

# OREGON'S DRUG INDUSTRY

## Shipments of Chittim Bark From This State Increasing Annually

That the gathering of Cascara bark is becoming one of the important industries of Oregon is shown by the increased annual shipments of this drug from this state. The following article on the subject will be found not only interesting but full of information.

During the year 1903 there were shipped from Oregon to eastern cities, London and German ports, in the neighborhood of 50 carloads of cascara bark, which product is the most valuable addition to materia medica. These shipments represented a grand total of about 500 tons, which were produced in the valleys of the Willamette and Columbia rivers and turned into the markets of the world. In May last, which marked the early part of the season, the purchasing price averaged about 4 cents a pound. Subsequently the market gradually strengthened to 5 cents, and by the latter part of August it reached the 12 cent mark. Early in September the price advanced to 14 cents and in some cases, where extra care had been taken in curing choice lots, the price of even 15 cents per pound was reached.

After that the price began gradually to lessen, so that at the close of the season it was half way down the scale. Many tons brought from 4 to 5 cents a pound, though the larger portion was sold for a price somewhere between 10 to 15 cents per pound. A fair average of the entire crop can be placed at 10 cents per pound, representing the truly amazing value of about \$100,000. While part of this amount was divided among the dealers, or middlemen, by far the major portion of this sum went into the pockets of the farmers and the laboring men. This was practically without the outlay of capital. In many cases the gathering of the bark was accomplished by families—men, women and children engaging together in the work. The peeling of this valued bark in most cases was from

land which was afterwards cleared for the purpose of agriculture.

Of the crop of 1903 Benton and Lincoln counties furnished the larger share, their output being conservatively estimated at nearly 300 tons, and valued at \$60,000; while it is probable that, as Corvallis is a purchasing center, it drew to a certain extent from the adjoining counties.

Polk and Linn counties were good producers, and next in line came Marion, Yamhill and Washington counties. A considerable portion was added by Multnomah and Clackamas counties to the annual output, while the tidelands of Clatsop added in swelling the amount of the product.

In the commercial world this bark is known as cascara, simply, but in materia medica it is designated as rhamnus purshiana, or cascara sagrada. In common parlance it is often denominated as chittim bark, and is sometimes called bearberry. Up to a few years ago the bark was but little known, and was only used in patent nostrums as an ingredient for cathartic purposes. Now it is extensively used by physicians as a tonic, laxative or cathartic agent in combination with certain aromatics. It is to be found in every pharmacy. Pharmacopoeias mention cascara as being found extensively in northern California, although it is largely to be found in Oregon and Washington.

The demand for this medicinal product has enabled the small farmer, homesteader and wideawake workman to clear no inconsiderable sums of money. There are many instances where laborers have contracted to slash land for the cascara bark they might secure, thereby gaining an abundant profit. Others for the insignificant sums of from \$20 to \$30 have secured privileges in cutting that have netted them a return of more than \$1,000. Mortgages on small farms have been paid through this agency and hundreds of women and children have easily earned during the summer months a sufficient sum to tide them through the rainy season in Oregon. Small farms on the river bottoms and homesteads in the valleys and canyons of the Coast range have already and will yet produce more money in cascara bark than the properties producing it could be sold for.

These statements may seem exaggerated, but they can be fully verified by the leading men of the counties mentioned. Oregon and Washington are the only states in which cascara bark is produced in such prolific quantities. Unless some means are taken for the protection of the smaller

trees and the planting of additional trees the time is not far distant when they will be utterly annihilated. In 1903 many acres of small trees were sacrificed during the excitement incident to the prevailing high prices. Had these been allowed to remain until they had attained a more mature age they would have yielded a larger harvest and produced at least double the amount of money.

The months of May, June, July and August comprise the season in which it is most profitable to secure cascara bark, for the following reasons: During this period the sap has ascended, thus greatly facilitating the peeling process. Then again, the bark gathered out of season is unprofitable, on account of the additional labor incurred in detaching it from the tree, and it has not all its proper medicinal virtues at such times.

Cascara bark is found in large quantities in various sections of Oregon, but in every instance on wet ground. The banks of lakes, river bottoms and swampy lands are especially favored by the cascara tree. When found in the Cascade and coast ranges the tree generally grows in deep canyons or at the base of high cliffs, where it receives the surface water from the uplands.

The size of cascara trees mostly sought for their bark are from three to four inches in diameter or more, since smaller ones are difficult to handle with rapidity. The tree is one of quick growth, hence the smaller sizes are generally let alone until they have attained profitable proportions. The largest cascara tree reported in 1903 was found in Benton county. This had the remarkable diameter of 30 inches or 2½ feet. It was stated last year that some of the cascara trees attained a diameter of six inches in six years, but this was proved inaccurate. By actual measurements a tree one inch in diameter has four rings denoting four years' growth; while larger trees show six rings to the inch, making a six-inch tree considerable older than six years.

The only tools used in gathering the bark are an ax for felling the trees and cutting away the branches and a peculiar shaped knife known as a "spud." Its blade is six inches in length. Its back is beveled to a dull edge to scrape the moss from the bark and there is a notch with which to girdle the tree. The end of the blade is rounded to separate the bark from the trunk.

