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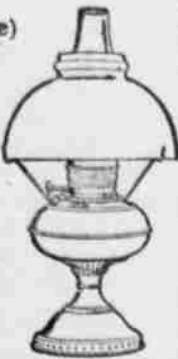
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INSECT ENGINEERING

FEATS OF THE CARPENTER BEE AND THE TUMBLEBUG.

The Sexton Bee is an Expert Gravedigger—Wonderful Skill of the Spider and the Great Strata That His Elastic Web Will Bear.

Long before man had thought of the saw the fly had used the same tool, made after the same fashion and used in the same way, for the purpose of making slits in the branches of trees so that she might have a secure place to deposit her eggs. The carpenter bee, with only the tools which nature has given her, cuts a round hole the full diameter of her body, through thick boards and so makes a tunnel by which she can have a safe retreat in which to rear her young. The tumblebug, without out-dock or machinery, rolls over large masses of dirt many times her own weight, and the sexton bee will in a few hours bury herself in the ground the carcass of a comparatively large animal. All these feats require a degree of instinct which in a reasoning creature would be called engineering skill, but none of them is as wonderful as the feat performed by the spider. This extraordinary little animal has the faculty of propelling her threads directly against the wind, and by means of her slender cords she can haul up and suspend bodies which are many times her own weight.

Some years ago a paragraph went the rounds of the papers in which it was said that a spider had suspended an unfortunate mouse, raising it from the ground and leaving it to perish miserably between heaven and earth. Would be philosophers made great fun of the statement and ridiculed it unmercifully. I know not how true it was, but I know that it might have been true.

Some years ago in the village of Havana in the state of New York a spider entangled a milk snake in her threads and actually raised it some distance from the ground, and this, too, in spite of the struggles of the reptile, which was alive.

By what process of engineering did this comparatively small and feeble insect succeed in overcoming and lifting up by mechanical means the mouse or the snake? The solution is easy enough if we only give the question a little thought.

The spider is furnished with one of the most efficient mechanical implements known to engineers—viz, a strong elastic thread. This thread is strong in well known. Indeed, there are few substances that will support a greater strain than the silk of the silkworm or the spider, careful experiment having shown that for equal sizes the strength of these fibers exceeds that of common iron. But notwithstanding its strength the spider's thread would be useless as a mechanical power if it were not for its elasticity. The spider has no blocks or pulleys, and therefore it cannot cause the thread to divide up and run in different directions, but the elasticity of the thread more than makes up for this and renders possible the lifting of an animal much heavier than a mouse or a snake. This may require a little explanation.

Let us suppose that a child can lift a six pound weight one foot high and do this twenty times a minute. Purlish him with 150 rubber bands, each capable of pulling six pounds through one foot when stretched. Let these bands be attached to a wooden platform on which stands a pair of horses weighing 2,000 pounds, or rather more than a ton. If now the child will go to work and stretch these rubber bands singly, hooking each one up as it is stretched, in less than twenty minutes he will have raised the pair of horses one foot.

We thus see that the elasticity of the rubber bands enables the child to divide the weight of horses into 350 pieces of six pounds each, and at the rate of a little less than one every three seconds, he lifts all these separate pieces one foot, so that the child easily lifts this enormous weight.

Each spider's thread acts like one of the elastic rubber bands. Let us suppose that the mouse or snake weighed half an ounce and that each thread is capable of supporting a grain and a half. The spider would have to connect the mouse with the point from which it was to be suspended with 150 threads, and if the little quadruped was once swung off his feet he would be powerless. By pulling successively on each thread, and shortening it a little, the mouse or snake might be raised to any height within the capacity of the building or structure in which the work was done. So that to those who have ridiculed the story we may justly say, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

What object the spider could have had in his work I am unable to see. It may have been a dread of the harp which the mouse or snake might work or it may have been the hope that the decaying carcass would attract flies, which would furnish food for the engineer. I can vouch for the truth of the snake story, however, and the object of this article is to explain and render credible a very extraordinary feat of insect engineering.—Folies of Science.

Era of Actium.

The "era of Actium" adopted during the early days of the Roman empire, commemorates the great victory gained by Octavius over the troops of Antony and Cleopatra, Jan. 1, B. C. 30. It was often used among the Romans both in writing and colloquially, just as in England people speak of events as occurring before or after the conquest, or as persons in this country frequently refer to events as having happened before or after the war.

A straight life is the shortest distance between honesty and honor.—Saturday Evening Post.

STEER FEEDING.

The Way an Illinois Farmer Finished His First Carload.

In regard to the feeding of the carload of cattle which I sold for \$5.35 in Chicago the other day I would say this was the first carload I ever fed. In the first place I had some blue grass pasture, more than I needed, and I bought eighteen head of good young Hereford steers. They were all of that blood but two—one Red Poll and one Angus—and were all coming two years old.

I bought them about the middle of June and turned them on pasture. During the second week of September I brought them up and fed them a little corn and still let them run on a good blue grass pasture until I got them on full feed. About the middle of October I confined them in a yard and fed them corn, clover and timothy hay. These steers weighed about 700 pounds when I started to feed them. They were all deboned but four, and I would always rather have my steers deboned. They were kept in a small feed lot, and I had a number of brood sows running after them. My feed lot is sandy, consequently it never gets very muddy. I kept the steers well bedded all the time. I bought them all around here near my home, and I think they made me about \$1.20 per hundred weight.

