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THE SIGNS OF THE SEASONS.

What does it mean when the bluebird flies
Over the hill, singing sweet and clearly?
When violets peer thro' the blades of grass?
These are the signs that the Spring is here.

What does it mean when the berries are ripe?
When butterflies flit and honey-bees hum?
When cattle stand under the shady trees?
These are the signs that Summer has come.

What does it mean when the crickets chirp?
And away to the south-land the wild geese steer?
When apples are falling and nuts are brown?
These are the signs that Autumn is here.

What does it mean when the days are short?
When the leaves are gone and the brooks are dumb?
When the fields are white with the drifting snows?
These are the signs that Winter has come.

The old stars set and the new ones rise,
And skies that were stormy grow bright and clear,
And so the beautiful, wonderful signs
Go round and round with the changing year.

GERARD LANGTON'S SECRET.

It was in a luxuriously furnished room where a glowing grate threw genial light and warmth upon the occupants, that Gerald Langton, lawyer and millionaire, listened with bated breath and pallid cheeks to a low and melodious voice that told the story of a life. The speaker, a beautiful woman of about thirty, yet ten years younger than Mr. Langton, reclined in a low cushioned chair, her dress, her attitude, both speaking of the ease wealth gives, but her face was full of the deepest anguish, as her lips recounted this story.

"You love me," she said, gently, yet sadly, "and I love you as I never loved anyone before, although I am a widow. That you knew, but you did not know my husband's name. By my uncle's last request I dropped it and took his, with the property he left me. Do not look at me tenderly, Gerald, do not shake my voice or my heart, for when you know whom I am, you will not repeat the offer you have made me, and which, Heaven is my witness, I tried to avert."

"Let your conscience be at rest there," said her listener, in a grave yet tender voice; "you have never given me one hope, Maude. By what instinct I knew that you loved me I can never tell, something in your eyes—some tone of your voice betrayed you. If, as you say, something in your past life does separate us, you have been no coquette to torment me with false hopes. But, Maude, tell me again, whatever stands between us, you love me?"

"I love you," she said, gravely "and it is because I love you that I will not let you link your honorable name with that of the wretch who was my husband. I was very young—not sixteen—when he came to make a visit to some friends living at Grassbank. Uncle Richard has a country seat near the village. I first met Alexander at a picnic, where he was the very life of the party, everybody's cavalier, courteous to all, full of wit and animation and service for all. I believe every girl at the grounds thought she had captivated him, his attentions were so well divided, and yet so impressive to each one. He claimed to be no more than a salesman in a large wholesale house with a good salary, but he had the manners of a gentleman, a good education, and the most perfect beauty of face and form that I ever saw in a man. It was not long before it was evident that he wished to win my love, and he had an easy task. Such love as a child of sixteen can give, I gave him. He was the impersonation of every hero of poetry and fiction with whom my limited reading had made me familiar. School-girl like, I had made an ideal hero, and fitted this, my first admirer, with all his imaginary perfections.

"From the first, Uncle Richard disliked him, pronouncing him false and shallow, and assuring me that my personal attractions had not won his heart; but that the fact of my being an heiress to a large property had gained me the protestations in which I so firmly believed."

"It is a painful story to me now, Gerard. Let it suffice that I lived in a world of delicious dreams while Alexander remained at Grassbank. When he left, he carried my promise to be his wife at Christmas."

"I think if my money had depended upon Uncle Richard that my marriage might have been prevented by his threatening to disinherit me, but both from my father and my mother I had inherited money that made me independent, in a pecuniary sense, of his control or consent."

"Most grudgingly, however, my uncle did consent, after searching inquiry about Alexander, resulting in no worse report than that his employes thought him fast, idle, and just the man to be a fortune-hunter. Even then my dear uncle would have protected my fortune by settling it strictly upon myself; but, with the reckless generosity of extreme youth, I refused to have this done. Never, I was firmly convinced, would my adored Alexander wrong me in any way."

"For a year after the splendid wedding that made me Alexander's wife I was very happy. I was too ignorant of the value of money to understand that we were living far beyond our income, and enjoyed to the utmost the luxuries surrounding me—the constant gaiety that was in such strong contrast to the school routine from which I had just been released."

