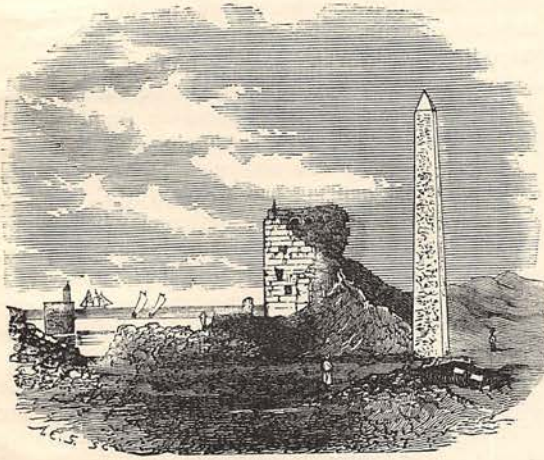


THE GATHERER.

A Neglected Gift.

They show but scant courtesy who, on receiving a gift, let it lie for over fifty years without carrying it home. This is precisely what may be said of us as a nation. In 1820 we were presented, by the then Pacha of Egypt, with one of Cleopatra's Needles—the



companion to that shown in our engraving—and from that day to this, we have done nothing towards effecting its removal.

It may be said in our excuse that one cannot pocket an obelisk weighing 250 tons, like a jewelled snuff-box; but the removal of the monument is practicable enough, and the cost, after all, would not amount to much.

The British Cleopatra's Needle lies overturned on the ground within fifty yards of the other Needle here shown. Both are interesting relics of bygone days. Danon, who went to Egypt with the French in 1798, supposed that they had once decorated the entrance to the palace of the Ptolemies, the ruins of which still exist at no great distance from the spot where the obelisks now are. They are of red granite and covered with hieroglyphics. Our column till recently lay almost hid in the sand: the whole of three sides, however, have now been exposed by excavations made by Sir James Alexander. It is seen to be of great value. Set up in London it would attract attention, not only on account of its antiquity, but as a monolith. We have nowhere in this country a carved stone even approaching it in size. Roughly, the dimensions of this colossal obelisk are: length, from extremity of base to apex, 66 feet; 7 feet square at base, and 4½ feet square at base of apex.

Several ways have been suggested for conveying the Needle to our shores. The easiest and least costly appears to be to construct an iron barge in England, large enough for the purpose, send it out in pieces to Alexandria, and put it together in a space to be ex-

cavated under the obelisk; the obelisk, previous to the excavation, being suspended on iron girders. This being done, a channel could be cut between the shore and the sea—it is only a distance of about twenty yards to the waters of the Mediterranean—the sea flowing in would raise the vessel to its burden, and the monolith being placed on board, and made secure, could be towed to England. All this, it has been calculated, could be done for a sum not exceeding £5,000, towards which 500 guineas have already been subscribed by one gentleman. We may hope, then, one of these days to see this monument of ancient Egypt adorning the Thames Embankment.

Wanted, an Ounce.

Amongst the 2,205 animals in the menagerie of the Zoological Society of London on the 31st December of last year, only one of the larger members of the graceful cat tribe was wanting. This was the Ounce (*Felis uncia*), a representation of which is given in our engraving. The home of the ounce is the mountainous region of Asia, and no specimen, it is believed, has ever been brought living to this country. The creature used to be considered only a long-haired variety of leopard: it is now known, however, to be a distinct species. It is very like the leopard, but may be distinguished from it by its possessing rougher and longer hair, as well as a larger and more bushy tail. The general colour, too—a greyish white, in which a slight yellow tinge is perceptible—is paler, and the spots which decorate its body are less sharply defined. The ounce is a very active animal, and an expert climber. It preys upon rodents and the smaller rumi-



THE OUNCE (*Felis uncia*).

nants. Of its other habits very little is known, so it would be an occasion for national gratitude if some adventurous traveller would only secure one and bring it to our shores. The task would be troublesome, no doubt, for an ounce is not likely to be led along with a silk thread round its neck.

Everlasting Flowers.

The flowers popularly known as Everlastings, are those of certain composite plants, an order of which the daisy is the best-known example. The peculiar



HELICHRYSUM BRACTEATUM.

property which belong to them is that of retaining their brightness and colour a long time after they have been gathered. This arises from the hardness of their tissue, which, having but very little moisture to part with, does not decay or shrivel up in drying. With everlasting flowers very beautiful and

effective nosegays may be made, and thus our rooms may be enlivened throughout the dreary months of winter. They are also admirably adapted for making wreaths and other devices for the decoration of churches, and for placing on tombs.

