

guanas. Unto that day none of owro men durst adventure to taste of them by reason of theyre horrible deformitie and loathsomness. Yet the Adelantado being entysed by the pleasantness of the kings sister Anacaona, determined to taste the serpents. But when he felt the flesh thereof to be so delycate to his tongue, he fel to amain without all feare. The which thing his companions seeing, were not behynd hym in greedynesse, insomuche that they had now none other talke than of the sweetnesse of these serpents, which they affirme to be of more pleasant taste than eyther our pheasants or partridges."

Partially for raw food seems to prevail in many countries. Raw fish, thinly sliced, formed one of the delicacies placed before Lord Elgin at a Chinese banquet. Baldwin tells us that the Kaffirs eat alternately a lump of roasted bull's flesh, and an equal quantity of the inside raw. A species of salmon, unknown in Europe, called in Siberia the nelma, is esteemed by the Russians more delicious in its raw state than when cooked, and is eaten to provoke an appetite. Ernan, in his "Travels in Siberia," says that during intense frost, raw flesh loses its repulsive qualities.

Wrangell adds his testimony to the superior flavour of raw frozen fish, seasoned with salt and pepper. Captain Hall says: My opinion is that the Esquimaux practice of eating their food raw is a good one; at least for the better preservation of their health. Eating meats raw or cooked is quite a matter of education.

The natives of the Sandwich Islands eat turtles, dolphins, flying fishes, etc., raw, considering that the flavour is lost in cooking, and the richest possible treat they can enjoy is to haul a fish from the water and literally eat it to death.

Sir Francis Drake says of the Patagonians, that they feed on seals and other flesh, which they eat nearly raw. Davis, in his second voyage to Greenland, in 1855, describes the natives as eating all their meat raw, drinking salt water, and eating grass and ice with great delight. Captain Hall, in his recent "Life among the Esquimaux," found the natives making a meal of smoking hot seal blood, and on tasting it, found it excellent, much to his surprise.

In New Guinea, the tripan, and similar marine slugs, are cut up into small pieces and eaten raw with salt and lime juice.

Locusts have been eaten from remote antiquity; the Arabs mix them with dough, and make excellent cakes of them. The Hottentots get fat upon them, and prepare from their eggs a brown or coffee coloured soup. In the Mahratta country they are salted, and in Barbary they are preferred by the Moors to pigeons. The latter usually boil them in water for half an hour, throwing away the head, and wings, and legs; sprinkling them with salt and pepper, and frying them, adding a little vinegar. At Natal, the locusts are collected in the evening in sacks by millions, and afterwards steamed in close vessels over a fire, then dried in the sunshine, and after being freed from their legs and wings by a kind of winnowing, are stowed in baskets in the granaries like corn. The dried locust is ground to powder between stones, and converted into a kind of porridge with water. It appears that the Kaffirs grow quite fat in the locust season. Dr. Livingstone tells us, in his South African travels, that for want of other food, he was compelled to eat locusts; and, strange to say, when roasted, he preferred them to shrimps!

Some entomologists tell us that caterpillars have a taste of almonds, and spiders of nuts. However this may be as regards the former, we are told by Spedman that large quantities of spiders, nearly an inch long, were eaten by the Kaffirs, and in the French colony of New Caledonia. In Europe there are instances of spiders exciting a kind of gourmand taste. Réaumur gives an instance of a young lady who never saw a spider without catching it and eating it. A clever woman—Anna Maria Schurman—used to eat spiders like nuts, as regards the cracking process, and excused her propensity by saying that she was born under the sign Scorpio. Lalande, the famous astronomer, was particularly fond of spider food; and a German is mentioned by Rozel, who used to spread spiders upon bread and butter, observing, in his imperfect knowledge of English, "that he found them very useful."

Humboldt tells us that he has seen Indian children drag out of the earth centipedes eighteen inches long, and more than half an inch broad, which they ate with eagerness. Insects' eggs are eaten by the Arabs and Mexicans; grubs of insects in the West Indies by both white and black men, who wash and roast them. The Mexican Indians prepare a liquor from the beetle, which has stimulating properties.

