

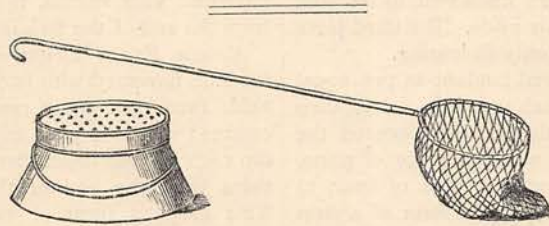
as before directed. To save time you may pour off a little in a saucer, set it in a cold place, and when ready beat it with a spoon; if the result is smooth and gets firm as it cools, you may conclude the rest in the saucepan is right; if it is white and creamy, but not firm, boil it two or three minutes longer.

Many people do not object to the sugary texture, but I would advise getting the fondant once perfect. The failure to do so once or twice will only teach you the art of sugar-boiling better than a chapter of words, and you will see for yourself how it passes from one degree to another. A pinch of cream of tartar put with the sugar when boiling will tend to prevent granulation; but if the least bit too much is added, it will also make it very hard to cream.

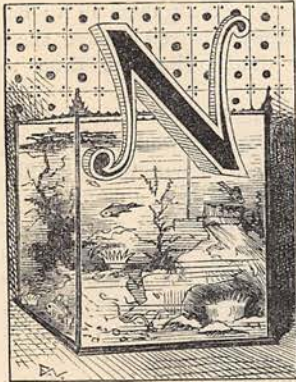
In giving these directions I have endeavoured to be very clear, remembering my own difficulties in teaching myself from books. For this reason I will emphasise one or two things—always use the *best* white sugar; be very careful that flavouring, colouring, &c., are highly

concentrated, as even a drop too much liquid will make your fondant run. When using chocolate get the best French *unsweetened*—your own candy supplies the sugar; and in making dipped candies take care your cream is thick enough to cover well, and not to run. If very hot it may be too thin; then stir a minute or two till it thickens, keeping it in boiling water all the time it is being used, or it will get hard at once; and when you put the fondant into the bowl to bring it to cream, stir it as it warms the whole time, or it will go back to syrup. In using a fork to dip, do not stick it into the article; drop your ball or nut into the candy, taking it out on the fork as if the latter were a spoon, rest it on the edge of the bowl a second to drain it, then neatly drop it on to the oiled paper. The cream candy should not run off on to the paper, leaving the inside bare; if it does, beat longer.

Lastly, when I say powdered sugar I mean such as you would use for cake-icing, as fine as flour.



OUR AQUARIUM.

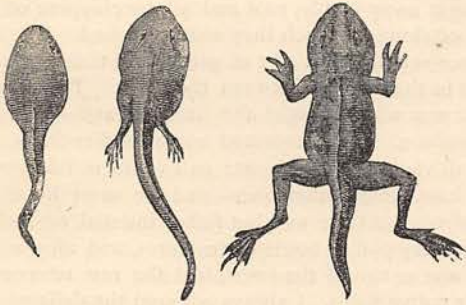


NOW I suppose most people, whose minds have ever been awakened to take an intelligent interest in the world of nature, can point to some particular circumstance which first called it forth and set their faculties going in that direction. It happened with me in this wise. When I went with mother on that never-to-be-forgotten first visit to London, I was of course taken to the Zoological Gardens, and was as much pleased with the lions and tigers, elephants and hippopotami, as any other child; but when I entered the zoophyte house, then newly erected, and looked into the tanks at the extraordinary creatures that might have been flowers or seaweeds, had not the movement of their small tentacles shown them to be alive, it was quite a different thing. All the rest of my time was spent in watching them. Seeing how much more I was interested there than in anything I had previously seen, my friends very kindly suggested that if I did not care about visiting the birds and reptiles, they would go on and see them,

and come back for me on their way out of the Gardens. This was delightful, and for the first time in my life I experienced the pleasure of observing the wondrous beauty of creatures which were not endeared by being familiar pets and playthings, but the very sight of which opened a new world of life and study.