"Then began a life of neglect, often of quarrelling, when I objected to my husband's course of conduct—his drinking, his extravagance, and his late hours. Still I found my own pleasures in society and a renewal of some of my favorite studies, especially languages and music. I was fond, too, of water-color painting, and made presents to my friends of specimens of my skill in that line."

"It was four years after my marriage when I was thunderstruck by Alexander asking me to request a loan of money from Uncle Richard, with the information added that every penny of my property was gone. Since then I have known that a large proportion of it was lost at the gaming-tables."

"Long before this I had lost all love for my husband. Respect had died out when I knew the dissipated life he was leading, and, foolish as I was, I could not continue to love a man whom I despised. I refused the errand, and brought down a torrent of such gross abuse that I really expected Alexander would end by striking me."

"Day after day the request was renewed, but I would not yield. Upon my marriage Uncle Richard had sold his city residence and taken up a permanent abode at Grassbank, where knowing my husband to be an unwelcome guest, I never visited him. I wrote occasionally, but the love of years, like that of father and child, had been so sadly strained by my persistence in marrying Alexander, that even our correspondence was languid and commonplace."

"I would not, therefore, write to him to ask a favor that I knew would not have been necessary without criminal recklessness of expenditure, and each refusal made my husband more furious. Then came an overwhelming blow. Alexander forged a check, and drew two thousand pounds of Uncle Richard's money from the bank. I do not think my uncle would ever have prosecuted him had he guessed who was the forger; but he handed the whole matter over to the law as soon as it was discovered that the check was forged. It was traced to Alexander, and at the same time it was found that he had robbed in the same way his former employers. He had given up all work upon his marriage; but when he found himself without money, his knowledge of the busines enabled him to forge the check of Derkiss and Co. Even if Uncle Richard had spared him for my sake, this other forgery would have entitled him to penal servitude. He was sentenced to seven years, and Uncle Richard took me home, full of heavenly pity and forgiveness for the child who had treated him so ungratefully."

"Then your husband is in prison?" asked Gerard in a hard, strained voice.

"No, no; he is dead! He died within the first year. Uncle Richard saw the death in the paper and sent the money for his burial. No; I am free; but none the less I am the widow of a convicted felon."

"But none the less," quoted Gerard, "the woman I love and honor above all others, and hope still to make my wife."

It took, however, more than one interview, full of lover's pleading, to win Maude from her resolution. She so honored her lover, was so proud of his good name and the position he had attained by his talents, that her sensitive nature shrank from even the shadow of her misery falling upon his life.

But the victory was won at last, and the lawyer walked home one evening full of a proud, glad joy, for Maude had promised to be his wife.

"If you are willing to take Alexander Hull's widow for your wife," she had said, "I will not oppose you longer, for I love you with all my heart."

He had no thought but of that glad triumph when he turned up the gas in his office. He was in the habit of making a last visit there before going up to his bed-room, in case notes or messages had been left for him. One lay there on this evening, a shabby-looking envelope, but directed in a bold, handsome hand that he recognized at once.

He tore it open. After a few words of introduction the note ran:—

"You did the best you could for me on my trial, but the facts were too strong for you. I have now a last favor to ask of you. I die, as you know, at noon to-morrow. You, as my lawyer, can see me at any time. Will you come as soon as you receive this, and win the gratitude of the man you know as "James Fox?"

"The man I know as James Fox," muttered the lawyer; "the smooth, plausible scoundrel who actually made me believe him innocent of the hideous murder for which he was convicted. I can find extenuation for some murders, but this cold-blooded assassination of an old man for money only was revolting. How he deceived me, though for a time! And how he exulted over his success in doing so when, as he says, facts were too strong! Shall I go to him? I suppose I must. It is still early."

It was not yet midnight when Gerard Langton was ushered into the cell of the man who in a few short hours was to meet the extreme penalty of the law for the worst crime.

Yet there was nothing revolting in the appearance of the criminal. His dress was neat, his hair carefully arranged, his mustache faultless, his hands white and refined looking. He rose from his seat upon the bed as his lawyer entered his cell.

