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## The Book of Nature.

Some plants go regularly to rest, and sleep so profoundly that in a cloverfield not a leaf opens until after sunrise, and others in South America are universally known as "the sleepers." Most mimosa fold up their delicate feathery leaves as night approaches, and when the sun rises once more, the little sleepy ones unfold again slowly, and, as it were, reluctantly, like some of us to begin their work anew. It has been observed, that these so-called sensitive plants, when wounded or otherwise suffering, cannot sleep but keep their leaves open and erect all night long until they perish. Other plants elude their slumbers during the day, and awake from their slumbers at night, while a few even droop and clasp them as if seeking support in its strength, whenever the sky is overcast and a storm is threatening.

This peculiar faculty of sleep stands in immediate connection with the general power of certain leaves to move either upon coming in contact with other bodies, or apparently in spontaneous motion. All the above mentioned mimosa fold up their leaves when merely touched; first one little leaflet will be closed, then another, until the whole leaf proper, with its delicate footstalk, droops down and claps the stem of the plant. If the plant be very irritable, as the *Mimosa pudica* is here found to be in proportion to *quadrifida*—the other leaves will follow the example until the whole little plant, plays, to use a Virginia phrase, "possum," and looks for all the world as if it were asleep. The oxalis of this continent requires several successive strokes to produce the same effect, and the robinia, or locust, which sleeps at night, must be violently shaken. The common wild lettuce also shows a great irritability, and curiously enough, only when the plant is in flower. Upon being touched, the leaves contract beneath, and force out some milky juice, with which they soon become covered.

The so-called spontaneous movements of leaves and other plants arise mostly, though not always from their general tendency to turn towards the light. Little is as yet known with accuracy of this interesting feature in the life of plants. A great number of leaves however alter their position by night and by day. Some make a half, some a quarter revolution and then turn their points downward. Others again, fold up in regular order the youngest leaf first, as if it required most rest, whilst the oldest are apt to do entirely without it. In other plants it is the state of the atmosphere which determines such movements—the buds of the geranium and the wild out curl up in dry weather, and straighten again in damp days—other plants do the contrary. The hygrometrica of South America closes the leaflets of its finely pinnated foliage long before the clouds rise, and thus foretells the impending change of the weather; and the plant known among us as the fly-trap, is called in its home on the warm plains on the banks of the Senegal, the good morning flower, because at that season of the day it gracefully bends over and bows to the passer by. On the banks of the Ganges, however, exists a vegetable form so quick of life as to resemble some of the minute animals in its motion. The leaflets of this singular plant are in perpetual motion; one leaflet will rise by a succession of little starts, and then fall in like manner; while one rises another droops, and thus the motion continues and extends over the whole foliage. Nor does it cease at night; in fact, it is said to be more vigorous even in the shade; and in the still, hot hours of an Indian summer night the plant is full of life and incessant motion. Not less singular is the action—for it is more than motion—of plants like Venus's fly-trap and others. The flowers are covered with sweet honey, and thus allure many an unfortunate insect which has no sooner touched the sweet store than the plant moves after the long stiff hairs which grow along the middle nerve, or closes its crown of gorgeously covered leaves above and thus seizes upon the unlucky robber. We can speak no longer of these plants of their favorite delicacies that they will not thrive in green-houses from which insects are excluded, and gardeners have been compelled to supply them, strange as it may sound, literally with animal food, to see them thrive and blossom as in their native home.

**UNANIMITY.** A Scotch parson, in his prayer said: "Lord, bless the grand council, the parliament, and grant that they may hang together." A country fellow standing by, replied: "Yes, sir, with all my heart, and the sooner the better—and I am sure it is the prayer of all good people." "But friends," said the parson, "I don't mean as that fellow does, but pray that they may all hang together in accord and concord."

## "No matter what cord," replied the other, "so 'tis but a strong one."

### A Country Lawyer and his City Friend.

Five-and-twenty years ago, when the Western region was scarcely settled—when the country bar-room was the place of common resort, and before those old-fashioned burr-stories and songs had yielded to the gossip now generally heard in every drinking saloon—there was a certain set of good humored, free-and-easy individuals, whose custom it was to "gather at the inn" of Old —in Ellicottville, Cattaraugus county, N. Y. State. Conspicuous among the set was Counsellor G., whose rough yet ready wit has spread his fame through all that region of country. Another member was a gentleman whom we will call X.

These, with others, whiled away many a winter evening, telling stories, smoking pipes, and quaffing mugs of hot flip, a "fluid" now almost forgotten.

But time separated this jolly company, as it does others, and the subsequent history of the counsellor and worthy Mr. X. were as diverse as their fortunes. G. plighted on with his "capitanees" at Ellicottville. X. in due time became engaged in respectable duties in Buffalo.

