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About the House. BIRTH OF GOLDENROD. The sun, in a lavish mood, one day Flung shining glints of his gold away. But the south breeze caught it with glad delight, And scattered it over the fields that night.

BULBS FOR FLOWERING. It is now time to attend to the Dutch bulbs for blooming indoors; although work among them might be deferred, it is wise to get them under ground. There is, also, the possibility that late purchasers will get the poorer bulbs. We include under the general heading of Dutch bulbs, tulips, hyacinths, and narcissus, these all being grown in the great bulb farms in Holland.

Hyacinths are some of the most satisfactory bulbs we can grow indoors, both the little Romans and the large Dutch. The Romans, which come from Italy and southern France, bloom much earlier than the Dutch. They are small, so we should put three bulbs in a five-inch pot, covering them down cellar like the Narcissus. The florists plant a great many bulbs in shallow boxes—flats, as they are called—covering these over outside, in some place where water will not lie, and they are left there until active forcing begins. Freezing does not hurt them, unless the leaves have pushed through. But it is not safe to allow bulbs in pots to freeze hard, because the pots will burst, neither is it very convenient for an amateur, as a rule, to cover the pots outside, so the cellar is recommended.

In potting Roman hyacinths, the bulbs are just covered with the earth, but Dutch hyacinths have one-half the bulb left above ground. One Dutch hyacinth is enough for a five-inch pot, but three or five of the bulbs in a flat pan give a good effect. Single hyacinths are usually the more satisfactory for winter blooming, though we often find the double doing well.

Always buy good named hyacinths for indoors; if cheap, unnamed bulbs are bought, they should be reserved for outdoor planting only. Here are some of the best for indoor use: Mrs. Van der Hoop, white; Macaulay, Fabiola, Mme. Hodgson, pink and red; Cesar Peter, Lord Derby, white; Ida, yellow.

The following are good doubles: Florence Nightingale, white; Blackberg, blue; Bouquet Tendre, pink. The tongue is very stout, and the foliage is difficult or painful, and the voice is hoarse or whispering. Often there is more or less jaundice. In the respiratory organs, bronchitis and especially pneumonia are frequent and dangerous complications.

In the treatment of grip we must first remember that we are dealing with an ordinary cold, but with a severe disease calling for as much care as severe fever or pneumonia. The patient must not only stay in the house, but in bed. All cases of grip, whether mild or severe, need a physician's oversight.

THE ROYAL RED CROSS. Of the three ladies upon whom the Queen has been pleased to confer the decoration of the Royal Red Cross for services to the sick and wounded in the recent Sudan campaign, are Miss Giddens and Miss Grist. Miss Giddens is a Scotchwoman, being a daughter of Mr. John Giddens, parish schoolmaster of Kilmory, Fifeshire. Miss Grist was trained in nursing at the Dundee Royal Infirmary, where she obtained experience both in the medical and surgical wards, and also in the children's ward. After four years' residence there, she joined the staff of a medical home in London. Four years ago she became a member of the Nurses' Co-operation. She was among those nurses selected by the Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War to proceed to Egypt. She made three journeys from Cairo to Assouan to bring down the sick and wounded in the hospital, and she was afterwards fitted up as a hospital. Latterly she has been employed as night sister of the Citadel Hospital at Cairo.

Miss Grist entered the Army Nursing Service in 1886, immediately after her course of training in the Western Infirmary, Glasgow. She served in different stations in England and Ireland, until she received her first orders for foreign service in Egypt. She worked in the Citadel Hospital, Cairo, through some severe epidemics of enteric fever in 1894 and 1895; the Dongola expedition and cholera epidemic in 1896, and she is now nursing the sick and wounded from Atbara and Omdurman.

In an interesting letter, written from the Sisters' Quarters, The Citadel, Cairo, Miss Grist says: "The work on foreign service is always much harder than at home, and since sanitary has been exceptionally so in consequence of weekly convoys of sick from all stations on the line of communication to the Sudan. The daily number of sick and eight days from dysentery and enteric in the most virulent form, have made the duty very sad and depressing, and given a mournful termination to this glorious campaign."

LESE MAJESTE. The greatest example of lese majeste in Germany is apparently more diverting than serious. The offence occurred at Spandau, near Berlin, and the offender is a stonemason with a numerous family. The mason was simply having dinner in the bosom of his family when he let fall some observations which were not exactly complimentary to the Kaiser. To his great surprise his wife did more than dissent from his views; she went to the nearest police station and denounced her husband, who was immediately arrested.