"I knew you would come," he said, courteously, "though you were offended at my want of frankness. Well, that is all over! You will not refuse the last request of a dying man, Mr. Langton?"

"Not if I can grant it," was the reply.

"This," said the murderer, "is not my first offence against the law. Some years ago I was sentenced for a term of years for a forgery. By a strange accident I escaped the penalty. On the same day James Fox was sentenced to two years for petty larceny, and we were sent together to prison. James Fox—my companion, understand, not myself—was deranged, but his lawyers had not been able to save him, as his aberration was not always apparent. When we were entered upon the books of the prison, imagine my amazement when my fellow-prisoner gave my name for his own. Like a flash I saw the advantage to be gained by the deception, and allowed the error to pass. My companion committed suicide, and I escaped with two years' imprisonment, instead of seven. But I feared recognition, and went to Canada. There I lived by my wits until a year ago, when I returned here to try to raise money from my wife, and thought I saw an easier plan by committing the crime for which I die to-morrow. But I want to see my wife. I wronged her—I robbed her—but Heaven is my witness I loved her. When I was put in prison she dropped my name, and took her own again. So it is not for Mrs. Alexander Hull you must go, but for Mrs. Maude Temple."

Was the room reeling—the ceiling falling—the wall closing around him? Gerard Langton felt as if they were, as the names fell on his ears. Maude—his Maude—the wife of this cool villian who talked of his hideous crimes as if they were ordinary events? Well, he knew that to carry this man's message was to separate himself from Maude for ever. Never would she let him marry the widow of a murderer! Very rapidly all the terrible facts pressed one after another upon his brain, and he said, "If you love her, why add a new misery to her life. She may have lived down the old pain you caused her; why, for a selfish gratification will you make her whole life a misery?"

"She is my wife! I would bid her farewell."

"She is not your wife! Your own crimes have released her from any allegiance to you!"

"You know her?"

"Yes! I know what she has suffered, and beg of you to let her still believe you died years ago."

"She is happy?"

"Scarcely that. Such wounds as hers never heal entirely, but it is cruelty to tear them open when they are quiet!"

"Has she married?"

"No! She is still your widow!"

"It is hard to deny myself one more sight of her face, and the hope I had that she would say she forgave me!"

"Think of her, not of yourself!"

There was a long silence in the cell. Every throb of Gerard Langton's heart was a pain to him, but Alexander Hull sat in moody silence, evidently reluctant to give up his wish.

At last he spoke.

"You have been very good to me. Tell me, now, if you have any personal reason for your request. Perhaps—you love her?"

"I do!" was the brief reply. "She has promised to be my wife!"

"Then it will be James Fox who is hanged to-morrow! I meant to give my real name up, but I will carry my secret to my grave. It may be in another world even the little last self-denial will be a plea for me. Go now. You may trust me."

And he kept his word, and Gerard Langton his secret.

When Maude, a few weeks later, became his wife, she little guessed the terrible ordeal which he had spared her, or the added disgrace that belonged to the name she had given up.

"Great Scott."

The other morning, while the urbane manager of Woodward's Gardens was smoking a four bit cigar and meditatively listening to the muffled wails of a tom-cat that had just been swallowed alive by the big anaconda, a tall, thin, scientific-looking man, with a goatee and blue glasses, entered the gate and remarked in an insinuating manner:

"Of course you pass the scientific fraternity?"

"Of course we do not," said the show man "What, not the savans, not the pioneers in the great march of the mind into the hitherland of the infinite beyond?" returned the Profestor, with great surprise.

"I will not deceive you," sarcastically replied the proprietor of the only salamander; "we pass nothing but the quills on the frettul porcupines—I mean the press. You can't see the ostridges unless you come down and put up."

"Dear me, dear me!" sighed the scientist reflectively. "To think that a professor of cosmogrephic conchology should be denied admittance to a third-class Zoo! Has the skamgatibus been fed yet?"

"Skam——which?" asked the tiger importer.

"The skamgatibus. You've got one, haven't you?"

