

THE GROWTH OF GALLS.

Their Use in Ink-Making—"Devil Beans"—Importance in Trade.
[Philadelphia Times.]

The ink we use to-day, or much of the best of it, is a well-known chemist of this city, "is an animal production, or, to be more correct, the result of the work of an animal." Insects as the cynipid, hymenoptera, coleomyzidae and diptera puncture certain plants with their ovipositors for the purpose of depositing eggs, and in some way they cause an abnormal growth of the wood, so that the larvae are in time surrounded by a round ball of wood, out of which the perfect insect finally makes its way. These galls, or those of certain insects, constitute the principal ingredient of certain inks. In our common black ink Chinese galls and tincture of iron form the principal parts. Sometimes logwood is used, but each dealer has his own secret and, of course, claims to make the best ink.

"Galls are generally known by common names and their nature is little suspected by their finders. Many are known as oak apples and currant berries and in some countries so beautiful are they that they are strung on wire and used in ornamental work of various kinds. The so-called Dead Sea apple is nothing more than a gall, produced by Cynips insano, and here are some that in California were called flen seeds. The person that sent them to me insisted that there was something supernatural about them. He brought them in a wooden box padded with cotton, to prevent them, he said, from being dashed to pieces, as they leaped about in the most astonishing manner. Some of them were what are called 'devil beans.' They are minute seeds, triangular in shape, and when placed upon the table they commenced to roll about and leap into the air in the most remarkable way. I cut one open, however, and soon showed the skeptic the motive power, which was a fat, light-colored lepidopterous larva that, when a moth, is known as carpocapsa dehiscentia. It was the struggles of this grub that made the seed jump.

"The most curious seeds were those of the tree known as Brincador. They are about as large as those of the mustard, and when they fall from the tree they keep up a continual hopping upon the ground, so that you would assuredly think that innumerable sand-hoppers were jumping about. But the secret is that each little seed contains the larva of a small dark-hued Cynips salatorius. I have observed this myself, and the noise of the leaping seeds sounds like the pattering of rain upon the leaves, and they can hop a distance of several inches.

"The subject of galls is an important one aside from the fact that ink is obtained from them, as they are used as medicine in various ways. In India the Somali women tattoo themselves with gall juice, and the blaster, dyer, etc., if they only knew it, are generally indebted to the maternal labors of the most insignificant insects. The importance of the gall business can be seen from this list, and these all go to the ink trade, and it only gives those that are imported into England yearly: Germany sends 100 tons, valued at \$75,000; Turkey about 320 tons, valued at \$200,000; Egypt, 80 tons; China, 70; Bombay, 100. In China thousands of persons get a living out of the gall business. They are known as woepi-ize and are produced by an aphid on an anacardium coccol tree. The galls are generally collected before winter, just previous to the first frost, and are generally submitted to steam, to kill the enclosed insect, and dried and then shipped by the pound or hundred weight."

Skin-Grafting for Burns.
[Philadelphia Post.]

Burns are a great source of trouble to the surgeon in many ways. For instance, if a burn is very extensive, there may be great difficulty in getting a cicatrix to form over the whole of it. Cicatrization only begins in the immediate neighborhood of living epidermis, and therefore a burn or ulcer must heal from the circumference to the center. This difficulty has often been met by a small operation called skin-grafting. A piece of sound skin about the size of a pea is pinched up—say, on the outside of the arm—and the epidermis snipped off with a pair of curved scissors, the scissors just going deep enough to cut slightly into the second layer of the skin and draw a little blood.

A special kind of scissors has been invented for the purpose, that will only take up just the right amount of skin, so that the operation is thus made even simpler still; and if skillfully performed, it causes only trifling pain.

The little fragment of skin thus separated is then placed gently, with its raw surface downwards, on the unhealed surface of the burn. The same thing is repeated again and again, till there are many grafts, if the burn is a large one. In using plaster, or some other similar material, is employed to keep the grafts in position and preserve them from injury. In about four days they should have taken root, and then the covering can be removed.