The Greeks ate grasshoppers, and liked them amazingly; the aborigines of New South Wales used to eat them raw, first taking off their wings. The Chinese thriftily eat the chrysalis of the silk worm, after making use of the silk; the larvae of a hawk moth are also much relished. The blacks in Jamaica eat the Bagong butterflies after removing the wings, and store them up by pounding and smoking them. The Hottentots eat the termites, or white ants, boiled and raw, and thrive well upon them—the female ant in particular is supposed by the Hindoos to be particularly nutritious; and Broughton in his "Letters written in a Mahratta Camp in 1809," tells us that they were carefully sought after, and preserved for the use of the debilitated Lurjee Rao, Prime Minister of Scindia, chief of the Mahrattas. The natives mix them with flour, and make a variety of pastry: the method is to parch them in pots over a gentle fire, stirring them about as is done in roasting coffee. They eat them by handfuls, as we do comfits: the taste is said to resemble sugared cream, or sweet almond paste. "I have discoursed with several gentlemen," observes Smeathman, "upon the taste of the white ants, and on comparing notes we have always agreed that they are most delicious and delicate eating." Dr. Livingstone says "the white ants, when roasted, are said to be good, and somewhat resemble grains of boiled rice."

Humboldt mentions ants as being eaten by the Marivituos and Marguerates, with resin as a sauce. Bees are eaten in Ceylon. It is probably bad taste to allude to the mites that we consume in our cheese in myriads. The grub of the palm-weevil, which is the size of a thumb, is a favourite dish in some parts of India. Ælian relates of an Indian king, who for a dessert, instead of fruit, set before his guests a roasted worm taken from a plant (probably the larva of this insect), which was thought very delicious.

The women of Georgia have collected nearly \$3,000 for the proposed monument to the late Robert E. Lee. The whole amount raised for the purpose in the South thus far is said to be not far from \$20,000.

AGRICULTURE.

CUCUMBER AND MELON CULTURE.

(From Moore's Rural New-Yorker.)

Comparatively speaking, but very few persons succeed in the cultivation of cucumbers and melons, for the simple reason that they have no clear conception of the natural requirements of the species of vegetable they seek to produce.

Usually, but little regard is given to the character or nature of the soil in which the seed is deposited, and the selection is made more in reference to the conveniences of location than from any other cause.

We have seen persons of more than ordinary intelligence, who claimed to be authority upon most horticultural subjects, utterly fail in the cultivation of cucumbers, melons, citrons, etc., even after having devoted much time and attention to the preparation of the soil, selection of the seed, and other incidental matters, and finally pronounce such crops among the most difficult to cultivate. Neither is it an uncommon occurrence for horticulturists to make a complete failure one year, upon the same soil where success attended their efforts during a preceding year, and what is more frequent, the plants after having obtained a favourable start, and dry, hot weather coming on, with an application of water to the surface of the soil where the plants take root, result, in most cases, in securing their entire destruction.

For the purpose of securing a better general understanding of the causes of such failures and to point out the path to success, we propose to present some facts regarding the proper mode of treatment and management, and to show them how to cultivate melons, citrons, cucumbers, etc., even if need be upon roofs of buildings, rocks and barren places, with equal, if not better success than can be obtained in the most highly cultivated fields or gardens.

In cultivation, the cucumber ordinarily requires a deep and rich soil, an abundance of moisture and continued heat. Its nature is to support itself by its tendrils in an upright position upon pieces of brushwood, in which manner the cleanest and best fruits are thus obtained. This, by the way, will be found to be a good practice too, where there is but little room for a horizontal growth upon the ground.

Cucumbers also, like most varieties of melons, have been found to possess in the leaves immense perspiratory power, so that they require a greater supply of fluid than those of most other plants; which accounts for the singular fact that they seem to thrive best where the roots find their way to an abundant supply of water. Such a supply of moisture is requisite under exposure to an intense sunshine, the heat and bright light of which decompose and alter the fluids of the plants and elaborate from them an abundance of sweet juices. This is peculiarly so with melons in hot climates; and experience has demonstrated that the moisture should be applied to the roots and not upon the surface of the soil in which they grow, so as not to cool the surface, check the growth, and kill the plants.