"Y-e-s-s; I believe we've a small female somewheres," said the grizzly's friend doubtfully.

"I never knew a first-class collection to have less than two pair," said the Professor contemptuously. "How do your azimuths stand this cold weather, eh?"

"Azimuths?" asked the Napoleon aggregator of curiosities: "what's them? Some new kind of bird—you don't mean ostri——?"

"Ostridges be hanged!" said the successor of Darwin; "ostridges are nothing. I've shot more ostridges with quail shot than you've got hairs on your head. You don't actually mean to sit there and tell me you haven't got a single azimuth to your back?"

"Don't believe I have," admitted the alligator breeder, mortified; "what are they like?"

"Oh, they're of the order Spinalis spicmatis, about eight feet high. Fur peels off in the spring, you know—the Siberian species, I mean. I suppose you've got one of those rectangular African flipgoobilies that reached New York the other day?"

"No; I'm darned if I did," said the much agitated showman. "Here I've been keeping an agent in New York on a big salary to look out for attractions, and he doesn't catch on to the first blamed thing. Spends all our money on second-hand panthers and kangaroos with the rheumatics. I'll bounce him by telegraph!"

"Haven't even got a flipgoohly, eh?" mused the scientist, in a tone of great pity. "And I shouldn't be surprised if you didn't have a golden-crested cuspidor in your whole show."

"Neither I have; neither I have," replied the wretched promoter of pelicans, in a tone of great bitterness. "S'pose you just step in, sir, and look round: mebbe there's something else you could say——"

"N-n-o, I guess not," said the tall man. "It would hardly pay me to spend so much valuable scientific time in a fourth-class show like this. Not even on azimuth, eh? I should think you'd be afraid of being actually mobbed some time. I'm sorry for you, my good man: sorry for you. I've no doubt you mean well, but—not a solitary skamgatibus? Great Scott!"

If wishbones were horses then turkeys might ride.

Heroes of the Coast.

The surfmen at Smith's Island, on the Northampton shore of Virginia, rescued the crew of the Albert Dally, of Augusta, Me. on the night of the 7th of January. On the following day Mr. Cobb's wreckers went on board in spite of the protestation of Keeper Hitchens, of the Life Service. That night the storm was terrific. The surfmen succeeded in reaching a point opposite the wreck, on which were the sailors and wreckers, at 2 A. M. of the 9th. Only the masts appeared in dim outline, while the hull was completely submerged. Several Coston signals were burned to cheer the men on the wreck and to enable the surfmen to determine more accurately the position of the vessel. It was determined to make an attempt to rescue them with the boat, but after proceeding some distance the surfmen could see nothing of the schooner and were forced to return to the shore. When it was light enough to see the vessel the safety line, discharged from the Lyle gun, was twice thrown across the jibboom of the vessel, but as no attempt was made by those on board to get the line it was hauled in by the surfmen, and each time it parted. Two more efforts to shoot the line over the wreck proved unsuccessful, owing to a strong adverse wind and the frozen condition of the line, which caused it to part before it reached the destined point. Had the line been thrown full across the vessel, it would have availed naught, as Mr. Cobb stated that they were too benumbed with cold to have handled it on board, even if it had been placed in their hands.

Seeing then that the only hope of saving the imperiled men lay in reaching them with the surf-boat, Keeper Hitchens and his crew, as soon as the ebbing tide allowed them to launch, set out through the storm and the sea, which was running half-mast high to the rescue of the nine men (five of the schooner's and four of the Copp Wrecking Company), who had been left on the stranded vessel and who could now be seen lashed to the rigging.

Keeper Hitchens and his men, though they had been out on the beach all night in the terrible storm without fire or food, drenched to the skin from their first effort to board the vessel, and keeping their feet from freezing only by wading in the salt water of the sea, yet rushed with alacrity to their duty. The boat was launched and started on its perilous journey, but the current was so strong that the men were cut to leeward and the boat forced inshore. Launching the boat again they got far enough out to reach the line which was fast on board the wreck, but the sea was running so high that it was snatched from the hands of the men who held it and again they were driven ashore. Another powerful effort was made to reach the wreck, and this time they succeeded.