BRITISH AGRICULTURE NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER TILLAGE LAST YEAR. Favorable Year—A High Average Yield of Wheat—Diminished Imports—More Than One-third of the Total Area in Permanent Grass Land.

The dependence of the British Islands on other countries for the bulk of their food supply, involving, as it does, the maintenance of an enormous navy at great cost, is giving rise to inquiry as to whether all is being drawn from the home soil for the maintenance of the great cost, is giving rise to inquiry as to whether all is being drawn from the home soil for the maintenance of the population that might be. The total area of the United Kingdom is 76,729,491 acres, distributed as follows:

England Acres. 32,555,312 Wales 4,723,573 Scotland 10,835,659 Ireland 20,327,947

Of this acreage only 19,813,665 acres were under tillage in 1898, of which cereals took up 8,816,756 acres. Of this area but 2,158,479 acres were planted with wheat, an increase of 219,523 acres over that of 1897. The rest were given up to the production of barley, oats, rye, beans and peas. Green crops, such as turnips, mangels, vetches and rape, occupied 4,261,482 acres, while clover and other permanent grasses covered the considerable area of 6,210,881 acres. The remaining 524,566 acres were divided into 155,364 acres of flax, hops and small fruit and 369,202 acres bare fallow. Permanent grass lands covered 27,978,809 acres, more than one-third of the total area of the islands. On comparison with 1897 there was a decrease in the tilled land of 130,178 acres and an increase of the area under grass of 54,099 acres. One remarkable fact is the steadily decreasing area of potato cultivation in Ireland. It was only 664,912 acres in 1898, against 804,508 acres in 1888 and over 1,000,000 in 1871.

THE AREA UNDER FLAX. In Ireland was also considerably reduced. The acreage of hops was less than that at any time during forty years past, and the yield the lowest, with the exception of two seasons, during the last fourteen years. The greater part of the British imports of hops come from Germany, principally Bavaria. The orchard area is placed at 226,050 acres, an increase of 1,949 over 1897 and of about 12,000 acres over 1894; but the yield was disappointing, chiefly owing to the ravages of insects.

For one thing the year 1898 will be noted in the annals of British farming; that is, the high average production of wheat per acre, the highest since 1884. It was 34.74 bushels per acre, against an average of 29.16 during the previous ten years, in which the highest yield was 33.68 bushels, and the lowest 25.95. The yield of barley was also the highest per acre, recorded since 1884, having been 35.75 bushels per acre; and oats, which gave 40.76 bushels per acre, only once exceeded this figure, which was in 1894, when it rose to 41.64 bushels. The official return of the total production of these several cereals was: Of wheat, 73,023,426 bushels; of barley, 68,019,818 bushels and of oats, 118,520,917 bushels.

The high yield of wheat was not, however, the only gratifying feature of the year 1898 to the British farmer. The average price of wheat was the highest, with the exception of 1891, when it rose to \$1.11 per bushel, having been \$1.08 in 1896, and \$1.07 in 1897, still between that price and the money paid for a bushel of wheat in 1898, when it fetched \$1.91 per bushel. But the most remarkable thing about the home wheat market during the year 1898 was the wide fluctuation in the weekly average prices, which amounted to no less than 68 cents per bushel.

As was to be expected from the increased area of land given over to grasses and pasture, there was a considerable decrease in the number of cattle, sheep and pigs in the United Kingdom in 1898 as compared with 1897. The totals given in the official returns are: Cattle, 11,821,232; sheep, 31,102,359; and pigs, 3,719,819; being increases of 145,173 cattle, 555,298 sheep and 36,460 pigs over the numbers in 1897. There was, however, a decrease

of 100,000 in the number of horses, as compared with 1897, when the returns showed 2,068,852 head. That figure, again, was a decrease by 45,296 compared with 1896. The diminishing number of horses employed in agriculture is attributed to the increasing application of machinery and steam power, in the multifarious operations connected with the cultivation of the land.

The average price of barley in 1898 was the best during the last seven years, but a long way under the average of the price during the previous years previous to 1894. In 1898 they sold at 55 cents per bushel, while in 1890 the average price was 69 cents.

