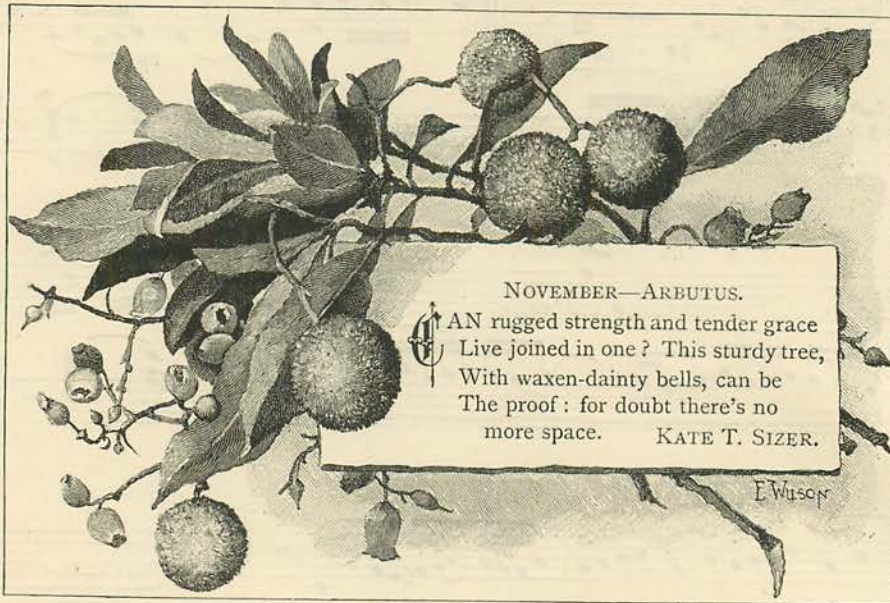


## FLOWERS OF THE MONTHS.



## NOVEMBER—ARBUTUS.

AN rugged strength and tender grace  
 Live joined in one? This sturdy tree,  
 With waxen-dainty bells, can be  
 The proof: for doubt there's no  
 more space. KATE T. SIZER.

## PRESCRIPTIONS FROM THE FAR WEST.



I AM tolerably certain that every queer prescription or blunder which fell under my notice, or of which I heard, while in the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains, could easily be paralleled at home; my own experience justifies me in saying so much, and I may give one or two instances. Some of these Western incidents, however, were so odd as to be well worth telling. I do not deal with prescriptions only; some matters connected with divers ailments are equally queer, and I can vouch for all I shall here record: in some, indeed, as will be seen, I was a party concerned.

The first prescription on my list was given me by a physician, an ex-army surgeon, who assured me that it was an excellent remedy. It happened that some years back I started from Denver, in Colorado, on a journey by coach of two or three hundred miles. It was exceedingly hot weather; the day I passed at Denver was the hottest, take it all through, I can remember.

On arriving at my destination, and for a day or two afterwards, I felt a soreness and tenderness about my nose and upper lip, which became painful to the touch; so I feared that some inflammation existed, and that an abscess was probably forming.

I applied to the doctor—there was but one in a very

wide circuit—and he recommended a poultice: advice excellent in its way, but there was nothing within fifty miles from which a poultice of orthodox character could be made. He told me, in this strait, as a substitute to use a slice of rusty bacon. I was astonished at this, and at first thought he was joking, but soon found he was seriously in earnest; he assured me it was one of the most effective and “drawing” poultices known.

I took his advice, and all night long, for two nights, and all the evening, when I could be by myself—which was the rule, in that lonely place—I wore this new poultice. I pledge my word that, unless the reader has tried it, he can have no idea how detestable is the smell of rusty bacon when inhaled for ten or twelve hours together, or how he comes to loathe every whiff of breath he draws.

I seemed to be suffering a specially ignominious and disagreeable martyrdom, but the climax was the worst of all, for on the third day I found that the tenderness I complained of was due merely to the unusually hot sun having scorched the tip of my nose—which was rather too long, I suppose, for the shade cast by the brim of my hat—and there was no inflammation whatever. I think I was more annoyed to find this out than I should have been at the prospect of a moderately severe illness.

The mention of this remedy suggests an incident in which there is some faint resemblance, and the chief

actress in it will perhaps read these lines in a far-distant country. A lady, the then *prima donna* of a small but well-known troupe, was announced as one of the attractions at a concert to be given in a particularly rough town on the western coast of the United States, and a large audience assembled on the occasion. It was a paying as well as a large audience, too, for the prices were high, while nearly all those who attended were men of the wildest and most unruly class, not likely to put up with what they might consider a slight.