When I reached home I talked to my father on the subject, and to Tom and Jennie as well. Tom laughed at me, and said I wanted to emulate the example of one of his schoolfellows, who kept two slow-worms in some moss in a glass jar, and struck on the side of it with a knitting-needle when he wished them to show themselves for either food or play. Father asked if a bowl of gold-fish would not content me; but after awhile, during which he was no doubt turning over in his mind what could be done, proposed that we should try a little fresh-water aquarium to begin with, as he did not see his way to procure either zoophytes or the requisite supply of the briny element, whereas spring-water was always obtainable, and he believed we should have a great deal of pleasure in watching the ways of some of the denizens of ponds and streams that were well within our reach. He did not promise that we should make a great success, and thought it possible that our fish might die and emit all sorts of unsavoury odours, and observed that it was quite a new experiment to him. In a few days a kind of good-sized glass box without a lid was made by a

neighbouring glazier, and Tom was told to get some river-sand and small pebbles, which were put in the bottom of the case to a depth of about two inches.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE FROG.

A couple of pieces of spar which did not contain any metal were deposited on this sandy bed, and the next question was as to what water-plants were to be admitted into our aquarium, for father said we must have something of the kind growing in it to produce oxygen and consume the carbonic acid gas given out by the respiration of the fish.

It was settled that on the very next half-holiday we—that is to say, father, Tom, Jennie, and I—should all make an excursion in quest of aquatic weeds.

The especial plant of which father was in search was the "water-soldier," which he had often seen in ponds in Kent and Surrey; but we stood on the edge of the pools in our neighbourhood, and looked in vain for the tuft of broad, arching leaves he described to us, and had to be content with some water-crowfoot, a root or two of brook-lime, and a weed with bright green leaves, which, as I have since learned, grows as it swims, and swims as it grows, to the great annoyance of those who wish to keep rivers or ornamental waters free. Its botanical name is *Anacharsis alsinastrum*; and we soon found that in our limited space it had to be kept perpetually in check. Tom also collected a few sticklebacks, one of which was a particularly handsome fellow, and at father's instigation he looked in the ditches till he found a couple of small newts, or efts, as they are frequently called. A man whose work took him every day down to the Avon had been told to bring us a few minnows, and these were to complete the list of our live-stock for the present. When we reached home father planted the roots of the brook-lime in the sandy bed which had been prepared, as well as those of the water-crowfoot; the other plant, he assured us, only wanted to float, and would shift for itself in every way. He then poured the water in slowly from a can with a very fine rose; and the next day, as it appeared quite clear, and the plants flourishing, the newts and sticklebacks

were turned in, and swam about as if they highly appreciated their new home after being kept in durance vile for four-and-twenty hours. Towards evening the minnows were brought and admitted to our colony, and father told us that he thought we had better not be too curious, as they were all strangers to us and to each other, and advised us to abstain from too many peeps through the glass till the next morning.

When to-morrow came I was up betimes and down-stairs to see the happy family in the glass tank; but imagine my dismay and disappointment when I saw every one of the dozen minnows floating dead at the top of the water, with their pretty silvery-looking stomachs uppermost, and most of them minus their eyes; while the sticklebacks swam merrily about, monarchs of all they surveyed, and perfectly heedless of the two newts which lay winking and blinking at the bottom. As soon as father appeared I told him, in a dismal voice, what had occurred; and after a minute inspection of the defunct minnows, he came to the conclusion that they had fallen victims to the murderous spines of the sticklebacks, and that the latter gourmands had also picked out and eaten the eyes for breakfast. In the course of the day Tom brought home two or three water-spiders, but though they dived rapidly to the bottom, and rose with lightning speed to the top of the water, and darted hither and thither with inconceivable rapidity, they soon shared the fate of the minnows; and we should have got rid of the voracious sticklebacks in disgust if it had not been for their sprightly movements, and the bright purple and golden hues of the largest one, who seemed to be quite a little king among them. In due time we saw this handsome fellow build a tiny nest under the shelter of one of the pieces of spar, with fibres from the roots of the



