

MUSIC IN THE HEIR.

In rhythmic rime a singer said: "There's music in the air." And it is true of any clime in winter foul or fair; They find it fact who far away mid foreign landscapes roam, And what so well fits other lands is no music at home! We have the truth exemplified until the neighbors stare, And hearing baby carol say: "There's music in the heir."

The count smiles feebly—a somewhat strained smile. "Not at all," he answers, with an effort. "All I need is rest and quiet. I am sorry to have put you to so much trouble." The days pass. The chamber remains, as ever, well arranged. The smug and shaven faces of the servants are expressionless. Nothing is changed—nothing save the master. And he is much changed. For he lies at death's door, and he knows it. Physicians shall not dole out weak platitudes to Count de Verteuil. But sometimes, as he lies staring grimly at nothing, the count's face shows weariness. In the world of fashion the countess tells her friends that her husband is "a little indisposed." She could not say that he was more, for Mme. Mathilde had not changed her life. Rides, drives, balls and parties make up the round. But nevertheless, morning and evening the countess dutifully visits her husband's chamber. "Better, I hope, to-day, my dear?" "A little better, I think, my dear Mathilde."

A DECOROUS DEATH

By Emilie Zola.

COUNT DE VERTEUIL is 50 years of age. Blue blood runs in the count's veins. His family is one of the most ancient in France. Yellow gold lies in the count's coffers. His fortune is one of the largest in France. Honors are heaped upon the count's head. He is a member of the Academy, a deputy, a patron of the arts. Countess Mathilde de Verteuil is 36. Blond is Countess Mathilde—blond and beautiful. Age does not wither her. Her rounded shoulders, her satiny skin, her golden hair, her stary eyes—all these make the matronly beauty of the countess the envy of younger rivals. The Verteuil household is a thoroughly respectable one. Dame Rumor's tongue never wags concerning it. Their marriage had been one of eminent good taste, said the world—both wealthy, both of good family. And then they had lived as husband and wife for nearly six years. And their two children—Ferdinand, in the army, and Blanche—had been so well brought up. And they had married Blanche very well. It is true they no longer affect the sentimental husband and wife. But what of that? If each has a separate suite in the Verteuil abode, do they not treat each other with the utmost courtesy? They are perfect models of deportment, and nothing can be said against either. One night madame the countess returns from a ball at two o'clock. She is fatigued, is Mme. Mathilde. As her maid disrobes her, she says: "The count, madame, is somewhat unwell this evening."

BETTER, I HOPE TO-DAY, MY DEAR.



"BETTER, I HOPE TO-DAY, MY DEAR," death-scene. He stifles his rattling breath. And, when he finds himself going, he turns to his wife and children and kisses them. The domestics are much moved. And then he turns his face to the wall. When his wife would speak to him, he motions her from him with a feeble gesture. The moments pass away. There is no movement in the silent form with its face against the wall. One of the physicians leans toward it. "All is over," he says, as he closes the dead man's eyes. Count de Verteuil has died, as he wished, alone. The morning of the funeral the Verteuil mansion is filled with sorrowing friends. The son and son-in-law of the count receive the guests with the mute politeness of affliction. And the mourners at the count's funeral are not common mourners. The nobility, the army, the magistracy, the senate, the academy—yes, come they all to Verteuil's funeral. The procession sets out for the church. The hearse is magnificently somber; black-plumed, black-draped, its hangings edged with silver; and the pall-bearers, too, are magnificent in their way—a duke, a field-marshal, a prime minister and an academician. The black-gloved, black-crevated and black-coated line files slowly through the streets, while the busy passers-by stop and uncover. And the countess? Well, she is completely broken down with grief, say the relatives. The countess is at home. At the church the ceremony lasts for nearly two hours. The organ thunders forth its lamentations, the singers wail theirs, while from torches held by boys the green flames cast a sickly pallor over the gathering. "Is not Faure, the celebrated tenor, going to sing to-day?" asks one mourner of another.

