A LAND OF FLOWERS.

Australian Landscape Is an Endless Panorama of Surpassing Beauty.

There is nothing that astonishes the stranger visiting Australia for the first time so much as the variety and beauty of its flowers. Australia is, indeed, a land of floral loveliness, and nowhere has nature been more lavish in her gifts of bud and blossom than in New South Wales. The landscape is an endless panorama of surpassing beauty.

There is a plethora of color in the flowers that everywhere meet the gaze. They are not placed here and there only, to give one the impression of limit; they cover mountains and valleys in all kinds of form and shades of beauty. Climbers, in rich crimson, and interspersed with every other color, are multiplied by millions, and scattered with a prodigal hand that knows no stint nor bound, save that of infinitude itself, until every shrub and plant and bush, robed in splendor, makes the country gay with blue and gold, and many colored dyes.

The gorgeous coloring of the Australian floral kingdom is hardly to be excelled elsewhere. Among the favorite native flowers is the stately waratah or native tulip, as it is sometimes incorrectly designated. It grows to the height of four or five feet, the slender stem being surmounted by a large dahlia-shaped flower of the deepest crimson. It is sometimes grown as a garden flower, but thrives best in the bush. The native rose, which has no resemblance, save in its delicate pink tint, to the favorite garden flower, is exceedingly plentiful. The blossom is small and modest, but wonderfully enduring, and forms a charming addition to an Australian bouquet.

The rock lily is so called from its being most abundant in rocky country, where its masses of yellowish-white blossoms stand out in a picturesque relief from the dense background of dark green foliage. The gigantic lily is, perhaps, the most magnificent of Australian native flowers.

A Chilly Firm.

Attorneys December and January are two Nevada lawyers who are amusing the Kansas people just now, where they have gone on business. The two men are distinguished lawyers in Nevada, and their firm style is "January & December, attorneys-at-law."

THE SCORCHER'S FAREWELL.

(With apologies to McGuffey's Third Reader.)

My beautiful, my beautiful! thou standest meekly by,
With proudly arched and glossy frame, and sprocket geared so high.
Fret not to roam within the park with all thy winged speed;
I may not scorch on thee again—thou'rt pinched, my silent steed.

Fret not with thy impatient tire, sound not the warning gong;
They'll check you in a basement damp because I scorched along.
The bike cop hath thy handle bar—my tears will not avail;
Fleet-wheeled and beautiful, farewell! for thou'rt held for bail.

Farewell! those fat pneumatic wheels full many a mile have spun,
To bask beside the Cliff House bar or do a century run;
Some other hand less skilled than mine must pump thee up with air;
The patent lamp that won't stay lit must be another's care.

Only in sleep shall I behold myself with bended back—
Only in sleep shall thee and I avoid the trolley track;
And when I churn the pedals down to check or cheer thy speed,
Then I must starting wake to learn thou'rt pinched, my silent steed.

Ah, rudely, then, unseen by me, some clumsy chump bestride
May wabble into rough brick walls and dish a wheel beside;
And compressed wind that's in thee 'scape in shrill, indignant pain
Till cruel man that on thee rides will fill thee up again.

With slow, dejected foot I roam, not knowing where or when
I'll meet a good Samaritan who'll kindly loan me ten.
And sometimes to the park I go, drawn in my hopeless quest;
'Twas here I struck a record clip—the copper did the rest.

Who said that I had given thee up? Who said that thou wert lost?
'Tis false, 'tis false, my silent steed! I fling them fine and cost!
Thus—thus I leap upon thy back and hit the asphalt trail!
Away! my bright and beautiful; I pawned my watch for bail.

—San Francisco Examiner.

A MEDICAL MYSTERY.

I had reached my office one morning in November, a year or two ago, when, to my surprise, I found a young fellow waiting for me outside the door.

"Mr. Somers," he began, impetuously, "can you give me your services for the day?"

"Is the matter very pressing?" I replied. "Tell me what it is."

"My name is Kincaid," he said quickly. "You did some family business for us a few years ago. I want you to come with me at once. We can just catch a train from Waterloo to Basingstoke at 9:10. It runs down in an hour. I'll explain in the train. Ten guineas for the day, and expenses. Make your own terms if successful. Will that do?"

