

SECRET OF HINDOOS.

THE TRICK OF YOGIS' FLOWER POT LAID BARE.

Discovery by Monsieur Ragonneau—Earth That Came From Ant Hills and Was Full of Formic Acid—Science to the Rescue.

SCIENCE is making plain, one after the other, all the mysteries, old and new, of the world, while it is devising on its own account feats more marvelous than legend—main or theosophic precipitation ever thought of, says the

New York Journal. The last mystery to be revealed and to have the cold light of science thrown upon it is the famous old trick of conjuring, of the Yogis, the ascetic adepts of India, of planting a seed in a potful of earth in plain sight of a curious audience and causing it to grow within an hour into a flourishing plant, from which the blossoms could actually be plucked. Scores of people of a veracity not to be doubted have seen this feat performed and have been baffled at its wonders.

Some have tried to explain the mystery by claiming extraordinary sleight-of-hand on the part of the Yogis, and others have insisted that the "trick" was the perfection of hypnotism. No one who ever witnessed this seemingly marvelous growth could be induced to believe that the plant they finally saw had actually grown within this short time from the seed. It was either that they had been hypnotized, bound by the will of the operator, and had imagined that they had seen the plant grow from moment to moment under the thin cloth thrown over it, or else that by some superb skill of legerdemain the pot containing the seed had been split away before their eyes and a new pot with a blossoming plant set down in its place at lightning speed.

A clear-headed, cold-blooded scientist, however, demolished these theories a short time ago, proving conclusively that, whatever else it might be, the plant-growing marvel was no fraud. At a recent Yogi seance, to which he went prepared, the aged magician planted the seed and covered the spot with a cloth, and the man with a turn for science "snapped" his detective camera at it. A moment or two later he took another snap shot and others at regular intervals of about three minutes each, until the Yogi showed the flowering plant. The shutter of the camera, set by clock work, performed its duty faithfully.

With painstaking care he then developed each plate. In each the cloth covering the pot was clearly visible. In only two, the first and the last, was there a sign of any human figure. These two plates showed the planting of the seed and the throwing off of the cloth, exhibiting the already flowered plant. On all the others there was simply the image, without a blur, of the covered pot. Only, showing amazingly that in some strange way the plant had been really forced to grow, the cloth, as it was seen on each succeeding negative, was raised plainly a little higher. In the series of plates there was a constant rise.

Thus it was made evident to all of British India that the "plant trick" was no delusion, but some incomprehensible marvel. So far much was gained, but it remained for a clever French savant, M. Ragonneau, to dig out the secret and to discover precisely the way it was done.

The series of photographs convinced him that there was no fraud. As a preliminary to his study, he set about examining closely every detail of this seeming miracle. There must be some science about it if there is no trickery, he reasoned; some hidden principle of nature, or some chemical combination mixed with the earth, not known to modern science as yet, and locked in the breasts of these "adepts" for centuries.

He observed, first of all, that the Yogis never attempted the "trick" unless they had brought along carefully guarded, some special earth or soil. At once it struck him that the secret might lay in this peculiar earth. But the Yogis would not tell him its nature, much as he pleaded or divulge to him where it came from. More and more was he convinced that some strange quality of this earth was what made the miracle possible. Finally by a system of bribery that loosened, at least, the tongues of the corrupt Hindoo servants of the Yogis, he learned that the "masters" obtained the earth from ant hills. Puzzled more and more Ragonneau persistently experimented with ant-hill earth that he collected with great trouble, ignorant of what properties it might reveal, but sure that he was on the right track.

A chance that was the result of carelessness, pure and simple, laid the whole mystery bare to him. While experimenting, he got a small quantity of the earth, and several ants at the same time, into his mouth. It was an unpleasant moment, but it gave him the solution of the problem. He detected on the instant, the presence of an enormous quantity of formic acid in this earth, worked into it from the tiny bodies of thousands of ants passing over and through it. The soil was charged with formic acid, in fact, direct from the ants.

A few experiments showed him that this formic acid was the mysterious, subtle power, compelling the marvelous growths. After a little he found himself perfectly able to do the Hindoo trick. The entire secret proved to be that formic acid quickly eats away the integument surrounding a seed. Then

coming into direct contact with the germ itself, it stimulates beyond all credence its growth, bringing about in mere moments what unassisted nature would require weeks for.

