



Some Curious Plants.

We grow so accustomed to looking at the simply beautiful flowers of our windows and gardens that sometimes we forget even to dream that in some parts of the earth there may be plants strange as well as beautiful, exhibiting eccentricities that fill us with wonder, and, occasionally, traits that might seem almost attributable to reason.

Amid the humid depths of Brazilian forests, reeking with heavy and miasmatic vapors, some of the very strangest of these plants are found, not the least curious being a species of orchid of epiphytic growth, which hangs upon and curls itself along the branches of trees overhanging rivers and lagoons, stretching its butterfly-like blossoms out over the dark water. But it is not in the mere fact of this plant growing upon the branches that its marvel consists. Each plant is provided with a long tube-like appendage which, for the greater part of the time, is coiled up and tucked away conveniently, like the mainspring of a watch. Just as soon, however, as the plant is in need of water, this long tube uncoils itself and reaches downward until it comes to the surface of the water, where it can drink its fill.

Speaking of orchids, have you ever heard of the wonderful collection belonging to Mrs. George B. Wilson, of Philadelphia—a collection which is worth a mint of gold? Not long ago Mrs. Wilson refused \$10,000 for a single specimen, one of the tiniest of specimens too, consisting of but two little leaves about half an inch long, growing in a flowerpot just big enough to hold about a spoonful of moss. The leaves are variegated, half white and half green, and the plant is not striking, but it is the only orchid known in the world whose leaves are so variegated, hence the English collector offered Mrs. Wilson \$10,000 for it—and was refused.

In the White House conservatory at Washington, in a room kept filled continually with thin steam, is a very wonderful flower, with a very singular name, "The Flower of the Holy Ghost." The plant was originally brought from the equatorial forests of South America, where only a single specimen was obtained, and that at the risk of a man's life. With infinite care it was conveyed to the White House, and given so nearly its native environment that it has never realized that it is not in its tropical home, and continues to put forth, from time to time, its pure white, bell-like flowers, each of which contains at its heart the perfect representation of a snow-white dove, poised, with outstretched wings. So perfect is the form that even little children, on peeping into the flowers, immediately exclaim, "Oh, see the pigeon!"

The pitcher plants of our own land, with their curious carnivorous propensities, and their peculiar structure fitted for the capture and digestion of the hapless insects which may fall into their power, are, perhaps, too well known to need comment. Less familiar, possibly, is the fern-like artillery plant, whose spores are discharged in a series of little explosions when the plant is roughly handled, or the sensitive mimosa whose leaves cringe away and fold themselves up at the touch of one's fingers; yet both of these plants may be grown with some success in pots in Canada.

There is space, perhaps, to mention just one more, which may also be grown in Canadian homes. This is the Crucifixion plant. I saw it for the first time last winter, and al-

though at that time I did not think it pretty, it fascinated me. Its stems and branches were absolutely bare of leaves, but covered with spines, and coiled round and round, with a suggestiveness that made one shiver. Towards spring, however, myriads of tiny pink flowers sprang out along the bare stems, hiding the thorns, and transforming the plant into the semblance of a bridal wreath; and lastly, when the flowers had vanished, the leaves came out, this last change making of the plant a laurel crown, which remained, fresh and green, until, at the approach of winter, the leaves once more fell off, leaving only the bare spiny stems to await the pink blush of spring.

FLORA FERNLEAF.

"Farmer's Advocate" office, London, Ont.

The Country Schoolhouse.

The little country schoolhouse—you Remember it; of course you do! Within the angle snugly set, Where two long yellow highways met, And saplings planted here and there About the yard, and boxed with care As if to typify in turn, The youngsters caught and caged, to learn.

Around the rolling pastures spread, With woodland patches garlanded, From which the breezes gladly bore Sly invitations to the door. Across the sills the bees' soft hum Was mingled with the muttered sum, And from their covert in the vale In plaintive pleading piped the quail.

With basket and with pail equipped, Clear eyed, tan cheeked and berry lipped, Athwart the pastures, down the road, They trudged to learning's poor abode; The pink sunbonnet, broad-brimmed straw, The bare brown feet that knew no law Of fashion's last; the bundled forms That laughed aloud at cold and storms.

What tales the scarred desks might relate Of triumphs gained with book and slate! What lore the clapboards loose possess Of feats at noontime and recess! And doomed how oft the panes to see, Back up the road, and o'er the sea, Haste boy and girl, new worlds to find, The little schoolhouse left behind.

Oh, little country school! In vain May critics hold you in disdain. The greatest lessons that you taught Were not by chalk and pencil wrought. As ope your door on fields and sky, So, likewise just as wide and high, You opened to the eyes of youth The principles of love and truth.

Humorous.

"Do you believe," a lady asked, "that a genius can possibly be a good husband?" "Well," was the modest reply, "I would prefer not to answer that question; but my wife ought to be able to tell you!"

Two Irishmen serving in an English regiment were good chums until Rooney was raised to the rank of sergeant. Forthwith his chest expanded, and from that time on he looked down on McGrane.

One day McGrane approached Rooney, and said, "Mike—I mean sergeant—s'pose a private stepped up to a sergeant and called him a conceited monkey, phat wud happen?"

"He'd be put in the gyardhouse."

"He wud?"

"He wud."

"Well, now, s'pose the private on'y thought the sergeant was a conceited monkey, and didn't say a wurd about it, Wud he be put in the gyardhouse?"

"Ave coorse not."

"Well, thin, we'll lave it go at that."

—[Youth's Companion.]

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