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**FARM AND HOUSE**  
 Plants and Flowers.  
**SPRING GARDENING.**  
 Now that the robins and martins are flying around, proving that coy spring has at length come, the gardening fever will, in the natural course of things, be upon every flower lover all over the land. However, don't be in too great a hurry to get beds spaded up until the ground is dry, for if you do your beds will be as hard as clods during the entire summer.  
 By far the best policy, when it can be done, is to have such digging done in the fall. It saves time in the spring, and the frost mellow the soil when turned up to its state.  
 Seeds of early vegetables can be planted as soon as there is a dry spot, and the same may be applied to such annuals as those in the seed catalogues as hardy, better hardy and tender annuals may be sown in boxes in the house, and as soon as the seedlings are up give a little air every day, gradually lengthening their breathing of the fresh air as they grow stronger.  
 Make beddings of geraniums, coleus and all bedding plants, and prepare, even at this early date, such plants as you would have bloom in the house next fall and winter. Geraniums, for instance, rooted in May kept in small pots, given good food, and all buds kept pinched off until September, then put into four-inch pots and fed liberally will make splendid winter bloomers. Roses will need similar treatment, only the pots must be plunged, that is sunk to the rim in the ground. Carnations in the same way, though these may be taken from their pots. Bouvardias do well bedded out in summer and lifted in the fall for winter blooming. Coleus, better hardy as foliage plants, are now extremely popular, and they can be had at least in an hundred different varieties and markings. I want to speak of the merits of the summer blooming plants and flowers as ornamental bedding plants. There is the caladium, or elephant's ear, a beautiful plant, having vines often four feet long and two feet wide. Manure these liberally and give abundance of water. Then dahlias, which some people have a great liking for. I admit that they are showy, but must say they do not impress me favorably. When we come to the state-egg, with their rich and varied foliage, and realize how easy they are grown, we are sure all will agree that there is nothing better than a clump of cannas upon the lawn. Gladioli are favorites of mine; there is such a variety in their markings, from purest white to deep scarlet. The choicest of these gladioli—white—are very small, the bulbs about the size of a pigeon's egg. The common sorts produce extremely large bulbs and are so productive that a person buying a dozen and caring for them properly can dig three to five times as many at the end of one season as he planted. These bulbs are perhaps the most hardy of all the summer bloomers, for several times after I have planted them the grounds has frozen and yet they did well.  
 The roses, on the contrary, are tender. To do well blossom they should be started in the house. Here is one way: Plant them in old tomato cans, without punching any holes for drainage, set them on the mantle over the kitchen stove, and keep warm and wet. When well started move to a cooler place, and in June set out in the garden. The old double variety runs up a stem six or seven feet high, and produces very fragrant flowers. Now there is a dwarf sort called pearl; the bulbs of this are much smaller but the flowers are equally as good.  
 A wonderfully shaped and spotted flower is that produced by *Tagetes pavonia*, or shell flower. The summer blooming amaryllis, among which are those called the atomus and Jacobean lilies produce flowers of marvellous coloring, but little or no fragrance. Johnsenia, on the other hand, is handsome with its white stripes on a red ground and is sweet scented.  
 Summer blooming oxalis make the prettiest of edgings for a garden. Their leaves are so pretty marked with zones as they are, and cut into many divisions. They are cheap, too, and remarkably prolific.  
 Cyclamen bulbs which have been in bloom all winter should now be allowed to rest. To do this turn the pots on their sides in some shady place, say the north side of a house, and only give water once in a while. After resting report, but give very little water until the leaves are well grown and then let them have air and water freely. The largest bulbs produce the most flowers, but throw off no amount. Increase is obtained by sowing seeds. Strange that many of our nicest plants, the apple geranium, centaurea candidissima, cyclamen, primroses, and others are propagated chiefly and in some instances entirely from seeds.  
 Delicious Indian Pudding, Steamed.  
 Put a quart of milk over the fire in a double kettle, and when it boils add to it one teaspoon of yellow meal dissolved in a little cold milk. (This cold milk may be taken from the quart before it is put over the fire.) Let the milk and meal boil together for a full hour. Then take it off the fire, pour into a large bowl and let it get perfectly cold. Then add three or four well-beaten eggs a half-pound of suet finely chopped, one teaspoon of powdered cinnamon, a half cup of stiffly beaten cream, a teaspoon of Royal baking powder and a little salt. Mix and beat well together. Grease well a tin mould, cover tightly, and steam in a kettle of boiling water from two to three hours. A tin lard pail with a good cover is an excellent thing to boil the pudding in. It is a delicious pudding. It must be eaten with the liquid milk sauce, directions for which were lately given in this column.  
 Fernery Made and Stocked by a Lady.  
 One of the most interesting ferneries I ever saw was made and stocked by a lady. It was along the side of a brick house in a city, in the underpinning of which there were on that side, no basement windows, and afforded a dead wall six feet or more high. I am not quite right in saying she "made" it, for it grew under the hands. She was fond of driving about in the country, and did not care what Mrs. Grundy would say. "Wherever she saw a tempting stone that was not too large, it was taken into the buggy, and helped increase the size of the rockery. In drives to the limestone hills a few miles back of the city, rocks were selected because certain ferns grew upon them; sometimes a box or bag of woods earth came home, to go between the stones brought at other times. Thus there was gradually built up a sloping rockery, common, indeed very common soil below, and gradually rising rocks, of various sizes, with woods earth between, and always keeping up an earth connection below. So gradually this fernery grew, and the plants as they became established increased each year in beauty, and I doubt not they still live, though they no more have the loving care of the hand that placed them there. Some care should be exercised by those who take up the roots of ferns, as they vary greatly in their manner of growth. Some have a large root-stock, which runs for some distance just below the surface; this is usually dead at the farthest extremity, while near the above ground portion, numerous roots are given off, every one of which should be saved for its whole length.  
 Hints for a Parlor Tableau.  
 As a contrast to this is a beautiful tableau

