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## THE CACTUS.

A much needed service has been rendered to cultivators of the cactus by Mr. A. Blanc, of Philadelphia, Penn., U.S.A., in the publication of his catalogue of cactus plants, wherein is not only a full description of many valuable varieties, accompanied in many instances with engravings giving the appearance of the plants and of their flowers, but also hints as to their cultivation, in which full directions are given concerning the soil to be used, the temperature required, and the various details needing attention to secure success. Accompanying this neat little work was a letter from Mr. Blanc offering us the use of such of the cuts as we might wish, for the purpose of giving our readers a better appreciation of the appearance of some of these very curious and interesting plants, than can possibly be given by any verbal description. We have availed ourselves of this very kind offer, and present our readers in this number with a plate containing four different species.

To those who wish to grow plants in the house, the cactus family offers many varieties that will thrive in the dry and heated atmosphere of a room,

where most other plants suffer and often perish. Besides, they are very patient of neglect. You may forget to water them for a month, and they will not show proper resentment by drooping and dying, but patiently wait for your return to thoughtfulness. They do not object to sunlight, nay the hotter and fiercer its rays fall upon them the better they thrive; so that if you can give them a shelf at the window, and heat enough to keep out frost in winter, with water when they are growing and blooming, they will almost take care of themselves the rest of the time.

The soil which they require is any good loam well mixed with sand, so that it shall be porous, and thoroughly drained. If the bottom of the pot be filled half way to the top with bits of broken pots, so much the better. During the winter they will need but very little water. Mr. Blanc says if the whole tissue of the plants seems to be plump and full, no water is needed; but, if there be the slightest approach to laxness, or a dulness in the surface color, then water should be given. In the spring and early summer when the plants are growing rapidly, they will require water twice or thrice a week.