One of the men on the wreck, Edward Hunter, of Maine, the steward of the schooner, who refused to go up in the rigging, had been washed overboard and lost about daybreak. The remaining eight men were carried ashore—four at a time—dreadfully benumbed by their long exposure to the cold. Richard Gordon, a member of the Cobb wrecking crew, died from the effects of exposure just about the time he reached the shore.

Killing Deer with Axes.

A correspondent gives an account of deer in the forests of Maine and the laws of that State to protect them. A number of years since a law was passed forbidding the killing of moose, deer or caribou between the first of February and first of October, and forbidding the hunting of them with dogs at any season, under a penalty of $40 for each offence. But this law did not protect the game. In the deep snows of January hunters from distant States, as well as those in Maine, killed thousands of the animals in the deep snows, in many cases using only axes for killing them as they drove them into the deep snow-banks, the hunters going on snow-shoes. In 1873 the legislature forbade the hunting or killing of the animals in January, as well as in all the following months to October. After this the deer increased rapidly, and at times they even mingled with the herds of farmers. The lumbermen could kill enough for their own use without going a great distance from their cabin doors. In a few years these laws were disregarded, and hunters came into the forests in the winter and slaughtered thousands and sent their carcasses to the Boston and other distant markets. In 1876 the Legislature made a law imposing a fine of $40 for each carcass or hide sent out of the State. This law served a good purpose in protecting the game, though it may be questioned whether it was not a stretch of legislative power in interdicting commerce between the States. However, in 1878 influences were brought to bear which secured a repeal of the law forbidding the exportation of carcasses and hides, and since then the deer, caribou and moose have been growing scarce, and the subject of making more stringent laws to protect them is discussed. As the work of destruction is now going on, not only the larger wild game but the forests of this country will disappear in a comparatively brief period.

Collecting the Damages.

"I am a quiet, unostentatious man, and never harm nobody," said the intruder, moistening the palms of his hands and taking a firmer grasp of the axe-helve, "but if you don't come down with $17 to soothe my lacerated feelings there will be trouble here in Austin." "Was the boy bitten so very badly by my dog!" asked the terrified owner of the animal, who is one of the most timid men in Austin "He was bitten just $17 worth," replied the intruder, swinging the weapon around his head. "Here is your money," replied the owner of the dog. The intruder put the money in his pocket, and was about to leave, when the proprietor of the dog remarked: "I hope your son was not bitten badly." "Why, he ain't my son. I haven't got any son." "Whose son, is he then, and how did you come to demand the money of me?' "He is the son of a friend of mine who owed me $17, and he didn't have any money. The only available assets he had were those dog bites on his son's body, and he turned them over to me for collection, and I have collected them," "Well, I declare!" "And stranger," continued the man with the axe-handle, "if you or any of your family ever get bitten by a dog, and you want the damages collected promptly from the owner of the dog, let me know, and I will do it for 25 per cent, net and furnish my own axe-handle."

Rome's Ruins.

Works of excavation in Rome are generally discontinued during the summer and autumn months. The laborers go off to the corn and wine harvests, where they get better pay, but this year the excavations on the Forum, and along the side of the Palatine facing the Temple of Romulus and the Basilica of Constantine, have been continued with increasing activity. The extent of ground broken is something unusual, and evidently Signor Baccelli is determined to do his utmost to insure, as far as possible, the completion of his grand scheme of archæological exploration by cutting out all the work he can. It comprises the restoring to light of all that remains of the buildings and constructions which surrounded and adorned the Roman Forum; the clearing of the entire area by removing everything, of whatever nature, superimposed upon it in modern times; the junction of the excavations on the Forum with those on the Palatine by the completing of both; the isolation from—or rather within—the modern city of the greater part of the fourth, the eighth and the tenth of the Augustan regions of ancient Rome which adjoined each other, and their dedication to the memories connected with them.