**called "Cagliostro's Magic Mirror."** Tradition affirms that a handsome prince once lost his bride. He applied to Cagliostro, a magician, to restore her to him, and Cagliostro promised to call up all the beautiful princesses he could find until the bride is found. For this tableau a double frame is required; the magician and prince stand respectively on the right and left of the front frame, and through a smaller frame, the mirror, the princesses are seen in turn. The magician calls up a princess with his upraised wand. She appears, looks at him, turns slowly toward the prince, who slowly waves his hand to signify that she is not the lost bride, and she passes out of the frame on the other side. The others then come in turn; there may be eight or ten, or as many as can be conveniently managed; the last one, of course, is the bride, who stays in the frame, looking lovingly at the prince as he falls on his knees before her. The dresses should be as pretty and as different as is possible.  
 Seeding Down Land.  
 From F. G. in Country Gentleman.  
 It is the practice to sow grass seed and clover as early as the season will allow. Winter grain favors this, and hence much of our seeding is done on the late snows of spring. Some practice a better plan, which is to sow land, prepared in the fall for wheat, in the spring without grain. This may be done on the late snows also, or later if the land is well drained so as to be early dry and the seed brushed and rolled in. This never fails, if the soil is rich and in good condition. In the most unfavorable season when other seeding fails, I have never known this to miss of a good set. Fertility favors moisture, and so does mellowness. If the winter moisture is utilized as it will be by early sowing and the seed is covered either by the harrow, or if sown on the snow, by the frost, the conditions of success are met. They are not met if the land lacks drainage, which most of our clay soil does. They are not met if there is a want of fertility. An average degree of richness will do only for a favorable season, but not in an unfavorable one, much less if a crop of grain to be sown is to be sown. If, added to this, a long severe drought occur soon after the seed is sown, the result will be as though no seed had been put out. Long droughts are usually fatal, even after the plant has started, for its short root will have no moisture to support it. So long as this dry condition remains manure will be ineffectual. I have known seeding to die out after it had grown out an inch or more, being exposed for weeks to strong drying winds. An occasional rain then seems to have little effect.  
 This was the case last season in this section, in soil either too light or puffy, or hard, and much worse when also lumpy and harsh, and its fertility reduced by long cropping without replenishment. Is it a wonder that so much failure results? We sow our poorest, worst worked land, and then expect to see the miracle of a crop which only the first-class soil produces. If circumstances preclude mowing the land into the best condition, much can be done by top dressing the soil with manure in the fall after it is ploughed, and early in the spring harrow and sow the seed. This will do to secure a catch, but after enrichment is necessary to establish and continue the crop. Here is where we often err. We let our land lie and take care of itself, in which case the grass runs out and the weeds take its place. In this section there is nothing so important as care in putting out land in grass and sustaining it. If not put in well so as to secure a good catch, it will take years with the best care to get it established, and then with the chance of having some weeds remain. When the crop is thick from the start and sustained by fertilizers, especially if clover is mixed with it, weeds have little chance, and none at all if the land has been well plowed so as to kill the weeds and the seed sown clean. All foul land should be treated in this way. It not only improves the soil in its texture, but increases the fertility, and sufficiently to pay for the labor. The curse of our grass land is the weeds overrunning it, but from habit we have become careless about it.

