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PREDICT ERUPTIONS.

Volcanoes Have Their Spasms That Scientists Can Foretell.

Careful study of the behavior of volcanoes has enabled observers in recent years to predict with some degree of accuracy when a renewal of plutonic activity is impending. This was the case last summer, when Mount Etna for a few days attracted attention, after seven years of almost complete quiescence. The last eruption had occurred in 1892, but in the autumn of 1898 blue flames began to emerge from the mouth of the largest crater and a great deal of vapor was emitted from the lesser orifices. It was then announced that Etna seemed to be preparing for an effusion of lava, probably on the south or southwest slopes. The expected eruption did not begin till the morning of July 19, 1899, when great volumes of smoke, with lava and sand, began to issue from the main crater, but after several days the activity subsided and Etna soon resumed its peaceful aspect. The present generation hears little of Santorin, among the Cyclades, in the Egean sea, but the volcano will again become a center of interest if the recent statement is true that Santorin is preparing for another series of the terrific explosions and outbursts that have always marked its active periods. For thirty years Santorin has been content with the continuous mild emission of gases, but according to Comptes Rendus of the French Academy of Sciences the volcano now exhibits much unrest and an active period is predicted. It is near the crescent western shore of Thera that Santorin has reared itself and two other lava islands above the sea. When it finally arouses itself after long periods of quiescence no volcano excels it in the violence of its outbursts. The eruptions between 1866 and 1870, when, according to Reclus, no less than 50,000 of partial eruptions were counted in five years, drew spectators from all parts of the world, including some men of science, whose observations made a distinct addition to our knowledge of volcanic action. In that period the ashes were sometimes thrown to a height of 4,000 feet and the immense outpouring of scoriae more than doubled the size of the island of Nea Kammeni.—Chicago Chronicle.

CASH IN A BAG.

Peculiar Way Kaffirs Have of Banking Their Money.

The natives of that part of South Africa which to a great extent is inhabited by bushmen and Hottentots have a peculiar system of banks and banking. These Kaffirs among whom this curious system of banking obtains live near Kaffraria, in the south of the Colony country. The natives come down south from their country to trade in the several villages and towns in large numbers and then return to Kaffraria. From those who trade of their own number they select one, who for the occasion is to be their banker. He is converted into a bank of deposit by putting all the money of those whose banker he is into a bag, and then they sally forth to the stores to buy whatever they want. When an article is purchased by any of those who are in this banking arrangement, the price of the article is taken by the banker from this deposit money bag, counted several times and then paid to the seller of the article, after which all the bank depositors cry out to the banker in the presence of the two witnesses selected: "You owe me so much!" This is then repeated by the witnesses. The general accounting comes between the banker and his several depositors when all desired purchases have been made, after which all the natives depart for their northern wilds.

Horse Shoes Weighing One Ounce.

The smallest horse probably that was ever fitted with a set of shoes by any horseshoer in California occupied a place in the shop of Howard & Millerick of Petaluma a few days ago. It was a six-months-old Shetland pony, one of a band a Los Angeles man was bringing down from Mendocino county, where they had been pastured during the summer. The rough roads had worn its bare feet and necessitated shoeing. The shoes, fashioned out of a steel bar, when fitted to the pony's feet were a trifle larger than a silver dollar piece and the full set weighed just four ounces, an ounce for each shoe.

The strength of wood increases with its density.

BIG CROPS ARE ALIEN

NOT ONE OF OUR GREAT STAPLE PLANTS IS INDIGENOUS.

Improvement Made in Recent Years in All Directions by Importation by the Department of Agriculture—Latest Experiments by Government Experts.

There is no feature of the work of the Department of Agriculture in which the Secretary or his assistants take more pride than that of the introduction of new plants into the United States, and the improvement of those which are already grown in this country, writes the Washington correspondent of the New York Commercial Advertiser. It may be said that not one of the plants producing the great staple crops of the United States is indigenous to the soil. A few varieties of grapes, plums and berries are improvements upon those which were found growing wild by the settlers of two centuries ago, but none of the grains, sugar canes, rice or any other well-known staples were known to Americans in the early days of white settlement. The Indians had a little corn, but even this, it is believed, was brought from Central America, and the grain itself is so old that its origin has never been discovered. The same may be said of wheat, though it is probable that the latter originated in the Eastern Mediterranean regions.

