

THE CHINESE.—"That singular people," says the *Athenæum*, "had found out the sexuality of plants long before it was insisted upon by Europeans. Long before any herbals flourished with us, they had such books illustrated by woodcuts. In fact, the work of Li-shi-chin, written more than three centuries ago, is still the standard book on the *Materia Medica* of China, and consists of fifty octavo volumes, illustrated by numerous woodcuts of minerals, plants, and animals."

HOW TO PRESERVE SCIONS.—C. C. Hatch, of Ischia, N. Y., who has followed grafting over forty years, says:—"I cut my scions in February. I then take resin with a little oil or tallow to reduce it, as clear resin is apt to crumble off. Melt it, and when boiling hot, dip the ends cut from the tree of each scion. This seals the pores of the wood, and then stand the butts of the scions on the damp ground on the bottom of my cellar, and turn an empty cask over them. In this way they keep fresh the year round. I have scions of apples and pears in my cellar to-day that are as fresh as when cut last February: and one year, for an experiment, I kept some over the next winter, and set them in April, after being cut sixteen months, and they grew. Grape cuttings prepared in this way, and then rolled up in oiled cloth paper, might be brought from Chili to New York in safety."

EVERGREENS FROM DECIDUOUS TREES.—A correspondent of the *Maine Farmer* says, while travelling in Canada, in November, 1862, in some locality, which he does not give, he was surprised to see shade trees around the houses in full leaf, apparently as green as in June. On inquiring the cause, he was informed it resulted from inserting a piece of pork rind in the tree the spring previous. He asserted that he tried the experiment on a single tree last spring, by boring into it about five inches with a two-inch augur, and lining the hole with pork rind. His letter is dated March 10th, 1861, when, he says, "this tree retains its leaves and the same general appearance as in June." The article is entitled the 'Sugar Maple Evergreen.'—*R. N. Yorker.*

[A friend at our elbow says a much better way to accomplish the same purpose, is to insert a portion of the tail of a bullfrog.—*Country Gent.*]

[Our printer's devil suggests that if by any process a portion of the brain of some correspondents could be inserted in the trunks of the maple, the 'greenness' would be considerably intensified.—*Gardeners' Monthly.*]

PRESERVING APPLES THROUGH THE WINTER.—Mr. Robert Donald, nurseryman, Working, gives the following account of his method of preserving apples. He says:—"This year I tried an experiment to preserve some apples in a ridge of earth, the same way we do potatoes in this part of the country. I had a trench dug five feet wide, one foot below the surface of the ground, and twelve feet long. I covered the whole surface of the bottom and sides with turfs of grass, the grassy side upwards, and then filled the space with golden nobs and some French apples, about two and a half feet deep in the centre, sloping a little to the sides, and then covered them close with turf to keep the fruit clean, the grassy side next the apples. I then covered the ridge with soil a foot thick to keep out the air and frost. At the end of April I had them taken out in fine preservation. I again, last autumn, kept fifty bushels in the same way, with equal success." This writer refers to several gentlemen in the same neighbourhood who were equally successful (after his communication) in keeping upwards of 200 bushels of apples until May in the following year.—*The Field.*

OPEN HEADS FOR FRUIT TREES.—Most orchard trees have their heads altogether too crowded; the limbs are allowed to fill up the centre so that light and air are excluded, and the full development and maturity of the fruit prevented. A distinguished pomologist in giving directions for pruning an orchard, advised to leave room enough in the centre of the tree for a barrel into which to pick the apples; and he was not far from right. It requires but little trouble to get a tree into good shape, if it is attended to while young, when the knife will do the work, which, if neglected, will necessitate the use of the saw and chisel. Where large scars are to be made, it is always best to defer pruning until summer; though cutting with the knife may be done after the severity of the winter has passed. Trees should be started with a view to an open and well balanced head, but where this has been neglected, they should be made as nearly right as possible before they get large. Wherever a branch will crowd another, if allowed to grow, or will unduly fill up the centre of the tree, it should be removed. A timely use of the knife in early spring, and an occasional summer pinching of a shoot disposed to grow where a limb is not needed, will keep the top open. It is sometimes necessary, in order to give the tree a proper balance, to induce a branch to prolong itself more than it naturally would; this can be done by removing the side shoots upon it.—*Rural New Yorker.*

Climbing Plants.

THE VIRGINIAN CREEPER, *Ampelopsis quinquefolia*, is an excellent running vine, more suitable for covering buildings than a trellis.

THE DUTCHMAN'S PIPE, *Aristolochia Sipho*, is a beautiful climbing plant, with large leaves, affording most ample shade. It has curious purple flowers, somewhat in the form of a pipe, and makes a strong, rapid growth.

THE CHINESE WISTARIA, *Wistaria Sinensis*, is perhaps the most desirable of all our climbing plants. The foliage is of a lively green, and the flowers grow in racemes, often more than a foot in length, of a very delicate purplish blue. It blooms most abundantly, producing hundreds and in large plants thousands of clusters of flowers, quite fragrant.