"Yes," says mourner No. 2, an elderly beau, who has just been staring through a single eyeglass at a pretty mourner; "yes, I believe he is. Ah, that is his voice now. What method! What range! Eh?" "Yes, indeed," says mourner No. 1. "Never heard him sing better in my life. Ah, it's a pity poor Verteuil can't hear him, ain't it? He was very fond of him." It is a beautiful June day. And as the carriages roll along the route for the cemetery, the windings of the road take the hearse out of sight from time to time, therefore it is not to be wondered at if the mourners sometimes forget it. The disjointed bits of conversation would seem to imply as much. "Are you going to the seaside this month, my dear?" "No, not until August. We start tomorrow for our country place, and—" "Well, as I was saying, the letter fell into his hands, and that was the cause of the duel. But it was only a scratch—the merest scratch in the world. I dined with him that evening at the club, and he won twenty-five—" "Yes, I believe the meeting of stockholders takes place to-morrow, and they want to make me a director. I don't know whether I'll accept or not. I'm very busy now, and—" "Scrunch, scrunch!" The carriages have quitted the road and are on the graveled walks of the cemetery. The talking ceases. The tomb of the Verteuil is at the extreme left—a magnificent marble structure, where carved angels in paroxysms of stony woe weep over the dead and gone Verteuil. The coffin is placed before it, and the funeral discourse begins. The count is pictured as a man who, had he not been cut off in his prime, would have regenerated the political condition of his country; a man renowned for his private virtues; a man who had encouraged agriculture and the arts; a man who had made a study of political economy and sociology; a man whose loss was irreparable. Such is the crowd that it is difficult for those on the outskirts to catch all the words. An elderly gentleman, with his hand to his ear, is listening, with pursed-up lips, to the eulogy. He catches these words: "—the qualities of his great and generous heart, his bountiful—" "Yes," he mutters, "I knew him. He was a clever hypocrite." The sound waves from this mingle with those of the priest's blessing. The mourners retire, and soon there are none left but the workmen, who are lowering the coffin into the vault. The cords creak, the oaken coffin gives forth a hollow sound as it strikes the stone floor. My lord Count de Verteuil is at home.—Adapted for the San Francisco Argonaut from the French.

AGRICULTURAL HINTS

HAMAMELIS VIRGINICA.

Both Bark and Leaves of This Plant, Known as Witch Hazel, Have Medicinal Properties. In the illustration, besides the plant, are shown a cluster of detached flowers, near the bottom, and at 2 a flower enlarged. The United States department of botany has the following to say on this plant: This is a small tree, 15 to 25 feet high under favorable circumstances, but more commonly it is a straggling bush, 10 to 15 feet high, growing in most of the states east of the Mississippi, usually in damp woods or on the banks of streams. It forms the type of a natural order (hamamelaceae), which includes about 15 genera in different parts of the world. The genus hamamelis is represented in the United States by one species, hamamelis



AMERICAN WITCH HAZEL.

virginica, another very similar one being found in Japan. The leaves are short stalked, three to six inches long, oval or obovate, slightly heart-shaped at the base, with the sides unequal, with straight conspicuous veins, the margins wavy or with coarse obtuse teeth, and somewhat downy when young. The tree or shrub is remarkable for its late period of flowering, which is in September or October, while the leaves are falling, and continuing on until winter. The development of the ovary or young fruit begins in the following spring, and the fruit is not matured until the fall. The flowers grow in small clusters or heads, each with a three-leaved, scale-like involucre at the base. The calyx is thick, four parted, and wholly on the outside. The petals four, strap-shaped, nearly half to three-quarters of an inch long, and of a bright yellow color. There are eight short stamens, only four of which are perfect. The small, hairy ovary occupies the center of the flower; this finally develops into a two-beaked, two-celled, thick and hard pod, with a single black bony seed in each cell. Both the bark and the leaves are used medicinally in domestic practice, in the preparation of certain proprietary remedies, and in the practice of physicians. It is stated that they were used as remedies by the Indians.—Farmers' Review.

BENEFIT TO FARMERS.

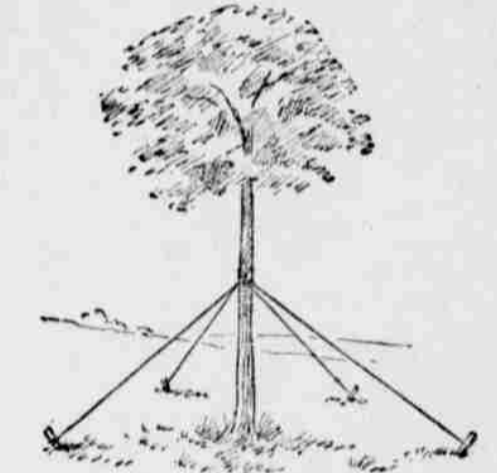
Trolley Lines Carrying Light Freight Save Much of Present Cost of Transportation. The construction of trolley lines in the suburbs of large cities and villages seems to be an additional benefit to farmers living near the routes, aside from the mere facility afforded them for personal transportation. Some of the large systems of electric roads in various parts of the country are now experimenting with the handling of light freight and produce, such as milk, fruits and vegetables for the agriculturist, and the success so far attained seems to solve the question of enabling the farmer to reach the best markets at a moderate cost for freight. Farmers and others interested, in cities and villages, in the subject of cheap food supplies, should see to it that all the trolley lines chartered in the future should include in their charter the right to carry freight as well as passengers. Railway transportation which shall pass the doors of hundreds of farmers on the way to large markets is at once a benefit to every farmer and gardener as well as to the consumer at non-producing points. Many trolley lines could occupy the early hours of morning, before passenger traffic commences, in carrying light freight for farmers on the route. The same might be accomplished during the night, especially in hot weather, when the depreciation in perishable freight would be less in the hotter hours of daylight. In many of our city markets, scores and even hundreds of farmers' and gardeners' wagons may be seen trundling along through the streets to reach our principal markets during the night, to

