

for several hours, we should say it is superior to the British Queen; it is large, oblong, or rather conical, with the same colour as that variety, but sweeter and richer. It is said by Mr. Sanders to be an excellent bearer, and to force well; in addition to which it is reported to be much hardier than the British Queen, nearly all which perished last winter round Tedworth, while this Nimrod suffered in no degree whatever." ]

**Effects of the Winter about Newark.**—In this immediate district the frost of the winter has done more mischief than was done by the frost of last year. The common Laurels are killed by hundreds, at least cut quite down to the ground. Last year they suffered very little. The *Cupressus macrocarpa*, I fear, is killed. The *Pinus insignis*, which was untouched last year, has its spines turned brown half way through. The variegated Golden Holly has the white or golden leaves generally turned brown. The large *Araucarias* have their leaves tinged with brown many feet higher from the ground than last year. The *Cryptomeria* has not suffered much. *Pinus Russelliana* is killed. In several places the common Yew is burnt on one side, and the Cedar of Lebanon also. Altogether these two last winters have cut very short the catalogue of hardy shrubs. D.

**Early Rhubarb** (see p. 208).—Your correspondent who says his gardener last October covered over some Rhubarb with cement casks and fold-yard manure, which was added several times in order to force the growth, and again some four months afterwards covered over, in a precisely similar way, other roots on the same soil, which though last covered were ready first, should remember that he covered up at a time when Rhubarb was wholly at rest, and when it would require double the time and heat to start it that it would when he covered his second lot, growth at that time having already commenced. Besides, starting to force before midwinter does not ensure his cutting so much earlier, more especially if the Rhubarb had not been forced before; if, however, it has once been started early it will start about the same time ever after, with little trouble; but to begin too soon, as your correspondent states, would require something more than merely adding manure "several times," for every gardener knows too well the uncertainty of dung heat in hard weather. If, on the other hand, your correspondent should begin to force after midwinter, and continue the heat till he gets a supply of Rhubarb, and the next year commence a week or two earlier, he might not then fail. It must be remembered, however, that different sorts of Rhubarb naturally vary very much as regards earliness. J. Divers, Maidstone.

**Does Sea-water Kill Seeds?**—I have begun making some few experiments on the effects of immersion in sea-water on the germinating powers of seeds, in the hope of being able to throw a very little light on the distribution of plants, more especially in regard to the same species being found in many cases in far outlying islands and on the mainland. Will any of your readers be so kind as to inform me whether such experiments have already been tried? And, secondly, what class of seeds, or particular species, they have any reason to suppose would be eminently liable to be killed by sea-water? The results at which I have already arrived are too few and unimportant to be worth mentioning. Charles Darwin, Down, Farnborough, Kent, April 11.

### Foreign Correspondence.

**LEAVES FROM MY CHINESE NOTE-BOOK: No. 8.**—*A Journey in search of a new Cedar or Larch, called Abies Kampeferi.*—I have been acquainted with this interesting tree for several years in China, but only in gardens, and as a pot plant in a dwarfed state. The Chinese, by their favourite system of dwarfing, contrive to make it, when only a foot and a half or two feet high, have all the characters of an aged Cedar of Lebanon. It is called by them the *Kin-le-sung*, or Golden Pine, probably from the rich yellow appearance which the ripened leaves and cones assume in the autumn. Although I have often made inquiries after it, and endeavoured to get the natives to bring me some cones, or to take me to a place where such cones could be procured, I met with no success until last autumn. Then, however, I happened to visit a part of the country where I had not been before, and quite unexpectedly came upon some fine specimens of full grown trees covered with ripe cones. They were growing in the vicinity of a Buddhist monastery in the western part of the province of Chekiang, at an elevation of 1000 or 1500 feet above the level of the sea. Their stems, which measured fully 5 feet in circumference 2 feet from the ground, carried this size, with a slight diminution, to a height of 50 feet, that being the height of the lower branches. The total height I estimated about 120 or 130 feet. The stems were perfectly straight throughout, the branches symmetrical, slightly inclined to the horizontal form, and having the appearance of something between the Cedar and Larch. The long branchless stems were, no doubt, the result of their growing close together and thickly surrounded with other trees, for I have since seen a single specimen growing by itself on a mountain side at a much higher elevation, whose lower branches almost touched the ground.

