

THE "BURNING BUSH."

A Wonderful Plant Whose Vapor May Be Set Aflame.

The "burning bush," which is known to botanists as the *Dicranum fraxinella*, is regarded as one of the most wonderful plants in the world. This plant is native to western Asia, though it is now found in some gardens of the temperate zone. In connection with the dictamnus it is rather remarkable that the species is common where the incident of Moses and the burning bush is said to have occurred.

A great many people who grow the plant are quite unaware of its strange habits. As a matter of fact, the dictamnus secretes a fragrant essential oil in great abundance, which, botanists say, is produced in especially large quantities by the flower stems, in warm weather volatilizing so that the air surrounding the plant is impregnated. Further, this vapor is highly inflammable, and if a naked flame is brought near to the plant the flames at once take fire with a most singular result. The whole plant is surrounded with crackling, shooting flames reddish in color and leaving a highly aromatic odor behind them. The burning bush does not seem to be injured in any way by the fire, for the flames do not actually come into contact with the plant itself.

Several conditions are needful if the experiment with the burning bush is to be a success. Thus it is essential that the air should be very dry and warm; also that there should be practically no wind. The best effects are secured only just after the opening of the flowers. It will be realized that these conditions cannot always be relied upon. A plan has recently been devised by means of which the inflammable nature of the vapors given out by the dictamnus may be shown with startling effect.

A strong plant of the burning bush is raised in a pot. At the time when the flowers are just reaching perfection the plant is placed in a glass jar or a case. This is closely covered for some hours before the time of the experiment. On removing the cover a light is held over the plant, when there is at once a tremendous outburst of flame. So great may be the rush of fire that the experimenter is cautioned to keep his face away from the top of the jar, as a serious burn is not by any means out of the question. After an interval of an hour or so with the jar or case closed up the experiment may be repeated with similar results.—Denver News.

The Versatile Manchurian Farmer.
In the early fall in Manchuria the natives undergo a sort of magic change from farmer to bandit. It seems something of a psychological somersault—one day a plodding farmer, the next a highwayman. After the last loafing, or giant millet, is cut, and escape is not so easy over the bare plains, another clap of the hands, and, lo, a peaceful farmer once more! It is not only the farmer who plays this exciting game; many another staid member of the community has his little fling. Some even combine their roles, differentiating according to the seasons. With the oriental's disregard for conditions, a man is often a bandit, merchant and magistrate all at once.—Alice Tisdale in Atlantic.

Macaulay's Torrent of Talk.
"Macaulay improves!" Macaulay improves! Sydney Smith remarked one day. "I have observed in him of late flashes of silence." The "sonorous vivacity" of this enormous talker nettled Smith, who found it impossible often to voice his own wit and wisdom. "I wish I could write poetry like you," he complained to a friend. "I would write an 'Inferno,' and I would pay Macaulay among a number of disputants and gag him!"

Another contemporary described Macaulay as "sloping all over on every subject and standing in the slope."

Wanted to Patent a Circus.
P. T. Barnum once came to the office to know if he could patent the three ring circus. In technical parlance his three ring circus was an aggregation and not a combination to produce a new result. Therefore it was not patentable, which information highly incensed the showman. "It will be adopted by every circus just as soon as I make it known," he declared. And it was.—Scientific American.

Radium Minerals.
Minerals that carry radium are fairly easy to determine. One of them, pitchblende, as generally found, is a black mineral about as heavy as ordinary iron, but much softer. The principal radium mineral, carnotite, has a bright canary yellow color and is generally powdery.—Indianapolis News.

Also Colored.
"Yes, I was fined \$50 for putting coloring matter in artificial butter."
"Well, didn't you deserve it?"
"Perhaps. But what made me mad was that the magistrate who imposed the fine had dyed whiskers."—London Opinion.

Wrong Time.
"So she refused you?"
"Yes, but it was my own fault," said the young stockbroker. "I proposed on a declining market."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Unnecessary.
"Did you ever try the hot water treatment in the morning?"
"Don't have to. My wife keeps me in it all the time."—Baltimore American.

The best thing for any one to say who has nothing to say is to say nothing and stick to it.

AN OLD TIME FARM

And the Methods That Were in Use in the Year 1840.