"Very well," I said; "go and get a cab—I'll join you directly."

I unlocked my office, picked up a portmanteau which I keep ready packed for emergencies, scribbled a note to my clerk, and in less than ten minutes was by his side in a hansom, on the way to the station. We secured a carriage to ourselves, and as soon as the train had fairly started he unfolded his tale.

"My uncle, Clavell Kincaid, died very suddenly last night, under curious circumstances, and I expect foul play," he begun.

"Tell me exactly what happened."

"We had a kind of family dinner party to make a fresh arrangement about the proprety in which my uncle had left a life interest."

"Nobody present but relations?"

"No."

"What is the property worth?"

"About £10,000 or £12,000 a year."

"Go on."

"As things stand now, my cousin Harry takes everything under the entail. The object of the meeting was to buy out his interest, so that it could be more evenly divided among the family. Everybody directly interested was present."

"You couldn't buy up your cousin's interest without his consent," I interrupted.

"Certainly not," answered the young fellow. "But Harry is a black sheep. In fact he's a thoroughly bad lot. He's been knocking about South America, and I don't know where else, for some years, and his record is about as black a one as a man can have."

"Very well," I said. "Now tell me about your uncle's death."

"We had finished dinner and sat chatting and smoking. Uncle Clavell was talking to my father; suddenly he said: 'Dear me, I feel so sleepy, I really think I——' then he stopped suddenly. His head fell forward and somebody rushed for brandy, thinking he was ill. As a matter of fact he was dead. It all happened in a minute."

"And you suspect your cousin of having killed him?"

"Yes."

"On what grounds?"

The young fellow looked blank.

"I hardly know," he stammered, "except that Harry's bad enough to do anything, and my uncle was in perfectly good health."

"Was Clavell Kincaid drinking anything at the time?"

"No, he was just smoking a cigar and chatting."

"Was your cousin near him?"

"No, he was talking to him several yards away."

"How do you think, then, he killed your uncle?"

"I—I don't know. That's why I've come for you."

"You must excuse me, Mr. Kincaid, but I'm afraid this is a wild goose chase. It was to your cousin's interest that your uncle should die. Your cousin is an 'outsider.' Your uncle dies suddenly, and you jump to the conclusion he has been murdered, but it doesn't follow by any means."

"Of course not, but I believe he was," he persisted.

"Has a doctor seen Mr. Kincaid? What does he say?"

"The doctor won't say anything definitely until he has made a proper examination. He thinks it is a total paralysis of the brain, and he can't account for it in any way."

"What kind of a man was your uncle?"

"Very healthy and very temperate. I have never known him to eat too much or drink too much in my life. Never had a day's illness."

"Well, it's a very strange case," I said, "and a very sad one. But, frankly, I believe your uncle died from natural causes. You are prejudiced in the matter; I am not."

We reached Basingstoke at a few minutes past 10, and then separated. Young Edward Kincaid was to go straight home and explain to his father what he had done, and get him to help. When I arrived I was received by father and son, and taken privately to the dining-room, where the death occurred.

"You must quite understand, Mr. Somers," said the old man, "that I am not prepared to indorse my son's opinion that my brother was murdered. His death was shockingly sudden, and my nephew, Harry, is, I am sorry to say, a thorough rogue, but I should be sorry to think he was guilty of this."

"I can't see any reason to suspect him of it," I said, dryly.

"This is the cigar which he was smoking," said the young fellow. "I took it out of his hand, and placed it on the mantelpiece. Do you think," he went on quickly, "a man could be poisoned by a cigar, because, now I come to think of it, this one came out of my cousin's case."

"I don't think a cigar could be made so as to kill a man on the spot," I replied. "It might make him very sick, or send him to sleep, but not kill him."

"Besides," said Edward Kincaid Sr., "several of us smoked cigars out of Harry's case. I think you did for one. You see," he continued, turning to me, "when we were lighting up my brother had cigars handed round, but my nephew produced his own case and offered it to those present. My brother was a connoisseur of cigars, and, knowing that Harry always had something especially good, and wishing, perhaps, to please him, he said, from the other end of the room, 'Harry, I think I'll have one of yours.'"