RENAISSANCE IN ITALY.

Symonds Was Disqualified for Being an Historian.

Symonds was 35 when he published the first volume of "The Renaissance in Italy," and he lived to finish that large undertaking, as well as to write several books of poems and essays, to translate the sonnets of Michael Angelo, the memoirs of Cellini and Gozzoli and to compose a "Life of Buonarroti," says the Quarterly Review. His activity, great and incessant, though illness struck him down, ranged over the provinces of literature with an ever-present judgment and a fastidious choice until he could say in an instructive sentence: "We love the sternest things in life best." For the duties of the historian he was on more than one account singularly disqualified. Names, dates, events which he had not seen or felt might be learned with facility, but vanished from his mind as if written in water. "Vague, ill-digested, inaccurate, rich in possibilities, poor in solid stuff"—this description of faculties which were to be employed on a task where Gibbon might have failed, does not inspire us with confidence. Nor will metaphors and imagery, whereby Symonds hoped if not to subdue yet to circumvent philosophical ideas, furnish that insight lacking which a student of the renaissance period is sure to put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, to dream that the "worship of the body" is a "new birth unto freedom," and to degrade science into the apologist of a sensual and decorated unbelief. Seeing he will not see, and hearing he "ill not understand. These are faults of a more serious kind than the purple patches and rhetorical tone which their author has marked in his volume. He moves everywhere on the surface, content if he is dealing with painters, poets, humanists, in a fashion almost operative and on a system so conventional that his characters fall in, line for line, with the legends and caricatures which a little judicious criticism puts out of court. Large and complex themes—catholicism, the reformation, the revival of learning—handled a thousand of times by partisans, striking their roots deep, and abounding in tyrannous individualities, that differ as much as Julius II. and St. Charles Borromeo, as Erasmus and Poliziano, Luther and Savonarola, would seem to suggest a weighing and sifting of evidence and readiness to hear both sides. But Symonds will not always be at the pains to understand the language he is quoting, and so faint is the grasp which he has upon his subject that when a master more judicial and inquiring comes forward—when Bishop Crighton sets the Roman events in a just perspective—he has hardly a word to say beyond the suggestion that somewhere, quondam, an adequate cause must be found for the reformation.

Ecstasy Not Ecstasy.

It is curious to find how often the printer gives "ecstasy" when left to his own devices. Authors in these days prefer the correct form "ecstasy." The late Dr. Gordon Hake, e. g., the parable poet, as he has been appropriately called—published a series of lofty lyrical stanzas entitled "Maiden Ecstasy," yet it is quite common to see the title quoted with the substantive incorrectly spelled. Two examples of "ecstasy" occur in early chapters of Mr. George Meredith's "Rhoda Fleming." In chapter vi., page 38, a mood is described as being "mixed strangely of humiliation and ecstasy"; and in the opening paragraph of chapter ix., page 62, a letter from a happy girl in Switzerland is stated to give the impression "as of a happy spirit resting at celestial stages of her ascent upward through spheres of ecstasy." Proofreaders should assert their authority in reference to this word.—Notes and Queries.

The Glass Eater.

"What is all that row in the dining-room?" asked the dime museum manager, with some irritation. "It do be the glass eater, sor," said the Zulu chieftain. "He says the cook give him a crackled tomlor an' he cut his tongue on it."—New York Press.

JEWELRY NATIONS.

Elaborately carved tortoise shell combs are worn with indoor costumes. Leather watch bracelets are furnished to match leather belts for outing dresses.

Dental thread holders of silver have been added to the already long list of toilet articles.

A large oval amethyst, surrounded by a wreath in varicolored gold, affords a stylish brooch.

Luxurious affairs are the fine gold mesh purses with a clasp concealed by a huge topaz or amethyst.

With other addenda for writing desks are silver letter scales, in the body of which a watch is introduced.

Cages for veils are of openwork silver and are furnished with pads of silk in book form. The veils are placed between these silken leaves.

Unique parasol handles are those with Dresden china figures in a framework of gilt. Long ivory handles, with tracings of gold and silver, are to be seen on other parasols.—Jewelers' Circular.

King Alfonso of Spain will be 10 years old next month and will then be handed over to his military tutors and begin to study in earnest.