I need scarcely say how pleased I was with the discovery I had made, or with what delight, with the permission and assistance of the good priests, I procured a large supply of those curious cones sent to England last winter. It was with great regret I read in this paper, and in a letter from Mr. Glendinning, that so few of these seeds had vegetated, and in order to increase

the number by procuring another supply, I paid a visit this autumn to the place where I had been so successful last year, with what results I shall proceed to relate. Having arrived at the Monastery of Tsan-tsing—for that is the name of the place—I lost no time in visiting the spot of my last year's discovery. The trees were there as beautiful and symmetrical as ever, but after straining my eyes for half an hour I could not detect a single cone. I returned to the temple and mentioned my disappointment to the priests, and asked them whether it was possible to procure cones from any other part of the country. They told me of various places where there were trees, but whether these had seed upon them or not they could not say. They further consoled me with a piece of information, which, although I was most unwilling to believe it, I knew to be most likely too true, namely, that this tree rarely bore cones two years successively, that last year was its bearing year, that this one it was barren. A respectable looking man, who was on a visit to the temple, now came up to me and said that he knew a place where a large number of trees were growing, and that if I would visit the temple to which he belonged he would take me to this spot, and that there I would probably find what I wanted. I immediately took down the name of his residence, which he told me was Quan-ting, a place about 20 le distant from the temple in which I was domiciled, and at a much higher elevation on the mountains. Having made an appointment for next day he took his leave of me with great politeness, and returned to his home.

Having procured a guide for Quan-ting, I set out early next day to visit my new acquaintance. Leaving the temple of Tsan-tsing, our way led up a steep pass, paved with granite stones. On each side of the road were forests of fine Bamboos—the variety called by the Chinese *Maou*, the finest I ever saw. The forests are very valuable, not only on account of the demand for the full-grown Bamboos, but also for the young shoots, which are dug up and sold in the markets in the early part of the season. Here, too, were dense woods of *Cryptomeria*, *Cunninghamia lanceolata*, Oaks, Chestnuts, and such like representatives of a cold or temperate climate. The Chinese Chestnut appears to differ slightly from the Spanish, but it is superior to that variety. A very pretty small one, about the size and form of the Hazel Nut, is much esteemed; both, I think, worth introduction to Europe. I have sent them both to India, and I am happy to hear that both are now doing well on the Himalayan mountains. Chestnuts have long been a desideratum in India; many fruitless attempts have been made to introduce them, but with Ward's cases we now work wonders.

Our road was long and rugged, and we were gradually attaining a higher elevation. We reached the temple of Quan-ting at last, and had no difficulty in finding our acquaintance of the preceding day, Mr. Wang-a-nok, as he called himself. It now appeared he was a celebrated cook—the Soyer of the district—and had been engaged on this day to prepare a large dinner for a number of visitors who had come to worship at the temple. He told me he would be ready to accompany me as soon as the dinner was over, and invited me to be seated in the priest's room until that time. This little temple has no pretensions as regards size, and was in a most dilapidated condition. In one of the principal halls I observed a table spread and covered with many good things, which were an offering to Buddha, and before which the visitors, as they arrived, prostrated themselves. As the valley in which the temple is placed is fully 3000 feet above the sea, I felt the air most piercingly cold, although it was only the middle of October, and hot enough in the plains in the day time. So cold was it that at last I was obliged to take refuge in the kitchen, where Mr. Wang was busy with his preparations for the dinner, and where several fires were burning. This place had no chimney, so the smoke had to find its way out through the doors, windows, or broken roof, or, in fact, any way it could. My position here was, therefore, far from being an enviable one, although I got a little warmth from the fires. I was therefore glad when dinner was announced, as there was then some prospect of being able to get the services of Mr. Wang. The priests and some of the visitors now came and invited me to dine with them, and, although I was unwilling, they almost dragged me to the table. In the dining-room, which was the same, by-the-by, in which they were worshipping on my arrival, I found four tables placed, at one of which I was to sit down, and was evidently considered the lion of the party. They pressed me to eat and to drink, and although I could not comply with their wishes to the fullest extent, I did the best I could to merit such kindness and politeness. But I shall not attempt a description of a Chinese dinner which, like the dinner itself, would be necessarily a long one, and will only say that, like all good things, it came to an end at last, and Mr. Wang having finished his in the kitchen and taken a supply in his pockets, declared himself ready for my service.