"Yes, if you remember," said the young man, "Harry walked up to him and picked a cigar out of his case and said, 'Try this one, uncle.'"

I felt rather perplexed, but to be on the safe side put the half-smoked cigar in my pocket for further examination.

"I'm afraid this doesn't prove anything," I said. "It isn't even suspicious. You see, Mr. Clavell asked for it."

"Yes, but perhaps Harry calculated he would do so, because Uncle Clavell often said that his cigars were the best part of him, and he always liked to smoke them."

"Could you manage for me to see your cousin?" I asked.

As luck would have it the person in question sauntered into the room. He was a worn-out dandified-looking man of about five and thirty, very sallow and bony, with a rather unpleasantly easy bearing.

I was introduced as representing the solicitors, and we began to discuss the death. I watched him narrowly. He talked about it with horrible composure, and didn't pretend to be sorrow stricken.

"Well, I suppose you three are talking business," he said at last, lazily, "so I'll clear out. I hate that sort of thing. I shall run up to town to-morrow, and call on your people," he added, turning to me. "Good morning."

"What do you propose to do, Mr. Somers?" said Edward Kincaid.

"It's impossible to form an opinion until we have heard a proper medical report," I replied. "When does the post-mortem take place?"

"This afternoon."

"Very well. I can't do any good here until that is over. I shall go straight back to town now, and have this cigar examined by an expert, and return here to-night, when you can tell me what the doctor says."

My visit to town was not very successful. The cigar expert pronounced the half-smoked specimen, which I asked him to examine, to be one of a very fine brand of Havanas, and he mentioned the name, but there's no need to repeat it now. On making a closer examination, however, he said he was mistaken. It was an imitation, and he pointed out a number of trifling differences in the dolling and wrapping which nobody but an expert would observe.

"You must be able to see," he said, "it's a beautiful cigar; quite as good as if it were a first-class brand. Only it's not any brand at all. It was made privately; there's nothing exactly like it on the market."

The next point was to ascertain if it had been doctored in any way. With that object I called on a certain celebrated specialist to get his opinion. On hearing an outline of the case he became most interested.

"I don't believe it's possible," he said, "for a cigar to be so manipulated that a person smoking it would drop dead. But we'll make a careful examination and see what we can find."

Then we cut it open and every bit of it was put under a strong glass. But after parts of it had been submitted to various tests no trace of poisonous matter could be discovered.

I returned to Basingstoke, arriving half an hour before dinner. The feeling in my mind was that, though there was some reason, perhaps, to suspect Harry Kincaid of the crime, there was not a particle of evidence in the true sense of the word.

I told Edward Kincaid and his father the result of my journey and then had a consultation with the doctor, who had been asked to remain for dinner. His decision was that Mr. Clavell had died from complete stoppage of the brain, but there was literally nothing to show what caused it and there had been nothing in Mr. Clavell's habits and mode of life at all likely to produce mental paralysis.

Further conversation was prevented by the necessity of dressing for dinner. As we went through the hall we met Mr. Harry.

"Harry, I'm taking care of the doctor. Would you mind Mr. Somers washing his hands in your room?" said Edward.

"Not at all," drawled his cousin.

"I hope you won't mind," said Edward to me. "Everything is, of course, in a beastly muddle, and," he added when we were alone, "you will have a chance of looking around."

That was exactly what I wanted. I went hastily around the room, but found to my disapointment that everything was carefuly locked. Suddenly my eye caught sight of his dinner jacket, which was hanging up behind the door. I remembered being told that our friend from South America only smoked cigars after dinner in England and it struck me he might have left his case in his pocket.

A search in the pocket proved I was right and the next moment I had in my hand an elegant little silver case containing seven cigars. I tumbled them out on the toilet and examined them. As far as I could make out they were exactly like the one I had taken up to town. Suddenly a hand was on the door.

"Would you mind my coming in," said a voice. "I just want to change my jacket."

He spoke with his usual drawl, but I thought there was just a shade of anxiety in his voice.

"Certainly," I said, putting the cigars back and keeping up a running fire of talk all the time.

"You are not going to dress, are you?" I said.

"Oh, no; but I hate these frock coats—a dinner jacket is much more comfortable."