The plan recommended, is to take a tight barrel or cask with large pebbles or stones say half full; upon these stones place a mixture of compost with rich alluvial soil, or fine fresh vegetable mould, until the barrel or cask is filled to within three or four inches of the top; in which plant the seed and cover to the requisite depth. This barrel or cask may be placed in any convenient situation where sufficient room or space can be obtained, and around which arrange lattice work or brush to sustain the outspreading plants in whatever manner may be found most convenient for affording access at all times to both the barrel and the plants.

Upon the outer side of the cask insert a pipe of convenient size, through which water may be introduced to the lower or under half of the cask daily, or as often as occasion may require; this portion of the cask should be kept constantly filled with water. Midway of the cask the staves should be perforated with several half-inch holes, for the free escape of any surplus water and at the same to prevent the admission of an equal distribution of air; this purpose would be better accomplished if the holes were bored upon a line at equal distances apart around the cask.

The effect of this arrangement, as will be readily seen, is that through the capillary attraction of the soil sufficient moisture is absorbed at all times to nourish the plants, while the admission of air can be controlled at pleasure by opening or closing the apertures upon the sides of the cask.

As to the production of cucumbers alone under this plan, it has been found to greatly exceed any other; the yield under proper management, from one "generating tub," has been found amply sufficient to fill a closely packed barrel with salted pickles.

Cucumbers, therefore, as will be seen, can be raised or cultivated with considerable profit, and produced in cities as readily and cheaply as in most country places, with the advantage of being able to secure them fresh for the table at all times during the season. The observations apply with equal, if not greater force to the cultivation of melons, citrons and many other vegetables.

The object or design intended to be accomplished in having the sides of the cask project some three or four inches above the soil, is to enable the plants to be started early in April, in our more Northern latitudes, and allow space for covering with glass, blankets, &c., thereby protecting their growth, and at the same time protecting them against frosts. Where light is abundant, such plants may be grown in warm rooms, and subsequently removed into the open air, where bees may have access to the blossoms, or the same agitated by the wind, during the blossoming season.

It is a good plan, also, to sprinkle the surface of the soil at successive periods, say once in every two weeks, with a weak solution of ammonia water, which will facilitate the growth of the plants.

The following curious example of "taking time by the forelock" is related in Boyd's "Reminiscences of Fifty Years," a pleasant volume of gossip recently published in England:—"My grandmother once awoke my grandfather in the middle of the night, and told him she much feared their son Willie had become deranged, as she had been listening to him for some time speaking loudly and rapidly to himself. Her husband listened, came to the same conclusion; and they forthwith hurried into their boy's bedroom to know what was the matter. Willie's explanation was, that as they were going to the sea-side next day, he wished to save time, and was saying his prayers over and over to last him during the holidays."

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Rothschilds in France desire to sell the magnificent vineyards of Chateau Lafitte, which they purchased in 1867.

"It is a curious fact," says an entomologist, "that it is the female mosquito that torments us." A bachelor says that it is not at all curious.

Major William McDiarmid, a compositor in the office of the Cincinnati Times, is ninety years of age, and used to set up Walter Scott's poems from the original manuscript.

A CURIOUS ANT.—Probably the most curious ant in the world is the parasol ant of the West Indies. Dr. Forbes Winslow, in his work on light, says these ants walk in long processions, each one carrying a cut leaf over its head as a parasol, in the sun, and they deposit these ten or twelve feet under ground, apparently with no other object than to form a comfortable nest for a species of white snake, which is invariably found coiled up among them.

FISH IN DEEP WATER.—A curious experiment was performed in France, recently, to ascertain whether fish could live in great depths of water. The fish were placed in vessels of water made to sustain 400 atmospheres, under which they lived and preserved their health. It is, therefore, concluded that fishes may penetrate to very great depths in the ocean with impunity, as a pressure of 400 atmospheres corresponds to a depth of 13,600 feet, or about two miles and a half.

