

## The Earth-worm.

The earth-worm lives a very solitary life below ground, driving its little tunnels in all directions, and never seeing its friends except at night, when it comes cautiously to the surface and searches for company. In the evening, if the observer be furnished with a "bull's-eye" lantern, and will examine the ground with a very gentle and cautious step, he will be sure to find many worms stretching themselves out of their holes, retaining for the most part their hold of the place of repose by a ring or two left in the hole, and elongating themselves to an almost incredible extent. If, while thus employed, an earth-worm be alarmed or touched, it springs back into its hole, as if it had been a string of india-rubber that had been stretched and was suddenly released. The worms have a curious habit of searching for various leaves and dragging them into their holes, the point downwards, and are always careful to select those particular leaves which they best like. As a general rule, they dislike evergreens; and the leaf which I have found to be most in favor is that of the primrose. I have often watched the worms engaged in this curious pursuit; and in the dusk of the evening it has a very strange effect to see a leaf moving over the ground as if by magic, the dull reddish brown of the worm being quite invisible in the imperfect light. The food of the earth-worm is wholly of a vegetable nature, and consists of the roots of various plants, of leaves, and decayed vegetable substances. Many persons cherish a rooted fear of the earth-worm, fancying that it lives in church-yards and feeds upon the dead. These fears are but idle prejudice, for the worm cares no more for the confined dead than does the tiger for the full manger, or the fox for the bleeding gazelle. The corpse, when once laid in the ground, sinks into its dust by natural corruption, untouched by the imagined devourer. The so-called worms that feed upon decaying animal substances are the larvæ of various flies and beetles, which are hatched from eggs laid by the parent; so that if the maternal insect be excluded, there cannot be any possibility of the larvæ. Moreover, neither the fly nor the beetle could live at the depth in which a coffin is deposited in the earth; and if perchance one or two should happen to fall into the grave, they would be dead in half an hour, from the deprivation of air and the weight of the superincumbent soil. Let, therefore, the poor earth-worm be freed from causeless reproach; and though its form be not attractive, nor its touch agreeable, let it, at all events, be divested of the terrors with which it has hitherto been clothed.—*Routledge's Illustrated Natural History.*

## Curious and Costly Books.

In the year 1572, a splendid production—the "Spanish Polyglot,"—was published, printed by Christopher Plantin. A most magnificent copy upon vellum, in the original binding, was sold in London, some twenty-five years since, for 1,000 guineas, and enormous as was this price, the copy was actually wanting three out of the ten volumes—those being in the Bibliotheque Royale. One of the scarcest books in the language—for there are, according to Dibdin, but two known copies extant—is a little black-letter tome of 1586, entitled "A Discourse of Englishe Poetrie," &c., one of which was sold in the Duke of Roxburgh's collection for £64. We might amuse the reader by citing a few of the quaint and alliterative titles of some of the books of those times. Take the following for instance:—"A Footpath to Felicitie," "Guide to Godliness," "Swarme of Bees," "Plante of Pleasure and Grove of Graces." (1586.) These were most rife in the days of Cromwell. There were many bordering closely on the ludicrous, such as the one styled, "A Pair of Bellows to blow off the Dust cast upon John Fry;" and a Quaker whose outward man the powers thought proper to imprison, published "A Sigh of Sorrow for the Sinners of Zion, breathed out of a Hole in the Wall of an Earthen Vessel, known among Men by the name of Samuel Fish." We might multiply the numbers *ad libitum*; but must content ourselves with adding one or two more. "A Reaping Hook well-tempered for the stubborn Ears of the Coming Crop, or Biscuits baked in the Oven of Charity, carefully conserved for the Chickens of the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit and the Sweet Swallows of Salvation." To another we have the following copious description:—"Seven

Sobs of a Sorrowful Soul for Sin or the Seven Penitential Psalms of the Princely Prophet David, whereunto are also annexed William Humuis's Handful of Honeysuckles, and divers Godly and Pithy Ditties, now newly augmented."

The "Mazarin Bible," so called on account of its having been found in Cardinal Mazarin's library, is considered to be the very first book printed with metal types. The first Bible, of 1462, is an edition which exhibits a matchless effort in the art of printing.

A few years ago a typographical wonder was exhibited in London, being a sumptuous edition of the New Testament, printed in gold on porcelain paper of most immaculate beauty, and, for the first time, on both sides. Only one hundred copies were taken off.

## BOND'S IMPROVED TOURNIQUET.

Very many accidents occur from hemorrhage where surgeons are not within call, and in such cases where the bleeding is violent and dangerous, some provision must be made to check it or the sufferer will die from what appears, and really is, in the absence of



medical aid, an insignificant matter. Especially at the present time, while the war is raging, are such incidents common, and it is gratifying to know that at a small expenditure all such catastrophes can be avoided. Our engraving is a representation of an improved tourniquet which, by compressing the vein through which the blood flows, at once stops the issue. It is merely a leather pad provided with an elastic strap which is slipped over the wounded limb and, in connection with the pad, thoroughly accomplishes the end in view. The engraving very fully explains itself and renders further comment unnecessary. The main points about it are that it is so extremely light and portable that it can be carried in the vest pocket, that it is so simple in its construction that it can be afforded at a low price, and lastly and most important of all, that it arrests the flow of blood and prevents that loss of life which would otherwise ensue. A number of eminent surgeons in this city have given this tourniquet their unqualified approval. No soldier should be without one, and friends could not do their absent ones a better service than by sending one of these appliances. Application for a patent is now pending. Further information can be obtained by addressing the inventor, F. W. Bond, 89 Nassau street, New York.