The Empire of Brazil.
[Mexico Two Republics.]

The empire of Brazil represents one-fifteenth of the surface of the globe, one-fifth of the new world, and over three-sevenths of South America. Its area is 8,337,318 square kilometers, with a seaboard of 7,920 kilometers. The country is divided into twenty-one provinces, and in distribution of soil, timber and water will compare favorably with the United States. The country bordering the northeastern coast for many miles is almost impenetrable mangrove, but is easily cultivated when cleared, and will raise anything imaginable—sugar, coffee, rice, tobacco, maize, plantains, fruits, vegetables.

Some 100 or 300 miles inland from this belt you strike the plateau, generally consisting of well-covered prairies, and for foreign settlers a more preferable country to reside in, albeit not quite so rich. Cocoa, from which cocoa, chocolate and other substances are extracted, flourishes on the plateau, also coffee, maize, fruits, mango, a root which furnishes tapioca, cotton and tobacco. The forests abound with the India rubber tree, logwood, which supplies madder, mahogany, cañon and coconut palm; mammee apple, mango, tamarind, bread fruit tree, cinchona and innumerable others.

Edgar A. Poe.
[W. A. Croffut.]

Who is New York's veteran editor since Webb and Thurlow Weed and Hugh Hastings died last year? Every editor of a New York daily but two has attained his position since the war. I suppose Mr. Dana will have to officiate as the veteran now, though—he was a youth when Webb and Weed were doing their best work. Or shall the honorary mantle fall on Edwards Lester, who, though scarcely older than Dana, edited a newspaper here in Webster's prime and then served the London Times as its American correspondent? His first book, "The Glory and Shame of England," circulated 150,000 copies, and did much to stir up an anti-English feeling at a time when Fenimore Cooper and Lockadale Willis were scorning everything American and worshipping everything British.

I called on Mr. Lester yesterday. "I have just been reading an English article about Edgar A. Poe," he said. "Dear me! It is wide of the mark. I knew him through and through. He made very little impression on the mind of his time. When I knew him best he was publishing The Broadway Journal in Nassau street, between Fulton and Ann. I see him now; slight built, with a head disproportionately large, small hands and feet, classic and symmetrical features, pale face and eyes like hot coals. He dressed with scrupulous care. He never wrote except under the spur of fierce necessity. If he had been rich he would never have written at all. His bad habits, too, have been misunderstood. It was not social tendencies that wrecked him. He was sly in his indulgence and preferred a solitary spree. When he disappeared from the face of the earth and was not seen by anybody for three or four days or a week, I don't think he cared a straw for women, anyhow. He was simply dishonest about money; he simply didn't know anything about it and gave no attention to it; he seemed to lack the power to bestow a thought on money. He was not a Faun of a masculine Undine. He was merely an incomplete man."

Mexico's Curious Sweetmeats.
[Mexico Cor. San Francisco Chronicle.]

The Mexicans put up the drollest sweetmeats in the world. They call them all—conserves, sweetmeats and candies—like dulces. Among other odd dulces, I have bought here candied sweet potatoes, candied apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries, mangoes, oranges, limes, sapodillas, guavas, bananas, and other fruits the names of which I do not know. Many of these 'sweetmeats' are not, at first, very palatable to the American palate, but you soon become accustomed to them as to drinking pulque, and then you like them. At first their guava dulce was very disagreeable to me, but now I like it. It does not resemble the guava jelly, which comes to us in the United States in the form of a red paste, put up in little round wooden boxes. The Mexican guava is a little fruit about the size of a Seckel pear, and when prepared, for desert is of a faint pinkish yellow color, full of small seeds, and has a flavor peculiarly its own. I do not know how to describe it, but it at first seems 'sickish sweet,' until your palate becomes accustomed to it.

Return in Eating.
[Bacon News.]

An aristocratic Englishman prides himself on spending about one-third of his time at the table. An American business man takes an equal pride in the celebrity with which he disposes of a full meal. Taking notice of these extremes a good number of people have demanded a reform. Dr. Tanner tried to introduce the habit of eating once every forty days.