In peeling the tree the operator girdles the trunk about five feet from the ground and then removes the bark from that point to the base. The tree is then cut down and the larger branches denuded of their covering. It has been found that the bark separates more readily by working downward and the operator thus avoids contact with the slippery trunk.

A fair day's work in bark gathering is placed at 150 pounds, when dried, but many exceed this figure. Harvey Nash of Buena Vista hold the record of 350 pounds.

The bark is dried in the sun by the peelers, who care for their output each evening. Wires are stretched from tree to tree upon which the bark is then suspended with the sap side down. It is left thus for four or five days, which, with favorable weather, is sufficient for thorough drying.

After the curing process is completed the bark is cut into small pieces preparatory to sacking, a strawcutter often being used. Grain sacks, holding 50 to 60 pounds, are generally used, although special sizes holding about 50 pounds are sometimes utilized.

The seed of the cascara trees are eagerly sought for planting purposes, and command \$1.25 per pound. A peculiar thing about the cascara tree is that the only way in which it can be grown is from the seeds, its reproduction by slips and cuttings having proven a failure. The seeds are gathered in September. Wild fowls are very fond of them. The berry containing the seed is round and is black in hue, with a diameter of one-third of an inch. Each berry contains three seeds a little larger than a grain of buckwheat and similar in shape. These are exceedingly bitter, while the berry itself is soft and pulpy, with a very pleasant taste.—Portland Journal.

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## NAT GOODWIN SAD

### Says Shakespearean Revival Is Classed as Failure Though Financial Success

Chicago, April 18.—Nat C. Goodwin evidently has not found that "life is ever so pleasant on the stage" this season. More in sorrow than in anger he writes thus from a small town near Chicago:

"When an actor is forced to abandon cities and play a series of one-night stands the result is most depressing, no matter what the financial reward may be, but when the depression is coupled with the readings of one's failures repeatedly printed in the little puny editions of those little places life becomes a burden. Every-where I play I read of my gigantic failures in 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' when, as a matter of fact, they were both huge successes, both financially and artistically, not from the point of view of the gentle critic, but from the box office standard and the verdict of the public.

"My 'Merchant of Venice' netted the largest receipts in the history of the stage at the prices. One week brought over \$20,000 for eight performances, and the highest price was \$2. And this production goes down to history as a failure. Ah, me! What a pity it is to be born in one's own country, and, worse, to be forced to play in it when iconoclasts have the power to destroy Rembrandt with a whitewash brush."

### BLUE JACKETS AND POLICE. Sanguinary Fight Between Marines and Local Officers.

Pensacola, Fla., April 18.—In a riot here tonight between police and blue jackets from the warships and a few artillerymen from Fort Barrancas, one enlisted man by the name of Banks, of the Seventh artillery, was killed, and four bluejackets from the Iowa and Albany were wounded although not seriously.

The riot started over the arrest of a bluejacket.

Three police officers were at the patrol call box when a petty officer from one of the ships blew a whistle signal in use on the ships for the men to assemble. Fully 300 men gathered and rushed the policemen, separating them. Two of the policemen had backed away from the crowd firing as fast as possible at the advancing bluejackets, who were hurling stones, bottles and other missiles at them. It was during this shooting that that the artilleryman was killed.

Reinforcements from the police station arrived at this juncture, and partly dispersed the bluejackets. Later, owing to many threats of the men from the warship to kill the police, Admiral Barker ordered ma-

rine guards from two of the ships ashore, and they quelled the riot and prevented the trouble.

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### Gloom at Baker City.

Baker City, Or., April 18.—A pall of gloom and sadness has fallen over this city. Four funerals will take place tomorrow, among which will be that of A. A. Houston and S. A. Glasgow, who fell from the scaffold on a building yesterday and died last night. They will be buried together by the Knights of Pythias, to which order they belonged. Mrs. James Fleetwood, the young wife of a prominent rancher, who died yesterday in convulsions, and John F. Jackson, the

24-year-old son of a rancher here, who committed suicide in the insane asylum at Salem, will also be buried. Of the dead all were prominent people in this locality.

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For over four years I suffered with general debility, causing a thorough breaking down of my system. My cousin, who had been benefited by S. S. S., told me about it. I tried it and it cured me. I heartily recommend S. S. S. to all who may feel the need of a thoroughly good blood tonic. Yours truly, MRS. JOSIE A. BRITPAIN, 44 W. Ninth St., Columbia, Tenn.

Debility, insomnia, nervousness, indigestion, dyspepsia, loss of appetite, strength and energy, and the hundreds of little ailments we often have are due directly to a bad condition of the blood and circulation, and the quickest way to get rid of them is by purifying and building up the blood, and for this purpose no remedy equals S. S. S., which contains the best ingredients for cleansing the blood and toning up the system. It is a vegetable blood purifier and tonic combined, that enriches the blood, and through it the entire system is nourished and refreshing sleep comes to the tired, never-rested, body.

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