

OUR ARM-CHAIR.

"CHEAPEST AND BEST."—The universal verdict of the press and public is that "Peterson" is not only the best magazine of its kind, but altogether the cheapest, excelling in its engravings, fashion-plates, stories and Work-Table all rivals at the same price. "Nothing but its enormous circulation," says the Lima (Ohio) Gazette, "could enable it to give so much for the money; it is incontestably the cheapest, as well as best, magazine of its kind. Every department, in turn, is pronounced 'Excelsior.'" The St. Johns (N. B.) Globe says, "We never recollect to have seen 'Peterson' in better style than it is this year." The Newport (Pa.) News says, "All competent judges pronounce the stories in 'Peterson' better than any in any of its cotemporaries." The Clay Co. (Iowa) Reporter says, "It would seem impossible to suggest any improvement in it." The Goderich (Canada) Star says, "The patterns are pronounced by the ladies to be as perfectly prepared as it is possible for them to be; the ladies cannot have a better general magazine." The Mitchell Co. (Iowa) Press says, "Superb embellishments, capital stories, one number alone is worth the subscription price." The Salem (N. J.) Standard says, "The cheapest as well as best of the ladies' magazines."

AN INVENTION of inestimable value as a beautifier has at length been perfected, in mask form, and is to be worn at night. While being perfectly harmless and easily applied, it secures to the wearer a blooming and faultless complexion. For descriptive treatise, containing full particulars, address The Toilet Mask Co., 1164 Broadway, New York.

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MOTHERS' DEPARTMENT.

[MEDICAL BOTANY—OF THE GARDEN, FIELD AND FOREST.]

BY ABRAM LIVEZEY, M. D.

No. VIII.—ACACIA—GUM ARABIC.

Though the *acaciae* from which the gum arabic of our drug stores is obtained do not belong to, nor are they naturalized in this country, yet this medicinal agent and article of diet for the sick is so very useful and important, that we feel that the source from whence it is derived should be better known, and its properties more fully appreciated, and for these reasons it is embraced in these papers, and is spoken of here, before we roam in the fields.

These acacias are of all sizes, according to situation, from mere shrubs to trees of medium size, and grow in Upper Egypt, Senegal, and other parts of Africa, as well as in Arabia and Hindostan, where the gum is much used for food.

The trees present a hard, withered aspect, and the main stem is covered with a gray bark, which is quite astringent, and is used in India for tanning purposes. The acacias seem by nature calculated for dry, sandy soils, and flourish in deserts where but few other trees will grow.

Gum arabic is the concrete juice of various species of *Acacia*, and when pure is transparent, inodorless, insipid, and feels quite viscid in the mouth. Mothers should be aware that mixed with the *true* gum, is often found one of

a darker color, rougher surface, much larger, and more globular, harder to break, and less readily soluble.

ALIMENTARY PROPERTIES.—The late Prof. T. D. Mitchell says he has had patients to subsist for months on this gum, without obvious loss of flesh or health. This is also the experience of the writer, with many other observers. We are told that camels attached to caravans derive from these acacias their chief sustenance, in many parts of those desolate regions in which Africa abounds. A caravan of Abyssinians would have starved, on one occasion, but for a stock of this gum among their merchandise, upon which one thousand persons subsisted for two months; and in times of great scarcity of the ordinary kinds of food, whole towns have been sustained by it. The Moors and negroes, also, live on the gum almost exclusively, during the period of collection; and the Hottentots, in times of scarcity, support themselves upon it for days together. Hence, in many cases of disease, our patients can be sustained for quite a length of time upon this *gum water*. It should be stated, however, *en passant*, that dogs fed exclusively upon this article soon perish; but they are carnivorous, whilst man is an omnivorous animal.

MEDICAL PROPERTIES AND USES.—Gum arabic is ademu-lunt, possessed of softening, sheathing, soothing qualities. Hence its use in strangury, catarrhal affections, irritation of the fauces or larynx, inflammation of the stomach, intestines, dysentery, diarrhoea, cholera infantum or wasting bowel affections. In all of these cases, a thick solution can be advantageously used *ad libitum*, besides possessing the advantage of the best and most suitable article of diet in these and other highly inflammatory diseases—being sufficiently nourishing, not only to support the patient, but to prevent the injurious action of the organs upon themselves. A thick solution of gum arabic may be used (like collodion), to shield recent burns and scalds from the irritating influence of the atmosphere. Thus, mothers can put this familiar article to many useful purposes. Jujube paste, marsh-mallow and Iceland moss paste are made of this gum, white sugar, whites of eggs and water, or of decoctions of marsh-mallow and moss, instead of simple water, if strictly made in accordance with the name in the latter two.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

KILTING YOUR FLOUNCES.—A great many ladies send their flouncing to be kilting by machines, as it saves, they think, time and trouble. But for several reasons we would advise our readers to do it for themselves by hand; we regard, on the whole, the truest economy, besides. In the first place, the heat used for machine kilting is very often too great, and we have seen flouncing so scorched in places that it has been at the folds like tinder; and in the second place, in many materials it certainly takes from their beauty, silk especially looking poor from the heat and pressure used, as it does when dyed or cleaned.

To kilt silk, having cut and joined the breadths, next hem them with fine sewing silk, not putting the stitches too close, and drawing the silk as little as possible. Supposing the flounce be required to form its own heading, turn it down at the top, and tack it along on the wrong sides, then, having decided upon the size of the pleats, fold two or three, pin them and crease them firmly, then take out the pins, and measure the width between the folds. You must now fold and crease your length of silk, or should it be a very long one a few breadths at a time, taking the width between the creases from the folds you have already arranged, so that when you begin to kilt you have every fold evenly and plainly marked. You will scarcely need to measure for creasing the folds if the flounce be a narrow one, but be careful to get them even and straight, and the work is then comparatively easy.

