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BING-STOKE Co.

THE BOTTLE TREE.

A Life Saver For Cattle During the Australian Droughts.

"It was like a real bottle, thirty feet high, covered with the bark of a box tree and with a gum tree growing out where the cork ought to be."

Such was the way in which an Englishman described the first bottle tree which came under his notice, and truly one who does not know the tree its sudden appearance in his pathway, often in the midst of dense scrub, must make a vivid impression.

The lower part of the trunk is thick and cylindrical, decreasing in size toward the top, its shape being that of a gigantic living bottle, from the neck of which spring the only branches and leaves that the tree possesses. In this respect it carries to an excess the peculiarity of most Australian trees—namely, their lack of branches for considerable distance up the stem.

The bark is of grayish color and very hard, says the Philadelphia Inquirer, but the wood inside is soft and moist. The latter can be chewed in the same way as sugar cane, but as it lacks its sweet, pleasant taste it is rarely used in this way. This peculiar

characteristic of the tree, however, makes it a valuable food for cattle.

Indeed, during the long droughts which occasionally visit Australia hundreds of settlers have to thank the bottle tree for saving them from ruin. Sometimes for more than a year and in the inland districts for still longer periods scarcely a drop of rain falls.

Every blade of grass is dried, tanks become empty, creeks no longer run and in many cases dry up altogether, as do nearly all water holes and lagoons; cultivation is impossible, and fodder for cattle and horses is extremely difficult to procure. Then the bottle tree comes to the rescue. Every scrub is searched for these living bottles, and everywhere is heard the ringing of axes as the strange, attractive trees are laid low.

As soon as the trunk has been stripped of its bark the cattle are brought to it if within easy distance, and there they remain till neither leaves nor wood is left. In places where the settlers have no scrubs of their own they will drive many miles in order to obtain a wagon load of this great treasure.

Sometimes instead of allowing the animals free access to the tree the settlers cut the trunk into strips, put the strips through the cutter and thus make a substitute for proper chaff.

In many instances during a drought, except for prickly pears and the foliage of trees, cattle are fed on these living bottles alone, and they have been the means of saving large quantities of stock.

It seems strange that in the absence of rain these trees should retain their moist interior, as the majority of others look dry and drought-stricken. But throughout all the bottle tree flourishes, lifting its dark green leaves toward the sky, whither the farmers and squatters turn longing eyes in hopes of the wished for rain.

When the dry season ends and the land in a very few weeks is covered with fresh green grass, the work of the bottle tree is done. But, mindful of its past usefulness, no farmer unless under absolute necessity fells this tree, and it may often be seen standing in solitary grandeur, its strange shape outlined against the blue sky, while the land at its base has been put under cultivation or has been converted into grazing grounds for the cattle.

Homemade Barometer.

Those who love experimentation may try the following method of making a cheap barometer practiced in France: Take eight grams of pulverized camphor, four grams of pulverized nitrate of potassium, two grams of pulverized nitrate of ammonia and dissolve in sixty grams of alcohol. Put the whole in a long, slender bottle closed at the top with a piece of bladder containing a pinhole to admit the air. When rain is coming the solid particles will tend gradually to mount, little star crystals forming in the liquid, which otherwise remains clear. If high winds are approaching the liquid will become thick, as if fermenting, while a film of solid particles forms on the surface. During fair weather the liquid will remain clear and the solid particles will rest at the bottom.

Rival Dignities.

An Englishman, fond of boasting of his ancestry, took a coin from his pocket and, pointing to the head engraved on it, said, "My great-great-grandfather was made a lord by the king whose picture you see on this shilling." "What a coincidence," said his Yankee companion, who at once produced another coin. "My great-great-grandfather was made an angel by the Indian whose picture you see on this cent."

"You are charged with stealing nine of Colonel Henry's hens last night. Have you any witnesses?" asked the justice sternly.

"Nussah!" said Brother Jones humbly. "I s'pecks I's sawth peculiar dat-uh-way, but it ain't never been mah custom to take witness along when I goes out chicken stealin', sah."

THE PLOWING SEASON

Ancient Superstitions of the Tillers of the Soil.

SACRIFICES TO THE GODS.

Customs That Were in Vogue Among the Romans of Old—Ceremonies That Are Observed in India and China—Rites of the Siamese Farmers.

The formal inauguration of the plowing season is very ancient and still is observed in some parts of the world.