Likes Herefords For Feeders. The best steers for my notion to feed are pure bred Herefords, but one cannot always get them. The better they are bred the better they will feed and sell as a rule. The way to get this kind of stock is to buy and use a pure bred bull instead of using an old scrub animal.

These cattle were in good flesh when they were put in the feed lot. I believe you should always have steers in good flesh to start with. I cannot tell how much these averaged per month, for I had no scales to weigh them on. They were not large, rough steers, but small, blocky, smooth and well shaped. I shipped them Jan. 22. The cattle went through fine, filled up well and weighed 1,095 pounds per head.—S. Pritchard, Jr., in Breeder's Gazette.

The Stock Tank.

Be careful about that stock tank during warm, sultry days. If it stands in the sun the water is no doubt very warm and filled with green scum, and this must be very disagreeable to the live stock that must drink it. Would you like your superiors to furnish you with such drinking water? Better clean out the tank, scrub it with soap-suds and lime and pump it full of clean, pure water from the well. The dumb brutes will appreciate it, I'll warrant. Such tanks should have a shed over them all the year round, a protection from the hot sun as well as the frosts.—Farm Journal.

THE VETERINARY

Horses that are afflicted with a chronic disease that causes a loud, unnatural noise in breathing are said to have thick wind or to be roared. This class does not include those afflicted with severe sore throat, as in these cases the breathing is noisy only during the acute attack of the disease. Thick wind is caused by an obstruction to the free passage of the air in some part of the respiratory tract. The noisy breathing of horses after having been idle and put to sudden exertion is not due to any disease and is only temporary. Horses fed on the seeds of leguminous and some other plants have paralysis of the laryngeal muscles, particularly when fed chick vetch. Other cases may come from lead poisoning, sore throat, and many times from heredity. Roaring, the name by which the disease is generally known, is only a symptom and not the disease. In bad cases the animal fairly suffocates. The cure depends much on the cause, and many times such horses are treated with little success. You can try one dram potassium iodide once a day for a week and then one-half ounce of Fowler's solution once a day for the next week in the drinking water, and if this does not do any good you would better go to a good veterinarian.—M. D. Williams, D. V. S., in Rural New Yorker.

Warts in Cattle.

Lumps or sores on the backs of cattle are caused by the larvae of the warble fly, or ox warble, a black fly thickly covered with yellowish hair. They lay the eggs on the backs of cattle from June to September. The grubs hatch out and bore through the skin and live there, next to the flesh, all winter. In the spring the mature grubs crawl out and fall to the ground. Put a thumb on each side of the lump and squeeze the grub out, or mix lard and sulphur and rub it into the lumps, which destroys the grubs. During July and August rub over the backs of cattle a mixture of four ounces flowers of sulphur, one-half ounce of tar and one quart train oil, and it will prevent the fly from laying its eggs. Rub on once a week. The chief harm these grubs do is the making of holes in the hide, thus lessening its value in market.—Ohio Farmer.

Useful Points, Both.

A pound of fat bacon given a cow that is off her feed will often effect cure, writes a correspondent to Farm Journal.

I will just send you one little thing, very simple and effectual remedy I want on a horse's nose or anywhere. Wash the warts with strong soda water. I took a perfect "mat of warts" off a colt's nose by washing them with strong soda water twice only. A seed wart can be taken off by soda. Pick the wart a little till the blood starts, then apply dry soda a few times.—Mrs. M. A. G.



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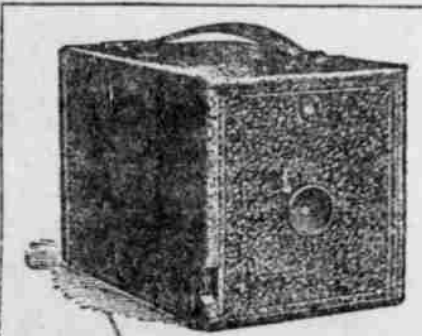
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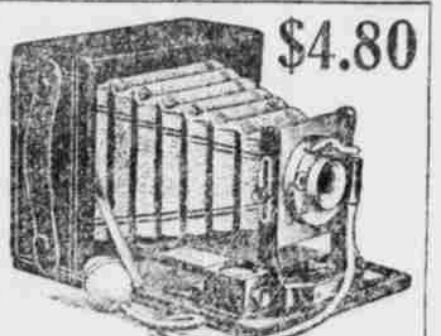
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Auto Fees to Build Roads.

Secretary of State Laylin of Ohio estimates that the new automobile registration law, which makes him the registering officer and authorizes him to collect a grade annual license, will produce a state revenue of \$20,000. As this is given to the highway commissioner, the state will have a new source of revenue for the road fund.

Drying preparations simply devel-

op dry catarrh; they dry up the secretions, which adhere to the membrane and decompose, causing a far more serious trouble than the ordinary form of catarrh. Avoid all drying inhalants, fumes, smokes and snuffs and use that which cleanses, soothes and heals. Ely's Cream Balm is such a remedy and will cure catarrh or cold in the head easily and pleasantly. A trial size will be mailed for 10 cents. All druggists sell the Balm. Ely Brothers, 50 Warren St., N.Y. Ely's Cream Balm cures without pain, does not irritate, causes no itching. It spreads itself over the inflamed surface, relieves immediately the pain of inflammation. Ely's Cream Balm is also used for all Catarrhs of the Eye.