Begin kilting with the top of the flounce to your right hand, turning the pleats away from you and pinning them both at the top and bottom with silk-pins (fine long ones are sold for this purpose which do not mark the silk as ordinary ones would). This done—say about half a yard in length at a time—tack it in the centre on the right side, putting a stitch in each pleat, and again about half an inch from each edge, with a fine needle and thin white cotton. This done it is ready for stitching, which must always be done with *silk*, whether by hand or machine. If you do not want to stitch it upon the dress, tack a tape underneath and stitch it down upon that. For a flounce it is better always to put this tape about a third of the depth from the lower edge, and stitch it before putting it upon the skirt.

With the exception of satin and *moiré* other materials are not damaged by ironing, and after the hem is made it is better to press it, as also the fold at the top if it is not hemmed at each edge. Muslin, alpaca, and many other materials will crease as silk will, and that will be found the easiest plan, and the soft materials are not injured by being done by machinery.

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

Accustom baby from his earliest toddling days to go about with you, up and down stairs—anywhere, in the dark; and at once dismiss the indiscreet, thoughtless nurse, who hints at such horrifying things as “black men,” ghosts, etc., etc. This is a very important lesson for early days: a timid child is always unhappy; he sees “black men” in every shadow he cannot account for, and wild beasts lurk incessantly beneath his bed. But few persons have any conception of the strong but unregulated imagination of children. Once frightened, it will take years to eradicate the fear he has felt; no coaxing, no amount of explanation will convince him that it is not lying in wait somewhere for him.

It is often tried, in order to get a young child “used to a noise,” to put him to sleep in a room where other children are romping and playing, or when a great deal of talking and laughter is going on. And no doubt after awhile the effort will succeed, to the great delight of mamma or nurse; he will drop off in the midst of an uproar; but it will be from sheer fatigue, as it is quite against baby nature to go to sleep in the midst of such excitement.

He will get used to the noise when he is awake, especially the noise made by his little brothers and sisters; it is his delight, and the more the better. But he should be put to bed in a quiet, cool room; this will not make him a nervous, timid child; on the contrary, his rest will doubtless be unbroken, and consequently refreshing. “There is a time and a place for everything,” and baby’s napping time, and his place for it, should not be in a room that is given up to “hunting the tiger,” or when an amateur menagerie is in full swing.

The sleeping-room should be darkened a little, and, in fact, everything done to *promote* sleep naturally. We, ourselves, would hardly choose, for the place of our slumbers, a room full of company, with the sunlight streaming down upon us from windows without shades or blinds.

Older children, especially in hot weather, when the evenings are very light, are often awake for hours after the time they should be asleep; there is nothing to make them try to sleep even, but much inviting matter in an opposite direction. Crib-rails make famous steeds, and splendid precipices can be jumped from one bed to another.

We ought to be able to spare a little pity for these restless little mortals. It is about impossible to “sit still” during the day, but to “lie still” in bed, looking at the walls or at each other, is not within range of their quicksilver nature. They would sleep well enough after a hard day of play, if

it were dark, so provide their sleeping-room with *dark shades, or blinds*. Thick, green muslin, or dark brown linen, cut the size of the window, and hung by two rings, are good materials for these shades; the green is pleasanter for the eyes on waking, and so is better on that account.

Keep the sleeping-room shaded in the morning, till after baby is awake; the strong light in his eyes, on first opening them, is very hurtful; after he is accustomed to the light, for a few moments, the bright sunlight may be let in, in a full flood of glory.

A mother should always be able to do a little “doctoring” on her children’s behalf. It is pitiable to see her stand by her infant, wringing her hands and moaning, unable to afford it the slightest aid. It is hard on baby, too, when the mother “runs away,” stopping her ears in time of trouble, because she cannot bear to see it suffer. Try to overcome this. If the mother could not assuage one atom of its pain, the sound of her voice and the pressure of her lips are priceless to him. The poet says that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing,” and it is *very* dangerous, when medicines are to be used that require skill and judgment in their administration, so we only propose to speak of those remedies that are harmless, and that can be resorted to, till a physician can arrive, in a serious case. The mother should do all she can, but she must recollect this one most important caution: *the moment she feels herself in doubt* upon any matter, she should not *trust* herself. It must be real, not fancied, knowledge that she should possess, when she appoints herself a “home doctor.” In all cases of doubt, not a moment should be wasted, but *reliable* help should be obtained at once.

At all times when baby is a little out of order, look well to his food, and rather under than over-feed him. This rule holds good almost always.

PUZZLE DEPARTMENT.

Everything relating to this department must be sent to GEORGE CHINN, MARBLEHEAD, MASS. All communications are to be headed: “FOR PETERSON’S.” All are invited to send answers, also, to contribute original puzzles, which should be accompanied by the answers.

No. 28.—A LADDER PUZZLE.

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The uprights are words of nine letters, the right meaning, using the faculty of judging; and the left, pervaded. The rounds, beginning with the highest, mean: 1, To rise out of a fluid; 2, A current of water; 3, The chrysalis of an insect; 4, To lie close.

Harlem, N. Y.

MINNIE S. YOST.

No. 29.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

1. A letter. 2. The female. 3. A bundle of grain. 4. A play-house. 5. Devoured. 6. A moor. 7. A consonant.

Marblehead, Mass.

G. C.

No. 30.—CHARADE.

UPON the plain beside the bank,
Where calmly now the river flows,
Two armies on the morn will meet;
But in my first they now repose.