Now, on the road to this town an unsightly and painful boil suddenly developed itself by the side of the lady's nose, so that she was obliged to keep that feature swathed in a cabbage-leaf, and being thus, in her judgment, utterly unrepresentable at any concert, she went to bed.

But she had reckoned without her host; the assembled miners decided that "they wouldn't have no fooling around," and Miss Zampa having been announced to appear, why, Miss Zampa must appear, and should appear. In vain did the proprietor of the troupe explain the position, in vain was the return of the money offered. "Nary cent" did they want, or would they take back, but they would have Miss Zampa, and they *did* have her.

To prevent an otherwise inevitable tumult, she was fetched from the hotel, cabbage-leaf and all, and—cabbage-leaf and all—she sang through the evening. Her duties were so onerous that she could rarely leave the platform, and never had she met so appreciative an audience. In spite of her nose being invisible, and her face half masked by cabbage-leaf, the miners applauded her to the echo. They were not unmindful of the sacrifice she had made to please them; being, for all their roughness, a good-hearted, generous lot, they strove to reward her.

My first instance is not the only one in my experience in which a queer poultice figures. In the same Western country a kind of whitlow is common, and is there called a "felon"—being terribly tender and painful, as whitlows are here. Seeing that the attendant at the house where I usually dined was evidently unwell, and was nursing his left hand as much as possible, I asked what was the matter with him. I was informed that "Pedro had a bad 'felon,' which had kept him awake all night." I inquired a little further, and ended by strongly recommending a linseed poultice—the merits of which valuable application had not become known in this distant region. Pedro and his mistress each thanked me, and promised to use it.

Next day I asked how the "felon" was; no better, it appeared, and indeed I could see that Pedro was in great pain. I then naturally asked if the linseed poultice had been tried. "Yes," replied the mistress; "in fact, he has it on now—but it has done him no good." I looked at Pedro's hand; the poor fellow certainly had a poultice on, and of linseed, *but the seeds were whole!* They had never heard of crushed linseed, and the unlucky Mexican might just as well have worn a poultice of glass beads, for any benefit he was likely to derive from such an application.

If Pedro were eventually cured of his "felon," I have no doubt it was by the "exhibition" of whisky and paraffin. This may seem an odd conjunction, but they are the universal remedies "out West;" and let the reader think what he pleases about them, I can assure him they are invaluable. I do not deny that in one case there is great danger of an overdose, but with these at hand, no Western man would think his medicine-chest poorly furnished. Whisky is used for a variety of ailments, and is known to be the nearest approach to a specific for reptile-bites, even the bite of the rattlesnake. Patients suffering from the worst and most obstinate forms of rheumatism—a disease terribly prevalent on the frontier—are sometimes wrapped in sheets saturated with paraffin, at other times they sleep in drawers or shirts soaked in like manner. This is said to be generally effectual; in minor cases I can vouch that paraffin is of value.

Good nurses and good nursing are scarce on the frontier, where there are few doctors and no hospitals—yet the roughest men are careful and tender with their sick friends: an assertion at which no one will be surprised. I remember one poor fellow who was very ill there—hopelessly ill, indeed, so that he died a few days after the incident I am about to relate.

He one day asked his then attendant—for several men took it in turn to nurse him—to give him some beef-tea. He was unable to rise from his bed, but described where it was—in a bottle on a shelf—and how it was, after being duly salted and peppered, to be just warmed over the stove. His friend did as directed, and was glad to see him drink the whole, asking, with kindly interest, if he liked it. "Not much," returned the poor invalid feebly; "it does not taste quite right, but I guess I should not like anything now, fix it how you might."

It probably did not "taste quite right," for on the time arriving at which the patient was to take a dose of medicine, it was found that his zealous nurse had mistaken the bottles, and had given him a basin half filled with the draught—duly peppered and salted, as aforesaid—a sixth of which he was to take every four hours. It is a wonder the man did not recover, after such energetic treatment!

I think, however, this last case is thrown into the shade by a fact which came under the notice of a personal friend. A small farmer had hurt his back, so the doctor ordered half a dozen leeches to be applied, and sent them to his patient. The leeches were applied, but not, I fancy, in the manner intended by the prescriber. The wife never dreamt that anything alive should be put on her good man, so she *fried* the unfortunate leeches, and made them into a sort of poultice!