Extensive excavations have restored much to light and have taught us much, but the desolation remained almost as great as before. These excavations never assumed any other aspect than that of a number of great holes, notwithstanding that some of them afforded considerable space to walk about in. There was—as regards the Forum—first, the hole between the massive wall of the Tabularium, with the rear of the modern municipal buildings standing upon it on the one side and the roadway passing from the Via Bonella to the Via della Consolazione in front of the Arch of Septimus Severus on the other, in which were completely visible the remains of the Temples of Saturn, Vespasian, and Concord, the Rostra and the Arch of Septimius Severus excavated in the time of Pius VII. Then on the further side of that roadway there was, until twelve years ago, the small, unclean hole dug at the expense of the Duchess of Devonshire in December, 1816. This, between 1870 and 1875, was enlarged as far as the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and in 1878—a second roadway being left at that point—another hole was dug beyond, extending as far as the Arch of Titus, and again the works were suspended.

But a new impetus was given in February last to the exploration of the Forum. A seat in the Italian Cabinet, and that seat the head of the Department of Public Instruction, was for the first time held by a Roman, Signor Baccelli. The Roman archæologists were anxious to ascertain the site of the Fabian Arch, of which no traces had been found on either side of the causeway left from the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina to the corner of the Palatine. Its discovery would determine the vexed question of the course of the Sacra Via, and there was no difficulty in interesting Signor Baccelli sufficiently to obtain his permission to remove the causeway in search of it. That search was ineffectual notwithstanding that some voussoirs and other details which had evidently formed parts of the arch were found, but discoveries of the greatest interest were made. Sufficient indications were obtained to satisfy many competent authorities as to the line of the Sacra Via: considerable remains of the Regia were found, and other important discoveries were made at the very spot where it was necessary to discontinue the excavations. These only served to stimulate unsatisfied interest. Among other things a fragment of the celebrated marble plan of Rome, dug up in the course of the works, gave the plan of the very spot where it was found, and raised the question of the Via Nova.

The work accomplished so far is a good earnest of what we may look forward to enjoying when the Palatine and the Forum—the area within which the whole history of Rome centered and can be studied—are excavated as completely as the remains of Pompeii, cared for with the same scientific discernment, and placed, as what is left of that ancient city is, open to the easy comprehension of the most simple. What is seen at Pompeii is seen completely and can be understood. What is visible of the Palace of the Cæsars and other remains on the Palatine and of the Forum can only be seen by looking, as I have said, into a number of separate holes, and, when seen, can only be imperfectly understood after infinite puzzling.

Twelve years ago the question of the very direction of the Forum did it extend from north to south toward the Arch of Titus, or from east to west toward the Circus Maximus—was still a matter of controversy. Certainly they were few who continued to hold to the latter theory: but, clear as the case appeared to the majority, there was then no visible evidence that could be put forward as decisive. Ten months ago no one could prove which of the two streets running along the Forum was the Sacra Via, and the theories as to its course were many. The difficulty has not yet been set at rest to the satisfaction of all, but the weight of authority is agreed that the excavations made last spring revealed the exact line of the celebrated street "glorified by a hundred victories," and the removal of comparatively a few more square metres of rubbish will settle the question forever. There are, with one or two unimportant exceptions only, no longer any doubts as to the names of the temples and other remains standing on the uncovered portion of the Forum. No one disputes the fact that we can point with certainty to the ruins of the temple which Augustus built on the spot where the body of "Great Julius" was burned, and to many other historic sights; but all this is still of but limited educational value, for bewildering controversy is rife—and will continue so until the whole area is cleaned—as to where the Comitium, the Græcostasis, the other Rostra and many more important details were situated.

The excavations on the Palatine have also given most valuable results. The general topography of the greater part of the Imperial Palace, and a few of the spots where events connected with the lives and deaths of some of the Cæsars occurred, have been ascertained beyond dispute. We can look with certainty on portions of the edifices built by Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian, and Septimius Severus. We know exactly where the remains of those built by Augustus and others are lying buried. We can walk along the gallery where Caligula was murdered, and picture the scene described with such graphic power by Suetonius, and especially by Josephus, but these are so far only detached facts, with no connecting links visible, and may well be likened to a few lines of a palimpsest deciphered here and there, while all the rest lies hidden beneath the work of later hands. It is not so long ago that the lines in which Statius mentions the colossal equestrian statue of Domitian on the Forum and the edifices around it were spoken of as a "stumbling block rather than an auxiliary to antiquities. Now we can stand upon the wreck of the pedestal of that colossus and look upon the remains of these edifices situated exactly as Statius describes them.

