

WE ARE ALL MORE OR LESS RUBBER.

Stretching human and plant cells to determine their elasticity is no longer a stretch of imagination. And it is under the microscope, working with glass needles with microscopically fine points, that Dr. William Seifriz, professor of botany at the University of Pennsylvania, is appraising how much "rubber" there is in man's make-up just as the engineers have tested the coefficient of the elasticity of steel and other structural materials.

So far, among other results, Dr. Seifriz has determined that the blood cell, or corpuscle, of the frog can be stretched to ten times its size. The human blood cell, however, is more stubborn. It stretches to only three times its original size before it breaks.

The extremely delicate nature of the experiment is apparent when he tells that the human blood corpuscle has a diameter one-two-hundred thousandths of an inch. The stretching, too, is accomplished by hand-made glass needles manufactured by himself.

DISTANCE IS WIDENED.

Glass threads are held over a small flame and suddenly snapped. These are then inserted in two holders on each side of the microscope. Then, as he peers through the lens of the instrument, they are gradually screwed toward the lone cell held in a minute drop of water hanging from a cover of glass under the instrument.

The needle points catch. They are screwed up to pierce the membrane. Then, with almost painful slowness, the distance between the needle points is widened, the distance being measured on a fine scale.

"We don't know yet just what the full value of this study will be," said Dr. Seifriz. "Science knows now that many diseases are due to leaky membranes losing salts necessary for proper functioning."

MEMBRANE IS WATERTIGHT.

"A membrane of high elasticity is fairly watertight; conversely, a membrane of low elasticity is leaky. Leaky membranes in humans mean all sorts of trouble. They are porous and lose their necessary constituents."

"The human protoplasm—cells—are not as elastic as rubber. They are like bread dough in more ways than one. They have the same sticky consistency and many of the same characteristics. Muscle and nerve fibers are being subjected to the same scrutiny by scientists. Nerve fibers have been found to be highly elastic—considerably more so than muscle fibers."

"It may be that a great deal may be learned of cancer caused through such experiments. There are scientists who are working on the cells with this end in view."

Wasp Takes High Rank as a Builder of Nests.

Wasps are the master architects of the jungle. Masons, tailors, carpenters, decorators, paper manufacturers and builders of skyscrapers—all of these trades and many more are open secrets among the wasps.

There appears to be almost an aesthetic sense among some species, writes Paul Griswold Holmes in the Bruce museum at Greenwich, in Nature Magazine. I have found the exquisite homes of the Nectarina wasps so beautifully decorated in color that I could scarcely believe my eyes.

These little wasps are found in colonies. They are rather timid and seldom sting. One may disturb their nests with impunity. The nests are of paper, constructed by macerating wood pulp into paper ribbon. The color of this basic material in the case of the species in question is coppery brown. When the nest is almost finished it is beautifully decorated by the addition of stripes and bands of pure white. These are laid on in interesting designs.

The bottom of the nest is pure white as a rule, but in one memorable case all the white portions were washed with the most delicate shades of pink and green.

Within the nests are tiers of hexagonal cells of paper, wherein the young wasps are reared, after the fashion of other paper wasps.

The walls of nests are often as thin as tissue paper, and it is surprising how they withstand the tropical downpours.—Exchange.

Antarctic Land Part of America's Domain.

The United States has an Antarctic domain as great as the holdings in the Arctic region of Alaska. Indeed, if we were to deem it advisable we could register a sound title to a vast area near the South Pole discovered by Commander Charles Wilkes, of the United States navy in 1840. This region, known as Wilkes Land, has an area equal to almost half that of continental United States.

The national congress was so impressed and elated by reason of this discovery that it authorized the publication, in 22 volumes, of the expedition's complete report, with all charts and surveys. But although so many years have intervened since Wilkes discovered the territory which now bears his name on all the standard charts, no effort has been made firmly to nail down the heritage. So far as we have been able to learn, no American flag has ever been hoisted there. Certainly we know that no colony ever has been established in that dreary domain, nor has any hardy exploring party followed in Wilkes' footsteps to make a detailed examination of this snowy region and its possible opportunities.—Fort Wayne News-Sentinel.

—Subscribe for the "Watchman."