DAYS OF THE SIMPLE LIFE.

(When All Kinds of Clothing Were Made at Home, When Eggs Sold For a Shilling a Dozen and the High Cost of Living Was Not a Big Problem.)

In view of the modern day high cost of living and of the many wonderful advances made in the last century—the railroad, telegraph, the ocean cable, the telephone, the automobile and farm and labor saving machinery of all kinds and the amazing changes these inventions have necessarily wrought in all directions in almost every walk of life—it may be of interest to recall living conditions on a farm in the year 1840.

The farm I have in mind consisted of 200 acres. The stock was fifteen cows, a yoke of oxen, twenty sheep, an old white horse, a dozen pigs, fifty hens, ten geese, a few ducks and a flock of turkeys.

The farm produced practically every thing the family consumed, both clothing and food. The sheep furnished the wool, which was carded at a "fulling" mill and made into rolls for spinning.

At home it was spun into yarn and woven on a hand loom. For beds it was left white; for clothing it was dyed any color desired. A competent housewife could make dyes of logwood, indigo or cochineal. The white and black wool were mixed to produce a gray like the Confederate uniform.

There were no ready made clothes; all clothes were made in the home. There was no woven underwear. Stockings were knitted at home as well as mittens and tippets. Caps with earlaps were of rabbit skin. There were no shoes. In the winter boots came up to the knees.

Several cows were killed each year. There was a tannery near by, where the skins were tanned. A shoemaker made our boots. They were usually too small and gave much trouble and pain.

The flax, cut and laid down until the fiber loosened from the woody part, was put through a heckle worked by hand and then spun and woven. This strong linen cloth was used for summer clothing, towels, etc. The seed was saved to make flaxseed tea (a medicinal) or poultice for bruises.

For food we had everything needed—fresh meat, potatoes, beets, cabbage, parsnips, pumpkins for pies, apples which lasted from fall to spring; cider, which gave us vinegar or produced a cider champagne.

Half a dozen pigs killed in the fall gave us plenty of ham and bacon, lard, sausages and salt pork. The hams and bacon were hung up in the smokehouse, a small building with no opening except the door. A small fire produced more smoke than heat, but gave the hams and bacon a very delicious flavor.

There were plenty of chickens for roasting and potpies and eggs, turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas, occasionally a roast goose with apple sauce.

From the cows' milk we made both butter and cheese. What butter and cheese the family did not consume was sold in a nearby village. Butter usually brought 12½ cents a pound. Cheese was also made at home, as there were neither creameries nor cheese factories. Cheese was sold at 5 to 6 cents a pound. All eggs not used went to the village store and brought 10 cents to 12 cents a dozen.

Every farmer made his own soap. It was called soft soap. It was soft, but very strong, and took the dirt off your hands and face very thoroughly and some skin also unless you were careful in your ablutions.

Little was heard of the world at large. Twenty miles from the railroad the great four horse stagecoach came every day, bringing the mails. There were few newspapers or magazines. The telegraph was unknown. The Atlantic cable did not succeed until 1866. There were only twenty-three miles of railroad in 1839.

All the wonderful agencies which have added to the power of man in the last century will not be lost, but will be added to constantly. The many problems of the modern day high cost of living can only be solved by time and the efforts of our greatest minds.—Warner Miller in New York Times.

Reason For Complaint.
"I kept the best bread," said a certain baker the other day to a poor fellow who complained of the inferior quality of the article he had purchased of him the day before.
"I do not doubt it," replied the customer.
"Then why do you complain?" asked the baker.
"Because I would suggest that you sell the best bread and keep the bad," was the reply.—Pittsburgh Telegraph.

Some Evidence.
"You say that preparation will make the hair grow?" asked the thin haired man of the druggist.
"Why, say," came from the drug man, "I know a customer who took the cork out of a bottle of that stuff with his teeth, and now he's got a hair-clip."—Yonkers Statesman.

Part Often Overlooked.
"It is all right to pat yourself on the back occasionally," said the dispenser of sage advice.
"Yes," said the player up.
"But don't forget to call yourself down when you need it, my boy."—Pittsburgh Post.

THE WORD "CASUALTY."

First Used as a Battlefield Term in the Crimean War.