Legal business, at distant intervals, called the lawyer to Buffalo, and he was, of course, glad to see his friend, but X., engrossed in business, or for reasons of his own, had not much time to talk over old times, and without intending it, probably, gave him the cold shoulder. The man of law noted this indifference, and possessing in wit what the other did in rhino, determined to ascertain whether he really meant to cut him out. Meeting him in the street next day, he said: "X., my old friend, how do you?"

"Well, very well; how are you?"

"I say, X., I've noticed several times, lately, that you have rather avoided me than otherwise. I ain't going to stand any such gammon."

"Why, what?"

"We used to be mighty good friends up in Ellicottville, and I don't know why we should not be here."

"But my dear sir—"

"Oh, it's no use talking; just go in here now, and treat as you used to."

"Well, let's go in."

And they entered a small, "one horse grocery," where the "cheap and nasty" was dealt out by the small quantity. X. gave a nod to the "mixer" behind the bar, and said:

"Just give my friend here some beer, and what crackers and cheese he wants, and charge it to me."

"Turning to G., he remarked, "You excuse me now, I've a great many things to attend to, and I can't stay here any longer," after which he left.

"Well, if that isn't cool," says G., "then I'm no judge."

Having dispassionately imbibed his beer, he stopped a moment to consider.

"I say, burkeper."

"What'll you have, sir?"

"Have you got plenty of crackers and cheese?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much will the cheese weigh?"

"About sixty pounds apiece."

"Full sixty?"

"Sixty and no mistake."

"Well, just send over to the Farmer's Hotel, where I stop, four of those cheeses, and three barrels of crackers, and charge them to Mr. X. will you? You heard him say I was to have what crackers and cheese I wanted?"

"Yes, sir."

And send them down soon, because I expect my team'll be there in a little time, and I shall want them all ready."

"Certainly, sir."

The four cheeses and three barrels of crackers were sent down, and in the course of time Mr. X. was presented with a bill for the same, which he paid, confessing, at the same time, that, although rather expensive, the joke was nevertheless a good one. He never afterward gave the cold shoulder to Counsellor G.

**SQUEEZING A LADY'S HAND.**—It is but lately that we understand the strange construction that is sometimes put upon the squeeze of the hand. With some it is entirely equivalent to a declaration of love.

This very surprising indeed. Must we take hold of a lady's hand like, hot potatoes? afraid of giving it a squeeze, lest we should burn our fingers? Very fine truly! Now it has been our ancient custom to squeeze every hand that we get in our clutches, especially a fair one. But not a wonder that we have not been sued for a breach of promise? We would not give a rusty nail for one of your cold formal shakes of the hand.

Every person who extends two fingers for your touch, as if he were afraid of catching some cutaneous distemper should be kicked.

The ladies may rest assured that a man who will not squeeze their hand when he gets hold of it does not deserve to have a hand in his possession; and that he has a heart seven hundred and forty nine times smaller than a grain of Mustard seed.

## A Paradise in the Pacific.

The Colonial possessions of England would seem to be unbounded, for occasionally new colonies spring up in different directions, and at once become famous. Thus for instance, Van Dieman's Land, once the receptacle of thieves and vagabonds, but now known by the poetical name of Tasmania, is held to be one of the finest colonies of Great Britain. Within a few years another has been discovered in the same region, and is known by the name of Queensland; it is said to be ten times as large as England and Wales, is crossed by the tropic of Capricorn, and extends to Torres Straits. In a word it is styled the Paradise of the Pacific, and it is henceforth to be looked upon as the great cotton region. The climate is admirable; consumption is unknown and persons 100 years of age are frequently met with. An English journal says of it:—

Queensland, we are told, in consequences of the moisture, is always green, the grass even luxuriant in winter. The pastoral beauty of Ireland therefore preserved in the vicinity of the cotton fields. The temperature, says Mr. Jordan, "is more constant than in many other regions with the same isothermal lines. This equization is due partly to the sea breeze tempering the heat of summer, and partly to the copious rains which fall during the hottest months of the year. The peculiar coolness and dryness of atmosphere, as compared with the latitude, has been explained by the intense evaporation which takes place in this part of Australia. The absence of the hot winds that frequently affect the other Australian colonies further accounts for the comparative coolness of the climate in Queensland. During a large proportion of the year the weather is fine, the sky cloudless, the atmosphere dry, elastic, and exhilarating. The summer months (December, January, and February) are hot, but not sultry or oppressive. The winter season when (as it almost invariably is,) is exceedingly beautiful and agreeable. The mornings and evenings are cool, during the day the air is warm and balmy, the sky brilliantly blue, and the atmosphere singularly transparent."

