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BALSAM OF PERU.

It Comes From a Tree That Will Grow Only in Salvador.

Naturally, one would expect balsam of Peru to come from Peru, but it does not.

Peruvian balsam comes from Salvador, and the little Central American republic has something of a corner on the market, for it seems to be the only country able to produce this valuable pharmaceutical resin in commercial quantities.

The balsam tree flourishes only along the western Pacific slope of Salvador, between the ports of Acapulco and La Libertad, a distance of not over forty miles, and covering an area of not more than 750 square miles. It is one of the most beautiful trees of the tropical forest and grows rather isolated from its kind. At full development it measures about forty inches in diameter and reaches a height of 80 to 115 feet.

The balsam or sap is gathered during the dry season and in the following manner: A hole is made in the outer bark either by pounding the surface with a blunt instrument or stone, thus separating the outer from the inner layers, or is cut with a sharp knife to form an opening six or seven inches long. From this portion of the tree then exudes, after a period of from five to eight days, the mature sap, which is collected by means of tying pieces of absolutely clean cloth over the wound, which absorb the liquid. When the flow ceases it is again stimulated by heating the tree by means of burning torches.

The cloths in which the sap has been collected are subsequently boiled, and this sap expressed mechanically forms the crude balsam. This is again boiled, foreign substances removed and the liquid poured into rectangular tins containing about fifty-five pounds each, and thus shipped to its final destination. A good balsam tree will yield from four to five pounds of sap a year, and if properly cared for will live to be a hundred years old.—Newark News.

Balancing an Egg.

All the world knows how Columbus on a historic occasion made an egg stand on end. After many learned theories had been advanced on balancing the egg he set the egg on end by, of course, smashing down the shell enough to form a base, but the problem is capable of still another solution. It is an easy matter to set an egg on a plate, for instance, if you know how. The trick is impossible until the egg has been boiled in an upright position. The position of the hardened yolk at the end of the shell lowers the center of gravity until the sphere can be spun or even balanced with ease.

Sensitive Tobacco Plants.

In Cuba the best tobacco comes from one strip of land only, the slopes of a certain river, and even there a north wind may ruin the crop. Tobacco is the most sensitive plant we know of. The smallest thing affects its flavor. Plant Virginia tobacco in Germany and the result is a better tobacco, but it is German tobacco, not Virginia. In north Borneo they produce the most delicate and silky leaves that ever were seen, but the tobacco lacks character and taste. Send Havana seeds to the Philippines, and you merely produce a superior Manila.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Why He Left His House.

In the Paris Louvre is a famous art collection, valued at \$800,000, which was given to the institution by M. Camille Groult. In the collection are some of the finest works of Watteau, Fragonard, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner and Constable. M. Groult's house on the Avenue Malakoff was so interesting that Alexandre Dumas file once told the collector that he could not understand why he ever wanted to leave it. "I will tell you," replied M. Groult; "it is for the pleasure of entering it again."

Irving's Distrust.

In her memoirs Ellen Terry says of Henry Irving: "Stoker and Love-day were daily—nay, hourly—associated for many years with Irving; but, after all, did they or any one else really know him? And what was Henry Irving's attitude? I believe, myself, that he never wholly trusted his friends and never admitted them to his intimacy, although they thought he did, which was the same thing to them."

Piano Keys.

The reason that piano keys become yellow is that they absorb grease from the fingers. To remove this grease cover the ivory with a paste made of whiting and a solution of potash. Let it remain for twenty-four hours, when the ivory should be nearly if not quite as white as when new.

ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

Utter Exhaustion Is One Reward For Attaining the Summit.

"The heart thumps irregularly, the pulse goes up to 100, your knees knock together, and your poor legs seem unwilling to carry you. Your throat is parched, you feel suffocated, your chest seems loaded down with a great weight, and such a feeling of utter exhaustion!"

This is Walter Woodburn Hyde's description of one's condition on reaching the summit of Mont Blanc, in Switzerland, as written to the National Geographic society at Washington.

"The air has now become so rare that even the stoutest guide is compelled to take breath every few steps," he continues. "If you ever saw an asthmatic man trying to walk up hill while a paroxysm was on him you can form some idea of the last part of the ascent. And what do you think is the first use made of the glorious view after all these hours of toil? Do you open your eyes wide in astonishment at the wonderful sight? By no means. You shut them as tight as you can and throw yourself down on the snow in utter weariness of mind and body, resenting the impertinence of your guides, who urge you to look about. But it is too cold to sleep, and soon you are up trying to keep warm."