be ready for the morning trade of grocers and peddlers. If such freight can be brought in over trolley lines it would save much of the present expense of transportation by team. Our attention has been recently called to a syndicate in Washington, D. C., which has come into control of the majority of the electric lines, giving the people of the Capital city improved service. It is now extending its system into adjacent Maryland townships, and in this connection is dealing with the freight question. Farmers can now bring their produce, vegetables, milk, eggs and the like, into Washington at a minimum cost, and at the same time offer their goods in a condition which will bring them the highest prices. The effect of this method is already shown by the increased business of this class which the Washington Traction company is now receiving. With the transportation problem satisfactorily solved in this manner, real estate in the country will advance in price; the farmer will receive more money for the same goods which he has heretofore been compelled to bring in some 10, 15 or 20 miles by horse and wagon, while rural settlements will become more thickly populated, with a better satisfied and more contented population. Should this system of catering to the patronage of the farmer meet with as much success in Washington during the winter as it has already in the short time it has been in operation, the trolley officials are authority for the statement that their lines will be extended even further into the country, and in time to come that the suburbs will be thickly interlaced with electric roads. To a greater or less extent this same programme is feasible for other cities and other localities, and it behooves farmers and those in their interest to seek such legislation as will facilitate the trolley lines in doing a freighting business and affording increased facilities to rural populations, both in light freight and passenger traffic. Nothing will prove a greater stimulus to values of rural property than improved methods of communication, especially the facility for getting farm and garden products into the market with dispatch and with economy.—Boston Globe.

STRENGTHENING TREES.

Excellent Device for Preventing Working of the Tree from Side to Side by the Wind.

Where a tree of considerable size, with a large top, is set out, the roots are very liable to be prevented from taking hold of the ground in consequence of the working of the tree from side to side by the wind. This can, in a great measure, be prevented by staking the tree down. To do this, fit a leather collar around the trunk of the tree four or five feet above the



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG TREE.

ground, so that the wires which are to be fastened to the tree will not in any way hurt the bark. At a distance of three or four feet from the base of the tree, drive the stakes, leaning at an angle from the tree. There should be from four to six of these stakes set in a circle around the tree. From these stakes carry the wires to the leather collar on the stem of the tree, tightening them so that there will be an equal tension on each side. A healthy tree that makes a good growth will not require any support after the second season.—J. L. Irwin, in Agricultural Epitomist.

Give Horses Time to Eat.

Horses should have at least 75 minutes for each meal. If they finish eating in less time, as they probably will, nothing will be lost by giving them a few moments' quiet rest, and digestion will be better if it is well under way before the animals begin work. Fifteen or 20 minutes longer given the horses at meals will be more than made up by quicker and more vigorous action in the field. The horse that has 75 minutes for meals can, and will, do more work than the horse that has only 45 minutes.—Rural World.

Plowing Strawberry Plots.

The garden plot for strawberries should be plowed or spaded in the fall, left rough, and well covered with fine manure. The frost will still further pulverize the manure, and in the spring the ground should be spaded again and the rake used to get it in fine condition, the plants being set out in April, if possible. With this treatment a plot of one-eighth of an acre of ground in strawberries will produce sufficient for a regular supply for a large family.

TO ESTABLISH AIRSHIP LINE.

Company in Texas Prepares to Launch Its First Aerial Passenger Craft.

The first airship to be built by the Custard Airship company at its factory at Elmore, Tex., will be completed in a few days and launched on its initial trip. This company was organized several months ago with a capital stock of \$100,000. It is composed of W. D. Custard, the inventor, and a number of prominent business men, who closely investigated the working model of the new aerial vehicle and pronounced it practicable. The company endeavored to manufacture machines in time to establish a line of them to ply between New York and Paris during the progress of the exposition at the French capital, but their construction was delayed, and it will be several months before regular lines of airships will be established between the principal cities of this country, should the one which is to be launched next week prove the success that is claimed for it. The complete machine weighs 250 pounds and it has a capacity of from three to five people. Its maximum speed is expected to be 100 miles per hour. The first trip will be from Elmore to Waco, a distance of 20 miles.

Terrible Fall.

Solemn-faced Man (with newspaper)—Well, I see there was a singular accident at one of the slaughter houses out at the stock yards yesterday. A man who was leaning out of an upper story window let go and dropped 60 feet, and wasn't hurt a particle. Eager Listener—How did that happen? "They were pigs' feet."—Youth's Companion.

Homeric.

A few years since two gentlemen, each bearing the surname of Homer, not an unusual one in Dorset, contested a county division, and at a public meeting one of them, feeling suddenly unwell, had to retire, when a local humorist, on his opponent's side, remarked: "Homer's Odd, I see." "Homer's Ill, I add!" promptly rejoined an adherent.—Cornhill.

Hope Springs Eternal.

Mrs. Clubleigh—Why, you are out every night. Clubleigh—I know it; but luck is bound to change some time.—Town Topics.