ARTIFICIAL FOOD.

Time is Coming When We Shall Dine on Food Tablets.

It is now proposed that the time is coming when bread and beef and milk or their equivalents will be produced artificially in the laboratory of the chemist, says the New York Journal. Prof. Berthelot, the distinguished French chemist, is the authority for this statement and he declares that the first steps have already been taken and he is sure that the coming generation will have such artificial food. It will be the same food chemically, digestively and nutritively speaking, but will differ in form. Just what the form of the food will be is not hinted at, except that it will probably be served cold in the shape of tablets, and of any color or shape that may be desired. Prof. Berthelot says gourmets and epicures may mourn, but he feels assured when they have grown accustomed to the change they will eat nothing prepared in any other way. In the future a burned beefsteak, chop or cutlet will be a thing unknown and a steak well done may be ordered in a dim brown colored tablet or a steak rare may be ordered in a tablet of light rose hue. The colors alone, the chemical prophet declares, will delight the epicurean senses and do much to overcome the prejudices that are bound to exist when the change is finally introduced. It has been demonstrated that even at present tea and coffee could be made artificially in the chemist's laboratory if the necessity or the commercial opportunity should arise. Sugar is another commodity universally used that can now be made in the laboratory, and an invention has been patented by which, it is claimed, sugar can be made on a commercial scale from two gases at a price of little more than 1 cent a pound. In a long and interesting report on the possibilities of obtaining food products by artificial means Prof. Berthelot says: "The essential principle of both tea and coffee is the same. The difference of name between them and caffeine has arisen from the sources from which they were obtained. They are chemically identical in constitution and their essence has often been made synthetically. The penultimate stage in the synthesis is theobromine, the essential principle of cocoa. Thus it may be seen that synthetic chemistry is ready to furnish for its laboratories the three great non-alcoholic beverages in general use. And what is true of food substances is equally applicable to all other organic substances." There is little or no limit to the professor's prodigies as concerning the changes in the present existing condition of affairs on this mundane sphere. He says: "I once choose to base dreams, prophecies and so forth upon the parts of the present one may dream of alterations in the present conditions of human life so great as to be beyond our contemporary conception. One can foresee the disappearance of the beasts from the fields, because horses will no longer be used for traction or cattle for food. The countless acres now given over to the growing of grain and producing vines will be agricultural antiquities which will have passed out of the memory of men. The equal distribution of natural food materials will have done away with protectionism with custom houses, with national frontiers, kept wet with human blood. Men will have grown too wise for war and war's necessity will have ceased to be. The air will be filled with aerial motors, flying by forces borrowed from chemistry. Distances will diminish and the distinction between fertile and non-fertile regions, from the causes named, will largely have passed away. It may even transpire that deserts now uninhabited may be made to blossom and be sought after as great seats of population in preference to the alluvial plains and rich valleys." The new food that it is predicted the coming generation will live upon—in fact, the great proportion of our staple foods which are now obtained by natural growth—will be manufactured direct through the advance of synthetic chemistry from their constituent elements, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. As an evidence of the possibility of the eventual disappearance of agriculture, Prof. Berthelot cited as an instance of laboratory products the dye stuff alizarin, the coloring principle of madder, which was formerly a great agricultural industry, but which is now almost wholly supplanted by the artificial product from coal tar. He also declares that chemists can now make indigo direct from its elements and artificial indigo will soon become a great commercial product. A century hence, if all that is predicted is true, people will be eating their soup, meat, fish and vegetables in tablets that will come in tin boxes labeled "keep it in a cool place" and they may be eating a full course dinner while running for a train, or they can munch a comfortable breakfast unnoticed in an elevated train or a cable car on their way to business, if such means of locomotion are not out of date in that progressive age.

As He Explained It.

She takes a great deal of interest in theatrical matters and remarked to the young man:

"These coster singers are very popular at present."

"Yes," he replied, nervously.

"I wonder why they call them costers?" she went on in a pensive tone. "I don't know, unless it's because it costs half a week's salary to go and hear one of them."—Washington Star.

Swipesy's Sister.

"Swipesy, doesn't yer sister go to Sunday-school?"

"You bet! An' she sings w'd de push in front of de big organ!"

HOW INDIANS GAMBLE.