The excavations in progress will soon reveal the spot behind the Temple of Castor where he reminded his contemporaries they might unguardedly lose their money. In like manner, when they are completed, we shall be able to tread, step by step, the route Ovid took ("Trist," III, 1, 27) from the Forum of Cæsar to the Palatine, and recognize the buildings and sites he tells us that he passed; that Otho followed when he suddenly left Galba sacrificing in the Temple of Apollo and hurried through the Palace of Mibdrius to the Velabrum, and thence to the Golden Milestone, near the Temple of Saturn, and all the other localities, both within the palace and on the Forum, Tacitus and Suetonius mention with such topographical exactness in their records of the tragical death of Galba; that along which Cicero hastened after Fulvius warning, from his house on the corner of the Palatine, and convoked the Senate to meet him in the Temple of Jupiter Stator the same spot where Romulus centuries before had rallied his Romans, and close to where their Sabine wives rushed from the Palatine down among the combatants. The clearing away of all the accumulation and rubbish lying upon it, like the later writing on a palimpsest, will enable us to put those bits together, to localize with exactness the scenes historians and other writers have described, and make it possible to study the events of Roman history as it has never been studied before on the very spots and within the remains of the very walls where they were enacted.

Geraniums In The Window.

It is very rare to see a well-grown geranium in window culture. Even if the plant bloom fairly, they are often drawn up, mis-shapen things, not pleasing to look upon. In the majority of cases, plants that have been set out in the garden for the summer are allowed to "go as you please." The roots finding an abundance of rich soil, the tops grow off at a famous rate. At the approach of cool weather the plants are taken up as they stood; if any cutting is done, it is at the roots, to bring them within the limits of the pot, and the plants are placed in the window. As a consequence of such treatment, the majority of the leaves fade and fall, and show a lot of long, lanky stems, with a small tuft of leaves at the top. This condition of the plants is due either to a lack of knowledge or to timidity. Amateur cultivators, as a general thing, seem to fear to use the knife; could the plant suffer pain, they would not be more reluctant to cut. The proper method is, to prepare the plants for taking in long before the time for lifting them; but it is too late to advise that, as it is to suggest pruning them at the time of taking them up. Even at this late day it is better to cut back the geraniums to a good shape than to let them remain as they are. Of course each plant will have its own needs in this respect, and only general advice can be given. Cut back the long stems in such a manner that the plant will form a low, rounded head, and remove altogether such branches as will make the head too much crowded.

Remarkable Hands at Poker.

Four members of a well-known club in New York sat down to a game of poker. There was a dollar limit, and there was no desire on the part of any of the players to win much money. After one deal three of them drew one card each, except the dealer, who passed out. The man on the left of the age bet one dollar, the second man raised him one dollar, and the age raised the pot another dollar. This was followed by raises to the limit all around a second time, when the man who made the first bet said:

"Gentlemen, I ought to raise the bet, but this is a sociable game, and I'll not crowd you. I will simply call."

Without waiting for the others to bet he laid face upward on the table the deuce, tray, four and five of spades. The fifth card he placed back uppermost.

The second man said. "I feel the same about this matter, I will simply call." He then showed the deuce, tray, four and five of diamonds, hiding the fifth card.

"I also call," said the age, and he displayed the deuce, tray, four and five of clubs. The fifth card of each was then shown, and it was seen that each had a straight flush of the same value. The pot was divided.

It was a square game, and the hands were not fixed.

The Quincy Market Cold Storage Company, of Boston, are said to have the largest refrigerating building in the world. It is of stone and brick, 160 by 80 feet in size, and 70 feet in height. The capacity is 800,000 cubic feet, the cost $200,000, and the ice chamber holds 600,000 tons of ice. It will be used for storing dressed beef and mutton. The Chicago refrigerating cars unload at the door.