When did the word "casualty" first assume the modern specialized meaning with which it is associated in war reports? I think it must have been at the time of the Crimean war, for in the latest volume of "Disraeli's Life" I have come across the following passage, dated Sept. 2, 1855: "Lady Londonderry is in despair about her son, who is now in the trenches. . . . Casualties, she says, and, truly, what a horrible word to describe the loss of limb and life!"

The underlining and the comment seem to show that Disraeli, one of the greatest masters of words, found its use unusual. Murray's Dictionary does not give much assistance on the point, for all its quotations, such as one from the Duke of Wellington's dispatches in 1810. "The casualties of the service," do not necessarily imply anything except loss by unavoidable accidents.

My suggestion, however, is borne out by the following from Stoecker's "Military Encyclopaedia," published in 1853, which says, "Casualties or casualties, a term signifying men that are dead (since first enlisted) or have been discharged or have deserted"—in other words, total losses. No mention is made, it should be noted, of the application of the word to temporary losses caused by wounds. It was Lady Londonderry's use of it in this sense perhaps which Disraeli found strange.—Westminster Gazette.

Riddle Making Epochs.

There have been epochs at which riddle making has been more especially in vogue, and such epochs would appear to occur at seasons of fresh intellectual awakening. Such an epoch there was at the first glimmering of new intellectual light in the second half of the seventeenth century. This was the age of Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, the first in the roll of Anglo-Latin poets. He left a considerable number of enigmas in Latin hexameters. Aldhelm died in 709. Before his time there was a collection of Latin riddles that bore the name of Symphosius. Of this work the date is unknown. We only know that Aldhelm used it, and we may infer that it was then a recent product. The riddles of Symphosius were uniform in shape, consisting each of three hexameter lines.—Cornhill Magazine.

Explosive Barrels.

Nitroglycerin, though an explosive, is rarely used by itself, being mixed with gun-cotton to form blasting gelatin or with a certain earth to make dynamite. Huge quantities of the explosive liquid are kept in casks, and the wood of these casks becomes so highly explosive through being soaked with the liquid that a kick will blow them to pieces. It is not safe to use the empty casks again for refilling them with the explosive, nor can they be used in any other way, even for fire-wood. There is only one thing, indeed, that can be done, and that is to explode the casks. They are placed on waste ground and usually exploded by means of a rifle bullet fired into them. Very little of the cask remains after the explosion.—London Standard.

Chicken Talk.

The chickens were gathered together in the farmyard conversing with one another, as is the custom among all self-respecting chickens who have been brought up by a careful and judicious mother hen.

"What would home be without a mother?" asked one little fellow, looking tenderly at old Mrs. Hen, who was searching among the neighbor's freshly planted seeds for some dainty morsel with which to treat her brood.

"An incubator, I guess," answered his small sister, who had inherited her old man's unseemly sense of humor.—Pittsburgh Telegraph.

Tatoosh Island.

The most equable climate in this country is found in Tatoosh Island, in the strait of Juan de Fuca, between Washington and Vancouver Island, where the temperature never has been above 80 degrees and rarely falls below 50 degrees.

Long Words.

While our language does not contain such long words as are found in some other tongues nor so many words of unusual length, still we have several that are awkwardly long for conversational purposes. We have "philoprogenitiveness," with twenty letters; "interconvertibilities," with twenty-one; "intercommunicabilities," with twenty-two; "disproportionableness," with twenty-three; and transubstantiation alists' and "contradistinguishability," each containing twenty-four letters. An effective little word is "sympneurogistic," as it announces to compress eight syllables into seventeen letters.

The longest monosyllables contain nine letters, and there are four examples, "spotted," "quieted," "strengths" and "stretched."

When Coins Were First Made.
Certain passages in the "Iliad" of Homer would lead to the inference that coins of brass were struck as early as 1184 B. C. Tradition affirms that the Chinese had bronze coins as early as 1120 B. C. But Herodotus, "the father of history," ascribes the "invention" of coins to the Lydians, about nine centuries B. C., and there is no satisfactory evidence that coins were known prior to that date.

A REAL BLIZZARD.

It Was the Worst Snowstorm New England Ever Experienced.

In February, 1717, occurred what is considered to have been the greatest snowstorm that ever visited this country—or perhaps any other. So deep was the fall that practically all through the New England states people were barricaded in their homes, and it was a considerable time before that section was opened up for traffic.