Horrible Methods of Treating the Insane

Until within the last century insane persons were treated with terrible cruelty in nearly all "civilized" countries, and as late as 1770 lunatics were exhibited at public fairs in England and as late as 1815 there were exposures of terrible cruelties in the Bethlehem hospital in England, and this led to gradual improvements and the introduction of enlightened and scientific methods in the care of the mentally afflicted.

One of the mildest of the old forms of treatment of mad people, and long in vogue at Strathfillan, in Perthshire Scotland, was connected with the observance of the festival of St. Fillan a Scottish saint.

Insane people were dipped in the "holy pool," where St. Fillan had bathed in the Seventh century. Many quaint ceremonies were connected with this "ducking." After the immersion the lunatics were herded to St. Fillan's chapel, and strapped to the floor, to be left all night.

Those who managed to free their bonds and escape were considered cured. Experience did not bear out this pious belief, however, and the custom gradually declined.

Old French Chateaux of Historic Interest

To say these French names over rapidly suggests college days and the struggle with declensions, but Guyon, Gallion and Gallard are not in any grammar, they are three interesting Normandy chateaux, whose ruins go back to the days of waving plumes shining armor and prancing steeds.

If you can ignore for a moment the scratchings of tourists on the old walls and the waste paper of kodak cartons they have left behind them, it is not hard to people, in fancy, the Twelfth century life that went on here, when Richard the Lion Hearted invaded the land.

The view from the tower at Guyon should not be missed and reminds one of the panorama from the Eiffel tower. Gallard, which in King Richard's day was "the key to all Normandy," will also give to those who scramble up the precipitous ruins, a wonderful outlook. At Gallion, the American will remember that it not only once housed Philippe-Auguste, Louis XII, the Medicis and Napoleon, but also Benjamin Franklin.

Age Limit Foolish

Though genius is always born and the highest kind shows itself at an early age, success is made, generally with much toil, and is not always accompanied by wealth. For that it must be combined with practical prudence, as it was in the cases of a Michelangelo, Rubens, Reynolds, Titian, and Shakespeare, who were all rich and happy.

Age limits to success, indeed, can be laid down broadly only by the foolish. "Too old at forty!" Sir William Herschel was forty-three before he made his first discovery in astronomy. We did not hear of Kitchener till he was forty-six, and Howard, the philanthropist, was still older when he emerged from obscurity.—London Tit-Bits.

Oh, Romeo!

He was a very shy young man, and although Eryntrude had presented him with innumerable opportunities for declaring his love in practical fashion, he could never summon up sufficient courage to take advantage of them.

They were sitting as usual one evening—she on the sofa, he on a chair, with the usual half-hour intervals between remarks, when the climax was reached.

"Isn't it funny," she said, "that the length of a man's arm is the same as the circumference of a girl's waist?"

"Is that so?" said he, mildly interested. "What do you say if we get a piece of string and see if it's right?"

English Common Law

The name "common law" is given to the unwritten law—lex non scripta—of England, in contradistinction to the written or statute law. It consists of a collection of maxims of British, Danish and Saxon extraction, to which custom and judicial decisions have given the force of law; and derives its origin, it is said, from King Alfred's code of laws, promulgated in 890 A. D., and afterwards lost. Statute law prevails over common law. The common law of the United States is based on that of England.—Exchange.

Live on Camels

The Tuareg, found over a large area in northern Africa, are nomads who live principally by means of, and on, camels. Tuareg women are as free as women in Britain. They go about unveiled, while the men are always veiled. The women choose their own husbands, and teach the children to read and write. They can own property, even after marriage, and their husbands have no control over it. Caste and authority are inherited through the mothers.

Paper Blockades

When a country declares a blockade, which it cannot enforce it is called a paper blockade, because it exists only on paper. Perhaps the most famous paper blockade in history was that declared by Napoleon in 1807. The French emperor declared a blockade against the British although he was not able to send a single war vessel to sea to support the blockade.—Pathfinder Magazine.

Judge Porter Outlines His Platform for Governor.

In line with our promise to give Pennsylvania Democrats information concerning the various aspirants for places on our State ticket we herewith publish part of Judge Porter's speech in opening his campaign for nomination for Governor.