A young fellow whom I knew very well was once ordered a dose of Epsom salts: the best known medicine, I should have said, in existence. The salts were sent, and he took them. I must own I should prefer some other way of taking my salts, for he sat and munched them up—*dry!* How long he was occupied in the task I do not know, but he said it was the most disagreeable medicine he had ever taken,

and was astonished when I told him how they should have been treated. However, his method did just as well.

The last anecdote I shall mention does not refer to Western life—neither, by the way, did that of the Epsom salts—but I may give it, as it is a very recent case, and helps to prove that Britishers can hold their own in making mistakes.

A neighbour of my own was advised to take a Seidlitz powder; he did so, but complained that it made him very qualmish. He poured the powder in the blue paper into water, and so took it; then in like manner he made a draught of, and took, the powder in the white packet.

My readers are recommended not to deal with their Seidlitz powders after this fashion.

---



---

"ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER."

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.



"OH, Gerty, do you think we might take a walk together? It looks so nice out of doors!"

The question was put in a subdued whisper, as the two sisters stood apart in a distant window.

"I don't know, Chriss. I don't know if it would be quite polite. I wish I knew

what people did in grand houses like this."

"So do I. I feel like a fish out of water. I don't think visiting is as nice as I expected. We have both looked forward to it so, and now I wish I were at home—almost."

"Hush!" whispered Gertrude warningly, and the next moment their hostess had come smilingly up.

"Well, my dears, and how are you going to amuse yourselves to-day? You know I told your mother that, with a whole houseful of guests on my hands, I should have to leave you to entertain yourselves a good deal. When I was young I used to like being left to my own devices, and I dare say you do too. A walk?—Why, to be sure! The whole world is before you. Go where you please, and do what you please; only be in for lunch at two o'clock. Mr. Chesterton is rather particular about punctuality and regularity at meals."

Gertrude and Christabel started off in the autumn sunshine, with a sense of joyous exhilaration and freedom from constraint. They were on a first visit from home, and the change from the quiet country rectory to a grand house—more like a castle than a house—with its parks and gardens and retinue of liveried servants, was a little oppressive. Moreover, their hostess, though an old friend of their mother's, was quite a stranger to them, and all the other guests in the house were considerably older than these two girls of eighteen and twenty. The Chestertons were childless people, who liked, in default of sons and daughters, to fill their house with visitors. Gertrude and Christabel had been invited to the Chase before,

but their mother had not then thought them old enough to visit at a grand house, and they had only arrived there upon the previous evening.

"It's all very nice, and rather like a fairy tale. I mean a sort of fairy palace, where everything is made of silver and crystal, and things are done for you, you don't know how," said Christabel, as they pursued their way; "only it makes one just a little afraid of the sound of one's own voice, and I don't feel quite as if I knew what to say or do. It's just a little bit like a bad dream sometimes, when one can't breathe freely, you know, and then I wish I were at home with father and mother; but it's amusing to hear people talk, and it will be great fun telling them all about it when we do get back. But a fortnight is a long time—at least it seems so now."

"Time will go more quickly when we get used to things," answered Gertrude wisely. "I know just what you mean, Chriss; but I'm sure Mrs. Chesterton is very kind, and, if we may take walks together and amuse ourselves as we like, we shall quite enjoy it after a little bit. But we must take care of our dresses and things, for you know we have not got very many, and mother would not like us to go about looking dirty or draggled. We can't be grand or fine, and it would not be suitable to try; but we can be neat and clean and fresh—so please be careful to keep so."

This bit of advice was not altogether superfluous, for Miss Chrissie was fond of rollicking about in a fashion that left speedy traces on her attire. At home this did not much matter, as she would take her rambles in an old frock that wanted no saving; but it certainly would not do to submit the pretty, dainty morning-dresses they had had made for "visiting" to any such rough treatment, and Chrissie recognised this herself with a little sigh.

"Visiting is certainly a doubtful joy," she remarked, and Gertrude laughed at her sorrowful look.

Nevertheless, the sisters enjoyed their morning ramble very much; indeed they enjoyed it so much that they rather overlooked the time, and, being used to an eight o'clock breakfast, forgot what a difference it made to the length of the morning when that meal was not concluded till half-past ten. All at once