plants, atoms of sand or gravel, and scraps of straw, which we dropped in for his accommodation. It was very interesting to see him coaxing his wife to take possession of the cozy house he had prepared for the reception of her eggs, and to watch his paternal care of the young fry when hatched; but I warn everybody who starts an aquarium to steer quite clear of these gentry, unless he or she wishes to keep them to the exclusion of all others. A difficulty arose before ours had been long in existence, from the decay of some of the lower leaves of the plants, and the accumulation of green scum on the top of the water and sides of the tank; and for some days we were at a loss how to remedy it, but at last we were told that two or three fresh-water snails of different kinds would act as scavengers, and consume every bit of it. When the water grew turbid it had to be drawn off by means of a syphon consisting of a piece of gutta-percha tubing, and the tank was refilled by means of the can with the fine rose. The reason for this method of supply is that every drop as it falls becomes aerated, and thus carries fresh life to the animals who are to inhabit it. When we banished the sticklebacks we again tried some minnows, which became so tame as to know our voices and come to the edge of the tank when we approached, and even to take crumbs of biscuit when delicately held between a finger and thumb. We also had some loaches, caddice worms, small tench, and Chinese carp, or gold-fish, from time to time, as well as tadpoles, which were invariably eaten by the newts; and more water-spiders, which, however, were thought such dainty morsels by all sorts of fish, that we gave up attempting to keep them in captivity.

After awhile father made me perfectly happy by proposing that during our summer holiday, which was to be spent at Tenby, we should collect for a marine aquarium; and how much pleasure may be added to a sojourn at the sea-side by an intelligent search for the zoophytes that may be found among the rocks and stones below high-water mark, I advise those who have never experienced it to find out for themselves. I hardly know what Tenby is like by this time; it has probably grown into a conglomeration of squares, terraces, and marine parades; but it was then a long, straggling street, with quaint walls and batteries, and was the head-quarters of people who, like ourselves, were bent upon hunting for seaweeds, actinæ, and similar objects.

Father provided himself with a hammer and small chisel, and we girls petitioned cook for all the wide-mouthed pickle or French plum jars she could be induced to spare; and thus prepared we set off—a very merry party—by steamer down the river Avon, on our way to the out-of-the-world watering-place on the Welsh coast. Of course, the baths and excursions were legion; but though we paddled about in the pools, watching the gardens of sea-anemones, and turned over innumerable stones, little and big, for the purpose of seeing the creatures that lay beneath, we did not begin actually to collect till the day of our return was fixed. A glass tank, quite as large again as our little fresh-water aquarium, had been bought before we left,

so as to be in perfect readiness for its furniture and inhabitants. Father gathered the seaweed, avoiding all the coarser kinds, but getting beautiful tufts of red and green, which were not merely *picked up*, but brought away bodily, root and all, by chipping off the bits of stone to which they were attached. The sea-lettuce was the best sort of green, and there were lots of it in the hollows between the rocks. This kind of work was what brought the hammer and chisel into requisition. Tom captured some soldier-crabs, and we all vied with each other as to who could procure the handsomest anemones—and we must have had hundreds between us; but father insisted on looking over every pail or bottle of treasures, and after selecting one or two of the finest, had the rest returned to their native pools. I always admired the delicate pea-green ones with amethyst-tinted tips to their tentacles the most, but Jennie preferred the red ones that have a circle of tiny knobs like bright blue glass beads set round the mouth. They were, however, of various sizes, and all kinds of brilliant hues. We contrived to get some off their rocks by poking our fingers into the cracks, and so getting under them; for others we used the end of a bone spoon, and occasionally we had to invoke father's aid and that of his tools. This was particularly the case with some sea-daisies, which fix themselves in small holes, at the top of which their grey crown of arms is expanded, and into which they retreat precipitately at the least touch of danger, leaving only a blue lump of jelly-like flesh to mark the spot.

Tenby is a great place for oysters, and Tom made friends with some of the dredgers, who would occasionally take him out in their boats. When the oysters were brought in he noticed that on the shells of some of them there was a longish mass of pink, brownish green, or white jelly; and begged a few, which they willingly gave him, oyster and all. The first he brought was put into a washing-basin full of sea-water in the sun, and we saw it spread into a beautiful flower with an orange-coloured mouth in the middle. Father said, however, that one of each colour was all we must venture to take home, and he set us to look among the thick growths of seaweed for some bright yellow snails and a few periwinkles, with which, and some live shrimps, he pronounced our stock complete, though he afterwards added to it himself a couple of oyster-shells encrusted with white tubes, which he told us contained a beautiful scarlet worm, called *serpola*, the only kind of annelid he meant to admit into our tank.

