

The Santiam News

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY
L. W. CHARLES

Entered at the postoffice at Scio, Ore.,
as second-class mail matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

One year in advance	\$1.25
One year, at end of year	1.50
Six months in advance	.75
Three months in advance	.50

Advertising rates made known on application.

MUSHROOM TESTS.

Not One of Them Is Absolutely Safe,
Declares an Expert.

"There is no absolutely safe, general or single, popular test which can be applied to mushrooms growing wild," writes Riley M. Fletcher Berry in the *Scientific American*. Mr. Berry ridicules the popular belief in the usual test whereby poisonous toadstools can be distinguished from edible mushrooms.

It is not true, he says, that a silver spoon placed in a vessel in which they are cooking will discolor if poisonous fungi are present and remain bright if all in the pan are edible, for the deadliest of mushrooms if freshly gathered will not discolor a spoon, while the most innocent will discolor it if decomposition has set in.

Neither is it true that if a mushroom has a pleasant odor and taste or if the stem be solid or the skin readily peeled from the flesh it is edible, and the salt water test is equally valueless, for the deadly amanita will be unaffected by salt. Again, some of the deadliest of toadstools have the same pink gills as the innocuous field mushroom.

It is especially in the "button" stage that it is difficult to distinguish poisonous from edible mushrooms, for the most deadly amanita rarely reveals its poison cup in this stage.

"There is," according to Mr. Berry, "but one form of mushroom which can safely be recommended to the world at large, to the unthinking who recognize no danger, the puff ball. And even this should not be gathered at either extreme of its existence, since in its button stage it may be confounded with the amanita, and when beyond maturity it may be infested with maggots too tiny to notice until they have made the eater ill."

"It is true that one may not heed warnings and yet possibly live after eating poisonous mushrooms if one soak them lengthily in brine or vinegar and pour this off before cooking. This, however, destroys the delicate flavor of the mushroom which makes it the coveted morsel centuries of epicures have declared it to be."

But the wise man, says Mr. Berry, will either make a serious study of fungi or will rely on the judgment of a trained mycologist or will avoid wild mushrooms entirely and grow his own.

An Only Child.

Being "an only child" is usually regarded as a piece of good luck. Recent investigations show that it is just the opposite. Of nearly 300 "only children" that the investigators examined only twenty were pleasant, normal boys and girls. The trouble with most of them was that they were selfish and ill tempered, and either because they were unwilling to make concessions or did not know how to make them they were unable to get on pleasantly with their playmates. Their parents had spoiled them. The moral seems to be for fathers and mothers rather than for children.—Exchange.

Notaries Public.

Notaries public are said to have been first appointed by the leaders of primitive Christians for the purpose of collecting data for the lives of the first century martyrs. It was a long time before the office had to do with legal employments, such as attesting deeds, wills, etc., and establishing their authenticity in any other country. There was much irregularity in the law concerning notaries until the year 1801, when statutes were passed in England and other countries fixing their duties.—New York American.

THE STORY OF CYPRUS.

An Island With an Amazing Career of Romance and Change.

Checkered and romantic has been the story of Cyprus since the days when King Richard Coeur de Lion conquered the island from the Emperor Isaac of Constantinople, who behaved disreputably to the Lady Berengaria of Navarre, whom the king subsequently married in the chapel of the castle at Limassol. These things happened more than seven centuries ago.

King Richard sold the island to the Templars. They could not pay the full price, and so Cyprus came back to King Richard, who gave it to Guy of Lusignan, the dispossessed king of Jerusalem. Thus Cyprus, the island of Aphrodite Anadyomene and of St. Barnabas, became an outpost of Latin civilization in the Levant and one of the most important trading centers of the middle ages.

The story of the island from 1200 to 1570 is one of the most extravagant pages of history. The wealth and pride of the nobles coupled with a delicious climate and lovely surroundings, promoted a fabulous luxury and an amazing feudal insolence. The kings who for centuries clung to the shadowy title of the last Jerusalem were twice crowned, once in Nicosia for Cyprus and once in Famagusta for Jerusalem. Their court was crowded by the bearers of picturesque titles dating from the crusades—princes of Galilee and Antioch, counts of Jaffa and Edessa; their tempers were hot and their morals loose, but they erected splendid buildings—great cathedrals, the Abbey of Bellapais and well placed castles—and during the days of the Lusignans Cyprus was more important in the eyes of the world than ever it was before or since. This exotic royalty failed at last, and the island fell into the hands of Venice.

The Venetians starved the island of its revenues and dismantled its castles. Finally in 1570 it was conquered by Sultan Selim the Sot for the sake of its rich wine, and the gallant Venetian, Marcantonio Bragadino, who held Famagusta valiantly for St. Mark, was betrayed after his honorable surrender to Lala Mustafa. His skin, stuffed with straw, was for a time used as a masthead sign by his cruel conquerors and was finally sold to his family.

The Ottoman finished what the Venetians had begun. He closed Famagusta to commerce and built Larnaca in its stead, but to all intents and purposes Cyprus was neglected and oppressed until the British made themselves responsible for its proper administration in 1878.—London Standard.

Cured.

The following is a Chinese joke: In a certain house there was a baby that annoyed every one by its continual squalling. At last a physician was called in. He administered a bolus of the soothing virtues of which he had a high opinion and offered to pass the night in the house to observe the effects of his remedy. After a few hours, hearing no noise, he exclaimed: "Good! The child is cured!" "Yes," replied the attendant, "the child has indeed stopped crying, but the mother has begun to mourn."

Zeno's Paradox.

Many persons will recall the famous paradox of Zeno by which he sought to prove that all motion is impossible.

"A body," he argued, "must move either in a place where it is or in a place where it is not. Now, a body in the place where it is stationary and cannot be in motion, nor, obviously, can it be in motion in the place where it is not; therefore it cannot move at all."

Bodies do move, however, and that is a sufficient answer to the ingenious philosopher.

The Spectroscope.

Originally the spectroscope was applied only to chemistry and in that limited field proved itself an invaluable aid in accurate analysis. By holding in a bunsen flame a platinum wire moistened by contact with the skin the presence of a few grains of salt swallowed a few minutes previously can be detected with the spectroscope. Indeed, so wonderfully refined is the work of the spectroscope chemist that he can discover in a substance the presence of one three-millionth of a grain of metal.

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