

FLOWERS THAT TRAP INSECTS.

AND A VEGETABLE WHISKY SHOP THAT CATCHES AND EATS FROGS.

A new species of vegetable whiskey shop has been added to the collection of plant curiosities at the Washington Botanical Garden. The liquor it distills in the pitcher-shaped receptacles that hang from its stems is especially liked by frogs, which hop into these traps for the purpose of drinking it. Although the sweetish fluid is a powerful intoxicant, the batrachian customer, however wildly over-stimulated, would certainly jump out again were it not that two very sharp dagger-like thorns project downward from the lip of the vessel in such a manner that Mr. Frog in trying to escape is thrust through the body by them at every leap until presently he falls dead in the "liquid refreshment"—an appropriate object lesson to all intemperate creatures—whereupon the plant absorbs his substance, as the ordinary whiskeyshop consumes that of its frequenters, and is thus supported.

This species is tropical and has to be kept in the greenhouse devoted to plants of the equatorial belt. Naturally there are no frogs in the conservatory, and so Superintendent Smith is obliged to feed

THIS ECCENTRIC VEGETABLE

with raw meat chopped fine, on which it thrives excellently. For lack of insects likewise he supplies with the same artificial sustenance the other sorts of whiskey shops that find in bugs of various descriptions their chosen prey. They will all eat beef, although each variety seems to have in nature its particular line of customers, one capturing cockroaches, another ants, and so on. Doubtless they all could live on any animal food, but there seems to be a difference of taste among the insects as to the liquors. One species will only touch the drink served by a certain representative of this carnivorous plant family; another selects by preference a different brew, and so on. Thus but one sort of bug is ordinarily found in each set of pitchers, those designed for the accommodation of large beetles and cockroaches being as big as small shoes. It is very curious to cut open one of these vessels after it has become withered and dead, being merely formed at one end of the leaf, and to find what a wonderful collection of victims it has gathered in and not finally digested, often numbering many hundreds, if the prey is small. The whole structure of each trap is beyond measure curious, the inner surface of some coated with little bristles that project downward and prevent the guest so hospitably received from walking out again. This is particularly a feature of what the superintendent calls the vegetable lager beer saloons, which prepare a liquor of much less intoxicating quality in tall chalice-shaped vessels instead of pitchers, depending upon drowning their customers rather than upon making them so drunk that they cannot get away. A deplorable thing it seems, by the way, to find such bad habits prevalent among bugs, the opinion having been always held that only man, the most noble of animals, had a right to indulge in vices to the elaboration and invention of which he has given so much attention.

So far as can be ascertained, no analysis ever been made of the liquors dispensed by these vegetable gin mills, chiefly owing to the fact that such an experiment would involve a very difficult problem in organic chemistry. It is known, however, that the strongest of them contain a large proportion of alcohol. Persons hard up for stimulants have often achieved a

MAXIMUM OF INTOXICATION

by swallowing the contents of a few of the pitchers, which sometimes hold more than a quarter of a pint each, without bothering about the insects in the fluid. Why may it not be that from this origin the term "bug juice" is derived? How appropriately is such a beverage adapted to the convivial uses of the tropical tramp, who, while pursuing his leisurely travels can pluck his drinks by the way side!

A novelty at the Botanic Gardens is a plant whose leaf bears a remarkably well executed caricature of the Duke of Wellington, all done in the veining; but in the interest of visitors it does not seriously rival either the "mother-in-law plant," a scrap of which swells up your tongue so that you cannot speak for days, or the famous "butcher plant" of Maryland, that has, instead of leaves, so many pairs of toothed jaws that close upon any insect venturing between to get at the bait within.

This "butcher plant," which grows nowhere in the world save in the vicinity of Wilmington, N. C., suffer for its carnivorous habits, being a chronic victim of indigestion.

Each stomach trap, having used up most of the gastric juice which it secretes in digesting the first living prey caught, usually finds the second victim it captures disagree with it, and the third it is unable to assimilate satisfactorily. Then the trap turns from green to brown and dies, like any leaf, other fresh ones developing meanwhile to take up the work of gobbling. After all, this greedy vegetable is not nearly so bad as the "cruel plant," as it is called, whose flowers wantonly capture unsuspecting butterflies that alight to sip honey, and hold them until they are dead, when the grasp of the ruthless petals is relinquished and the luckless visitor is dropped on the ground.

Plants even employ insects as their servants in the work of reproducing their species, paying them wages in honey. Most vegetables combine the two sexes in one flower; but breeding "in and in" is no more healthy for them than it is for animals (the blossom must marry with another if the species is to be continued in a healthy way. So young Mr. Honeysuckle dresses himself in a spring suit of bright yellow and

PERFUMES HIMSELF DELICIOUSLY

for the purpose of attracting the gay butterflies that flutter around. He also provides a small store of nectar in a golden cup to offer any insect guest that may come his way. Presently a butterfly pauses to take a sip of the sweet liquor, but in doing so she cannot avoid getting some of the pollen on her head, and this she carries to another honeysuckle, where she stops for a second bit of refreshment, incidentally rubbing off some of the pollen upon its stigma. Thus is accomplished the marriage of the flowers.

