

### A Taste for Reading.

Time should be devoted by every young man and woman entering life, were it only half an hour a day, to the development of their mind, to the gaining of useful information, to the cultivation of some ennobling taste. A taste for reading is worth more than any sum we can name. A rich man without this or some similar taste does not know how to enjoy money; his only resource is to keep on making, hoarding money, unless he prefer to spend it, and a mind that is not well developed does not know how to spend wisely. A well-known millionaire used to say that he would gladly give up all his money if he could only have himself the education which his lazy stupid boy refused to acquire. Be advised, make it a rule never to be broken to devote at least half an hour a day to the reading of some useful and instructive book. Every man needs a knowledge of history, the elements of science, and other useful subjects, and, if only half an hour a day is given to reading, he will find the advantage of it. Be hungry and thirsty for knowledge of all kinds, and you will be none the worse, but all the better, as business men and women. Beware of novels; they are ensnaring and pernicious.

### The Discovery of Silk.

The discovery of silk is attributed to one of the wives of the emperor of China, Hoang-ti, who reigned about two thousand years before the Christian era; and since that time a special spot has been allotted in the gardens of the Chinese royal palace to the cultivation of the mulberry tree, called in Chinese the "golden tree"—and to the keeping of silkworms. The first silk dress in history was made, not for a sovereign nor for a pretty woman, but for the monster in human shape, Heliogabalus. Persian monks, who came to Constantinople, revealed to the Emperor Justinian the secret of the production of silk, and gave him some silk worms. From Greece the art passed into Italy at the end of the thirteenth century. When the popes left Rome to settle at Avignon, France, they introduced into that country the secret which had been kept by the Italians; and Louis XI. established at Tours a manufactory of silk fabrics. Francis I. founded the Lyons silk works, which to this day have kept the first ranks. Henry II. of France wore the first pair of silk hose ever made, at the wedding of his sister. The word "satin," which in the original was applied to all silk stuffs in general, has since the last century been used to designate only tissues which present a lustrous surface. The discovery of this particular brilliant stuff was accidental. Octavio Mai, a silk weaver, finding business very dull, and not knowing what to invent to give a new impulse to the trade, was one day pacing to and fro before his loom. Every time he passed the machine, with no definite object in view, he pulled little threads from the warp and put them to his mouth which soon after he spat out. Later on, he found the little ball of silk on the floor of his workshop, and was attracted by the brilliant appearance of the threads. He repeated the experiment, and by using certain mucilaginous preparations succeeded in giving satin to the world.—*Hatters' Gazette.*

### The Horrible Fly in India.

One of India's pests is the metallic blue-fly. You sink the legs of your furniture into metallic sockets filled with salt and water, and pack your clothing in tight tin boxes, to prevent the incursions of white ants, but you have no remedy against the metallic blue-fly, which fills every crevice, every keyhole, and every key itself, with clay. This fly is an artistic as well as an industrious worker, and he works always with an object. He first selects a hole, a key-hole or an empty space in any metallic substance is preferred, but, in the absence of any such material, the holes in the bottom of a cane seat chair, or any perforated wood, will answer the purpose. After seeing that the hole is clean and in good order, he commences operations by laying on the bottom a smooth carpet of clay, then the bodies of several defunct spiders are triumphantly placed upon the clay carpet. On top of these spiders the eggs of the female fly are deposited. The tomb is then ready for closing. The top is neatly covered over with clay, but it still has an unfinished look. This

is remedied by a thin coat of whitewash, and then the fly looks upon his work and pronounces it good.

When this tomb is opened there are more metallic blue-flies in the world than there were before. You are anxious to examine or wear some of your valuables, which you always keep under lock and key, and you take your key and endeavor to unlock your trunk, but it is only an endeavor. There is resistance in the keyhole. You examine the key, and find that it is nicely sealed up with clay, and the keyhole in the same condition. It is a work of patience to destroy the nursery of the poor insect, and lay his castle in ruins; but a determined will can accomplish much. Cane-seated chairs are sometimes so occupied by these clay homes as to make it hard to determine what the original substance was.

### The Butter-Tree.

(PENTADESMA BUTYRACEA.)

Very attractive must be those localities upon the banks of the Niger where the native hut-dweller has ever within his reach a butter tub that never fails. The rich and oily secretion afforded by the butter-tree is so abundant as to assure the house-mother of unlimited comfort in the cooking and dressing of viands most desired.

Indeed, so productive is this wonderful forest gift that fears are entertained lest its fruitfulness may at no late day effect a great social revolution in districts where it most abounds. Slave merchants have dreaded its power as an article of commerce, and at one period the King of Dahomey was induced to issue an order for the destruction of all the butter-trees in his kingdom.

But all attempts to destroy it have thus far proved useless. Cut, hewn at the root, nay, even burned, it springs up with apparently renewed vigor; royal edicts are powerless, and "shea butter" is still sold abundantly in the market, retaining its well-deserved popularity, even though imperial orders would, if carried out, utterly exterminate from the earth this marvelous gift of God.

### Covered with Gold.

It is a curious fact that Russia, one of the poorest of civilized countries, makes a greater parade of wealth in one respect than any other State. The domes of all the great churches in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other large towns are plated with gold nearly one quarter of an inch thick. The new church of the Saviour, dedicated and opened in Moscow last August, represents a value of fully \$15,000,000. The Isaac Cathedral in St. Petersburg may safely be credited with at least thrice that amount. So strong, however, is the old Slav belief in the inviolable sanctity of "holy places" that, during countless seasons of widespread and bitter distress, no attempt has ever been made to plunder the gold thus temptingly exposed. Indeed, one of the finest churches in St. Petersburg, the Kazan Cathedral, owes its massive shrine to a voluntary offering of plunder taken by the Cossacks in 1812.

**THE NEVILLE RECIPE FOR GARDEN BUGS.**—Mr. Edgar Neville has a two-acre farm at Avenue B and Fifth street, Tremont, where he has fought potato bugs, army worms and grasshoppers for fourteen years. Paris green and hellebore he found killed the insects, but poisoned the crops. He buried the potato bugs a foot deep, and they dug their way out with characteristic cheerfulness. Mr. Neville lay awake nights thinking of what he should do, and five years ago hit upon a compound which is deadly, he says, to bugs of all kinds, and harmless to man. He has tried it for several years, and while his neighbors' crops have been ruined, his own have been saved. He is an old man now, and he asks a New York paper to spread abroad his recipe, so that it may do good everywhere. It is as follows:

Dissolve one ounce of saltpetre, two ounces of alum, and half a pound of the commonest brown soap in three gallons of water, and sprinkle with a watering pot over the growing plants."

Mr. Neville recommends that seed be soaked in this mixture before planting.