**UNHAPPY ARISTOCRACY.**  
 Hard State of the Male Members of the Imperial Family of Russia.  
 Geo. Augustus Sala, beholding the male members of the Russian aristocracy gathered at the funeral of the Czar, falls to pitying them as follows:  
 "It may be a platitudinous remark that illustrious rank, an income of a great many thousands of roubles a year, a fine house to live in, a dandy cook and plenty of servants, and the breast of your coat all covered with stars and crosses, do not necessarily of themselves confer on humanity the thing called happiness; but it is expedient to remember this truism in view of the opinion that these adorn no states of existence more monotonous, more useless, and indeed more generally deplorable than those of the male members of the Imperial family of Russia. The grand Duchesses are more fortunate. They have at least the chance of marrying foreign potentates, of escaping from his Imperial Majesty's Gaol—in which his Imperial Majesty himself is the chief prisoner—of conversing with free people, and of breathing fresh air. But here are these young, middle-aged and elderly Imperial gentlemen, forming a caste apart, as isolated and comparatively as numerous as the Imperial caste of the Yellow Girdle in China, condemned to pass their lives, buttoned and buckled, and strapped up in the tight-fitting uniforms, and to wear helmets or forage caps on their heads. They were dressed in uniform when they were children; they live in uniform; and when they die they will be buried in uniform. Each adult one of them is mured up in a palace of his own as big as a barracks, where he keeps his place kept in safe custody by a swarming retinue of aides-de-camp, equerries, maitres d'hotel, grooms and lackeys, and the wages of this army of parasites added to the revenue apportioned to their Highnesses from a civil list of ten millions of roubles a year, but which is practically unlimited, go far towards eating up the fat of the land, and grinding the face of the miserable *moujik* even to the bone."

**Saved by Her Calves.**  
 From the Philadelphia Times.  
 The utility of a pair of patent sawdust calves was strikingly illustrated last Saturday in Philadelphia. Shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon a mad cur, pursued by two perspiring policemen, dashed into Eighth Street from Walnut and caused such a flutter among the petticoats of the locality has seldom witnessed. Among the footlights of the Grand Central Theatre, this female could not face a rabid canine, so she bunched up her petticoats and made a dash with the others for safety. Her legs, which had served her so well before, did not go back to her this time, for the mad dog, probably attracted by the development below the knees, drove her poisonous fangs into her stocking and went howling on. The ballet-dancer, more dead than alive, was dragged into a drug-store, where an eager and anxious crowd of

**men carefully examined her legs.** Their recovery was made that the canine had only destroyed the sawdust padding which the young woman had tied to a lean stake to give it roundness and attractiveness. The eager, anxious, and solicitous men departed much sadder and a heap wiser.