But the bee is the Cupid of the vegetable world, to whom is assigned most of this marrying and giving in marriage among the blossoms. There is one kind of orchid that depends altogether for the continuance of its species upon flights among bees. To a moral delinquency on their part it may be said to owe its survival entirely. The petals of each of its flowers are so bent as to form a sort of little tunnel, and to get at the honey a bee must go in at one end or the other. If nothing interferes it will never come in contact with any of the pollen, but now and then it happens that it meets another bee which has entered from the other side. Then there is a fight, and in the scrimmage the combatants get bounced around and are covered with the reproductive powder. However, in order to accomplish anything, one of these bees must go off and have the same sort of fight in another orchid blossom, so as to transfer a portion of the pollen to the stigma. Luckily this occurs often enough to perpetuate the plant.

Some kinds of orchids imitate to the life bees, butterflies, and moths, apparently for the purpose of attracting these insects on the decoy duck principle. The object is not quite so evident in the case of varieties of these extraordinary plants whose flowers counterfeit with amazing exactness toads, huge spiders, and other animals. There is one which presents the likeness of a man hanging by the head, and another that opens and shows a beautiful dove in an enclosure of petals.

A book might be made of the freak plants of the world. There is the vegetable box constrictor of India, known as the "maloo climber," which twines about great trees and

STRANGLES THEM TO DEATH,

so that they decay, fall in, and often leave the empty tower of climbers standing erect. In South America there is a "cow tree," which gives milk that is shown by chemical analysis to be of almost exactly the same composition as that of the cow, which it resembles to perfection in appearance and quality, tasting like sweet cream. Deep in the swamps and forests of the Island of Formosa grows a plant the stems of which are filled with a fine white pith. This pith is cut by the Chinese into thin strips and is called "rice paper." Bodies of the dead suspended within hollows of the "baobab" tree that grows in Africa are transformed into mummies for all eternity without further process of embalment. On the elevated barren plains west of the Volga grows a plant closely resembling a lamb, which was said by travellers of old to bend from the stalk upon which it could turn and feed upon the herbage about it, but when the grass died it perished from hunger. The likeness referred to is not so to be denied though its death when the grass dries up is due to the same cause that kills the other vegetation, namely, drought.

The newspapers poke a good deal of fun at the summer girl, but even Editors know that the Summer girl and a narrow-seated buggy and a moonlight night make a very attractive combination.

THE GRIST GROUND.

BY HARKLEY HARKER.

"Good-by to the old farm!"
"How so, my son?" asked the grizzly father, as the young man hung the scythe on the tool-house rack.

"I say good-by to plow and furrow, hills, rocks, long hours of hard work, and poor pay. I have chopped my last stick of cordwood, husked my last bushel of corn. I hang up the scythe now, forever. The great city shall give me a living."

"But, my boy, the farm shall be yours to-morrow; only give mother and me bread, and that, too, not for long."

"I don't want it. Sell it, give it away. I'm done," hotly exclaimed the young man, as he wiped his beady forehead with his tawny hand.

"John, listen to reason! It has been a scorching summer, but we have nearly finished it. You think these people who roll by here on the mountain stages every day, have things easier than we. But this is their vacation. All these fine gentlemen work like slaves the rest of the year; and the city girls with gay dresses and white hands—"

"I tell you, father, I'm done. Don't argue it."

"But to leave the farm because destiny calls, because one is fitted by education, by nature, for other vocations, or because one sees an opening, is well enough. To go to the city, however, for the mere sake of going to the city—John, you are a fool. What will you do for bread? It doesn't grow on street-lamps."

It was all in vain to add words. The haying was over; the limit of endurance the young scamp had fixed in mind all summer through, as many an evening he had climbed the stone wall, musing in the dust of passing coaches whose laughter peeled forth upon him like a song of sirens, or suddenly answering the frolicsome pedestrians who paused upon their alpen-stocks to ask how much farther to the Tip-top House. It was not far, and of evenings when the air was still, down through the great hemlocks came strains of bewitching music, startling the sheep in this high pasture, and yearlings from their browsing, and startling the heir of all these herds as well.

It was not so last year, this strange discontent; it was never so with him before; though born under yonder red, low-roofed, old dwelling, as were all his fathers; though the window of his birth-chamber looked out upon the mountain caravansary, whose cool splendors thousands yearly came to see. But he was eighteen now. It is stepping into a new world to become eighteen years old.