Some of the everlasting flowers are hardy annuals, others are tender annuals; some again are hardy perennials, and others are greenhouse shrubs or herbaceous plants. Of the hardy annuals the two most commonly grown are *Helichrysum bracteatum*, which has yellow flowers, and *Xeranthemum annuum*, the flowers of which are purple or white. Of the first there is one variety which has the outer petals tipped with copper-colour; and one which affords flowers of many different colours. The handsomest species of *Helichrysum*, however, is the *H. macranthum*, from the Swan River Colony, which has white flowers tipped with pink. These species of *Helichrysum* and the *Xeranthemum* will afford an abundant supply of flowers, which should be cut when at their best and laid out to dry.

Of the tender annuals the most desirable are *Rhodanthe Manglesii*, a lovely little plant from the Swan River, with delicate pink flowers; *Morna nitida*, with beautiful yellow flowers; and *Gomphrena globosa* (the Globe Amaranth), the flowers of which are purple. This last is supposed to be the amaranth of the poets, which, from the durability of its flowers, was con-

sidered to be the emblem of immortality. It seems to have been used at funerals in the time of Homer, as he describes it as worn by the Thessalians at the funeral of Achilles, and it is still used for the same purpose in various parts of the Continent.

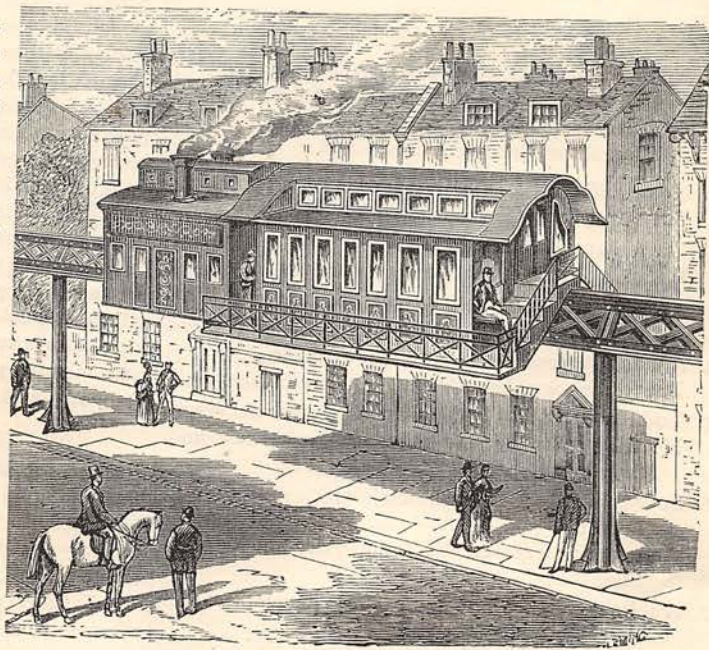
Of the hardy perennials the following are the kinds most generally found in our gardens:—*Antennaria dioica*, which has pink flowers, and the two white-flowered species, *A. margaritacea* and *A. triplinervis*; also three species of *Helichrysum* (*H. arenarium*, *H. orientale*, and *H. Stachas*), all of which have yellow flowers.

The greenhouse shrubs or herbaceous plants are grown in pots, and will continue to produce flowers every year for many years. Some of the most effective of these are the following:—*Astelma eximium*, with lovely crimson flowers; *Helichrysum ericoides*, with pink flowers; *H. argenteum* (white), and the two purple-flowered species, *H. proliferum* and *H. sesamoides*.

Care should be taken in the case of all the flowers which have been mentioned to gather them before they are too far advanced, and to see that they are properly dried: they will then last a long time.

Street Railways on Pillars.

Every one in these times wants to go post-haste, and the subject of rapid transit in towns has in consequence received considerable attention. Not satisfied with making railways by burrowing under-ground, our



THE "SADDLE" RAILWAY.