**THE CLOTHING TRADE.**  
 A Sale of the Coat that was Worn an Hour or Two by Mr. Jones.  
 From the New Orleans Times.  
 "Herman," said a Poydras street merchant clothier, addressing his clerk, "have you sold all of those overcoats that was left over from last winter?"  
 "No sir, dere was dree of dem left yet."  
 "Well, dere must sell 'em right away, 'e winter will not last, you know, Herman. Bring me one of dese coats and I will show you somedings about de piness. I will tell you how ve sell dem out, and you must learn de piness, Herman; de winter was gone, you know, and ve have had dese coats in de store more es seek years."  
 An eight-dollar overcoat was handed him by his clerk, and smoothing it out, he took a buckskin money purse from the showcase, and stuffing it full of paper, dropped it into one of the pockets.  
 "Now, Herman, my boy," he continued, "watch me sell dat coat. I haf sold over dirty-five of dem shust de same way, and I want to deech you de piness. Ven de next customer comes in de show I will show de way Rube Hoffmanstein, mine broder in Detroit, sells his clothing and vuder dings."  
 A few minutes later a negro, in quest of a suitable pair of cheap shoes, entered the store. The proprietor advanced smiling and enquired:  
 "Vat is it you wish?"  
 "Yer got any cheap shoes hyar?" asked the negro.  
 "Blenty of dem, my front, blenty; at any price you want."  
 The negro stated that he wanted a pair of brogan, and soon his pedal extremities were increased in them, and a bargain struck. As he was about to leave, the proprietor called him back.  
 "I ain't gwine ter buy nuffin else, I've got all I want," said the negro, sullenly.  
 "Dot may be so, my dear sir," replied the proprietor, "but I shust wants you to look at dis coat. It was de pure Russian wool, and dis time last year you deen got de same goat for twenty-five dollars. Mine gracious, clothing was gone down to nodding and dere was no money in de piness any longer. You want somedding dot will keep you from de vedder and make you feel warm as summer dime. De consumption vos goin round and de doctors dell me it vos de vedder. More den nine peopled die de round were I had dese shoes. Dis coat dot. Mine fren, dot goat was Russian wool, dick and lery. Vy, Mr. Jones, who owns de pank on Canal street, took dot goat home mit him yesterday and vore it all day, but it vas a leedle bright across de shoulders and he brought it back shust a vile ago. Dry it on, my dear sir. Ah! dot vos all right. Misder Jones vas a rich man and he liked dot goat. How deep de bookets vas, but it vas a leedle tight across de shoulders."  
 The negro buttoned up the coat, thrust his hands in the pockets and felt the purse. A peaceful smile played over his face when his touch disclosed to his mind the contents of the pockets, but he choked down his joy and inquired:  
 "Who did you say vore this hyar coat?"  
 "Vy, Misder Jones vore vos de pank on Canal street."  
 "Vat yer gwine to ax fur it?"  
 "Dat's powerful high price fur dis coat, but I'll take it."  
 "Herman, here, wrap up dis goat fur de shentleman and draw in a cravat; it will make him look nice mit de ladies."  
 "Nebber mind, I'll keep de coat on," replied the negro, and pulling out a roll of money he paid for it and left the store.  
 While he was around the next corner moaning over the stuffed purse, Hoffmanstein said to his clerk:  
 "Herman, fix up anudder vore of dese goats de same way, and deen forget to dell dem dot Misder Jones, vor vus de pank on Canal street, vore it yesterday."

**The Hospitable Belgians.**  
 From the London Times.  
 The Belgians are the only hospitable people still remaining in Europe, and think nothing of asking perfect strangers to join their family circle in a five minutes' acquaintance. If, therefore, a traveller stops in any place where a wedding or christening is going on, it generally depends on himself whether he will be one of the guests or not. Not long ago I had gone to bed at a Belgian inn, when I heard a resolute knocking at my chamber door, and some giggling as of some laughing girls outside. It was about 11 o'clock P. M., and I got up, much wondering what could be the matter. The landlord had sent his daughter and some of her young friends to ask if I would join a midnight pilgrimage they were about to make to the shrine of a neighboring saint in fulfillment of a promise they had made to a deceased relative. I got up, joined their party, and it was certainly the jolliest pilgrimage I ever saw or heard of. We walked along country roads by starlight, singing songs which were not of a particularly saintly character, and when we had accomplished the object of our mission in a quaint old chapel where the saint worshipped we wandered out to a picturesque village and ate hot rolls and fresh butter with some excellent coffee. As we returned by rail in the early summer morning, the whole family seemed to have adopted me as one of themselves. The duchy of Luxembourg is, if possible, still more patriarchal in the manner of its people, and a man I know was invited by some people he had never seen before to pass a month at their chateau. What is perhaps still stranger he went, was really well received, and that the impromptu acquaintance thus formed turned out to be mutually satisfactory. Belgium is now by far the cheapest place in Europe, except some of the remote parts of Italy; and in Belgium or in the duchy of Luxembourg the fare is everywhere excellent, while in Italy one may have to live on macaroni and tomatoes.

**An Excited Cad.**  
 From the Montreal Star.  
 When Lord Dufferin was governor general of Canada his hospitality was famous. On one occasion, in consequence of a letter of introduction which had been presented, his lordship invited an ambitious New York cad to dinner at Rideau Hall. Naturally the evening a terrific rain-storm set in, and Lady Dufferin considerably invited her husband's guest to pass the night at the Hall. Needless to say, he accepted and the cup of his ambition was full. Shortly after he had retired, Lord Dufferin sent one of the footmen up to his room to see if he had everything he wanted. The footman could not find him. He was nowhere to be seen. He had run to his hotel in the pelting rain to get his night shirt.  
 Several specimens of fossil woods and ignite have been found at a depth of 191 feet below the surface in boring an artesian well at Galveston, Texas. Above these were 55 feet of quicksand and 135 feet of solid blue clay. The contractor also asserts that a considerable quantity of bones, and shell have been drawn out of the well, from what depth is not stated.