CALIFORNIA FLAX.—The editor of the Los Angeles News has been furnished by Dr. Osborn, of that place, with a parcel of native flax, which grows wild and is said to be abundant in that section. The News says it is from a stock which appears to be a species of nettle; in texture there appears to be no material difference between it and common flax. It is thought that this plant might be successfully cultivated. The fiber is quite as fine and strong as a cultivated article of real flax.

## VALUABLE RECEIPTS.

TO REMOVE STAINS OF INDELIBLE INK.—The nitrate of silver forms the basis of indelible ink. Linen is sometimes stained with it, and it cannot be removed by washing with soap. Such stains can be removed with a solution of the cyanide of potassium, especially if the stain is fresh, but if it is old the best way of erasing them is by the application first of the following mixture:—Spirits of wine 1 ounce, iodine 20 grains, nitric acid 20 drops, hydrochloric acid 20 drops. It is applied with a camel's hair pencil, when the dark stain will become yellow; after this apply a solution of the hyposulphite of soda, or one of the cyanide of potassium, and the stain will quickly disappear. The linen should then be washed in soft water. Stains of nitrate of silver may be removed from paper by the same method.

CARE OF HARNESS.—T. Oliver Ayres, a practical harness-maker, Kent county, Del., contributes to the *American Agriculturist* the following suggestions:—"Harness should be kept hung up on wooden pegs in a clean dry room with a plank floor, so that it may be free from dampness. When soiled, it should be washed with Castile soap suds. Harness that is in constant use needs oiling four times a year; if only occasionally brought out, as carriage harness, &c., twice a year will be sufficient, if the washing be not neglected. To oil harness, separate all the pieces, and lay them in water until thoroughly wet through. Then wash them clean and allow them to dry sufficiently. To know when they are in a good condition for oiling, bend a strap, and if the water does not ooze out it is dry enough. Train oil (whale oil) is sometimes used, but neats-foot oil is much better. Mix with it a little lamp-black, and with a brush apply it to both sides of the straps. About six hours after oiling, wash the whole with Castile soap and warm water, let them dry, rub well with a woolen cloth and buckle them together."

Whale and most vegetable oils injure leather. Neats-foot oil, with the addition of one ounce of beeswax to the pint of oil, is the best mixture that can be used for harness. Soap suds should only be used with a sponge to wipe off the dirt; the leather must not be soaked with the suds. A good method of keeping harness in good condition and appearance, is to blacken and polish it exactly like shoe leather, then apply the mixture of neats-foot oil and beeswax.

ALLOYS OF PLATINUM.—Iron and platinum in equal parts form a crystalline alloy. Platinum dissolves in fused zinc, forming a bluish white hard alloy. Equal weights of nickel and platinum form a yellow alloy; and an alloy resembling gold in color is made of 9 parts of platinum; 16 of copper, and 1 of zinc. Lead, antimony, arsenic, gold and silver form alloys with platinum. When tin-foil and platinum are wrapped together and heated by the blow-pipe, they combine with incandescence, and zinc heated in platinum foil, before the blow-pipe, burns vividly with a slight explosion.

CLEANING GLASS.—Mix some fine whitening in a little dilute alcohol, and smear it upon the glass with a soft rag, after which rub off with chamois leather. Looking-glasses may thus be cleaned, and fly specks, &c., removed.

ZINCING IRON.—Iron to be coated with zinc is first scoured with sand in warm dilute muriatic or sulphuric acid, washed and dried. After this it is run through a bath of melted zinc, the surface of which is covered with sal-ammoniac. If the iron is covered after being scoured, with a strong solution of the common salts of tin, and dried before being dipped into the zinc, a beautiful wavy surface of zinc is obtained. Zinced iron should be nailed with zinced tacks.

TO PROTECT ANIMALS AGAINST FLIES AND INSECTS.—Walnut leaves, 4 ounces; lobelia leaves, 4 ounces; boiling water, 1 gallon. Let the mixture stand until cool; then express the fluid through cotton cloth, and add 4 ounces of the tincture of aloes. Apply a small quantity of this compound, daily, to the surface of the body, by means of a sponge.

REMEDY FOR BITES AND STINGS.—Plantain leaves (*plantago major*), 4 ounces; lobelia leaves, 2 ounces; boiling water, 1 quart. When the mixture becomes cool, bind a quantity of the herb on the affected part, and give the animal, as a drench, four or five ounces of the remaining fluid, every four hours.