American cousins have determined to mount lines on iron or steel pillars and carry them along their great thoroughfares. The elevated railway plan was vigorously discussed in the United States twenty-five years

ago; its cheapness, compared with the cost of any other system, being used as a strong argument in its favour. Nothing came of the discussion till a year or two back, but now there is an elevated railway nearly five miles long running in New York. It is a single-track line, built on iron posts upon the edge of the pavement. The equipment of the road consists of six engines and twelve cars, each car affording accommodation for forty-eight passengers. The stations are in most cases placed over the street-crossings, with the stairs leading down the side streets.

In the illustration we have what is known as the "saddle railway," projected by General Le Roy Stone. It is claimed by the ingenious inventor and his friends to be the cheapest, best, and least objectionable form of elevated street railway that has ever been devised. The car, it will be observed, seems placed astride the line. A few improvements on this plan have been proposed by English inventors—compressed air, for example, to be used as a motive-power instead of steam—and it has been suggested that a line should be erected as an experiment in one of the main streets of London.

A probable objection to such lines undoubtedly is that, whilst satisfying all the requirements of rapid transit, they may offend the eye. There is always a drawback of some sort. According to the promoters, the lines will not encumber the streets in the least, will look exceedingly handsome, and will never be regarded as a nuisance. But it is to be feared that many will set them down as hideous.

Shakespearian Acrostic

This has been always sweet in every age and clime,
Of all things here below most subtle and sublime;
Shakespeare to show its influence oft delights:
His players form the subject of my lights.

1. He *wooded* a damsel's *heart* with lands and gold,
But to his *woe* received a *shoulder*—cold.
2. The gallant youth a maid's love could command,
But not till after death could win her hand.
3. This girl and her mistress combined to excite
The feelings of love in a coy little wight.
4. A man who for his daughter made alliance,
But to the *beau* the *belle* gave not compliance.
5. To help a suit clandestine—to aid a girl's delivery
He tried; and he was *suitèd*, too, with new and finer livery.
6. Suggestions base he harboured, which preyed upon
his mind,
And tragic deeds resulted from grief and passion
blind.
7. A miracle was worked on him by love complete and
duteous,
His form was changed from aged man to maiden
fair and beauteous.
8. Make room for one whose name implies he can
himself make way,
Though simple he's a "peeler" bold, and holds a
legal sway.

F. G. C.

ANSWER TO ACROSTIC ON PAGE 446.

C	har	M
A	nn	A
S	ta	G
S	yring	A
E	lipha	Z
L	apis	Lazul I
L	aw	N
S	cin	E

I. Charm or spell.

II. Anna, sister of Dido; also—

"A rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,
That Mary to *Anna* conveyed."

III. Stag—deer.

IV. Syringa.

v. Eliphaz, son of Esau; and Eliphaz, the Temanite comforter of Job.

VI. Lapis Lazuli—with a blue streak.

VII. Lawn—turf, and cambric.

VIII. Seine—and *sane*.

In Sable Weeds.

There is a wide-spread feeling abroad that the customs observed in connection with Christian burial are capable of improvement. Funerals are too costly, and might be made less so without losing in decorum. Indeed, they would probably gain in that respect, for a considerable outlay often produces nothing but what is highly fantastic.

This subject has recently been considered by a committee appointed by the Synod of the Diocese of Salisbury. The result of their deliberations has been the following suggestions:—They recommend that long flowing hatbands, scarves, and cloaks be altogether disused, but that plain hatbands of crape or cloth be retained; and these they consider the mourner should provide for himself. They also discourage the time-honoured practice of giving away complimentary mourning, and strongly urge the clergy to decline all such gifts. And, in general, they recommend that the dress of mourners be simple, plain, and inexpensive. In advocating these reforms one runs the risk of being set down as deprecating the use of mourning altogether. But why should it be so? One may desire to do away with extravagance, and at the same time heartily wish that mourning apparel may ever be worn in token of sympathy and sorrow.

The Perils of the Streets.

Street accidents grow more numerous every year. Something might be done to diminish them, and we have pleasure in directing attention to a proposal recently made by which this desirable end might be attained. Wheeled vehicles, as we all know, go at a much faster pace than foot-passengers; the former often moving—even in busy thoroughfares—at from five to eight miles an hour. This leads to a very unequal contest between pedestrians and carriages of all sorts. Even at a simple and direct crossing the foot-passenger has to contend with the speed mentioned, and has to keep a sharp look-out both to the right and left. But the chances of danger are greatly multiplied

when he has to make his way over some important crossing where a number of streets meet, each contributing its quota of traffic. Take the site opposite the Mansion House for example, where no fewer than seven thoroughfares meet. This is perhaps the most dangerous crossing in the whole world. The proposed remedy is that between given points, to be marked by high posts painted with Government red, foot-passengers and wheeled vehicles should be placed upon an equality as to pace. This might be done at all main crossings throughout London and in other large towns. Foot-passengers could then thread their way without fear of sudden collision, and the number of accidents resulting from the perils of the streets would be sensibly diminished.