Though not much of a conversationalist, a mute might get along very nicely in a spoke factory.

Remarkable Comets.

The earliest observers of comets were either among the Chinese or Chaldeans. Among the most ancient nations, especially the Greeks and Romans, comets were regarded as not only precursors of evil, but frequently also of good fortune. Thus in the year 344 B. C. the appearance of a great comet was thought to be a token of the success of Timoleon's expedition to Sicily. Again, in the year 134 or 132 B. C., the birth of the great Mithridates was signalized by two remarkable comets whose brightness, we are told, eclipsed that of the noon-day sun, and which occupied a quarter of the heavens. The accession of Mithridates in the year 118 B. C. to the throne of Pontus was likewise marked by a celestial visitant of the same nature. A comet which shone in the year 86 B. C. was thought by Pliny to have been the forerunner of the civil commotions which took place during the consulship of Octavius, and another which appeared in 43 B. C. was believed to be the soul of Julius Cæsar transported to the heavens. Later on, a number of comets, during the reign of Nero, were seized on by that emperor as pretexts for all kinds of persecution. Tacitus, referring to one of these, remarks that it was "a kind of presage which Nero always expiated with noble blood." Josephus relates that in 68 A. D., among the terrible omens which foretold the doom of Jerusalem, was a comet with a tail in the shape of a sword, which hung for a year over the city. Comets were frequently regarded in past times as the presages of the death of some illustrious personage.

Comets are said to have foretold the death of the Emperors Vespasian, Constantine the Great, and Valentinian, of Attila the Hun, Mahomet, Louis the Second, Richard Cœur de Lion, Philip of Spain, Francis the Second, and many other potentates too numerous to mention. The historian Sozomenes describes a terrible comet which hung over Constantinople in the year 400, and was believed to be the cause of the pestilence that devastated the city. During the Middle Ages comets were almost universally considered as foretelling calamities. We read less of them as presaging an auspicious reign or honoring the birth of a great hero, than as the precursors of plague, famine, or war. In the year 1000 it was popularly believed that the world was coming to an end, and it may be easily imagined that men's minds were in a state to exaggerate the importance of any phenomena in the heavens. A comet which was visible in that year for nine days, was described as being shaped like a dragon, and as having many impossible accompaniments. Shortly before William the Conqueror crossed to Britain a comet with three tails made its appearance, which was said by his courtiers to prove the divine right of the invader to the throne.

This comet has been proved to be identical with that afterwards discovered by Halley, and had already appeared several times, in the year 684 A. D., 12 B. C., and possibly 135 B. C., in which case it was the same as that which announced the birth of Mithridates. Previous to the time of Newton the appearance and movements of comets were a great puzzle to the philosophers, and numerous were the speculations as to their nature. The Chaldeans had by no means a totally false notion of the causes of their appearance and disappearance, attributing them to the fact that they revolve in orbits far above the moon, so as to be only visible to us during a small portion of their revolution. They were also right in believing them to be of a nature allied to the planets rather than mere atmospheric phenomena. This view was adopted by the astronomer Appolonius of Myndus, who as Seneca relates, receives his ideas from the Chaldeans. It was also held by Diogenes, the Ionic philosopher, that, Hippocrates of Chios, and several of the Pythagorean school. Seneca had the same opinion. The great comet of 1861 created considerable of a sensation by the suddenness with which it blazed out, and the shortness of the time during which it was visible in our latitudes.

Pottery.

Modeling pottery is as delightful an occupation as making mud pies. The student, with a board on her lap or on a table, takes up a lump of clay and kneads it to a proper consistency with water. With a little leaf-shaped wooden knife she carves out a rose, and as each petal is shaped she takes a camel's hair brush and paints the whole flower, or rather what she call slips—that is, water made the thickness of cream with clay. Iron pins are used for veining the leaves, and each bud is copied from the natural object placed before the artist. During all these processes the vase or article to be be decorated must be kept moist. If it is too wet, it will melt away into clay; if too dry, it will crack and break in the firing, and when at last all the ornaments are attached, they are painted in natural colors, and the body of the vase receives its proper tint.