Dr. E. Schunck, in a paper read before the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society at the last meeting, described a new acid—anthraflavic acid—which occurs as a yellow colouring matter accompanying artificial alizarine. When crystallized from alcohol and dried, it has the appearance of a dark lemon yellow silky mass, which, under the microscope, is seen to consist of slender four sided prisms. The acid is only slightly soluble in boiling water, and almost insoluble in cold. If pure anthraflavic acid be dissolved in an excess of caustic potash, and the solution be boiled down to dryness, a yellow residue is left, which, after being carefully heated, almost to fusion, dissolves in water with a red colour. By the action of caustic potash, anthraflavic acid is converted into alizarine, the process being doubtless one of oxidation.

ONE CONVENIENCE OF SMALL POX.—There is a story told of the friend of a widow, who sold mutton pies, having destroyed the business of a foreman who had set up as a rival to the widow after her husband's death. He went into the rival's shop on a Saturday evening, when it was crowded with customers, and laying down two large cats on the counter, said:—"These make eleven; you can pay me on Monday, when I make up the dozen." Needless to say, the shop was cleared. On the same principle a juror stated, a few days ago, in the Court of Common Pleas, that he was Sanitary Inspector for the Strand Union, London, and was employed visiting small-pox patients, removing infected clothing, &c. The Judge excused his attendance, and although the court was crowded to excess, he had no difficulty in making his way out, a lane being formed for his passage.

HELIOGRAPHIC PRINTING.—A patent has been recently taken in England, which consists in an improved method of preparing caseine, or curd of milk, for subsequent use in the formation of casting blocks, printing blocks, and in preparing the surfaces of paper. The inventors take milk which has become sour and set by keeping, and separate from it the grease and other extractive matters by the following process: The milk is churned, when sour and set by natural causes, and put into a bag and allowed to drain for about twenty-four hours; boiling water is then poured on it, and it is subjected to a squeezing process. After this the best result is obtained by pouring water at about half boiling temperature on it. It is again squeezed and allowed to stand until it has cooled down, and then washed well in clear cold water with continuous squeezing to remove all the grease and milk they can. When dry, the residuum becomes hard and granular, and is the substance or caseine which is the object of the invention.

ROAD WITH SINGLE-RAIL.—Mr. J. L. Hadden, C.E., of London, has devised a single-rail tramway for conveyances in mountains and thinly peopled countries, of which he gives the following description:—"Imagine a bicycle let in a longitudinal aperture in the centre of the bottom of a cart, and the cart nearly touching the ground, so that only about six inches of the wheels would be visible; next, a kind of balancing pole run through the sides of the cart at right angles to the single-rail on which the bicycle is to run. The two ends of the pole are to project about three feet on either side of the cart, and rest upon, and be harnessed to the backs of two mules. The animals will thus be one at each side of the load, instead of being in front in the ordinary way. It would be impossible to turn over, because, in order to do so, it would have to force one mule to the ground and to lift the other in the air; and, moreover, as its floor would only be six inches above the rail, an overturn would be of no account. All the weight in the cart, if evenly distributed, would bear upon the rail, and the animals, having no load upon their backs, would be able to exert considerable tractive power."

SOMETHING NEW IN RAILWAY CARRIAGE HEATING.—The railway line from Vienna to Oderberg—the Emperor-Ferdinand-Northern-Railway—has made a new arrangement for heating its passenger trains by steam. The steam is produced in the engine and circulated by means of four-inch iron tubes running through all the carriages. The pipes nearest the engine are only an inch and a quarter wide, passing underneath the engine and tender into the four-inch carriage pipes. The connection from carriage to carriage is kept up by telescopic metal tubes with self-acting valves attached to them, by which the condensed water escapes. First-class carriages have two pipes for heating them, with slides inside to shut out the steam in one or both, as agreeable to passengers. Second-class carriages have only one pipe with the slide outside, leaving the regulation of the temperature to the guard. The atmosphere in the carriages may thus be kept up to any desired temperature. The apparatus was tested the other day on a portion of the line from Vienna to Lundenburg, and has given entire satisfaction. The temperature outside was 39 deg., while a sharp north wind was blowing. Inside it was kept up on the way to Lundenburg at 100 deg., and on the way back at 66 deg., without the slightest difficulty or any perceptible change on the road.