Inasmuch as it was delivered to the people of Lawrence, his home county, to people who know him best it is certain that he wouldn't say anything that he felt he couldn't stand squarely back of. Therefore the following ought to reveal to the careful reader just what might be expected of Judge Porter were he nominated and elected Governor of Pennsylvania.

"It is not a matter of choice whether we will live under government. So long as men are inclined to do what they know ought not to be done, or continue not to do what they know ought to be done, government of some sort we must have. As men advance in civilization they demand, and are entitled to have, government of better sort.

"The Constitution of Pennsylvania declares that the 'supreme executive power shall be vested in the Governor, who shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.' It is my purpose, if elected, to observe this mandate from the people, not alone because it is so written but because I believe laws should be enforced. Government is in danger when men do not want law enforced.

"A free people engaged in governing themselves seldom differ in respect to principles involved. All good citizens want good government, regardless of party affiliation. They frequently differ in respect to the method of process of carrying such accepted principles into effect. Being free they are at liberty to make mistakes, but the mistakes are their own, and they are at liberty to correct them.

"I think we made a mistake in eliminating the State convention from our election laws. I favor such modification of the Uniform Primary Act as will permit the voters of a political party to choose delegates, in the several counties of the Commonwealth, to a State convention and such delegates to meet in convention, adopt declarations on State issues before the people and select candidates on such issues for State officers, in manner similar to procedure in national conventions.

"Men and women exercise their right of self-government at election. By their ballot, on Election Day, they declare their will in respect to the affairs of the Commonwealth. To defeat that will or prevent its honest expression is a sinister type of treason. Laws should be enacted of such character as to prevent the corruption of elections, in ballot, count and return, or at least render certain the apprehension and punishment of every person guilty of election frauds.

"If elected, I shall recommend, as soon as an economical administration of State affairs will permit, that the Direct Inheritance Tax Law be repealed or so amended that a small property accumulated by the industry and frugality of a family will pass, upon the death of the father or mother, to the surviving parent and children without charge or deduction by the State. The annual compensation paid to unnecessary employees of the various State Departments would, if eliminated, justify such legislation at once.

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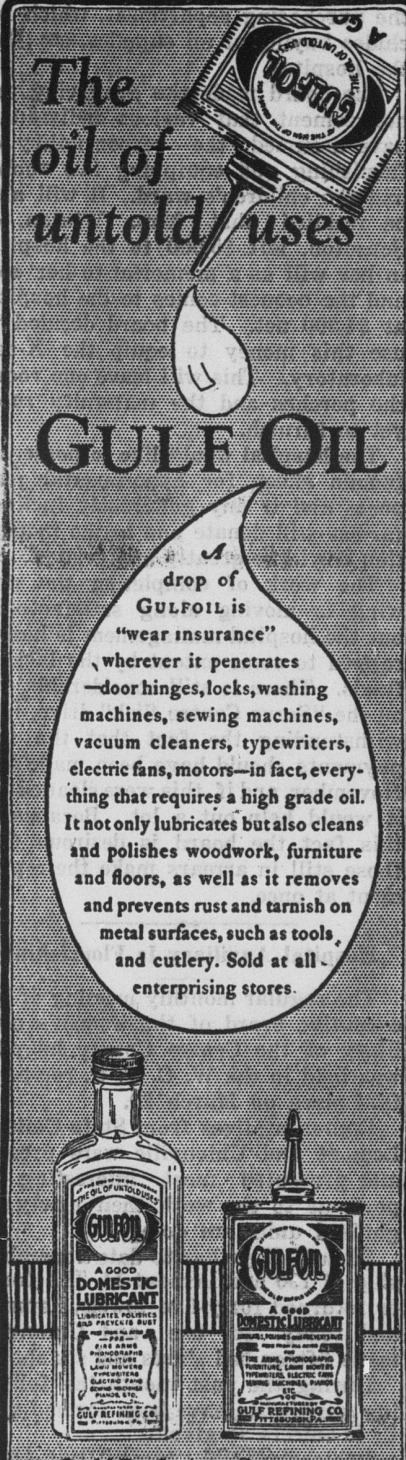
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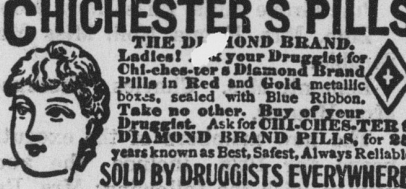


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