I was washing my hands, and I stood in front of the mirror, so that I could watch him. I noticed that as soon as he had changed his coat he opened his cigar case and as well as I could judge from the expression on his face, counted them.

I began to feel profoundly interested, and determined to watch Mr. Harry and his cigars closely. Dinner was rather a dull affair. There were no ladies present and everybody was naturally depressed by the awful occurrence of the previous night. As soon as the dessert was put on we began to smoke, and I was on the lookout for the appearance of the silver case.

It was soon produced and offered to his right-hand neighbor, who, however, declined it, preferring to smoke a cigarette. A little satirical smile flickered across Harry Kincaid's face. He selected one for himself and lighted it. The conversation became general and a little brighter. The wine was passed around the table hospitably, and all began to look as if they were prepared to meet the troubles of the world with a cheerful resignation.

Suddenly Harry Kincaid gave a loud groan and staggered to his feet.

"Good heavens! I—— Help! Brandy!"

Before anyone could move he snatched his cigar case out of his pocket and hurled it across the room toward the fire. It struck a glass epergne in the center of the table and broke it. Then he fell to the ground, struggling madly, with the most horrible expression of fear and malice on his face I ever saw. In his fall he seized the tablecloth and dragged nearly everything off the table. We all sprang to our feet and the doctor rushed to his side. But it was too late. He was dead.

I cannot describe the horror of the scene. It didn't last more than a minute, and we stared at one another aghast. The same thought was in everyone's mind. He had died in just the same way that Mr. Clavell died the night before, only, being a younger man, the struggle had been more intense.

I at once picked up the cigar case, which was lying on the hearthrug, and in the presence of everyone turned out the contents. I noticed that one of the six cigars was about an eighth of an inch shorter than the rest. I cut it open down the center. In the middle there was a little blue substance about the size of a pea. Then we opened the other five. They were ordinary cigars.

It was easy to see what had happened. In putting the cigars back into the case I must have rearranged them and the villain had incautiously smoked one which he had prepared for someone else. I took the lump of blue poison to the specialist whom I had consulted in the morning.

After some weeks I had this letter from him:

My Dear Mr. Somers: I have carefully examined the blue substance which you submitted to me some little time ago, and have also shown it to the most eminent chemist of my acquaintance. We are bound to confess we can tell you nothing about it. It contains drugs which are quite unknown to modern science, and I can only think that Harry Kincaid had picked up some fiendish skill from the South Americans which is very happily quite unknown in Europe. It is a most fortunate thing that he fell into his own trap, as I feel quite sure that otherwise it would have been impossible to bring him to justice. Believe me to be yours faithfully, GIBBS DALTON.

—Tid Bits.

A woman's definition of a good doctor is one who has a tender voice and sympathetic eyes.

The vital principle is strongest in the common tortoise. One of these animals has lived for six months after the removal of its brain, and the severed head has given signs of life three days after being cut off.

Dishonored Drafts.

When the stomach dishonors the drafts made upon it by the rest of the system, it is necessarily because its fund of strength is very low. Toned with Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, it soon begins to pay out vigor in the shape of pure, rich blood, containing the elements of muscle, bone and brain. As a sequence of the new vigor afforded the stomach, the bowels perform their functions regularly, and the liver works like clock work. Malaria has no effect upon a system thus re-enforced.

Men are alike in nature, but different in character. They are one family, but many children.

Some folks make a specialty of picking out crosses for other people to carry.

Hall's Catarrh Cure

Is a constitutional cure. Price 75 cents.

Beware of the man who tries to whitewash sin of any kind.

My doctor said I would die, but Piso's Cure for Consumption cured me.—Amos Kelner, Cherry Valley, Ill., Nov. 23, '95.

The man who is trying to get to heaven alone, is not fit to go.

When Dobbins' Electric Soap was first made in 1865 it cost 20 *cents a bar*. It is *precisely* the same in ingredients and quality *now* and *doesn't cost half*. Buy it of your grocer and preserve your clothes. If he hasn't it, he will get it.

True nobility shows itself in doing good.

Mrs. Winslow's SOOTHING SYRUP for Children teething; softens the gums, reduces inflammation allays pain, cures wind colic. 25 cents a bottle.