Now comes a man from Maine, a Mr. S. N. Silver, of Auburn, who says: "Five years ago I began eating one meal per day. I spend an hour eating, and eat no more than if I had taken three meals. I am twenty-five pounds heavier, and can endure more labor than when I ate three meals per day." He says: "It is accounted for on the perfect assimilation of food, two-thirds of which is wasted when three meals are eaten." His wife seconds the family arrangement, and takes a quiet lunch between times. We intended to make a point on the economy of food during hard times but when Mr. Silver avers that he eats as much at one meal as he would at three the point is lost, and the reform Mr. Silver urges is hygienic and not economic.

Christies of Temperature.
[Academy News.]

Grand Haven has a mean winter of 26 degrees, while just across the lake, and in the same latitude, Milwaukee has a mean of 22 degrees, and while New Buffalo, in nearly the same latitude as Chicago, has a mean of 28 degrees, the latter's mean is 24 degrees. Traverse City, nearly surrounded as it is by water, although about 300 miles north of Chicago, has a mean temperature of 1 degree lower than the latter city, and has much greater immunity from extremes.

It is stated that the most excessive cold at Mackinac, for a period of twenty-eight years, is not on an average greater than at Fort Riley, 490 miles further south; and Mackinac has averaged warmer by at least 1 degree, for eleven years than Chicago. The extremes at Mackinac are not so great as at St. Louis, while the lowest temperature at the former place is only 10 degrees below that of the latter.

Antiquity Trade Marks.
[Scientific American.]

A foreign contemporary has discovered that trade marks are nearly as old as the industry of the human race. Ancient Babylon had property symbols, and the Chinese claim to have had trade marks 1,000 years before Christ. Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, had a lawsuit about a trade mark, and won it. As early as 1800 the English parliament authorized trade marks, and the laws of America have also protected them. Extraordinary means have been required at all times to guard against the fraudulent use of marks of manufacturers. If we have no means of identifying the trade mark, the best goods at once lose their value. This was early discovered, and probably the successors of Tubal Cain were the first to use distinctive marks on their productions.

THIEVES OF BOOKS.

Kleptomaniacs with Literary Inclinations Who Need Careful Watching.
[Philadelphia Times.]

"That book will cost you \$3, sir," said a clerk in a Market street book store, politely, but with an incisive tone that showed he was not to be trifled with, to a young man whom he surprised in a remote corner, where he had been lingering long over a case of handsomely-bound volumes. The young man was well dressed and of gentlemanly appearance, and was evidently near-sighted. He glanced up hurriedly, his face colored, and his eyes, in spite of the friendly mask of a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, betrayed confusion and chagrin. Then he drew from the pocket of his satin faced overcoat a handsome copy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. With a face that would have afforded Burton an excellent study, he thumbed the volume a moment mumbled that the binding didn't exactly suit him and left the store with more speed than dignity.

"I had been watching him for twenty minutes," said the clerk. "Steal it! Of course he intended to steal it. You have no idea of the number of books that are stolen by apparently respectable people from the shelves of stores and libraries." "I suppose hundreds of books are stolen from us every year," said Mr. Stuart, manager of one of our book stores. "In many cases the thieves are never caught. Frequently when they are detected they are found to be people of such good social standing that we mercifully permit them to settle the affair without the mortification of a public prosecution.

"Quite recently I detected a case of systematic sneak-thieving which had been going on for months. If I should give you the name of the offender you would be astonished. He is one of Philadelphia's most respected citizens. He baffled us for a long time, simply because I thought him above suspicion. Finally a clerk hinted to me that this gentleman was responsible for the recent disappearance of many valuable books. 'I miss a volume every time he leaves the store,' said the clerk. 'Impossible,' said I. 'He cannot be the man.'

