corals, is fatal. A favourable situation is a sheltered bay with a rocky bottom overgrown with green seaweed and freshened by gentle waves and currents. So favoured, the cuttings grow to a sponge two or three times their original size in one year, and at the end of five to seven years are large enough for the market. Similar experi­ments with similar results have more recently been carried on in Florida. The chief drawback to successful sponge- farming would appear to be the long interval which the cultivator has to wait for his first crop.

After the sponge has been taken from the sea, it is ex­posed to the air till signs of decomposition set in, and then without delay either beaten with a thick stick or trodden by the feet in a stream of flowing water till the skin and other soft tissues are completely removed. If this process is postponed for only a few hours after the sponge has been exposed a whole day to the air it is almost impossible to completely purify it. After cleaning it is hung up in the air to dry, and then with others finally pressed into bales. If not completely dried before pack­ing the sponges “ heat,” orange yellow spots appearing on the parts attacked. The only remedy for this is to unpack

the bale and remove the affected sponges. The orange- coloured spots produced by this “ pest,” or “ cholera ” as the Levant fishermen term it, must not be confounded with the brownish red colour which many sponges natu­rally possess, especially near their base. The sponges on reaching the wholesale houses are cut to a symmetrical shape and further cleaned. The light-coloured sponges often seen in chemists’ shops have been bleached by chemical means which impair their durability. Sponges are sold by weight ; sand is used as an “ adulteration.”

It is difficult to obtain recent statistics as to the extent of the sponge trade ; the following table gives a summary of the sponges sold in Trieste, the great European sponge market, in the year 1871 :—

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Sponge. | For Export. | | For Home Consumption. | |
| Value in £ | Mean price per pound. | Value in £ | Mean price per pound. |
| Horse sponge | £60,000 | 6s. | £4400 |  |
| Zimocca sponge | 20,000 | 6s. | 550 | 6s. |
| Fine Levant sponge.... | 20,000 | 14s. | 950 | 14s. |
| Fine Dalmatian sponge | 2,000 | 8s. |  |  |

(w. j. s.)

SPONSOR. The presence of some suitable sponsor or sponsors to give the answers required and undertake the vows involved would seem to be almost essential to the right administration of the sacrament of baptism, in the case of infants at least. In this aspect, however, as in many others, the early history of the development of the rite of baptism remains obscure. The Greek word for the person undertaking this function is *ἀνάδοχος,* to which the Latin *susceptor* is equivalent. The word “ sponsor ” in this ecclesiastical sense occurs for the first time, but incidentally only, and as if it were already long familiar, in Tertullian’s treatise *De Baptismo* (c. 18), where, arguing that in certain circumstances baptism may conveniently be postponed, especially in the case of little children, he asks, “For why is it necessary that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger, who both themselves by reason of mortality may fail to fulfil their promises, and may also be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition [in those for whom they become sponsors]?” There is nothing to make it unlikely that the sponsors here alluded to may have been in many cases the actual parents, and even in the 5th century it was not felt to be inappropriate that they should be so ; Augustine, indeed, in one passage appears to speak of it as a matter of course that parents should bring their children and answer for them “ tanquam fidejussores ” *(Epist. . . . ad Bonif,* 98). The compara­tively early appearance, however, of such names as *com- patres, commatres, propatres, promatres, patrini, matrinæ* is of itself sufficient evidence, not only that the sponsorial rela­tionship had come to be regarded as a very close one, but also that it was not usually assumed by the natural parents. How very close it was held to be is shown by the Justinianian prohibition of marriage between godparents and godchildren. On the other hand, the anciently allowable practice of parents becoming sponsors for their own children seems to have lingered until the 9th century, when it was at last formally prohibited by the council of Mainz (813). For a long time there was no fixed rule as to the necessary or allowable number of sponsors, and sometimes the number actually assumed was large. By the council of Trent, however, it was decreed that one only, or at most two, these not being of the same sex, should be permitted. The rubric of the Church of England according to which “ there shall be for every male child to be baptized two godfathers and one godmother, and for every female one godfather and two godmothers,” is not older than 1561 ; in the

*Catechism* the child is taught to say that he received his name from his “godfathers and godmothers.” At the Reformation the Lutheran churches retained godfathers and godmothers, but the Reformed churches reverted to what they believed to be the more primitive rule, that in ordi­nary circumstances this function should be undertaken by a child’s proper parents. All churches, it may be added, of course demand of sponsors that they be in full communion. In the Church of Rome priests, monks, and nuns are dis­qualified from being sponsors, either “because it might involve their entanglement in worldly affairs,” or more probably because every relationship of fatherhood or motherhood is felt to be in their case inappropriate.

SPONTINI, Gasparo Luigi Pacifico (1774-1851), dramatic composer, was born at Majolati (Ancona) in Italy, 14th November 1774, and educated at the Conservatorio de’ Turchini at Naples under Sala, Tritto, and Salieri. After producing some successful operas at Rome, Florence, Naples, and Palermo, he settled in 1803 at Paris. His reception in the French capital was anything but flatter­ing. His first comic opera, *Julie,* proved a failure ; his second, *La Petite Maison,* was hissed. Undaunted by these misfortunes, he abandoned the light and somewhat frivolous style of his earlier works, and in *Milton,* a one- act opera produced in 1804, achieved a real success. Spontini henceforth aimed at a very high ideal, and during the remainder of his life strove so earnestly to reach it that he frequently remodelled his passages five or six times before permitting them to be performed in public, and wearied his singers by introducing new improvements at every rehearsal. His first masterpiece was *La Vestale,* completed in 1805, but kept from the stage through the opposition of a jealous clique until 15th December 1807, when it was produced at the Académie, and at once took rank with the finest works of its class. The composer’s second opera, *Ferdinand Cortez,* was received with equal enthusiasm in 1809 ; but his third, *Olympia,* was much less warmly welcomed in 1819.

Spontini had been appointed in 1810 director of the Italian opera ; but his quarrelsome and grasping disposi­tion led to his summary dismissal in 1812, and, though reinstated in 1814, he voluntarily resigned his post soon afterwards. He was in fact very ill fitted to act as director; yet on 28th May 1820, five months after the failure of *Olympia,* he settled in Berlin by invitation of Frederick William III., commissioned to superintend all