

WOONG THE MUSES.

BY F. MACPHERSON.

To the feeble, a sun-bath intensifies gladness
Athletics for such as are strong ;
There are philters for lovers, to dissipate sadness ;
And nectar for children of song.

I have tested the merits of every fluid
Specific, for dullness of mind ;
And vouch, that the gift of the "Mystical
Druid,"
Leaves all other fluids behind.

When the muses I woo, on Sarsaparilla,
How slow and abortive, the flights ;
The quantities false, and failures would fill a
Waste-paper basket to rights.

When the muses I woo, on gin or Jamaica, —
And spread for an attitude high —
The paper destroyed, and used up, would
make a
Kite for an urchin to fly.

When the muses I woo, on milk-punch or
sherry,
The lacteal product is mild ;
Should my theme be pathetic, tragic or
merry,
'Tis the lachrymal wail of a child.

When the muses I woo, on old Highland
whiskey,
To realms beatific I soar ;
The Helicon summit I scale blythe and
frisky.
When a draught Hippocrene I pour.

It charges me full, with rapture ecstatic, —
With visions supernal and bright ;
My sanctum elysian — if 'tis but an attic, —
Is radiant with sunbursts of light.

Orchids and Their Instincts.

TO THE naturalist in the tropics a collection of orchids is a never-ending source of interest. He cannot help feeling that they are not only living things, but that they have faculties not generally credited to members of the Vegetable Kingdom. He sees them rejoicing in congenial positions, and shrinking before a strong wind or the burning rays of a tropical sun. When the block to which they adhere becomes decayed, they show their distaste in an unmistakable manner by throwing out new aerial roots, which feel their way to some better anchorage. If a drought comes, and no water is given, the leaves fall, and they lie dormant for months, to awake and put forth their wonderful flowers when the rains fall. When they can no longer exist under most trying circumstances, they die very slowly, often lingering on for years without the sign of a flower. Even when the bud is in an advanced stage, a change of place will often cause it to wither before opening.

The orchid-lover knows his plants as the shepherd his sheep. He may have a dozen of one species, and can recognize the flower of each individual. He loves them, and thinks of them almost as persons, rejoicing in their welfare, and sorrowing when they are sick or about to die. Like a good nurse, he moves them from one place to another, and watches to see whether they improve by the change. When, after all his care, they die, he is almost inconsolable. The plant may

be the only one of its kind, and perhaps another is unobtainable. All he can do is to treasure up its portrait as a memento of one that has been loved, but, unfortunately, lost. He may even feel some touch of remorse as he thinks that perhaps if something more had been done its life might have been saved. When they are strong, healthy, and vigorous, he rejoices with them. Morning and evening he gazes fondly on them, looking for new leaf and flower buds, watching their gradual development, and, if the plant has not produced flowers before while in his possession, eagerly anticipating their advent. They are sure to be different from the others in some way, and perhaps the character may be so marked as to excel every one of the same species. The true orchidophile, however, loves his plants too well to neglect one for another, for every individual has its own special beauties. Some may be larger and more showy than the others, and a fancier will pick out what he considers the best ; but the naturalist often finds more to admire in some of the despised ones. To him the neglected genus *Catasetum* is more interesting than the gorgeous *Cattleya*. As he takes his morning walk, and sees a number of uncommon bees flying towards a certain part of the garden, he knows at once that the *Catasetum* which he saw in bud yesterday is now open. On getting near, the flower-spike is seen surrounded by bees, some of which are almost hidden in the hood-like recesses of the flowers. Here is one with the pollen masses sticking between the shoulders, and there another which is blundering along with a pair on one of its wings, where, of course, they are in the wrong place and hamper its flight. This latter must have been struggling with another for a sip of the nectar, and as only one could get at it properly, the pollen masses stuck on the wing instead of the back. Other genera are almost as interesting as *Catasetum*—*Coryanthes* perhaps more so. To see the unique shape of the flowers of the latter is quite a wonder, but to observe its end and aim is a revelation. Hanging downward from an oval bunch of roots, on which the leaves are perched, is a flower-stem, to which several beautiful cups are attached. Into these a liquid is distilled which covers the bottom. In the early morning a metallic-green bee is attracted by the powerful odor of the flower, and, flying to it, falls into the cup, where its wings are wetted. Unable to fly or crawl up the steep sides, it moves round and round for a few minutes until it perceives a narrow chink at one end. This opening is too small for it to pass through easily, but by pushing hard it opens like a spring door, and the insect in going out rubs against the pollen case, and carries off its contents on its back. Still unable to fly, and perhaps confused with the strong odor, it crawls up the stalk and slips into another cup, this time rubbing the pollen masses on the stigma,

thus fertilizing the flower. All the white orchids are fertilized at night by moths, and these may still be seen at work very early in the morning. Although more simple than either *Catasetum* or *Coryanthes*, every species is worthy of the most careful investigation.

How can the naturalist, with these and a thousand other examples before him, help allowing that there is something higher here than what is commonly called vegetation? Everything in the life-history of the orchids goes to prove that they have been working towards certain ends for ages, with what results we see to-day. A great deal has been written about their cultivation and collection, but few have had opportunities of seeing them at home in all their glory and luxuriance. Those who have done so will perhaps be able to confirm by their experience in other countries what we have here given as a page in the life-history of the Guiana orchids—James Rodway, in Longman's Magazine.

A Vexed Problem Solved.

That difficult problem of Toronto water supply is at last solved. The St. Leon Mineral Water Company are in a position to supply the citizens with 36,000 gallons of their famous water daily. This is sufficient at least for drinking purposes, and to the fastidious taste it is a great deal more palatable than boiled sewage and much safer than the raw, uncooked article.

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"For Years,"

Says LARRIE E. STOKWELL, of Chesterfield, N. H., "I was afflicted with an extremely severe pain in the lower part of the chest. The feeling was as if a ton



weight was laid on a spot the size of my hand. During the attacks, the perspiration would stand in drops on my face, and it was agony for me to make sufficient effort even to whisper. They came suddenly, at any hour of the day or night, lasting from thirty minutes to

half a day, leaving as suddenly; but, for several days after, I was quite prostrated and sore. Sometimes the attacks were almost daily, then less frequent. After about four years of this suffering, I was taken down with bilious typhoid fever, and when I began to recover, I had the worst attack of my old trouble I ever experienced. At the first of the fever, my mother gave me Ayer's Pills, my doctor recommending them as being better than anything he could prepare. I continued taking these Pills, and so great was the benefit derived that during nearly thirty years I have had but one attack of my former trouble, which yielded readily to the same remedy."

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