



Sage and its Virtues.

"GARDEN sage!" said a Glasgow clergyman, "one of the trash tribe, a perfect abomination, good for nothing, used by fools for stuffing ducks who feed for apoplexy." But cooks and doctors differ in opinion, as we shall find presently, for we have no less than 130 different kinds of this beautiful plant, the whole of which are ornamental, and natives of every part of the world. My reason for writing of sage at this time is, that a friend of mine who has leisure to read the newspapers tells me that our doctors are much against the use of tea at this season, as they say that it tends to promote cholera; ergo, I beg to inform my friends and well-wishers that they may have a very good substitute for tea in sage—namely from *salvia*, to save or heal, in allusion to its balmy or healing qualities. The Chinese will give 4 lb. of their best tea for every pound of dried sage leaves. A gentleman who owned a valuable and an extensive estate in Devonshire, told me that he had often seen shiploads of sage sent from the south of England to China, to be there exchanged for tea. They say they wonder at the Europeans for going so far for tea when they have better tea of their own. The variety used for tea is *Salvia officinalis*, or common garden sage, of which there are many varieties, differing in the size, form, and colour of the leaves. The Chinese use it as a tonic for debility of the stomach and strengthening the nervous system, and prefer it for these purposes to their own tea. *S. grandiflora* is preferred for making tea; it is indigenous to the south of Europe, and of recent introduction into Britain. *S. pomifera* produces protuberances as big as oak galls, occasioned like them by the puncture of an insect. In the isle of Crete, *S. officinalis* has the same sort of excrescences, and they carry them to market under the name of sage apples.

S. verbenaca is a native of Britain, and very aromatic. A mucilage is produced from its seeds, which, put under the eye-lids for a few moments, cures any sand or dust there, and brings it out; and hence the name of oculus Christi, clear eye, or wild clarry. The flowers of *S. glutinosa* are used in Holland to give a flavour to the Rhenish wines.

A wine is made from the herb or flower boiled with sugar, which has a flavour not unlike Frontignan. *S. Indica* is a magnificent species, but rather tender in severe winters. *S. formosa* and *S. splendens* are very ornamental. All the species thrive in light soil, somewhat rich, and are readily propagated by seeds, cuttings, and dividing the roots. It is a remarkable fact, that the essential oil contains camphor, which exists in such quantities in sage and lavender that it has been supposed the separating of it might become an article of commerce.

Sage has a fragrant, strong smell, and a warm, bitterish, aromatic taste, like other plants containing an essential oil. It has a remarkable property in resisting the putrefaction of animal substances, and is in frequent use among the Chinese as a tonic in the form of tea. The longer I use it I like it the better.—R.M.N., in *The Farmer* (Scottish).

The New Large-Flowered Clematises.

CLEMATISES *lanuginosa*, *azurca grandiflora*, and others have long graced our gardens, and are remarkable for their enormous flowers of various shades of blue; but it is only within the past few years that numerous striking varieties of the family have been noticed at our shows, in various shades of blue and rich dark purple. They are so attractive in appearance and noble in flower, that doubtless many of our readers have been induced to purchase young plants, and therefore a few words on their culture may not be amiss. They are, when well grown and flowered, the noblest of all climbers for walls, trellises, or any other position in which hardy climbers may be desired. We have seen them flourish freely planted on the level ground, and allowed to stroll over it in their own way. On trellised arches which one occasionally sees in gardens, on the slender wire-work

fence so often used of late, they are truly beautiful and effective. They, like most things that we have to treat of, enjoy a good rich soil, and if with that it is light and free, so much the better. If the soil is very heavy, it had better be made light by the admixture of road sand, leaf mould, and other matters which may be convenient before planting; if light, it must be well deepened and enriched with rotten manure, and stiffish loam, if convenient; but, no matter what the soil may be, the secret of cultivating these clematises is to give them a few inches of well-rotted manure, on the surface of the earth all around where the roots are, or, in other words, to "mulch" them. If the appearance of the manure is objected to, as it may be by many, it may be covered with an inch of soil, and on that some annual, like the aster, may be grown for the summer months. As regards training, they are best left alone in summer, at least till the shoots get very long indeed; but during the winter months they must be firmly tied or nailed over whatever surface they occupy, as the weight of flowers is considerable where they are properly grown, and by having the main shoots firmly secured, the rich mass of blooms, many of them as large and larger than tea-saucers, may be allowed to hang down in a graceful and natural manner, which much increases the beauty of the plants and whatever position they adorn.—*London Field*.

Hon Marshall P. Wilder's pear garden contains about 11 acres, having some 900 varieties in bearing.

David Smith, of Sanbornton, N. H., has a grape vine from which he has picked this year 2,000 lbs. of grapes.

LARGE PUMPKINS.—The annual ceremony of crowning the king of the pumpkins at the central markets, Paris, took place on Sept. 28th. The vegetable which obtained the honour this year weighed 258 lbs., and measured 11 ft. 4 inches in circumference. It was grown at Gonesse, Seine et Oise.

VERONICAS.—According to the authority of a writer from the Avonside Botanic Garden, there are many fine sorts of Veronicas yet to be introduced from New Zealand, and that are known to botanists. They are mostly shrubby kinds, usually scentless, sometimes azure blue in color, but mostly white.

JAPAN PRIVET.—The *Gardener's Chronicle* says the beauty of this shrub is insufficiently known, though it is extensively planted by the landscape gardener. Large in leaf almost as a goodly orange, and producing flowers almost as large as the white lilac, and very sweet, it possesses first class attractions as an ornamental shrub.