Among the Romans by the institution of various religious festivals connected with agriculture the seasons came to be regarded with a sort of sacred reverence. Before the old Roman put the plow into the ground he went to the temple of the goddess of earth, Tellus, one of whose priests performed certain propitiatory rites. Virgil in his "Georgics" advises the Roman husbandman to observe the signs of heaven according to the crop he desires to produce. The time to plow for flax, barley and the sacred poppy was when "balance has equalized the hours of day and sleep and halves the world exactly between light and shade. When Taurus ushers in the year with his gilded horns and Sirius sits facing the threatening bill is time for beans. For wheat and spelt the Pleiades should hide themselves from your eyes while Marla sets, but the desired crop has belled them with empty ears." But first of all the poet admonishes the farmer to "honor the gods and offer sacrifices to them."

In India there are certain days when it is unlawful to plow. Mother Earth is supposed to sleep six days in every month, and on such days she refuses to be disturbed in her slumber. In northwest India the cultivator employs a pundit to select an auspicious time for the commencement of plowing. Great secrecy is observed. In some places the time selected is in the night; in others daybreak is the customary time. The pundit goes to a field, taking a brass drinking vessel and a branch of the sacred mango tree, which is efficacious in frightening away evil spirits that may haunt the field. Prithivi, the broad world, and Sessa Naga, the great snakes which support the world, are supposed to be propitiated and reconciled by this ceremony. The pundit satisfies himself as to the direction in which the great snake is lying, for it occasionally moves about a little to ease itself of the great burden of the broad world which it carries. The pundit then marks off an imaginary line. Five (a lucky number) clods of earth are thrown up, and water is sprinkled in the trench five times with the sacred mango bush to insure productivity. Caution must be exercised lest the charm be broken and prospective fortune imperiled. The farmer must remain secluded during the following day; no salt must be eaten, no money, grain or fire given away.

Among the Karnas before plowing the farmer makes a burnt offering of butter and molasses in his own field and again at the village shrine.

The Chinese begin plowing on the first day of their solar year. Anciently the rites which were celebrated by the Chinese at plowing time were elaborate, but rationalistic sovereigns eliminated one expensive religious rite after another until nothing was left except the imperial act of homage to heaven and earth and agriculture in the ceremonial plowing.

The Siamese observe a rite called Raakua about the middle of May, which is preliminary to the plowing season, and it is not proper for any one to plow until the ceremony is over. The court astrologers determine the time for it. On the day fixed by them the minister of agriculture, who is always a prince or nobleman of high rank, goes with a procession to a piece of ground some distance from the capital. Where the festivities are to take place a new plow, to which a pair of buffaloes are yoked, is in readiness, decorated with flowers and leaves.

The minister guides the plow over the field, closely watched by the spectators, who are especially interested in the length and folds of the silk of his lower garments, because the prosperity of the season and its characteristics, wet or dry, are to be predicted from these as he follows the plow. If the robe rises from his knee there will be disastrous rains. If it falls below his ankles there will be a drought. If the folds reach midway between knee and ankle the season will be prosperous.

After a proper number of furrows have been turned old women strew grain of different kinds. In them and bulls are released from the yoke and allowed to feast upon the seeds. The grain which the animals eat most freely will be scarce next harvest, and that which they refuse to take will be abundant.

In Yorkshire it was considered unwise to disturb the earth with plow or spade on Good Friday.—Exchange.

A Shipwreck.

Muggins, gazing intently at a dead dog, in a resigned tone at last said: "Here is another shipwreck." "Shipwreck! Where?" blurted out Juggins.

"Where, my dear friend?" quoted M. "There is a bark lost forever." Juggins growled and passed on.—London Fun.

It is impossible for a man attempting many things to do all things well.—Xenophon.

GLOUCESTER.

The Greatest Fishing Center in the United States.

Everything smells of fish in Gloucester. It is not an odor to which any of the natives object. Nor do visitors find in it anything of which to complain, for it is the pungent ozone of the sea, the smell of fish freshly caught. Gloucester has really never known anything else, for since its beginning, approaching three centuries ago, it has always had fishing for its chief industry, and today it is the greatest fishing center of the United States and according to the belief of many, of the world.