Since this work of the Department of Agriculture commenced the character of nearly all of the grains, practically all of the rice, much of the cotton and many of the grasses has been entirely changed from that produced for market twenty years ago. Hardy and spring wheats have been brought from Russia for use in all the Northern States, date palms have been brought from Algeria to grow in Arizona, Egyptian cotton and Egyptian clover are now being planted in many of the Gulf States, and a seedless raisin grape has come to us from Italy. Up in Michigan, along the sandy lake shores, a German clover is being planted to hold the sand dunes in place against the prevailing winds. Japan has sent us a clover which is used extensively in the South for a winter crop, and a score of improved vegetables have succeeded those which formerly grew in American gardens.

It was not many years ago that all of the rice grown in the United States was of the Honduran variety. This was found to be unprofitable, and the rice industry languished perceptibly. The Department of Agriculture took the matter up and introduced the Japan or Krushu rice, which has created such a revolution in rice growing as to eliminate all other varieties. It is claimed that at least $20,000,000 has been invested in rice fields in Texas and Louisiana since the introduction of the Japanese grain. It yields twenty-five per cent. more an acre and mills at least twenty-five per cent. more unbroken rice than did the Honduran variety, and has, therefore, increased the rice production per acre over fifty per cent. The department has long since given up the rice business to legitimate business enterprise, for it is a principle governing the introduction of a new plant that as soon as a variety is found desirable, and is recognized by the seedsmen, the department withdraws from the field and leaves to private enterprise the opportunity of handling the business.

Growing just a short distance from the agricultural building in Washington is a thick, thorny hedge of orange trees. Citrus Trifoliata they are called. The fruit is inedible, being small and bitter, but the orange is hardy, growing to maturity as far north as Philadelphia. The great frost of 1898 in Florida, which destroyed so many orange groves, suggested to Secretary Wilson the great advantages which would follow the discovery of a hardier variety of this fruit than is now grown in this country. It was decided to produce a hybrid orange, crossing the Florida plant with a Trifoliat in the endeavor to get a sweet orange which should be likewise hardy. The department has succeeded in getting 3000 of these hybrid plants. It is too soon yet to say what the result will be with the fruit. It is not believed, however, that a sweet orange will result, though there is still some hope of that. It is though, however, that by again crossing this hybrid with the sweet orange that in time a marketable fruit may be produced from a tree which will grow very much further north than the one now known to the orange groves of the country.

In the meantime, however, this hybrid orange is a new and remarkably valuable hedge plant, with an evergreen foliage and long thorns, making it an impenetrable thicket. This in itself, in the opinion of Secretary Wilson, is a sufficiently valuable discovery to justify the work already done, but the experiment will be pushed to a conclusion in the endeavor to secure a hardy sweet orange. As the Secretary says, "One of the marvels of the new century may be an orange tree bearing marketable fruit which will thrive in the temperate zone."

The importation of Egyptian cotton has been watched with a great deal of interest by the Secretary, owing to its adaptability to the arid belt of the United States. In Egypt this cotton is irrigated, and the purpose of its importation into the United States is to find a profitable crop for Arizona, New Mexico and Texas west of the San Antonio River. Winter muskmelons are another curiosity which promise to become commercially valuable when grown in larger quantities. These muskmelons are grown and harvested in the summer, stored in cellars, and ripen sufficiently to be eaten about Christmas time. Some of these melons have already been grown in Colorado, and give considerable satisfaction. They do not look much like the muskmelon now known to the market gardener, but they are said to be not only a novel but a very desirable addition to the winter bill of fare. They are dark in color and elongated in shape, weighing on an average from twelve to fourteen pounds.

The department is now endeavoring to introduce into Oregon and Washington the Bavarian and Bohemian brewing hops. Those sell for twice as much as do the American varieties and produce certain qualities of beer now only secured in this country by importation. Experiments are now being made on a field scale with the Swedish brewing barley, which took the grand prize at the Paris Exposition. American barleys are inferior in their brewing qualities to many others, but Secretary Wilson believes great results will obtain from the experiments now being conducted. In New England the farmers have been supplied with several new kinds of vegetables which have added to the profits of market growing and to the value of the garden as a source of supply for the home table.

A work which is now being taken up by the Secretary on a considerable scale and systematic manner is that of the improvement of country roads. This he looks upon as the principal work in hand for the coming year. The United States has been divided into six districts. Into each one of these districts an expert has been sent to study the question of better roads. The geological characteristics of the country will be noted, the value of all available rock and road-making material determined, and the best kind of a road for each district will be selected, taking such matters as cost, available material and traffic into consideration. This work will be done in such a way as to be made useful to every resident of these districts desiring information or instruction in the matter of road-making, and Secretary Wilson expects splendid results from this better-road educational work.