He was eighteen, and the only child alive; generous, willful, pampered, of robust health, and by no means an Arcadian saint, though living amid the so-called innocent country hills. As he reclined upon the road-side wall, there was yet something about him very engaging. The open countenance blushing in the settling sunbeams, the full brow and quick, dark eye, the broad chest and stout limbs of a perfectly formed and handsome animal. But the human animal can dream, picture, plan, and ponder with powers of mind that no other animal possesses. John was the last fellow who should have gone to the great town. Of warm affections, conscience, he had none. What pleasures and gratifications did his vivid imagination sketch upon the evening sky, away southward, whitherward lay the vast city, miles and miles down?

Farewell the broad, rough uplands, with familiar stone heaps dotted over; the upper barn where he had "broken" many a wild colt and called it his own; the white gable of his neighbor whither the path across lots ran, trodden by his bare feet almost since their first steps; farewell the school-house at four corners, the sweep and stretch of fairest landscape under the sky, set in the distance with the spires of village churches far down the valley. The home of many blessings, and a shadowed face at the window leaning on an old hand in the twilight gloaming; for father had been in and told the story, and the two old ones were powerless against the young, imperious resolution. He in reverie, he in ponderings deep; not how they shall coax a living from the old farm, for they would rather the time had come to die, and cease the strife of a life rent with gaping graves into which strong sons had sunk one by one and left them only one, and he more cruel than their other sorrows; pondering how to prevent the ills of passions never yet controlled by their Saviour's strong and gentle hand; foreseeing much and fearing more; for they were ignorant of the city, too. He in reverie, building gaudy castles of a good time coming, and he free to drink to his fill; in

Out of Sorts

Describes a feeling peculiar to persons of dyspeptic tendency, or caused by change of climate, season or life. The stomach is out of order, the head aches or does not feel right.

The Nerves

seem strained to their utmost, the mind is confused and irritable. This condition finds an excellent corrective in Hood's Sarsaparilla, which, by its regulating and toning powers, soon

Restores Harmony

to the system, and gives that strength of mind, nerves, and body, which makes one feel well.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Sold by all druggists. \$1; six for \$5. Prepared only by C. I. HOOD & CO., Apothecaries, Lowell, Mass.

100 Doses One Dollar

reveries till the stars came out above the mountain pines. They in prayer together for him, in the chamber where he was born; and what more could they do, having given him up to God?

After all, it was not a very joyous departure, that Monday morning in the September glory.

The boy could not quite exult as he had anticipated. The mother, with her last few tokens of love that can never cease to care for its own; tokens wrought with clumsy, eager fingers, and homely with the style of the hill country; and her last trembling embrace. The father silent as they jogged to the village station, as if his great heart halted midway between his love and indignation. For it was a fool's errand, was it not? A headstrong inclination to desert a good home and its duties for a whim. But his boy had not run away at least, and he would speed him to short folly, and to quick and sure return. Even the dog protested; and believe us, it touched the boy's heart most of all, as with frantic skurry, he bayed the train away.

Well, well, the great town opened its arms and took the young man in, as the myriad lamps of night laughed and winked at his conceit, twinkled, and winked, and joined hands down the long boulevards of darkness, till they seemed to change to fiery serpents with many a coil hissing, "Here comes another. What shall we do with him?" And now the dull roar of the streets gave answer "We know what to do with him." To all of which the boy replied "Have I not read all about it? I shall know what to do with myself. I come to prey, not to be preyed upon." But it must be confessed again that one is not quite so confident, standing in the actual presence of the vast metropolis, as among the mountain paths, looking thitherward. The city opened its jaws and took him in.

It is not for us to tell all that the city did with the aimless and pitiful fool. He was not without a welcome. Many welcomed him. He was strong, and could give much strength away. His veins were full and it took many moons to suck them dry. He was mountain fed, and his fat wasted slowly. But the vampires were many, the fires were kept burning, and God's laws enforced.

We saw the end this summer. It was in this wise. We were riding down from the Tip-top House as the sun went down, and sat beside the loquacious driver. As we stopped to untrig the wheels in a farm-house yard, an old man sat by the wall, his white hair roscate in the day's farewell, and unutterable sadness in his fine old face. A few neighbors loitered about the tidy gate-way, and a cheap crape knot fluttered at the door beneath the porch.

"A death here, driver?"

"Just the same as elsewhere, sir." And we were silently attentive at his reply, while he went on to explain.

"Yot see, sir, the city had him about a year. He had a good time; too good. The doctors wrote from the hospital. His father went after him. But the fool hath said in his heart there is no God, and—"

"And, driver, the city ground him up and spit him out."

"Yes, sir. They have the tools to grind men with down there, I reckon."

We rattled on down the same stony highway traversed by the New England boy one little year before; and burned to whisper his story, as a warning to a youth whom we know of in a happy country home. Heaven bless him as he reads.