

Again: Lord Lindsay states that, in the course of his wanderings amid the pyramids of Egypt, he stumbled on a mummy proved by its hieroglyphs to be at least two thousand years of age. On examining the mummy after it was unwrapped, he found in one of its closed hands a bulb, which, when planted in a suitable situation, grew and bloomed in a beautiful dahlia. The credibility of this story is very questionable, since the real dahlia is a tuberous-rooted Mexican genus, not known to botanists till the year 1789. That a bulb of any sort germinated under the circumstances alleged is highly improbable, since the characteristic of the surroundings of a mummy is perfect dryness, which would completely change and devitalize the tissues of a bud-like bulb. It is, however, more credibly asserted, and generally believed, that wheat is now growing in England which was derived from grains folded in the wrappings of Egyptian mummies, where they must have lain for two or three thousand years. Professor Gray, the eminent American botanist, does not fully credit the account, but Dr. Carpenter, the distinguished English physiologist and naturalist, gives it his full indorsement.\*

Professor Agassiz asserts that "there are some well-authenticated cases in which wheat taken from the ancient catacombs of Egypt has been made to sprout and grow." Dr. Carpenter even goes so far in this connection as to give utterance to the following observations, which happen to be extremely pertinent in the present instance:

"These facts make it evident," he says, "that there is really no limit to the duration of this condition (latent vitality), and that when a seed has been preserved for ten years, it may be for a hundred, a thousand, or ten thou-

\* On this subject and the longevity of seeds in general, see Report of the Commissioner of Patents for 1857, Agriculture, p. 256 (condensed from the Gardener's Chronicle, London).