The soil produces 40 bushels of Indian corn to the acre, three tons of potatoes to the acre, wheat 30 bushels to the acre; tobacco, coffee, rice arrowroot and cotton, in corresponding quantities. As yet the growth of cotton as an experiment shows that cotton of the finest sample can be produced worth according to Mr. Bazley, 1s. 4d. per lb. There is no danger from frost, but there is some danger, we apprehend from rain. Fortunately however, cotton can be grown east of the main range without suffering from excessive drought or excessive rain.

This Paradise, of course, holds out strong inducements to emigrants. The clearing of land is not difficult. It can be done at £4 an acre; and the Queensland Parliament "passed laws calculated to encourage emigrants of such a class as will most likely to themselves benefit, and to play the foundation of the permanent wealth and prosperity of the colony. The Alienation of Crown Lands Act, provides for the rapid survey of large tracts of the best lands for agriculture, in localities suitable for water carriage or other means of transit. These agricultural reserves are to be marked out in connection with all the principal townships and on the shores of the bays and rivers. The amount of land thus reserved for farming will be almost unlimited, the law providing for a continuous supply, and that the quantity of land in each agricultural reserve shall always be kept five thousand acres a head of the demand." This land is to be purchased for £1 per acre, and for £40 the emigrant can claim 120 acres; for 6d. the acre for six years, with a right of exemption. The crops once raised can easily be disposed of from Moreton to Sydney, and in condition to be taken to the coast by the thousands of pineapples, which are easily disposed of. No valuable and so good are these pineapples that they are about to be carried to Melbourne.

If only one tithe of this flattering description be true Queensland must in a few years become a most prosperous colony. At present the great want, as in every other part of Australia, is felt to be a want of hands. Labor is difficult to find, and is of course high-priced. Wages for a time must interfere with the extension of cultivation of sugar and cotton, and there is some difficulty, in one of your cold formal shakes of the hand. Every person who extends two fingers for your touch, as if he were afraid of catching some cutaneous distemper should be kicked.

## Madame Van Schaeck's Cat.

The anger of an Amsterdam lady was recently aroused by the misbehavior of Myneer Deidrich, a zealous member of one of the volunteer rifle corps of that flat but handsome city, who, when practising at a target, unluckily shot the cat of Madame Van Schaeck.

Though full of rage and grief at the loss of her favorite, and bent upon revenge, the lady was anxious not to do or say anything that could implicate her husband in the affair, deeming best a duel between the two gentlemen might be the result, and accordingly determined to avenge upon Madame Deidrich the tragic death of the unfortunate animal. She therefore sent private orders to her husband's foreman—Myneer Van Schaeck is one of the most extensive shipowners of the city—desiring him to have the holds of their ships searched for rats, and to send her fifty of the finest specimens of those creatures that he could succeed in causing to be taken alive. The order was promptly executed, and the rats safely shut up in a large chest, were dispatched by the bereaved frau to the country house, whether the Deidrichs had taken themselves for the summer. The chest reached its destination in safety, arriving just as the owners of the piece were enjoying the beauty of a lovely summer evening. Madame Deidrich who was expecting a box of dresses from town and supposing the chest to contain the looking for finery, caused it to be brought into the dining room and opened under her own eyes. Her feelings, when the lid was raised and the avenging army leaped forth from its ambush, may be imagined. Nailed to the under side the lid was a letter addressed to the dismayed and astounded lady and containing these words:—

"MADAME.—Your husband has killed my cat. I have the honor to send you my rats. Yours, etc.,

ADELA VAN SCHAECK.

**DEALING WITH THIEVES.**—The following true story is told of Jacob Sheaf, Esq., a merchant of Portsmouth in former times.

A man had purchased some wool of him, which he had weighed and paid for, and Mr. Sheaf had gone into a back room to get change for a note. Happening to turn his head while there, he saw in a glass, which swung so as to reflect the shop, a stout arm reach up and take from the shelf a heavy cheese. Instead of appearing suddenly and rebuking the man for his theft, as another would have done, thereby losing his custom forever, the crafty old gentleman gave the thief his change, as if nothing had happened and then, under the pretence of lifting the bag to lay it on the horse for him, took hold of it, and exclaimed:—

"Why, bless me, I must have reckoned the weight wrong!"

"O, no, not that, the other, 'you may be sure you have not, for I have counted with you.'"

"Well, well we won't dispute about the matter it's so easily tried," said Mr. S., putting the bag into the scales again. "There," said he, "I told you so: I knew I was right; made a mistake of nearly twenty pounds; however, if you don't want the whole, you needn't have it, I'll take part out."

"No," said the other, staying (the hands of Mr. S., on the way to the strings of the bag, I guess I'll take the whole."

And thus did he pay for dishonesty by receiving the skim milk cheese for the price of wool.

On another occasion, Mr. S. missed a barrel of pork. A few months after, a man asked the question.

"Did you ever find out who took that pork, Mr. Sheaf?"

"Yes," was the reply, "you are the fellow for none but myself and the thief knew of the loss."