When a two masted schooner, laden to the gunwales with its cargo of fish, comes into the wharfs the fish are carried in great tubs. Over these stand a company of experts, men who have cleaned hundreds of thousands of fish and who can make the quick cuts and do the scraping with incredible speed. Running to each tub is a hose, and after the waste has been removed an instant under the high pressure of water from the hose cleans out the fish completely and makes it sweet and ready for the next step in the operation. Codfish is dried and salted before being sent to the market, and the work is also done on the wharfs. Here are ranged hundreds of tables exposed to the bright sunlight. The cleansed fish are piled up in such a manner that the warm rays get a most admirable chance at them.

From the open air drying tables the fish are shifted to the boxing and packing establishments, which are also located along the water front, and then they are made ready to be shipped to all parts of the world.—Springfield Union.

INSOMNIA.

Curious Way in Which It Affected a Woman's Imagination.

"I can't stand this any longer, doctor," said the nervous woman. "If the patient in the next room to mine, No. 22, doesn't keep quiet at night I must change my room or leave the sanitarium altogether."

"What's the trouble?" asked her physician.

"She has one of these squeaky old wooden beds, and every time she turns over it awakens me. Last night she did nothing but toss and fro, and I didn't get a single wink of sleep."

"I'll see to that at once," he assured her. "A woman in your condition certainly must have absolute quiet at night. I'll have the patient in No. 22 sleep on the roof. The fresh air will be better for her anyway."

The next morning the nervous woman appeared in the consultation room of the sanitarium in radiant mood.

"How did you sleep?" asked the doctor.

"Perfectly," she replied. "I'm so much obliged to you. It made a great difference."

"I knew it would," he said gravely. He was telling the truth, because he knew the power of the imagination in disease, especially of the nerves. As a matter of fact, No. 22 had not been occupied at night for three weeks. The patient had been sleeping on the roof all the time.—Exchange.

Got Quite Pleasant.

The mistress of a hospitable home in New York recently had to employ a new second girl whose work she liked, but whose blunt and forbidding manner she liked not at all. She talked to the girl and urged her to be pleasant and agreeable whenever she had to say anything to other people, particularly visitors.

A great surprise for the mistress followed this admonition. The next day the girl happened to attend the door, and she opened it just as her mistress was passing through the hall. To the astonishment and bewilderment of the latter the caller by the hand, actually dragged her inside the door, expressing her pleasure at seeing her, and then hastened to announce the call to her mistress.—New York Sun.

Canaries of Paris.

The venter of chickweed in Paris is a well known figure. The sellers are numerous, and their cry is one of the most noteworthy of those that resound in the morning in the streets of the French capital. According to the Bulletin des Halles, there are about a hundred thousand canaries in the capital, and the daily consumption of chickweed is estimated at \$2,000. This sum looks large, but it allows only 2 cents for each bird. A Paris contemporary points out that a goodly portion of land between Suresnes and Courbevoie is set aside for the cultivation of the weed.

The Excitement.

"How fast do you usually travel?" "I don't pay much attention to that," answered the motorist. "I get most of my excitement in watching the rapidity with which pedestrians move out of my way."—Washington Star.

Feminine Nerves.

There are nervous women, there are hypernervous women. But women so nervous that the continual rustle of a silk skirt makes them nervous—no, there are no women so nervous as that.—Wellington Free Lance.

Sticks to His Word.

"He is a man who sticks to every word he says." "Is that so?" "Yes; he stutters so."—New York Telegram.

Necessity is stronger far than art.—Aeschylus.

Two Great Orators.

As an orator Demosthenes was head and shoulders above Cicero the Roman. The great Athenian stands in a class all by himself, if we are to believe the consensus of learned opinion. Cicero, it is said, prided himself on his facility of extemporizing at need, but probably trusted little to it on great occasions, while with Demosthenes it was the rule never to speak without manuscript. They would never have made the reputation they did if they had been tied down to their notes.—New York American.

Their Only Job.

"Why, Mrs. White," began the summer visitor newly returned to Saymouth, "how those maples of yours have grown since last year! It's perfectly amazing!" "Oh, I don't know it's anything to wonder at," said Mrs. White easily. "They ain't got anything else to do."—Youth's Companion.

JEFFERSON -- THEATRE

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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE
Estate of Joseph Kerr, late of Reynoldsville Borough, Deceased.
Notice is hereby given that letters of administration on the estate of Joseph Kerr, late of Reynoldsville borough, Jefferson county, Pa., have been granted to the undersigned, to whom all persons indebted to said estate are requested to make payment, and those having claims or demands will make known the same without delay.
C. J. Kuntz, Administrator.
Reynoldsville, Pa., Oct. 26, 1908.



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