"The view, if you have any desire to see it, is indeed incomparable. The panorama before you is immense, but everything is on such a grand scale, great agglomerations of plains and mountains, that all details escape you. Most of Switzerland, great portions of France as far south as Lyons and the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy in Italy are spread out before you. The cold was so intense that five minutes after arriving at the summit we were all ready to begin the descent."

"Although the ascent of Mont Blanc offers no greater dangers than that of some other Swiss mountains, it has the name of being the longest and most exhausting climb in the Alps. While such peaks as the Matterhorn and the Chamois Aiguilles are so formed that no great quantities of snow can cling to their sides and consequently present for the most part merely dangers incident to rock climbing, Mont Blanc, from its peculiar formation, is almost wholly buried in its upper reaches in snow and glacier, so that crevasses and avalanches and all other dangers peculiar to snow climbing are a constant menace to the climber."

Didn't Forget Discipline.

Near Settat, in Morocco, during a fierce engagement, a soldier of the French foreign legion was struck by a Moorish bullet and fell flat on his face. "He is dead," said his corporal, leaning over him. Lifting a battered face, the legionary groaned, "No, corporal; not dead, but badly hurt." "Where is your pocket of lint?" demanded the corporal. "I have forgotten it," said the soldier, trying to wipe away the blood. "Two days' arrest," shouted the corporal, and lifting the wounded man on his back, he staggered to the nearest doctor amid a hail of bullets.

Not Giving Themselves Away.

Mr. G. H. Putnam, the well known publisher, in his recollections, tells a story of some revelers in Berlin who were making their way home rather unsteadily one night. Each of them was astonished to see in the sky a comet with two tails.

"But," Mr. Putnam says, "each one kept his great astronomical discovery to himself."

It was not until they found this phenomenon being discussed in the newspapers that they confessed to having seen it themselves!

Owen Meredith.

Owen Meredith rested his fame on "Lucile," but could never be induced to contradict the charges of plagiarism that were made in connection with it. "What's the use?" he said. "If I deny them people will believe there is something in them. If I say nothing at all the book will be read and the charges ignored or forgotten." He was proud of the poem, and in the circle of his intimate friends often quoted passages from it and described the circumstances under which these lines were written.

French Servants.

I never go to Paris without being amazed afresh at the attitude of the servants, for the French cook, maid or butler, is not only a human being instead of a decorous and silent automaton, like the English domestic, but weeps when you weep, smiles when you are merry and, in short, takes a genuine interest in your affairs. — London Sketch.

MARVELS OF MAGNETISM.

Some of the Peculiar Properties of This Mystical Force.

The true nature of magnetism as such, of course, is not known. All that we can be sure of is that magnetic attraction does not radiate outward in all directions as does light, but simply acts along lines consisting of closed curves and called lines of force, these lines connecting the two poles and not extending very far outward between them. These curves may be found very nicely by placing a horseshoe magnet under a thin sheet of paper and sprinkling iron filings on top. The filings will collect along the lines.

Now, as to the different kinds of magnets, there are natural, artificial and electromagnets. The natural ones are found as magnetic ore in the earth, the artificial ones are made by stroking a piece of iron or steel with a magnet, and the electromagnets are caused by the action of an electric current.

Some peculiar things have been noticed in regard to magnetism, among which are the following facts:

It has been observed that fire irons that have rested in one position during the summer months are often highly magnetized, no doubt having been caused by the magnetism of the earth itself by the process known as induction. Other iron articles that stay in one position and do not come in contact with fire or other heat are often found in the same condition, such as iron bars to jail windows and iron railings in front of houses.

The most peculiar observation made, however, was that the upper part of the steel tire of a carriage wheel attracts the north pole of a magnet, while the bottom part or part in contact with the earth attracts the south pole. This is in the northern hemisphere only and is fully in accord with the theory of induced magnetism. Of course in the southern hemisphere, where the earth is under the influence of the south magnetic pole, the conditions are reversed.

A magnet dipped into boiling water loses a great part of its magnetism, which is miraculously restored to it on becoming cool again.

A sharp blow given to a magnet will cause it to lose its magnetism. Also the application of heat will have a like effect.

If a magnetic needle be placed over a rapidly revolving plate of copper, although it be separated from it by a thick plate of glass, the needle will revolve in the same direction as the plate.—Exchange.

First Postal System.

The first letter post, in the modern acceptance of the word, seems to have been established in the Hanse towns in the early part of the thirteenth century. A line of letter posts, connecting Austria with certain towns in Lombardy, followed in the reign of the Emperor Maximilian. In 1481, when Edward IV. was at war with Scotland, a system of relays of horses was established in the north in order to provide the king with the latest news from the seat of war. The first regular post route between England and Scotland was established by Charles I. in 1635.