"I placed a watch upon his movements, however, and detected him the very next time he came into the store. He settled the matter with us, and in consideration of his high reputation in the community we did not prosecute him. We caught a fellow a month or two ago who was gradually accumulating a whole set of Washington Irving's works by carrying out one at a time, in the hope that it would not be missed. He had secured 'The Sketch Book' and the 'Alhambra,' but we dropped on him just as he was getting away with 'Knickerbocker's History.' He was taking them out by the common process known as 'sub-contailing.' Many people who would not take a penny belonging to another will steal books with apparent impunity. I know men whom I would trust with my watch and my pocket-book, but I would not trust them five minutes before the shelves of this store.

"Experience tells me that a man whose tastes are literary and whose means are limited will always bear watching in a book store, especially if he is a frequent visitor. One of the most annoying experiences is to find that some literary sneak thief has taken one of a set or series of some rare edition which is not easily replaced. In this way I have recently had costly sets of Shakespeare, Carleton and Ruskin made wholly unsalable.

"Books are frequently ruined in another way. Some of these kleptomaniacs have a penchant for the handsome steel engravings and portraits that often adorn a frontispiece. They take a book from the shelf, insert a wet string between the front leaves, and then quietly replace it. In fifteen or twenty minutes the string has so moistened the paste that the entire leaf can be removed without tearing it or making the least noise."

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.
[Joe Howard in Philadelphia Press.]

She is petite, with a large head and oval face, the features of which, like all that branch of the Beecher family, are very heavy and strongly marked. Her eyes are large and lustrous, and generally beam with a roguish twinkle, that is fascinating to this day. She wears her hair precisely as when I first knew her, parted in the middle, where the Lord designed all women's hair should part, and terminating in long, pretty gray curls, which fall gracefully on either side of her face. Her manner is soft and quiet, almost deferential. She stoops, and always did, and the customary attitude of her hands is that described by Solomon, or the queen of Sheba, or some oldtime writer, when he said: "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, and a little more folding of the hands to rest." Quiet dignity, a calm sense of superiority and gentle, unobtrusive womanly tenderness would seem to be the habit of this woman, whose name is known wherever the human tongue can speak and the mortal eye can read.

A Strange Problem.
[“Bigo” in New York Sun.]

The agricultural returns which have just been published in England present a remarkably strange problem. The cultivated area of Great Britain has increased 81,000 acres during the current year, and 1,363,000 acres since 1873, yet the period since 1873 has been the most disastrous of the century, and the food imported has increased in value from \$398,290,000 in 1864 to \$787,000,000 last year. During this period of increasing cultivation of the soil there has been a decrease of 1,011,000 acres in arable land, and, although there has been an increase of 3,375,000 in grazing land, there has been scarcely any increase in flocks and herds. The number of sheep has even decreased 3,359,000 in spite of the fact that the price of meat has been constantly rising during that period. This anomalous state of things is difficult to explain, except upon the theory of a greatly improved mode of living of the masses.

Baked Milk.
[Nebraska Farmer.]

Invalids are now fed on baked milk. The milk is put in a glass jar, covered with paper on top, and baked ten hours in the oven.

TRADITIONS OF WASHINGTON.

How He Looked, Talked and Lived—His Work and Recreation.
[Washington Cor. Cleveland Herald.]

I have spent much time recently in the grass-grown streets of Alexandria, Va., chatting with the old citizens about George Washington, and gathering together such traditions to him as have come down to them from their fathers. Mr. William Carne, the youngest man I talked with, was perhaps 50 years old. He is a newspaper correspondent and litterateur, and he has for years been interested in gathering traditions of Washington.