After telling you what we collected, I must say how the creatures were arranged in their new home. Father quite eschewed the notion of having either sand or pebbles at the bottom, for fear there might be any tiny worms in the seaweed which would creep into the crevices of such a layer and die there; but he took two or three bits of rock, on which the anemones might fix themselves if the glass walls of the aquarium did not quite suit them, and he arranged these and all the pieces of weed, and poured in the water, two days before introducing the animals, that seemed well

and lively in the glass bottles wherein they had travelled from Tenby.

Bristol not being very far from the sea, we and some like-minded friends arranged to have a supply of salt water brought to us once a week, and father contrived to suspend over the tank a bottle with a small hole in the bottom, which was filled up day by day, and sent a continual monotonous drip into the aquarium, which he said brought fresh oxygen into the water and kept it sweet, so that it did not require renewal nearly so often as he at first supposed would be necessary. Then the snails consumed all sorts of matter that would otherwise have caused pollution, and it was very funny to see them mowing down with their lips the green vegetation that collected

on the sides. One or two of the soldier-crabs had a curious little worm living with them in their shells, which always came out and helped them to eat their food; and I once, after feeding the anemones with scraps of raw meat, which had to be guided into the middle of their feelers, saw a large strong shrimp steal a tempting morsel out of the very mouth of one of them, or I might say out of his stomach, as the orifice serves both purposes.

Few people, I believe, are ever as successful with a marine aquarium as we were with ours. It was a great source of pleasure to us for many years, and received numerous additions as one or another of us went to distant shores and brought home specimens that were both rare and strange.

ELIZA CLARKE.



BUT FOR ILION.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH. DENNYS' WELCOME HOME.



CAPTAIN HERVEY and his friend Jasper spent a pleasant week at Genoa. Not only were there plenty of "jolly American people," but many English visitors, and Dennys recognised several acquaintances at the *table-d'hôte* of the

Hotel de Gênes, where they were staying. From Genoa they proceeded to Milan, where Jasper had some relatives; and three weeks passed by almost imperceptibly, for the capital of Lombardy is a city that grows upon one every day—there is so much to be seen, so many historical and antiquarian associations, such a number of exquisite places within easy distance, that one is never in a hurry, and often bewildered which to visit first, and strongly tempted to fall into the national and characteristic dilatoriness of the Milanese, and never do to-day what can possibly be put off till to-morrow. Jasper was very happy. The grand old city, with its wealth of artistic and literary treasures, its glorious churches,

magnificent monasteries, splendid theatres, and promenades, pleased him; the lazy, good-humoured indifference of the people was amusing too; and then the scenery round about was simply magnificent; but Dennys was growing discontented—the grouse lay heavy on his mind; and as August passed, and September found them still at Milan, the pheasants and partridges worried him, and he longed to be back at Hervey's Hollow for just one good weary day's tramp over the moors. Unless when on foreign service with his regiment, Dennys always went home for the shooting. His uncle had been a thorough sportsman, and always had the house full of kindred spirits in September. In his mind's eye Dennys saw the grand hall at Hervey's Hollow in the gloom of a chilly evening, with the firelight dancing on the polished oak floor and wainscot, and gleaming on the trophies that adorned the walls. It looked so bright, cheery, and home-like; and not the least pleasant and prominent part of the picture was the slight figure of his little cousin waiting to welcome them, her face full of eager inquiry as to the amount of the bag. Sometimes Ilion would be in the hall too, nestling in a great easy-chair near the fire, with Flora and Diana—a pair of Italian greyhounds—shivering by his side. Then Uncle John would stand for a moment and rub his hands in the genial blaze, and compliment his nephew on the result of the day, which was sport to them and death to so many unoffending animals. Denby and Westwood and Meekins, and others, would lounge about for a few moments till the dressing-bell rang, and then they would all come down to dinner, hungry, happy, and healthily tired. It was a complete home picture; and though Dennys knew Uncle John was gone for ever—his kindly face