The fellow was detected by the shrewd dealer, who possessed the valuable faculty of knowing when to be silent.

**AN EVERY-DAY FACT.**—Jane Eyre, is a sensible novel. It teaches what every-day life demonstrates to be a fact—that plain people of either sex inspire as ardent and sincere attachments as those who are gifted with external charms. Beauty is a gift to be taken away at any moment by accident or sickness, and the victim of time, before which the blooming cheeks turn pale, and the sparkling eye dismisses its lustre, while wrinkles and gray hairs come unbidden to scatter their defacing marks over the polished brow and mingle among auburn tresses. To be kind, pure, and honest, to exhaust their powers of imagination, language, and description, in making up their beautiful heroines, but the world would look strangely which is the spice of life were all people beautiful—besides, it requires the contrast of plainness to set off beauty. The lover knows his lady is not beautiful, her hair may be red, her eyes green, and her form bear no proportion to the classic contour of the Venus de Medici, yet in his eyes she

possesses a fascination far more bewitching than the beauty of any woman he ever saw. The sympathy of mutual affection, congeniality of mind, and similarity of taste, form the strongest and most permanent bond of union between friend and friend. Those we love will ever seem beautiful in our eyes.

When a school girl, a woman hopes for the time when she can go into society and be admired, and break hearts and receive all the attention which a pretty girl generally receives. When a man, who hopes for a handsome, rich husband, and elegant house, and servants to do her bidding. When a woman, she hopes she will be able to dress better than her neighbors, and that her children will be handsomer than those of her acquaintances. As she grows older she hopes that her husband will be more liberal in the way of pin money, and that she will be able to wear the first spring bonnet to church after they are announced; and finally, when about to leave this world for a better one, she hopes that her husband will not marry a second time, and if he does, that her children will be well treated by their step-mother, and that they will sometimes think of the dead, for a mother's last thought is of her offspring.

Blessed are those who hope, for sometimes it is all they get in this world; and double blessings upon woman for her truthfulness, hopeful and cheerful disposition, and for thinking that all men are not bad. Hope is a woman's anchor, and without it she would drift into such a current of despondency that she would be shipwrecked before she arrived at maturity.

**HUMBLE ORIGIN OF GREATNESS.**—The eminent Lord Lyndhurst's father was a portrait painter, and that of St. Leonard's a saddler. The origin of the late Lord Tenterden was, perhaps, the humblest of all the English nobility, for was he ashamed of it; for he felt that the industry, study and application, by means of which he achieved his eminent position, were entirely due to himself. It is related of him that on one occasion he took his son Charles into a little shed, then standing opposite the western front of Canterbury Cathedral, and pointing it out said, "Charles, you see this little shed; I have brought you here on purpose to show it to you. In that shop your grandfather used to shave for a penny. That is the proudest reflection of my life."

**KILLED IN WAR.**—Marshal Saxe, a high authority in such things, was in the habit of saying that to kill a man in battle the man's weight in lead must expended. A French medical surgical gazette, published at Lyons, says this fact was verified at Solferino, even with the recent great improvement in firearms. The Austrians fired, eight million four hundred thousand rounds. The loss of the French and Italians was two thousand wounded. Each man hit cost seven hundred rounds. The main weight of balls is one ounce; thus we find that it requires on an average two hundred and seventy-two pounds of lead to kill a man. If any of our friends should get into a military fight they should feel greater comfort in the fact that seven hundred shots may be fired at them before they are hit, and four thousand two hundred before they "shuffle off the mortal coil."

**GIGANTIC BIRD'S NESTS.**—Mr. Gould describes the Watled Talegalla, or Bush Turkey, of Australia, as adopting a most extraordinary process of nidification. The bird collects together an immense heap of decaying vegetable matter as a depository for the eggs, and trusts to the heat engendered by decomposition for the development of the young. The heap employed for this purpose is collected by the birds during several weeks previous to the period of laying. It varies in size from two to four cart-loads, and is of a perfectly pyramidal form. Several birds work at its construction, not by using their bills, by grasping the materials with their feet and throwing them back to one common centre. In this heap the birds bury the eggs perfectly upright, with the large end upwards; they covered up as they are laid, and allowed to remain until hatched; when the young birds are clothed with feathers, not with down, as is usually the case. It is not unusual for the natives to obtain nearly a bushel of eggs at one time, from a single heap; and as they are delicious eating, they are as eagerly sought after as well as the flesh. The birds are very stupid.

**SIMPLICITY.** The Bishop of Oxford, having sent round to the church wardens in diocese a circular of inquiries, among which was the following:—

"Does your officiating clergyman preach the gospel, and is his conversation and carriage consistent therewith?"

The church warden at Wallingford, replied:—

"He preaches the gospel, but does not keep a carriage."