

THE DATE PALM.

The date palm is one of the oldest of the vegetable immigrants to California. It has taken a much humbler position in the public thought than the orange, the olive and the grape, which were its attendants hither, and yet it has grown into stateliness and attained the dignity of a landmark in several places. The date has lingered in quiet probably because, though its leaves and flowers appeared freely, its fruit is seldom seen. Why fruit has not appeared, whether owing to the isolation of individual trees and consequent lack of fertilization, or whether other conditions have made it barren, has not, we believe, been fully decided. And yet the date palm has fruited in California occasionally, as our columns have shown during the last five years. It is probable that lack of fertilization is the cause. We just notice in an essay on fruits by Dr. Sturtevant, of Massachusetts, that Theophrastus, in the fourth century B. C., observed that palm trees do not bear fruit unless the females are fecundated by

carry their branches in religious processions. They were in their prime when the Castilian from Mexico was attracted to the shores of southern California. They saw him accumulate broad acres and cattle upon a thousand hills. They saw him lose his proud position and fall back before a more aggressive people. After nearly a quarter of a century had passed over the heads, and two generations had passed away, they saw the new era dawn upon the land about them. On one side two large brick blocks were suddenly erected. On the other side, between them and the sea, among their companions, the olive trees—nearly as old—the county court house. They were large trees in 1846, when Fremont made his famous ride. The emigrants of '49, who took the southern route from Salt Lake, and struck the Pacific first at this point, remember them as they stood out against the western sky. They are old and substantial evidence of the great fertility of our soil, of the genial nature of our climate, of the softness of our winds. They ought to be cherished and protected. The work of human hands, when destroyed, can be re-



THE DATE PALM IN CALIFORNIA.

the dust contained in the flowers of the male, and that in Greece the palm trees raised for ornament in the gardens bear no dates, or at least never bring them to perfect maturity. This is old observation. The old padres should have understood the philosophy of date and fecundate, and have made their early plantations accordingly.

The oldest date palms in the State are those which are growing upon the sites of the Missions in Southern California. The engraving on this page gives a view of one of these, and the use of the engraving is suggested by a fitting tribute to a pair of these old palms, which we find in the *Ventura Signal*, of last week. The old trees and their history are well touched off in the following paragraph:

For many years two large and stately palm trees, in what was once the luxuriant garden of the old Mission fathers of this place, have been admired by Eastern people as the principal attraction of San Buenaventura. They are about 40 ft. high, and 10 ft. in circumference at the base. Long and graceful fern-like leaves branch out about 30 ft. from the ground. They are from seeds planted by the Mission fathers, probably in 1786. For nearly a hundred years have they stood silent witnesses of the decay of the native race, many of whom, in years gone by, were accustomed to

stored. Such a work, when lost, never can be.

The palm shown in the picture is smaller than the veterans at San Buenaventura, but it is of the same species, and serves to show the general characteristics of the *Phoenix dactylifera*. During recent years there has been quite a disposition to plant date palms, and some very handsome groves of young trees may be seen in different parts of the State. It remains to be seen whether they shall prove of any value for fruit bearing.

HABBIT A LA MINUTE.—Clean, skin, wash and cut up a rabbit; put in a saucepan with one-fourth pound of butter; salt, pepper, a couple blades of mace powdered. When about three-fourths done, add two teaspoonsful of flour, a pint of water, two glasses of sherry, two table-spoonfuls of minced parsley, and if you have them, three dried mushrooms. Boil hard for 10 minutes.

BLACK INK.—To 1 gallon pure rain water take 1 lb. of logwood chips, 1 oz. bi-chromate of potash and 15 grs. prussiate of potash. Boil and strain the logwood first, thoroughly, adding water to make it up to a gallon. Then add the other ingredients. Hundreds have paid a dollar each for this recipe. It is said to stand the test of oxalic acid.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

A BARBER ON BALDNESS.

Speaking of the credulity of many people touching the efficacy of hair tonics, an intelligent French hair dresser says:

"Very often the hair falls out after sickness. In such cases it generally grows again without the aid of any hair tonic whatever; but when it falls out from natural causes it never grows again. The celebrated Dr. Bazin, who was formerly physician-in-chief of the St. Louis Hospital at Paris, and who is known throughout the world as the most learned specialist for affections of the skin, told me one day that there was nothing that could make the hair grow after the baldness had come on gradually. This I believe firmly, or, if there was anything of the kind, we would not see so many New York doctors with heads as completely destitute of hair as the backs of turtles.

"I don't think I am far from the truth when I say that during the past 25 years that I have practiced the profession of hair dresser, I have made the trial upon different bald heads of more than 500 different hair tonics, and I am bound to admit that I never saw a single head, the hair of which was restored after baldness. At the end of so many failures, I am completely undeceived as to the value of all the preparations; and I would not now recommend any one of them, because I would be afraid to commit the crime that is designated by the words, 'obtaining money under false pretenses.' In my pathological studies upon the hair, I have found that people who persevere a great deal from the head are apt to get bald. The bad habit of wearing hats indoors is also very hurtful to the hair. In 1806, after the famous battle of Jena, in which the Prussians were completely defeated by Napoleon I, Baron Larrey, the celebrated military surgeon, perceived that many of the German prisoners were completely bald. Surprised, he made inquiries as to the cause of this, and he found that they owed their baldness to the shape—as homely as unhealthy—of their caps. The foul air of their head gear, having no issue, destroyed the vitality of the hair."

VEGETABLE LEATHER.—The *London Mechanics' Magazine* states that there are very extensive works at Stepney Green, London, in which great quantities of artificial leather, are manufactured. In appearance it resembles common leather, and it is only by a very close scrutiny that the distinction between them can be detected. It is manufactured in webs 50 yards in length, and four-and-a-half feet in breadth, and is now much used for bookbinding, and several other purposes for which tanned calf and sheepskin are employed by us. It is also used by saddlers for making harness, and it may be made of any thickness desirable, and is capable of being stretched or cemented. India rubber is the principal substance of its composition, but there are other ingredients mixed with it, whereby its leather qualities are secured. The method of making it is not given, and it appears that this is kept secret; but that such a substance is manufactured, sold and used in large quantities is a fact of too great importance to be overlooked.

THE baby didn't feel pretty good anyway, poor little thing; the car was cold and the road was rough and everybody else was cross and glum, and the baby had only one way in which to express its emotions, so it cried. And how it did cry! Twenty-eight miles of it, and no sign of a let up, and the tired mother just smothering it with baby talk and rocking the little thing in her arms. Presently a testy-looking man, an old bachelor if there ever was one, turned in his seat and snarled, "Can't you shut that child up?" The light that gleamed from her eyes was dangerous, as she hugged the baby a little closer, and fired back at him, "I can shut you up a great deal quicker." The bowl of approbation went up all over the car and he "shut up."