

so, too, there are certain leguminous plants which thrive best on the rocky soil of Cornwall, which contains fifty per cent. of arsenical sulphuret, and the remainder of which is silicea and sulphuret of zinc. In one of the deserts of Upper Egypt, between the Nile and the Red Sea, the eye perceives only an unbroken sheet of burning sand. Yet a French botanist tells us of having found on its borders, braving the heat of the sun, and unrefreshed by any drop of water, numerous tufts of an *Asclepiade*, whose large, moist, velvety leaves glistened with freshness.

The incessant reproduction of vegetable life, is insured to us by the great number of seeds of certain plants. On one poppy stalk we find 32,000 seeds, and on one stem of tobacco 40,000. The fecundity of some fungi is extraordinary. Fries counted more than 10,000,000 reproductive bodies in one individual of the *Reticularia maxima*, and the microscopic grains of the *Lycopodium* can be counted by thousands of millions, every one of which, though invisible to the eye, may give birth to a *fungus*, which, in one night, can attain the size of a gourd.

These seeds are spread abroad in many ways. Some are furnished with membranous wings and plumes, as if created for the express purpose of floating on the air. Certain lichens from the mountains of Asia, traveling on the wings of the wind, suck up watery vapors from the air, and actually grow during their wanderings. Torn from their native soil, when scarce larger than a pin's head, they have attained the size of a small nut by the time they reach the ground.

The manna upon which the Hebrews fed in their long wanderings through the wilderness, was probably showers of these edible lichens, as they have a most agreeable flavor. A French chemist reported to the Academy of Sciences, having met with them in Asia, that the natives had insisted they had dropped from heaven, calling them in their own language, "bread from heaven," and that he had several times seen the ground covered with them to the depth of six inches.

Sea currents are great aids in the transmission of plants.

The hard fruit of the cocoa palm and the immense husks of the climbing mimosa, torn away by waves, and rocked by storms, are frequently stranded on the shores of Scandinavia, where the want of heat prevents their development. So, too, important migrations in the vegetable kingdom, are due to the movements of rivers and streams. By these means seeds often travel a long way to find a new home. Streams springing from the glaciers of the Upper Alps deposit in the plains of Munich some of the species which grow near their lofty summits. In like manner an Alpine moss, *Bryum Alpinum*, torn away in the Thuringian forest, is carried to the porphyry rocks near Halle.

Masses of ice are called on to assist in the dispersion of plants, as we now find in the north of Germany lichens, mosses, and a few woody plants, which have evidently been borne from the Scandinavian mountains to the plains of ancient Germany, by the immense icebergs which ages since bore down the granite boulders now found there.

Yet each country has its own special blossom, the blue gentian, flourishing amid Alpine snows, and the sandworts growing along the sandy sea-coast, refusing to live if transplanted to richer soil. Laplanders pride themselves on a flower called Charles's Sceptre, never found outside the limits of that inhospitable land, and dreary Siberia can boast her beautiful *Cypripedium*. St. Helena, that rocky, sea-girt isle, has sixty-one native species, of which only two or three have been found elsewhere.

As change of elevation has the same effect upon

climate as change of latitude, plants characteristic of different latitudes appear in succession upon mountain slopes. The palm may delight our eyes in the valley, on the slopes above figs and pomegranates blush in the sunshine; a few hundred feet higher cypress and myrtle wave in the evening breeze; still higher up, we leave the shade of the elm and chestnut to breathe the aromatic fragrance of pine forests, until these are superseded by mosses and lichens of northern zones, "Who live in modest ways and ceaseless praise."

"Fern-Rooms."

ANYBODY with taste, a little money—and some knowledge of gardening—of the kind of gardening, that is to say, which is now called window-gardening—can have a "fern-room."

A fern-room is made by setting up a square, five feet high, of glass set in a frame work of wood or iron, and of which the shape best sets off the ferns which, kept slightly moist by the water in a small tank of tin around which they rise or fall, according to the variety to which they belong, has these plants for its sole purpose and ornament.

Why a construction should be called a room to which this description applies is best known to those who so designated it in the beginning. Certain it is that the past few months have seen many a "fern-room" constructed, and that the effect, setting forward as they do in the rooms they adorn, is good. Moving on rollers and capable of being transported from one room to another, it is needless to say that the small tin tank does not communicate with any pipe. The fern is a plant so beautiful that the eye never tires of it, and the various varieties grouped together thus are simply exquisite.

