

PECULIARITIES OF AUTHORS.—Homer, it is said, had such an aversion to natural music, that he could never be prevailed on to walk along the banks of a murmuring brook; nevertheless, he sang his own ballads, though not in the character of a mendicant, as recorded by Zoilus.

Virgil was so fond of salt that he seldom went without a box-full in his pocket, which he made use of from time to time as men of the present day use tobacco.

Handel was such a miser that at the very time he was in receipt of £50 a night from the Opera he was frequently known to wear a shirt for a month to save the expense of washing.

Samuel Rogers was an inveterate punster, albeit from his poetry one might suppose him to have been one of the gravest men in Christendom. He had one peculiarity that distinguished him from all poets, past, present, and to come, viz., £300,000.

Young wrote his "Night Thoughts" with a skull and a candle in it before him. His own skull was luckily in the room, or very little aid would have been yielded by the other.

It is said that Dryden always cupped and physicked previous to a grand effort at tragedy.

Bembo had a desk with forty divisions, through which his sonnets passed in succession before they were published, and at each transition they received correction.

Milton used to sit leaning back obliquely in an easy chair, with his leg flung over the elbow of it. He frequently composed lying in bed in the morning; but when he could not sleep, and lay awake whole nights, not one verse could he make. At other times his unpremeditated lines flowed easily with a certain impetus; then, whatever the hour, he rang for his daughter to commit them to paper. He would sometimes dictate forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number. These may appear trifles, but such trifles assume a sort of greatness when related of what is great.

SUPPOSED CHARMS AGAINST EVIL.—Amongst other charms against evil may be named that of our ancestors, who, when eating eggs, were careful to break the shells, lest the witches should use them to their disadvantage. We do the same for a similar reason; it is accounted unlucky to leave them whole. They avoided cutting their nails on Friday, because bad luck would follow; but we have improved upon their practice, and lay down the whole theory as follows:—

"Cut your nails on Monday, cut them for news;
Cut them on Tuesday, a new pair of shoes;
Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for health;
Cut them on Thursday, cut them for wealth;
Cut them on Friday, cut them for woe;
Cut them on Saturday, a journey you'll go;
Cut them on Sunday, you'll cut them for evil,
For all the next week you'll be ruled by the devil."

Most grandmothers will exclaim "God bless you!" when they hear a child sneeze, and they sum up the philosophy of the subject with the following lines, which used to delight the writer in days of his childhood:—

"Sneeze on a Monday, you sneeze for danger;
Sneeze on a Tuesday, you kiss a stranger;
Sneeze on a Wednesday, you sneeze for a letter;
Sneeze on a Thursday, for something better;
Sneeze on a Friday, you sneeze for sorrow;
Sneeze on a Saturday, your sweetheart to-morrow;
Sneeze on a Sunday, your safety seek,
The devil will have you the whole of the week;"

These lines may be taken either as charms or spells to produce the effect predicted, or as omens of warnings of the results to follow. In most parts of Lancashire it is customary for children to repeat the following invocation every evening on going to bed, after saying the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed:—

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on;
There are four corners to my bed,
And four angels overspread,
Two at the feet, two at the head.
If any ill thing me befall,
Beneath your wings my body hide,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on. Amen."

THE FLOWER GARDEN.

We wish to impress upon our friends how much can be done with a little care and trouble, and a trifling outlay of money, to beautify their homes and make them attractive, not only to their own families, but to all around them; we are frequently in receipt of letters like the following, from which we make a few extracts:—

"PLEASANT RIDGE, OHIO.
Last year I purchased of you quite a collection of garden and flower seeds. My flowers were the wonder of the community, and a great source of pleasure to myself and family.
MRS. A. J. P."

"SAGINAW, MICH.
The seeds you sent me last year gave satisfaction; some of the plants, grown from seed you sent me, took the first premium at our county fair. S. B. W.

Much can be done to beautify the garden, with a judicious selection of *Annals* raised from seed, all of which can now be sown, at the South, in the open borders, and at the North, in a hot-bed, or in boxes placed in a sunny window. Let the soil be light and fine, and be careful not to cover the seeds too deep, this is a fruitful cause of failure in the germination of seeds. See *Dreer's Garden Calendar for 1868*, page 36.

The following species, with their new and improved varieties, are always desirable, and, indeed, indispensable to keep up a continuous bloom. *German Asters, Antirrhinums, German Balsams, Candy-tuft, Canna, Clarkia, Convolvulus, Coreopsis, Delphinium, Gaillardia, Lobelia, Momordica, Nasturtium, Pansy, Phlox-Drummondii, Petunia, Portulaca, Pinks, Sweet Mignonette, Sweet Peas, Sweet Scabious, German Ten Week Stocks, Thunbergia, Verbena, Double Zinnia.* Assortments can be made up from the above from one to five dollars.

In addition to the above there is a large variety of bedding-out plants, grown from cuttings, necessary to complete the garden, such as: *Roses, Verbenas, Geraniums, Fuchsia, Lantana, Salvia, Chrysanthemum, Phlox, etc.*, of which we shall refer to in another number, a complete list of which will be found in *Dreer's Garden Calendar for 1868*. Mailed to all applicants upon the receipt of a postage stamp.

Address HENRY A. DREER,
Seedsman and Florist, 714 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

The way a new style of skirt that has come into fashion was invented, is thus described:—

"A Brooklyn hatter, for amusement, promised his wife that he would make her a skirt—such as never was before known. He took some felt, and adopting the beating process by which felt hats are made, he stretched the material over a frame and beat it in successive layers till a thick, full-sized seamless skirt was made, impervious to rain or damp, warm and not heavy. It was regarded as a wonder by the ladies of New York, and more were demanded, until an immense factory has been opened, one hundred hands employed, and the demand cannot be supplied."

ARTICLES were exhibited at the Paris Exposition apparently made of meerschmum, but manufactured entirely out of potatoes, prepared in a peculiar manner by a chemical process. Turnips treated in the same way furnish an excellent imitation of stag's horn, which can be cut into thin plates for veneering, and rendered as flexible as leather by soaking in glycerine or water. Carrots, similarly prepared, make an imitation coral.

ALL letters and offerings of music must be addressed to J. Starr Holloway, editor Musical Department of the *LADY'S BOOK*.