Our road led us up to the head of the valley in which the temple stands, and then it seemed as if all further passage was stopped by high mountain barriers. As we got nearer, however, I observed a path winding up round the mountain, and by this road we reached the top of a range of mountains fully a thousand feet higher than any we had passed, or 4000 feet above the sea. When we reached the top the view that met our eyes on all sides rewarded us richly for all the toil of the morning. I had seen nothing so grand as this since my journey across the Bohea mountains. On all sides,

in whichever direction I looked, nothing was seen but mountains of various heights and forms, reminding one of the waves of a stormy sea. Far below us in various directions appeared richly cultivated and well wooded valleys; but they seemed so far off, and in some places the hills were so precipitous, that it made me giddy to look down. On the top where we were there was nothing but stunted brushwood, but, here and there, where the slopes were gentle, I observed a thatched house and some spots of cultivation. At this height I met with some Lycopods, Gentians, and other plants not observed at a lower elevation. I also found a *Hydrangea* in a leafless state, which may turn out a new species, and which I hope to introduce to Europe. If it proves to be an ornamental species it will probably prove quite hardy in England.

We had left the highest point of the mountain ridge, and were gradually descending, when on rounding a point I observed at a distance a sloping hill covered with the beautiful object of our search—the *Abies Kampeferi*. Many of the trees were young, and all had apparently been planted by man; at least so far as I could observe they had nothing of a natural forest character about them. One tree in particular seemed the queen of the forest, from its great size and beauty, and to that we bent our steps. It was standing all alone, measured 8 feet in circumference, was fully 130 feet high, and its lower branches were nearly touching the ground. The lower branches had assumed a flat and horizontal form, and came out almost at right angles with the stem, but the upper part of the tree was of a conical shape, resembling more a Larch than a Cedar of Lebanon. But there were no cones even on this or on any of the others, although the natives informed us they had been loaded with them on the previous year. I had therefore to content myself with digging up a few self-sown young plants which grew near it, and which I shall endeavour to introduce to England.

I now parted from my friend Mr. Wang, who returned to his mountain home at Quan-ting, while I and my guide pursued our journey towards the temple at which I was staying by a different route from that by which we had come. The road led us through the same kind of scenery which I have endeavoured to describe—mountains; nothing but mountains, deep valleys, and granite and clay-slate rocks—now bleak and barren, and now richly covered with forests chiefly consisting of Oaks and Pines. We arrived at the monastery just as it was getting dark. My friends, the priests, were waiting at the entrance, and anxiously inquired what success had attended us during the day. I told them the trees at Quan-ting were just like their own—destitute of cones. "Ah!" said they, for my consolation, "next year there will be plenty."

I cannot agree with Dr. Lindley in calling this an *Abies*, unless Cedars and Larches are also referred to the same genus. It is apparently a plant exactly intermediate between the Cedar and Larch; that is, it has deciduous scales like the Cedar and deciduous leaves like the Larch, and a habit somewhat of the one and somewhat of the other. However, it is a noble tree; it produces excellent timber, will be very ornamental in park scenery, and I have no doubt will prove perfectly hardy in England. R. F.

### Societies.

**ENTOMOLOGICAL: April 2.**—J. Curtis, Esq., President, in the chair. Donations of books from the Royal Society, the Society of Arts, the Entomological Society of Stettin, Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, &c., were announced, as well as an extensive collection of specimens of aphides preserved in Canada Balsam presented by Mr. F. Walker, and a number of rare British Lepidoptera by Mr. H. Doubleday. Mr. Stainton stated with reference to the discussion respecting the corrosion of the pins with which insects are stuck, that he had only observed this to occur in one species of *Nepitich* (*N. Acetosæ*), and from the acid nature of the corrosion upon which it fed it might be considered that the corrosion was attributable to the nature of the food of the larva; the transformations of the species in question had been observed last year by Mr. Shield, of Dublin. Mr. Foxcroft exhibited specimens of 17 rare species of Lepidoptera which he had reared from larvae taken last year in Fifeshire; he also exhibited specimens of *Papilio Machaon* reared from two very different varieties of larvae. Mr. Bond exhibited a variety of *Spilostethus Mentastri*. Mr. Edward Shepherd exhibited specimens of *Donacia*, some stuck with the common pins and others with electro-plated pins; the former were, after a few months, infected with verdigris, whilst the latter remained uninjured. Mr. Samuel Stevens exhibited specimens of the very rare *Euchirus longimanus*, male and female, brought to England by Madame Planché from the Eastern Archipelago; also specimens of *MacLeayii*. A note was read from Mr. Wallace containing a description of a magnificent new species of butterfly belonging to the genus *Ornithoptera* from Borneo, which he proposed to name after the Rajah Brooke. Mr. Curtis read a note on the species of Galls, recently figured by himself in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, suggesting that some of them might prove varieties. A memoir by Mr. Deborough was read on the natural history of the hive, being a continuation of his observations on the observatory hive, which had gained the prize recently given by the Society on that subject. The secretary gave notice that the Council had resolved to offer the duplicate insects in their collection for distribution among the