These are, in brief, a very few of the things upon which the Department of Agriculture, with its staff of trained investigators, is now working.

Secret Mirrors as Detectives.

The part secret mirrors play in the conduct of jewelers' and other stores displaying small wares is treated at some length in the Jeweler and Metal Worker. These small mirrors are skilfully and unobtrusively disposed here and there about the store to enable the proprietor to see what is going on without himself being observed. Another modern ruse employed by up-to-date jewelers is the use of ring cases from which it is impossible to remove a ring except while the attendant depressed a spring concealed in the frame. This he usually manages to do so cleverly while maintaining a hold on the tray with one hand that the intending purchaser imagines there is nothing to prevent him from freely removing the rings from their cases in the tray. Let him try to remove a ring while the attendant's back is turned, and he realizes the true state of affairs. Of course, such trays are only used for valuable gem-set rings.

A Toe For a Finger.

Nicoladoni has recently published a case in which a toe was surgically substituted for a lost finger. Four months before operation, the patient lost his right forefinger by accident.

The second toe was so divided that a detachment still remained to his foot by means of the soft parts, and the toe was applied in place of the absent finger, the parts being kept in position by a plaster cast. For twelve days a gradual severance of the connecting bridge of tissue was carried out, until a complete separation was effected. The whole toe retained its vitality, and it is further reported that it has developed sensibility, although the power of movement has not yet been established. Nicoladoni hopes that this will occur. This is his second case of the kind.—Medical Times and Hospital Gazette.

In a Moving Picture.

One of the happiest uses served by that wonderful and many named invention, the moving picture machine, appears in a story told in "The London Music Hall."

A party of gentlemen were watching the pictures, when in one of the South African scenes they recognized an officer friend. The wife of the officer, on being told of this, wrote to the manager and asked that this picture might be put on on a certain evening, when she would purposely journey from Glasgow.

She had not seen her husband for over a year, but at last observed him in a group—on the screen of a cinematograph!—Youth's Companion.

Close Shavers Beware.

In shaving, says the London Family Doctor, to make the skin perfectly smooth requires not only the removal of the hair, but also a portion of the cuticle, and a close shave means the removal of a layer of skin all around. The blood vessels thus exposed are not visible to the eye, but under a microscope each little quivering mouth holding a minute blood drop, protests against such treatment. The nerve tips are also uncovered and the pores are left unprotected, which makes the skin tender and unhealthy. This sudden exposure of the inner layer of the skin renders a person liable to have colds, hoarseness and sore throat.

Feline Depravity.

"This," remarked the cat as something was said in her presence concerning her nine lives, "always gives me that die hard feeling."—Chicago Tribune.

A Contented Man

Such is Russell E. Gardner of St. Louis.

A remarkable man has been found in the Mississippi valley. His home is in St. Louis and his name is Russell E. Gardner. Perhaps there is not another man in the world like him. He is contented, absolutely satisfied with what he possesses. He is only 35 years old, yet he has retired from business with a quarter million dollars which he has made during the past ten years. He says that making money is as easy as rolling off a log and believes that any man should secure enough wealth by the time he is 35 years old to live in comfort the remainder of his life. In the year 1900 he made too much money and a few days ago distributed $10,000 of his year's earnings among his employes.

His Rapid Rise.

Ten years ago he was working at his trade of carriage making. He made up his mind that people wanted a cheaper, well-made, piano-box buggy. He reasoned that if he could make enough of these buggies to sell them at a close margin he could get rich. With this idea he started in. Last year his shops turned out and sold 22,000 of these vehicles and on each one he only made $2.50, but the total net profit exceeded $50,000. His shops and offices are fitted up in the most comfortable style. In them he has introduced many novel features among which is a barber shop. Here his employes are tonsorially treated and if a man calls on business or to have a chat, he is asked to have a shave or a shampoo if his appearance indicates that he needs either. Mr. Gardner considers this hospitality as more practical than a treat to a cigar or drink. Then he finds a great deal of fun in it. He says that the idea tickles everyone and people talk about it afterward, thus making it a good advertisement.

Employes Get a Chance.

Mr. Gardner has turned his business over to his employes, but is still the owner of it. He says that should he get tired of boating, fishing and gunning he will return again to the shops, take off his coat and go to work. He has no desire to travel in foreign countries, but will spend his time in the Mississippi valley, which he considers the most beautiful and interesting section of the world. He has a yacht on the river and intends to see every bit of the noble section from St. Paul to the gulf, to look up all its tributaries, pry into its bays and bayous and see its every island and natural beauty. He is a jolly young man, free of care, full of happiness and with his wife will enjoy life according to his own fancy.