Many accidents, however, are not to be laid to the charge of rapid driving so much as to carelessness on the part of pedestrians themselves. How many of us go through the streets inattentive to everything around, with eyes downcast, and wrapped up in our own thoughts. It would be doing a good turn to a large section of the community if some one would write an "Art of Walking in City Thoroughfares." If people would keep their eyes about them, they would not only often see wonders, but have less chance than now of being run over by a passing hansom, or knocked down by an omnibus.

Needlework in New Hands.

A radical reformer has come forward recently with the proposition that a new item should be included amongst the subjects taught to boys in elementary schools. He wants them to be instructed in plain needlework. "Nothing," he says, "stands in the way of this admirable movement but a prejudice that a puff of common-sense will blow quite away." It may be objected that needlework is not a manly occupation. Sailors, however, practise it, and no one ever heard that it did them any harm. It won't do, also, to say that there is no time for its being taught. In the London School Boards, girls are taught to work well in two hours a week, and, were the necessity admitted, this time could easily be spared for boys. Our reformer does not propose that boys should be initiated into all the mysteries of the art. He only wants them taught to sew on buttons, darn stockings, and mend and even make their own clothes. That such knowledge would be useful, few whom hard fate has knocked about the world will deny. Every one does not grow up to have a nest of his own, and woman's kind and willing fingers to work for him.

An English Generation on the March.

An English generation on the march from the cradle to the grave is an instructive spectacle, and we have it carefully presented to us in the report by Dr. Farr. Let us trace the physical fortune which any million of us may reasonably expect. The number, to begin with, is made up of 511,745 boys and 488,255

girls, a disproportion which, by-and-by, will be redressed by the undue mortality of the boys, and will be reversed before the close of the strange eventful history. More than a quarter of these children will die before they are five years old—in exact numbers, 141,387 boys and 121,795 girls. The two sexes are now nearly on a level. The next five years will be much less fatal. In the succeeding five years—from ten to fifteen—the mortality will be still further reduced. Indeed, for both sexes, this is the most healthy period of life; the death-rate, however, is lower for boys than for girls. There will be some advance in deaths in the next five years, and still more in the five which follow, but 634,045 will certainly enter on their twenty-sixth year. Before the next ten years are at an end, two-thirds of the women will have married. The deaths during that period will be 62,052, and of these no fewer than 27,134 will be caused by consumption. Between thirty-five and forty-five a still larger "death-toll" will be paid, and little more than half the original band—in exact numbers, 502,915—will enter on their forty-sixth year. Each succeeding decade, up to seventy-five, will now become more fatal, and the numbers will shrink terribly. At seventy-five only 161,124 will remain to be struck down, and of these 122,559 will have perished by the eighty-fifth year of the march. The 38,565 that remain will soon lay down their burdens; but 2,153 of them will struggle on to be ninety-five, and 223 to be 100 years old. Finally, in the 108th year of the course, the last solitary life will flicker out. Such, then, is the average lot of a million Englishmen and women.

The Water Supply of London.

The quantity of water consumed in the metropolis, as stated by the Rivers Pollution Commission, is 113,800,000 gallons daily, or 41,537,000,000 gallons per year, in weight equal to 185,433,035 tons. It has been suggested that the rivers Thames and Lea should be abandoned as sources of supply, and that London should be furnished with deep well or spring water from the surrounding district. It seems probable, however, that if this were done, the country for many miles round the metropolis would be turned into an arid waste. This will be seen from the following statement. It is calculated that a square acre of land yields, on an average, about 89,600 gallons per annum; and at this rate 463,582 square acres, or 722 square miles (an area nearly equal in extent to the entire county of Oxfordshire), would have to be drained to furnish the necessary supply of water for our present metropolitan population. But when we take into consideration how rapidly the population increases, and the gigantic proportions London may have attained fifty years hence, the probability that dwellers in the metropolis will be able to command the luxury of spring water (if the supply is to be obtained from the neighbouring district) seems more than ever remote.