THE SCARLET TRUMPET FLOWER, *Bignonia radicans*, is a very desirable climbing plant, bearing large trumpet-formed, bright orange flowers, from the middle of summer until autumn.



SCARLET TRUMPET FLOWER.

MANURING NEWLY SET TREES.—We this spring saw a neighbour finishing off the planting of a row of handsome maples in front of his dwelling, and complimented him on his taste and public spirit, and expressed the hope that his trees would live and flourish. "They ought to grow," said he, "for I have put a half wheel-barrow load of hog manure into each hole." "Have you?" we responded, "then the trees will die, and you may as well pull them up now and throw them on the brush heap." But he could not be convinced of his error. "Hog dung done well on the corn-field, and with hops and tobacco; and why won't it with shade trees?" And so he left his handsome maples, with their roots enveloped in the powerful manure, and the result was as might have been expected. A few leaves put forth in May, but in June they turned yellow and dropped off, one by one, and to-day the trees are dead. The lesson is a plain one: keep away manure from newly planted trees. Give the roots finely pulverized surface soil, as good as can be found, and the trees will doubtless thrive. If the soil needs bettering afterward, apply manure to the surface in the fall, and work it in the next spring. Its effects will soon be visible.—*Selected.*

Entomology.

Usefulness of Birds.

At a recent meeting of the Farmers' Club of the American Institute the following remarks were made in reference to the usefulness of birds:—

Mr. Robinson read a communication from the Rev. Mr. Weaver, saying that his trees had been unusually free from canker worms, and he attributed it to the presence of large numbers of reed birds.

Dr. Trimble:—Mr. President, I must say a word for the reed bird. Were it not for birds we could not live; insects would destroy the whole of our grains and fruits. One of the most valuable of all is the reed bird. When I see bunches of these brought into our markets in the fall I am pained and grieved. It does not eat the curculio, but it eats the canker worm and it eats your span worm that gets on the trees in this city. Last spring I was standing with a friend by Madison Square, when he called my attention to the great numbers of reed birds in the trees. We watched them, and they continued to come till there were 300 or 400 of them in the square. They were feeding on the span worm, and it was curious to watch their mode of feeding. They could not rest on the slender ends of the branches where the worms were, and they would flutter off in the air and approach the worm till they could catch him with their beak. The worms seemed to have an instinct that their enemies were after them; they felt a jarring of the limbs, and they began to let themselves down by their webs in hundreds. The reed birds are not fly catchers like the king bird and the swallow, and they could not catch the worms while suspended thus in the air.

Mr. Marshall:—Is the reed bird the little black bird that comes in flocks?

Mr. Robinson:—No, it is the cherry bird.

Dr. Trimble:—The male is marked with yellow on the tips of its wings, and it has a crest on its head which it can raise at pleasure.

Mr. President, I have devoted all of my leisure this summer to dissecting and examining the crops of these insectivorous birds, and I have no doubt that if a knowledge of their usefulness could be spread throughout the community, it would result not only in laws for their protection, but in a public sentiment also which would enforce these laws. The most valuable bird that we have is the Baltimore Oriole. That eats the curculio, the great destroyer of our fruit.

Several other subjects were discussed, but we select the above only for our columns.—*Scientific American.*

A FEW WORDS ON BIRDS AND INSECTS.—The cawing rook is the smallest of the crow tribe. He is a true insect destroyer. The cornix, or real crow, will kill young lambs and pigs by pecking out their eyes. A buzzard will destroy 6,000 mice annually. One owl is worth a dozen cats in field, barn or granary. Black-birds, thrushes, robins, and larks are worm-eating birds. The goldfinch eats thistle seeds. A swallow will devour 900 insects in a day. The miner bird, a worm-eater, has been introduced from India into Australia. The bird called the laughing jackass is the best native mouser and snake killer in Australia. How fond the Englishman is of the robin, which is his social winter companion, with which he feeds crumbs of bread, and which the barbarous Buffon recommended as a *bonne bouche* when eaten with bread crumbs. The cockroach deposits 100 eggs at one time, and the wheat fly 130 eggs; and the aphid is still more prolific.—*New Zealand Paper.*

TO PRESERVE FRUIT FROM INSECTS.—"Muscat" writes to the *London Times* on this subject:—"The following remedy, first invented by a near neighbour and friend, the late Rev. W. Kirby, will be found efficient: a hand glass, commonly used by gardeners (a square one is the best), is the instrument to be used. This has to be tightly covered at the bottom with thick white paper, varnished to resist the wet. A circular hole, six and a half inches in diameter, is then cut in the centre of the paper, and the glass is placed on three bricks over a plate filled with beer, sugar, and a little rum, a moderate distance from the infested spot. The effect is magical; in a few hours the glass is crammed with wasps, hornets, and flies, (bees will seldom enter), which, having tasted the sweets, fly upwards to the light. A common sulphur match, made by dipping brown paper into melted brimstone, will destroy thousands. The constant hum of insect life inside will attract all the marauders from the fruit trees to the glass."