"Oyster-Blocks."

THE above is the name of the new ice-sets for serving raw oysters at fashionable dinners and suppers. There is, first, a tin box. Into this is set a large square slab of perfectly pure, clear ice. Around the box and concealing its edge is beautifully arranged, handsome sea-weed of the least jagged kind. When the time comes for serving the raw oysters they are laid upon the slab of ice, on which they must not remain long enough to freeze—in a room of average temperature this will not happen—and then they are taken in. "Little Neck" clams are served in the same way, and a fancy having demanded the small crabs that are frequently served with oysters, these are thus brought to table also.

An oyster, clam, or crab, never looks so appetizing as on ice. There is little difficulty in preparing this elegant and delicate addition to a dinner or supper, and a host is usually willing, even in a private establishment, to take some trouble for the sake of style.

The Women of Yesterday and To-day.

SARA COLERIDGE.

SARA COLERIDGE was the daughter of S. T. Coleridge, of famous memory, and was born at Greta Hall, near Keswick, December 22d, 1802. When but a few months old her father thus described her in a letter to a friend: "My meek lit-

tle Sara is a remarkably interesting baby, with the finest possible skin and large blue eyes. She smiles as if she were basking in a sunshine as mild as moonlight of her own quiet happiness."

In some of her recollections, she tells how nervous and ill she was during her childhood from a fall she had in the river Greta, and she says she one day sat down by her aunt, and exclaimed in a piteous tone, "*I se miser!*"

"Yes," was the compassionate reply, "and you will be miserable if your mother doesn't put a cap on you."

This energetic hint was taken, caps were put on her, which the tiny maiden wore until eight years old.

She had a morbidly keen imagination, and when left alone in the dark, would think of lions, the only form of terror her dark-engendered agitation would assume. Her next bugbear was the ghost in Hamlet, and then her uncle Southey's ballad horrors, especially the Old Woman of Berkeley. The agonies she endured between nine and twelve o'clock at night, before her mother joined her, are only to be imagined by persons of equally sensitive fancy.

What made the matter worse, too, was, that like most nervous sufferings, it could not be understood, and subjected her to censure and ridicule. Her uncle Southey (the poet) laughed at her, and her mother scolded her for creeping out of bed and slipping into the parlor when she could endure the loneliness and night fears no longer. But her father understood her better, and insisted on a lighted candle being left in the room. From that time her sufferings ceased.

Before she was twenty-five she had made herself acquainted with the leading Greek and Latin classics, and was well skilled in French, German, Italian and Spanish, mainly the results of her own independent efforts. She was also well versed in natural history, especially botany and zoölogy, and could any time turn from abstruse metaphysical speculations, of which she was fond, to inspect the domestic architecture of a spider or describe the corolla of a rose.

In 1822, she met her cousin, H. N. Coleridge, then practicing as Chancery barrister in London. A strong attachment sprang up between them, and they were married in 1829, after years of patient waiting.

In 1839, she published a romance, *Phantasmion*, a fairy tale, commenced at first for the entertainment of her little boy, whose beauty, vivacity, and early intelligence are described with maternal pride and fondness in some of her letters.

She at this time devoted great care to her children's education, deeming it no degradation of her genius and culture, to lavish their charms on Latin grammar, history, and geography. She decorated a set of wooden blocks with simple and appropriate verses, hoping in this way to sweeten the tough morsels of learning, with play and pleasure.

In 1841, her husband's health gave way, and in January, 1843, he died. He had been the literary executor of her father, and she now dedicated the whole of her intellectual energy, to the carrying out of her husband's wishes, in the doing justice to her father's name.

It was not long before she was obliged to yield her unfinished work into another's hands. She had waited seven years for the fulfillment of her happiness, she waited another seven years, filled with tender and loving memories for the great change, to which indeed she had learned to look forward to, from the eve of her wedding day.

After a lingering and painful illness of a year and a half, she died in the forty-ninth year of her age, the 3d of May, 1852, and was buried in the old churchyard of High-Gate, beside her parents, husband, and son.

L. P. L.