As the whole and compared with more recent years, that which has just passed was not a bad one for the British farmer, but he has a great deal to do before anything like the comparative prosperity of twenty years ago can be hoped for. A good deal of attention is being given to experiments that have been carried on by two English farmers during the last few years for the improvement of the soil by cross-fertilization. The results already achieved are remarkable. Varieties of wheat have been produced which give grain on an average 50 per cent heavier than that of the ordinary wheat; and it is believed that the new varieties of wheat and barley are making a gain of 20 or 40 per cent more than the existing varieties. Extraordinary results have also been attained by greater intensity of cultivation on small allotments. Instances have occurred where the yield of wheat has been at the rate of over seventy bushels per acre, just double the production of food in the British Islands to a higher level than it has yet reached. In the one article of cheese something has already been done as a result of the adoption of better methods and more economical management. The immediate effect was seen in the falling off of the purchases of Canadian cheese last year to the extent of about \$2,000,000, and there is little doubt that with the extension of the factory system now being adopted in England for the making of butter and cheese and the great

use of green forage crops as substitutes for hay, the importation of the foreign-made articles, must diminish, as it is doing in the case of those countries from the different countries of Continental Europe.

THE TRANSVAAL MINES.—The Diamond Industry—Coal Mines.—188 Gold Mines, but Only 28 Pay Dividends.—The Diamond Industry—Coal Mines.—The report on the mining industry of the South African Republic for 1897 presented to the Volksraad gives remarkable details of the progress made in the gold mining in the Transvaal and the striking regularity in any other known gold fields. The capital of the 188 gold mines working at the end of 1897 was \$963,863,750. Of these, 28 mines with a capital of about \$50,000,000 paid \$14,700,000 in dividends, or nearly 30 per cent. Sixty-four other mines were producing gold but paying no dividends, and some could not pay any without a considerable reduction in working expenses. The other 106 mines were in course of being opened up.

The total value of the gold yield in 1897 was \$58,250,000, being \$15,000,000 more than in 1896. Of this 66 per cent, was from crushing mills and 34 per cent, by chemical extraction. The quantity of ore worked was 5,741,311 tons, which gives a yield of a little over \$10 to the ton, which as the working expenses were about \$6.62 per ton, left a net profit of \$3.38 per ton. The working expenses in 1896 had been \$6.53, and in 1895, \$7.54 per ton. The total expenditure of the gold mining industry had been \$45,350,000. As during the past year, so in 1897, the Transvaal Government refrained from levying the tax of 2-1/2 per cent, on the yield, and as there is no income tax and no exchange or stamp duty is paid on newly issued shares, the gold mining industry does not appear to have much to complain of in that respect. The reduction of the price of dynamite by \$2 and the lowering of railway rates contributed in increasing the profits.

There were, however, great losses made in Transvaal mining securities during 1897. These are attributed to the UNSCRUPULOUS PROCEEDINGS of promoters, who formed nearly 400 companies with a total capital of \$900,000,000 in localities where no gold existed, and overcapitalized other companies to such an extent that dividend paying was entirely out of the question. The promoters have not only imported free of duty and coal carried to the mines free of charge. The profit paying capacity of the mines in general is estimated to be increased by 25 per cent of the Kaffir laborers being constantly incapacitated for work. The scarcity of labor tells heavily against the gold mining industry. The total area of gold claims in 1897 was 251,659 acres, a large decrease on the previous year, due to the abandonment of worthless claims.

In coal mining there was considerable progress. There were twenty collieries at work, with an output of 1,600,212 tons, being an increase of 162,915 tons over that of 1896. The price fell, however, from \$2.28 per ton in 1895 and \$2.11 in 1896 to \$1.88 in 1897, leaving but a small margin for dividends, that amounted altogether to only \$297,500. The wages of the white miners averaged \$1.00 per month, besides gold and coal, there is a small production of silver, lead and tin, not of much importance as yet. Diamond digging in 1897 yielded about 4,000 carats, and is likely to receive an impetus from the recent discovery of a field near Pretoria, which, it is hoped, may prove more than Kimberly. At the time the report was completed 307 diamonds had been dug up, the largest weighing sixteen carats. The same difficulty, however, that hampers the gold and coal mining industries tells against the economic working of the diamond fields.

A MODEL CORRESPONDENT. One woman who has a long list of friends with whom she corresponds has a record of never being far in arrears with her letters. She has made it a rule to write one friendly letter each day. It may not be a long epistle, but it is always an interesting one, for it gives a newsy, bright manner of the little incidents of the writer's daily life, and is not penned with the idea of simply filling a certain number of sheets. Business letters must be written, and take much time; this one epistle a day is only a heart-to-heart chat with a friend, consuming only just as much time as the writer can spare—sometimes ten minutes, on other days half an hour. By this rule of writing a single letter to someone of her correspondents each day this woman says she is never obliged to give a whole day to "catching up" with her friends, and she scarcely misses the few minutes she spends every twenty-four hours in "keeping even."

Slenderous remarks concerning a lady in Essex Street, Canada, caused the offended party to avenge herself by lashing her traducer. The whip lashed struck him in the eye, and destroyed his sight.

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