Accompanying this snow there was a terrific tempest and a very low temperature. It was not only in sections, but all over the north, and at many places it drifted to the extent that it may be said that "whole villages were snowed under."

The blizzard caused a very heavy damage to property and especially to live stock. Thousands of cattle perished throughout the country because their owners were unable to go to their assistance, and many remarkable instances were related of rescues. On one New England sheep farm it is said that 1,100 sheep, the property of one man, were found dead, and one flock of a hundred, on Fisher's Island, were found buried sixteen feet in the snow. Two of them only were alive, they having subsisted on the wool of their companions for twenty-eight days after the storm.—Philadelphia Press.

TREES AS BAROMETERS.

Why It Is a Sign of Rain When the Leaves Show Their Backs.

Persons who are close observers have frequently seen the trees when the foliage presents a much different appearance from that ordinarily seen. This is more noticeable in poplar and silver leaf trees.

The odd appearance is due to the fact that the backs of the leaves are turned up, showing the under sides, which are, as a rule, a lighter color than the upper side. Some of the leaves are such a light green as to appear almost white when the backs show in the sunshine.

This behavior of the leaves is due to an unusually low barometric condition of the atmosphere, which causes the leaves to curl a little and flip up in the breeze to such an extent as to show their backs or under sides.

The low barometric condition produces local showers, and it is always safe to predict rainfall when the leaves are seen to have their backs up. Long before the white man came to America Indians knew of this sign and placed great reliance on it. Science also finds knowledge of it among savage tribes of Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands.—New York American.

Lo's Business System.

Old settlers will tell you that the Indians broke the first ground for wheat growing purposes in the spring of 1881. The Indians got their first ideas of settling on land and establishing permanent homes from association with the cowboys. Members of the tribe, including Pocotello Tom, China Eye and Big Lipped Pete, broke some ground and seeded a few acres of wheat.

When the wheat was harvested and washed in primitive Indian fashion the growers began to market the grain. The native wheat king would deliver wheat to American Falls or elsewhere in the vicinity for 50 cents a bushel. If the customer went after the grain the price was \$1 a bushel. When questioned as to the meaning of their singular business methods the Indians would invariably reply: "You come to my wickup, you heap want 'um. Me come to your wickup, maybe so you don't want 'um at all."—Farming Business.

England's Oldest Borough.

As Salisbury is well known as Sarum, so is England's oldest borough, Barnstaple, as Barum, which may have been the Roman name of the town. According to old memorials, "the old name of the town was Abertawe, because it stood toward the mouth of Taw river." The Saxons changed it to Berndenstaple. Barnstaple appears to have been represented in the Witenagemot or Anglo-Saxon parliament. Thus it is one of the oldest boroughs, if not absolutely the oldest, in the kingdom. Its broadcloth manufacture, once an important industry, has now died out, but there are manufacturers of lace and gloves, large cabinet works, tanneries and potteries (Barum ware).—London Globe.

Study of Synonyms.

Little Duicic was asked by her teacher to define the word "whimsical." "It means 'odd,'" she replied. "And now," the teacher went on, "please write a sentence containing the word properly used."

Hesitatingly the little ten-year-old took up a pen and after a moment's thought wrote, "There are two kinds of numbers—whimsical and even."

Dog Carts in Holland.

Residents of Bunschoten, Holland, make use of the little carts drawn by dogs, which are to be seen in very many parts of the Netherlands, and have a fine breed of tall, yellow, smooth haired dogs, which they sometimes harness three abreast.

Venice of Brazil.

Pernambuco is called the Venice of Brazil on account of its numerous lakes, rivers, waterways and an immense coral reef with which nature has completely encircled the city and inside of which all but the very largest ocean vessels anchor.

When the fight begins within himself a man's worth something.—Browning.



THE UNIVERSAL CAR

FORD IS STILL MAKING CARS

Rumors to the contrary are untrue. The ever increasing demand for Ford Cars makes them hard to get. Buyers of Ford Cars for the past year have been compelled to wait their turn. We are taking orders every day and if you are wise you will see us at once about your car. No time to lose now if you are contemplating the purchase of a car in the early spring.

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