THE PUYALLUPS AND NISQUALI-LIES PLAY "SLA-HAEL."

Their Squaws Chant Incantations—Bones and "Beans" Important Factors—The Stakes Consist of Ponies, Cows and Pigs.



THE social event of the season for the Puyallup, the Nisqually and a few White River Indians has just passed, says the Tacoma Ledger. It was the annual gambling and horse-racing of the tribes, which took place on the Nisqually reservation. The festivities began Saturday, and lasted until Monday morning, when they ceased, and a procession of the most tried Indians that the people along the route have seen in many a day started back to the Puyallup reservation. They bore no laurels, it is true, but then they had their ponies and blankets, which at one time during the gambling they came disastrously near losing.

The sport took place at a gambling house kept by "Jim" Dimrool, a Nisqually Indian, and located in a clearing five acres in extent on the right bank of the Nisqually river, four miles above Maxfield station, where the Northern Pacific crosses the river. The game played by the Indians is called "sla-hael" and was actively participated in by thirty Puyallups, five White River Indians and thirty Nisquallys, the White River Indians, playing with the Puyallups. The stakes put up by each side were seventeen ponies, one cow and ten pigs.

It was in this gambling house last Saturday afternoon that "Jack" Skamenke, the leader of the Nisqually gamblers, stood up and began singing the low dirge-like song which forms part of the ceremony and then handed the bones to one of his men. The Indian took the bones, fumbled and changed them, and then, holding a bone tightly concealed in either hand, began swinging them for a wary Puyallup to guess which hand contained the white one. The gambling was in full progress. The scene was a strange one, well worthy the brush of a Frederick Remington or any who indulge a liking for the wild and fantastic. The bright wood fires were burning in either end of the room. Ten feet from the walls two rows of Indian men were kneeling down, facing each other, leaving a space of ten feet between them. In one row were Puyallup and White River Indians and in the other were Nisquallys. In the center of the kneeling rows of Indians were the leaders, "Tommy" Lane for the Puyallups and Skamenke for the Nisquallys.

Back of the kneeling backs were benches running the entire length of the room. On these sat the Indian women of the respective tribes, who watched the varying fortunes of the players with most intent interest.

Stuck in the ground in semi-circular form, in front of both Lane and Skamenke, were thirty-five small wooden pegs about three inches in length and one-fourth of an inch in diameter. These were the "beans" and when one side won the thirty-five belonging to the other, the game and pot was also won.

Suspended from the neck of each Indian player and hanging in front of his breast was a handkerchief, beneath which he deftly concealed his hands when the bones were given him to swing.

The bones mentioned are three inches in length and one inch in diameter. One of them is perfectly white, the other one has two black rings around it. Each of the leaders has two sets of bones, but only one set is used at a time. The game proceeds as follows: The leader of the side whose turn it is to bring luck, the squaws incantation to bring luck, and the bones also, if they wish. Two of his men are then designated by the leader to shake the bones, which are grasped by the player, one in either hand and both hands are placed beneath the handkerchief hanging over his breast, where he fumbles the bones, shifts them about from hand to hand to confuse those who are keenly watching him from the other side, and then, suddenly drawing them from beneath the handkerchief, begins swinging them to the right and left in front of him. The leader of the opposite side then guesses or names one of his men, whom he thinks may be the more lucky, to guess which swinging hand contains the white bone. If the guess is correct the leader of the side which is playing—not guessing—pulls one of the beans from the ground in front of him, and tosses it over to the leader of the side which has made the correct guess. The "bean" is taken by the winner and stuck in the ground with the other beans belonging to his side. The bones are also to be passed to the guessing side, whose turn it becomes to play.

Providing the guess is incorrect the side making it tosses a bean over to the side playing and the man who has shaken the sticks has the right to shake them again, while his opponents make another guess. Both sets of bones were guessed upon by the same man at the same time. If he guessed the white of one and missed the other he won a bean and one pair of bones, but lost a bean upon the other set which was shaken again for him to make another guess. In this manner the bones and beans were constantly passing back and forth from one side to another with

the varying luck of the different sides. Saturday's game ended in a draw.

A YACHT'S NARROW ESCAPE.

Nearly Run Down in the Dark by a French Man-of-War.

