An old legend traces the origin of the Thistle as the emblem of the Scottish kingdom to the far-away time when the Danes were invading the country. On a dark night, runs the story, as they were advancing to attack an encampment of Scots, one of them trod on a Thistle, and the thoughtless exclamation which followed awakened the slumberers, who, springing to arms, defeated their assailants. In gratitude for this deliverance the flower of the Thistle was adopted as the national emblem. [8 (1895): 300]

In the Bulletin of the United States National Museum, No. 39, Dr. Frederick D. Coville, botanist of the Department of Agriculture, has recently printed some clear directions for collecting specimens of plants and information illustrating their aboriginal uses, which will be found useful to both travelers and settlers who have an opportunity to observe the habits of any of the tribes of American Indians. [8 (1895): 300]

The Hard Maple of Mame furnishes a large part of the material used in the manufacture of shoe-pegs, although the wood of the Canoe Birch is sometimes used for this purpose. Shoe-pegs are sold by the bushel, and now range from seventy-five cents to one dollar a bushel, $150,000 having been received, it is stated by a correspondent of The Manufacturer and Builder of this city, last year by the Mame shoe-peg factories. [5(1892): 228]

The destruction of the forests which has been going on about the diamond mines near Kimberley, South Africa, is believed by Dr. William Crookes to have seriously modified the climate. The country within a radius of a hundred miles has been stripped of wood to supply timber for the mines. The forests were barriers against the wind; they tempered the heat of the sun in a region where the air is extremely dry, and their removal is thought to account for the dust storms which have been so frequent in that country this year. [10(1897): 249-250]

Professor Roberts, of Cornell University, is sending out circulars to notify whom it may concern that under the Agricultural Extension Bill the college of agriculture has undertaken to assist, free of expense, all teachers who wish to introduce what is called "nature studies" into the public schools. Nature study means nothing more than seeing familiar things in a new light, and the Cornell faculty wish to encourage the investigation of common objects so as to teach accurately observation and the power of clearly expressing what is seen. [10(1897): 150]

Professor McDougal gives some very good reasons in the current number of Appleton's Popular Science Monthly for the establishment of a botanical garden in the West Indies, so that tropical plants could be studied without going to Butenzorg or some other garden on the other side of the world. A laboratory and garden in the West Indies could be reached from any important city in our country in four or five days, and it would be much more accessible for the European botanist even than are those established among the antipodes. Such a garden would be of direct benefit to a great number of working botanists in America and furnish investigators and graduate students of this country with unequaled facilities for biological research. [9(1896): 510]

A thoroughly useful Farmers' Bulletin of about twenty pages, just issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, is entitled Washed Soils. How to Prevent and Reclaim Them. Along the banks of the Ohio and in many portions of the south hundreds of fields have been washed and furrowed beyond the possibility of profitable cultivation. How the destruction of forests has caused these gullies, how to prevent them, and how by cultivation, reforesting and covering up the ground with grass this evil can be checked and cured is plainly set forth in these pages. The illustrations are not artistic, but they are helpful, and the methods of constructing hillside ditches and terraces, the best preparation for forests, with approved methods of planting and caring for them, are all plainly set forth. The statements in this little tract are so truthful, and the deductions so logical and convincing, that every landowner who is not already familiar with them ought to read and consider them. [9(1896): 510]

The Northwestern Lumberman, in speaking of the great flood in the Mississippi valley, says that the deluge has so far subsided that lumber will soon begin to move northward again over the overflowed region, but much of it will be unfit for shipment because it has been under water and is covered with silt. This dirt-covered material will all need to be cleaned, and this will involve a vast amount of work and expense. Where the cottonwood has been covered with water it will be practically ruined, as the dirt can hardly be washed out of its fuzzy fibres, and the result of this is seen in the fact that the price of this lumber has advanced one dollar a thousand. Lucky manufacturers whose lumber piles have been above the water will make the most of their advantages, and the effect will be seen in the market for oak and ash as well as for cottonwood. It will be several weeks before logging can proceed in the bottom-lands with the mills restored to running condition. There will be mud everywhere, tramways washed out, bridges and trestles destroyed, so that it will be midsummer before everything can be restored to order, with mills running steadily, and weeks more will elapse before the newly cut lumber is dry enough to ship. [10(1897): 190]