NEW WATERMELON.—Bayard Taylor, in *Morris' Rural Advertiser*, says he has raised a new hybrid watermelon that cannot be surpassed for size, crispness of flesh or sweet flavor. The largest he has grown is 20 by 13, weighing 40 lbs. The flesh is crimson, 4 or 5 inches in diameter in the centre, with a very narrow rind, ripening in September, a fortnight or three weeks later than our American varieties. He thinks if care is taken to prevent farther hybridizing, they will become a valuable acquisition. He says he has never in any part of the world found a watermelon equal to the specimens of this new variety, which he has raised this summer. He calls it the Russian-American watermelon.

THE APPLE TREE.—Growing spontaneously almost throughout Europe, and in most other temperate climes, just where that warmth ceases which enables the vine to bring forth good fruit, there, by a kind provision of Providence, begins the climate most suitable to the apple; and the celebrated traveller Von Buch has remarked that it will grow in the open air wherever the oak thrives, thus extending its range to 60 degs. N. latitude, beyond which it is scarcely known. Linnæus, indeed, was told in Lapland that one apple tree was at least growing there—a fruitless one, it was admitted, but its barrenness only due to its having been cursed by a beggar woman to whom the owner had refused a taste of its produce; but on asking to be shown this marvellous growth, he found it to be an elm, a tree rare on those high latitudes, and which the ignorance of the inhabitants, unfamiliar with the real aspect of either, had invested with the name of apple, superstition stepping in afterwards with a myth to account for all discrepancies. Of the two extremes which it can endure, the apple seems to prefer warmth to cold, for the apples of Astrachan, if transplanted southwards, improve, while the Malo di Carlo of Italy, when removed further north, deteriorates; and though few apples are grown south of Paris, yet the departments of France which lie north of that city form a dis-

trict more favorable to them than even England can afford. The tree is likewise found in some parts of India, and an attempt was made some years ago to introduce its culture into the northern part of that continent, when a single tree, in consequence of being the only one which survived, cost upwards of £70 before it was planted. In South America, too, Humboldt found excellent apples abundant in the markets at Caracas, in Venezuela, and was assured that they were the growth of trees which had never been grafted. The apple tree asks for little depth of earth, for, having no tap root, a single foot of soil will suffice it, and twice this quantity gives its ample scope; but it is necessary that this little should be of a certain quality, so that its appearance may always be looked on as a mark of at least a tolerably good soil. Like most fruit trees it prefers calcareous earth, and geologists have noticed that the orchard counties of England follow the track of the red sandstone. Its shade is so kindly that in the Surrey nurseries tender evergreens are always planted under its protecting branches.—*Our Common Fruits*.

MANURING.—The most successful method I have yet practiced is to plant vines all about my trees,—winter squashes, mostly—by making large hills on the top of the ground—8 or 10 shovels full in a hill—say 6 feet apart or more; the vines will grow rapidly and soon cover the ground, affording a capital mulch for the trees in autumn's drouth, and at the same time bear more squashes than they would in the open field. In the fall, spread these hills or piles of manure broadcast over the ground. This practice can be continued for many years. It is not necessary that these hills should be all animal manure. A good compost is one-half animal manure, one-half old leaf-mould from the woods and a shovel full of ashes, or a handful of superphosphate of lime in each bill.—L. L. PIERCE, in *Boston Cultivator*.

CURE FOR AMERICAN BLIGHT.—A correspondent of the New Zealand *Lyttelton Times* gives his experience on this subject as follows:—"Uncovering the roots to some distance from the stem, filling in the space with about half a sack or more of sawdust, and covering it over with earth, a gentleman assured me he had found to be very successful in curing this pest, and that the second year, after applying the remedy to four very badly-blighted apple trees, they yielded a remarkably fine crop of fruit. Two or three years ago some trees at Christchurch were treated in a somewhat similar manner with malt-dust. When the roots were uncovered some months after, they were found free from blight wherever there was any malt-dust left about them. It did not occur to me to inquire whether the sawdust had been obtained from any one particular sort of New Zealand forest tree, which might have properties especially disagreeable to the insect. I have for some three years past found a couple of winter paintings of soft soap and sulphur, laid on with a common paint brush, from the smallest twig end down to the main stem, sufficient to keep my trees in a perfectly healthy state above ground, and as free from blight as one may expect, when they have the misfortune to be alongside of neighbours who never do anything for their trees, although covered with the insect all the year round."

DRY CULTURE OF AQUATIC PLANTS.—A writer in "*All the Year Round*" says: "The question what aquatic vegetables we can persuade to live and thrive out of water is important not merely in a decorative, but in an utilitarian point of view. If celery has been induced to desert its native ditch and grow fat and fine in our kitchen-gardens, there is no reason why other good things should not follow its example. A recent *Gardener's Chronicle* says:—'A supply of water-cresses for autumn and winter may be easily obtained by planting some strong young tops, about four inches long, in a line at the foot of a north wall. The cuttings should be of pieces which have roots protruding from the joints. Water-cresses will grow freely in such a situation. And where there are no artificial beds, and natural ones are a considerable distance off, these will be found useful.' There are water-flowers which take pattern by the water-cress, presenting themselves and their foliage independent of floods. One of my rambling grounds is a large tract of marshes abounding in vegetable and animal life. There are deep pools, shallow ditches, banks of mud uncovered by water, and dry ground tilled by the spade and the plough. In all these sites, except the latter, the white water-lily is abundant. In the pools, it sends up long leaf and flower stalks; in the shallower places, proportionally shorter ones; or the muddy patches, with no water over them, it assumes the habit of a herbaceous plant, which only requires judicious treatment to make magnificent 'bedding stuff.' Here is a fish out of water worth catching, and it will be strange if somebody does not take the hint. Our gardeners are perfectly competent to carry it out."