Talking of collisions reminds me of a little incident of some five years ago, which is characteristic of sailors' practical common sense, writes the earl of Desart in Cassell's Magazine. I was lying becalmed floating about helplessly on a dark night, some five miles outside Ajaccio harbor. The French president, M. Carnot, had just been there and there had been high jinks, which we missed through the contrariety of the winds. Well, out of the harbor came a number of great ships of war, the French and Italian fleets, and what roused their officers, flushed with pique of honor, of a little English yacht bobbing about in aimless fashion among them? One of them—a turret ship, that looked, I am told, at least 1,000,000 tons in the gloom, came straight at us and our flare, or blue light, kept on deck for emergencies, had no effect on her course till the last moment, when she altered her helm and shaved us by a few yards.

Had that alteration of helm come a second later there would have been paragraphs in the London papers, "A Yacht Missing," and the eventual writing off of the yacht's number at Lloyd's as "foundered at sea," for the going over us would have scarcely woke the ironclad's captain, and the officer of the watch would have naturally have said nothing about the incident. But where the sailor man's sense came in was here: I had, seeing it was hopeless to think of getting into harbor that night—retired to my berth before the fleets emerged and only heard of our narrow escape next morning. To my question why we down below were not warned of the imminent catastrophe, I received the reply: "It would have been no use your coming on deck; she'd have gone clean over us and her sides were too high for a jump, even if there'd been time!"

NEEDED FOOD AFTER ALL.

The Western Man Felt Better for It—So Did the Poet.

Once a rich western man who wanted to enjoy life in New York for a few days took the poet in tow as guide and mentor, says the Scranton Truth. The western man's idea of life went no farther than the playing of billiards and drinking wine. For three days he moved around from one billiard room to another. One of his peculiarities was that after the first morning he did not care to eat. He lived on stimulants. The poet likes to eat. He would from time to time suggest to the western man: "This would be a good time to go and get a nice English chop around at Brown's," or "what would you think just now of a good, thick beefsteak, broiled and—?" "Oh, humbug!" the western man would say. "We haven't time to eat, and what do you want to eat for when you get all the wine you want?" And the poor, tired poet had to drag along and pick up a bite as he could from a free lunch. Late on the third evening the western man got so tired he went to bed in an uptown hotel. The poet got a bed in the same room. Soon as sleep overcame the former the poet rang the bell and requested a menu card. Then he began at the top and ordered straight down through it everything from blue points to coffee—to be served for two. When the two suppers were served he sat down and cheerfully ate them both. The western man slept right on. Next morning when the western man awoke and looked at the empty plates and the debris of the supper on the table he rubbed his eyes and after indulging in deep thought for a moment looked over to the other bed and said to the poet: "I think you were right, after all; we did need something to eat. Heavens! we must have been hungry to eat up all that stuff last night, but I feel much better for it." And the well fed poet said, "Me, too!"

The Preacher and the Driver.

Lecturing recently on "Great Orators and Preachers I Have Known," Dr. Rogers found occasion to tell some very amusing anecdotes belonging to the last generation—or the last but one.

Perhaps the funniest of them was of James Parsons of York. He wends in Nebraska and Kansas Farmer to driving on the box seat into Doncaster during race week, and thinking problem flesh about anything rather than horse flesh, when the driver pulled out his watch, with the remark: "We'll be in time, after all, I think."

"In time for what?" said Parsons, a little absently.

"Why, the St. Leger, of course."

"The St. Leger? Oh, yes, to be sure! But I never go to race meetings."

No one would ever have supposed from his appearance that he did. The driver was non-plussed for a moment, but he soon excused his passenger by saying:

"Ah, well, you're like me, I suppose. I always did like a real good cock fight a sight better."—Toronto Catholic Register.

Glass Floors.

A new warehouse in Paris has been built with glass floors. The initial cost is considerable, but in view of the fact that toughened glass is so much longer lived than wood the experiment is likely to prove cheaper in the long run.

Tax on Cats.

A new government tax of 1 mark on each cat kept as a house pet has been imposed in Dresden. Thousands of animals have been destroyed by owners desirous of avoiding the "cat tax."

To Sweet for Anything.

Mount Desert, Me., has a school-ma'am whose name is Daisy Peach.

IN A CHINA SHOP.

How the Work is Done in Worcester, England.