Good Men.

Nature seems to exist for the excellent. The world is upheld by the veracity of good men. They make the earth wholesome. They who live with them find life glad and nutritious. Life is sweet and tolerable only in our belief in such society and actually or ideally we manage to live with superiors. We call our children and our lands by their names. Their names are wrought into the verbs of language. Their works and effigies are in our houses, and every circumstance of the day recalls an anecdote of them.—Emerson.

Her Choice.

Bobbie and Elsie were told that there were two apples on the table for them. Being taught to consider each other first, Bobbie said, "Take your choice, Elsie." "No," said Elsie, "you take your choice." Each kept insisting that the other take first choice, until finally Elsie broke the deadlock by taking the bigger apple. Instantly Bobbie's eyes flashed, and he exclaimed wrathfully, "Put that back and take your choice."—Boston Transcript.

Curly Hair.

The reason why some hair curls and some does not is a perfectly simple one. Curly hair is flat and has a natural inclination to assume a spiral form, just as a shaving has. Straight hair is cylindrical, and it is one of the properties of the cylinder that it has a greater inclination to stay straight than any other form of matter; hence its use in the formation of bones.

THE MAN IN THE STAGE.

A Grim Tragedy of the Olden Days in New York City.

A good many years ago, long before skyscrapers and rapid transit were thought of and New York was just a big growing town, they used to tell a story that was ghastly enough to curdle the blood of the most skeptical and to keep people of nervous temperament awake at nights.

The tale went that of a summer night a husband and wife, returning home from the theater, entered a Fifth avenue stage far downtown and for many blocks were the only occupants. A little above Fourteenth street, however, the stage came to an abrupt stop, the door was opened and three young men entered. One of the three had evidently been drinking heavily, for his companions were obliged to help him to his seat. The door was closed behind them, and the stage continued its journey northward.

About ten blocks farther on one of the young men rose and, bidding his friends good night, stopped the stage and alighted. A few minutes later the second of the three said, "Well, good night, Dick," pulled the strap, stepped to the sidewalk and walked off through one of the side streets. There remained in the stage only the husband and wife and the young man who was obviously under the influence of liquor and who sat in a crouching attitude in the corner of the stage under the dim flickering lamp.

After a time the husband noticed that the young man's head seemed to be drooping as if in sleep, and, fearing that he might be borne beyond his destination, he rose, tapped him on the shoulder and called attention to the number of the street they had just passed. There was no response, and the husband repeated his words, leaning over as he did so. Then he suddenly straightened up, turned to his wife and said quickly, "We will get out here."

She began to protest, but he simply repeated the words, pulled the strap and helped her to alight. As they stood under the corner lamppost she turned questioning and asked him why he insisted on their getting out of the bus so far below their destination.

"Because," he replied, "that young man's throat was cut from ear to ear."

The Kind of Piece It Was.

One evening at a social function where Sarasate was among the guests a young violinist had the bad taste to play one of Sarasate's compositions with variations of his own creation. The latter were inappropriate and inartistic and jarred upon the ears of all. The performer ended his work and made his way to Sarasate, doubtless expecting a word of recognition or praise. Sarasate said nothing, and the player finally asked, "I hope you recognized that piece?"

"Certainly," Sarasate promptly replied; "it was a piece of impudence."

The Rosicrucians.

It was not until the eighteenth century that the mystic secret society of the Rosicrucians died out. This order was founded by a German noble called Christian Rosenkranz, in the year 1388. They pretended to be able to prolong life and to be aware of things that transpired in distant places. A curious coincidence was the fact that its founder lived to the age of 106. The Rosicrucians asserted they had an unrevealed secret which was an incentive to recruits.

The Same Old Name.

"The boys in this town must have heard all about me before we moved here," boasted Tommy on the day after the family's arrival. "But there's no one here that knew us," objected his mother. "That's all right," persisted Tommy. "Just as soon as I came in the school yard this morning they all yelled 'Hello, Bricktop!' just the way they used to do at home."—Lippincott's.

Good Guess.

"You are so preoccupied at times," said Mrs. Fourthly, "that I don't feel safe in letting you out alone."

"That is to say, my dear," replied the Rev. Dr. Fourthly, with his benevolent smile, "when my mind wanders, as it does occasionally, somebody ought to go along with it."

Quick to Notice.

"Who was that fool you just now bowed to?"

"My husband."

"Oh, I—er—I humbly, most humbly, apologize. I—"

"Never mind; I'm not angry. But what a keen observer you are."—New York Telegram.



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