

CAPTIVE BALLOON AIDS ORCHARDISTS

Citrus trees in southern California are sometimes affected by a parasitical scale which can be eradicated only by fumigating the trees, one at a time, with potassium cyanide. This is a most formidable job but commercial growers are in the business to produce big crops of first-class fruit—if they can't do that the sooner they get out of the game the better—so they fumigate.

Huge canvas bags or fumigating tents are dropped over the trees to confine the fumes of the chemical until they can get in their work. Heretofore these heavy tents have been raised and lowered by means of hand-worked derricks, laborious work that requires the services of half a dozen or more men.

An ingenious Los Angeles man has invented and patented a scheme to make a captive balloon do the work of the derricks. He uses the balloon, a small one of 3000 cubic feet capacity, somewhat the same as such balloons were used in the late war. The tent is made fast to the balloon instead of the regular parachute and ropes, held by men on the ground, are paid out until the tent is lifted and poised over the tree to be fumigated. Then, by drawing in the ropes, the balloon is pulled downward and the tent is lowered over the tree, a large hoop being provided to keep it open at the base.

The tent is then cut loose from the balloon and is supported by the branches of the tree. When the tree is properly fumigated the balloon is given more rope. As it goes upward it pulls a big ring along one of the guy ropes until it reaches a trip-hook attached to the top of the tent, when the latter snaps automatically into the ring, coupling the tent to the balloon.

Four men with a balloon can do just about twice as much work in a given time as seven men can do with a derrick. Another very important advantage is that neither the trees nor the growing fruit are damaged as they sometimes are where a derrick is used for raising and lowering the tents.

A CAT OF THE TRENCHES

It was in an English encampment of soldiers somewhere in Belgium—in front, artillery lookouts; behind, infantry trenches; in the background, artillery officers' dugouts, says *Our Dumb Animals*.

The lookout men saw a cat emerge from the German trenches in front of them, make her way calmly to their trenches, pass through and proceed to the rear where she carefully inspected the officers' billets. Then she retraced her steps to the German lines, and the Englishmen supposed that they had seen the last of her. To their amazement she reappeared with a kitten in her mouth, passed by them to the zone of comparative safety in the rear, dropped her kitten in

a dugout, went back to the German trenches and got pussy number two.

Finally she had three kittens safe in the English lines, and speculation as to her reason for the removal of the kittens was vain. She never told why she deserted the Germans.

The English officers, amused by her trust in them, wrote the story home and a mother sent red ribbons for the pussies. Her son in writing said that they had named the three kittens Bomb-Thrower, Wheezer and Ginger, and that they looked very handsome in their ribbon decorations.

ANCESTOR OF WATCH FAMILY

Old records which have turned up in Nuremberg, Germany, together with a queer watch seem to establish the watch as the oldest specimen of the portable time-piece in existence. It was meant to be carried on a strap from the belt, as it is entirely too thick for pocket use. It resembles the small clocks which for many years sold at \$1.

The case is an ornamental box like a wide napkin-ring, with an ornamented, removable lid. The face has the familiar Roman numerals, with the VI actually present, for there is no second-hand to cut off that hour.

The works are altogether of iron and steel. The main spring has a pig's bristle to act as an auxiliary spring as the main spring becomes exhausted. The watch had to be wound frequently to keep fair time. It was made in Nuremberg in the early part of the 16th century and marks almost the beginning of the art of watchmaking.

HISTORIC TREES IN BOTANIC GARDEN

Though it is now somewhat antiquated and a little the worse for wear, the national botanic garden, opposite the west entrance to the national capitol in Washington, is an interesting place and thousands of sight-seers visit it yearly. There are to be found trees, shrubs, flowers, etc., native to about every clime and country of our globe.

Many of the trees growing in the garden are living monuments to men who have been prominent in public life since the garden was established. One of the most interesting in this respect and at the same time one of the oddest of the trees there is a hornbeam. It was planted by Abraham Lincoln. In the half century and more of its life there it has grown and spread until it covers about a tenth of an acre.

An acorn from a tree growing over the grave of Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, was carried to America and planted in this garden by Charles A. Dana, then editor of the *New York Sun* and foremost among the journalists of the world. Senator Hoar and Evarts each planted a cedar of Lebanon tree. Gen. Grant is represented by a beautiful acacia tree which he planted. The tragedians Edwin Booth, Edwin Forrest and J. W. Booth, each planted a water cypress. These three trees are arranged in the form of a triangle.