Close beside Worcester cathedral are the ugly workshops and tall chimneys of the Royal porcelain works. When we watch the thrower molding on his mangle wheel the plastic clay we are filled with wonder at his skill and ask ourselves whence came the clay which takes so readily any form the potter wills, says an English paper. The flint bowlers found upon the plains of Brittany in France, feldspar from Cornwall and Sweden, bones from America, besides other things, all pay tribute. These unlikely constituents are calcined and then ground exceedingly fine in mills. The grinding takes from twelve hours to six days. It is a sight worth seeing, those powerful mills racing round the deep trough made out of stone from Derbyshire weighted with heavy blocks, churning each material, for each is ground separately, into a thick white cream. When finished the liquids are strained through fine hair sieves and all particles of iron withdrawn by means of magnets. The different ingredients are then mixed together in proper proportions and kneaded into the required consistency and then the clay is ready for the thrower. The art of molding clay has become much more exact since the employment of plaster of paris molds. After the thrower, with the help of his wheel, has roughly shaped the clay into what is termed the "lining" it is taken off the wheel and put into a plaster of paris cast, which in turn is placed upon the whirling wheel, and the "lining" is then deftly molded to the exact shape. As plaster of paris absorbs moisture quickly the lining is soon firm enough to be handled. It is then "turned" like ordinary wood or metal and has handles, which have been molded in plaster of paris, fixed by the same clay. The porcelain is then ready to be baked. For this it is packed in fireproof baking dishes called "seggars" and supported on every side by powdered calcined flint. These seggars are made to fit exactly one upon the other, although they are of different sizes and depths, and they are arranged in columns side by side in the oven. This oven is then bricked up and eight fires are lighted and kept burning for forty-eight hours, night and day. Most of the china is glazed, an operation requiring care and skill. The articles are bathed in the liquid glaze—a muddy-looking broth—and a greater part of the superfluous glaze shaken off. But it is impossible to free them perfectly, besides the fingers leave marks which have to be removed after the glaze has been dried in a hot room. Women and girls are employed for this work. The ivory glaze is a delicate salmon pink before it is baked, the white a dark drab. After it is glazed the pottery, for the second time, is packed in seggars and baked. After this the colored china is painted and baked again. The gold is also baked in. Few people know that gilt on China is the purest gold that can be bought. It is ground with mercury and turpentine into a black-looking paint and applied with a fine camel's hair pencil. Boys are trained for this work from 14 years of age, it being nearly impossible for older people to acquire the accuracy of eye and hand necessary. It is a great drawback to the production of artistic pottery that the coloring is totally different in the paint to the result after burning. For instance, gold paint is black before and dull gold afterwards; the brightness is produced by polishing it with an agate. Other colors are obtained from metallic oxides; iron gives red, cobalt, blue, etc.

I believe it would do us all good could we put Catholic and Protestant, the Baptist and Universalist, together and tell them to find what is common to them all, and I have faith to think what is common to all would be what is best in each, and thus living out what is both common and best we should find a pure Christianity of both doctrine and action.—Rev. Lee S. McCollister.

PERSONALS.

Professor Faib, the Vienna prophet, is a failure. His cataclysms do not appear on time.

Those farmers and others who have wended in the east and desire to send Nebraska and Kansas Farmer to do so now, while the ice is down low. Fifty cents will send you a sample for one year each. Come and bid up, the new gentleman, owner of the black rod, forgot his official speech in parliament the other day.

No wonder they call Edison a wizard. He has taken out 711 patents up to date, and if he lives ten years longer will probably make the number a round thousand.

John W. Mergen, a carpenter in the railroad shops at Topeka, has been admitted to practice before the supreme court of Kansas. He has studied law evenings for five years.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

Religion requires the extirpation of all those passions and vices which render men unsocial and troublesome to one another.—Tillotson.

Severity carried to the highest pitch breaks the mind; and then in the place of a disorderly young fellow you have a low-spirited, moped creature.—Locke.

If I were to trust to my observation and give a verdict on it, I must depend that, in my experience, I have found that those who were most indulgent to themselves were (in the mass) less kind to others than those who have lived a life nearer to self denial. I go further, in my experience I have observed that a luxurious softness of manners hardens the heart, at least as much as an over-done abstinence.—Burke.