Mr. Carne said: "The last of the old men who knew Washington personally passed away about twenty years ago, and it is very late to attempt to get authentic information about him. I was born in Alexandria, and I have been engaged all my life in studying Washington's character, and have talked with all the old citizens of Alexandria for the past thirty years and more in regard to him. I knew George Washington Custis, and I remember him as coming here every 22d of February and on the Fourth of July. He would take his stand on the steps of the City hotel and would begin to address the crowd on the greatness of Washington and to tell them anecdotes and gossip concerning him. I have made an especial study of Washington as a young man. The traditions of Alexandria represent him as a very proper young fellow, six feet tall, rather stately in carriage and exceedingly fond of horses. He liked to try new horses, and it is said that during a single day he rode ten different horses into Alexandria. Every one tells me that he made a fine looking figure on horseback. He sat straight and had thorough command of his steed. This straightness he kept until the last. He is said to have danced a great deal as a young man, and to have been very fond of balls. I have no doubt that he danced somewhat, but I do not think he ever unbent himself to any extent.

"The dance of ante-revolution days was far different from the voluptuous waltz, and the fantastic German of the present. The minuet, for instance, is more like a funeral tread than a ball-room skip, and Washington could easily move through this without appearing anything but eminently respectable. I have no doubt that he drank a glass of wine or whisky now and then, as was the custom in those days, but I don't think he ever frequented the tavern or gossiped at the groggeries. As to his relations with women, in all my talks with those who have known him I have never found reason to believe that he did anything improper.

"As to his circumstances as a young man, they were rather poor, and he learned habits of business which stood him well in later years. He did not begin to make money until he became a surveyor, and then he made it very fast, earning \$25 a day. He had plenty of chances for speculation, and among other things he bought two lots in Alexandria. On one of these he built an office and to this he came every day during a part of his life to do his business here. He never lived at Alexandria, but rode up from Mount Vernon."

An old gentleman whom I met above the Braddock hotel, told me he had for years heard George Washington Custis talk of his adopted father. Said he: "Custis looked up to Washington as a god. He described him as straight as an American Indian, and as true in his walk as the savage. From the stories I have heard of Washington, I have tried to picture him in my mind's eye. He was a tall man, padded with muscle. He was six feet two inches in his shoes, and he weighed 210 pounds in his prime. He wore about No. 11 shoes, and had gloves three times as large as the average. His hands were so large they were a curiosity, and his whole frame was bony and large-jointed. He had a broad chest, but not a full one. It was rather hollow, and he was troubled in his last days with a cough. His mouth was firm, and his lower jaw gripped the other with a determined grip. In later years he lost his teeth, and the false ones he got did not fit well, and pushed out his lower lip. He had eyes of cold, light gray, which could look stern and angry upon occasion, and which seldom smiled. He was as wide as the hips as at the shoulders, and kept his straightness of statue to the last. He had large legs and was a good rider and runner. You have heard the stories of his wonderful strength of arm, and how he threw stones wide distances. His nose was rather thick and coarse. I have never heard that it had a blossom on it."

"He was rather fastidious as to his dress, though he wore plain clothes when not on military duty. He always shaved himself, but had a servant to comb and the his hair every morning. I have heard Mr. Custis say that he rose very early at Mount Vernon, often before daybreak, and as early as 4 a. m. He would, at sunrise, go to his stables and look at his blooded horses. When he came back he had a light breakfast of corn cakes, honey, and tea, or something of that sort, and then he ate nothing more until dinner. I am speaking of his later years. After breakfast he rode over his estate, and at 3 had returned and was dressed for dinner. Dinner was a big meal at Mount Vernon, and Washington ate nothing after it. He usually drank five glasses of Madeira wine at dessert, but I have never heard of his being drunk. He was not opposed to the moderate use of liquor, and when he was first elected to the house of burgesses of Virginia, among the items of his election expenses were a hoghead and a barrel of whisky, thirty-five gallons of wine, and forty-three gallons of beer. In the Virginia house he did not cut a great figure. He was not much of a speaker, but he was popular, or he could not have held his place for fifteen years as he did. I have understood that he treated his slaves very well, but that he made them work and would allow no foolishness among them. Washington liked the theatre, and he was fond of dancing in early life."

For a Cold.

When a cold is caught the best thing to do is to give the stomach a rest for at least one day, eating a light supper half an hour before going to bed. A drink or two of hot tea or coffee during the day and a hot, sour lemonade before turning in for the night.

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