RUSSELL E. GARDNER.

To Stimulate Faithful

The Presbyterian church has undertaken to raise funds on an increased scale for the beginning of the new century, and in other ways seeks to stimulate the growth and effectiveness of the church. Rev. Dr. Charles A. Dickey of Philadelphia, the moderator of the general assembly of that denomination, is devoting his time to the work, and at present is speaking in the west. He will visit all parts of the Union. The Presbyterians have not fixed upon a definite sum as their goal, but their aims run up into the millions. Dr. Dickey's purpose is to stimulate the faithful to more liberal

REV. DR. CHARLES A. DICKEY.

giving for all the agencies of the church, for the payment of debts, for the support of colleges and missions, and for the aid of various philanthropies. The church already has a movement under way to add 500,000 children to the 1,000,000 already attending its Sunday schools.

POWER FROM SUNBEAMS.

An Apparatus Devised That Produces 10,000 Degrees of Heat.

Many a person every day sees the most powerful engine ever made, without knowing it. Not a wheel goes round anywhere in the world that is not driven, indirectly, by the sun. It furnished the coal used in the steam engine and provides the stream that drive the water wheel. Without it there would be no plants, and therefore no horses, no oxen, no living creature of any kind.

Great inventors have tried to find a way to use the sun's energy directly. Everybody has heard how Archimedes set fire to an enemy's fleet by focusing sun-rays on the wooden hulls by means of a piece of glass. Ericsson, the man who invented the Monitor, made a small engine that was set in motion by sunbeams. William Calver of Washington has just invented an apparatus that is said to produce 10,000 degrees of heat by means of focused sunshine. The greatest heat ever produced heretofore was 6,000 degrees, which was obtained with an electric arc. A number of mirrors are arranged in the new machine so that the rays falling on each one are all focused at a single point. Thick glass and tough Russian iron are said to melt like wax under the focused rays. The apparatus will, it is said, bore a dozen holes in a soaking wet plank in as many seconds. It might, perhaps, be used to advantage in smelting ores. Its use in connection with the steam engine would be in producing steam without the use of coal.

Princess Imprisoned Between Walls.

Elevators are by no means the recent invention generally supposed. An amusing account of what was probably the first attempt at an elevator is told by St. Simon and according to him it was from a M. Villayer that the idea of a "flying chair" first emanated. This ingenious person set up a passable prototype of the modern elevator in his house in Paris, working it up and down between the walls. The daughter of Louis XIV. was so delighted with the novelty that she had one put up in her own apartments at Versailles. This honor was, however, the undoing of poor M. Villayer's machine. The chair suddenly stopped moving while the princess was between two landings and she had to remain blocked up for three hours until the workmen broke a hole through the thick wall. The king was so annoyed at this that he forbade any further experiments in the same line.

New Vegetable Wanted.

Our present garden vegetables are cultivated varieties of wild species. Why do not our horticulturists seek for other wild plants that could be introduced with profit to our tables? A fortune awaits him who does this successfully, says Le Science Francaise. We may be shy, at first, of a dish of iris, or a saxifrage salad, but the papers will relate how Bernhardt and Coquelin ate and liked them, and then the iris and the saxifrage will become popular, like the potato.

GREAT ELECTRIC PLANTS.

Where the Motive Agency Is Furnished Entirely by Motive Power.

The continent of North America is blessed with the largest system of fresh-water lakes and rivers in the world. From the earliest settlement of the country to the present day the value of the magnificent waterway from the sea to the middle of the continent presented by the St. Lawrence river and the great chain of inland seas that are its feeders has been fully appreciated. It is only recently, however, that another feature of these waterways has become important and indeed even today there is too little understanding of the great part in the commerce and industry of the United States that is to be played by the magnificent water powers which are scattered throughout the thousand-mile length of this river and lake system from Montreal to Superior.

Already at four points great plants for the utilization of the vast energy of the mighty stream of water flowing from the Grand Lakes to the sea have been erected, and of these three are in United States territory. Within a few weeks we have described the fine plant at the Lachine Rapids, near Montreal, which utilizes a small portion of the flow of the St. Lawrence at that point. The Niagara plants are too well known to heed further comment. The plant at Sault Ste. Marie has had much mention, and last week we described the largest of all the developments—that at Massena, N. Y.

The great total of power developed under development in these plants reaches the enormous total of 400,000 horse-power. Ever since the Laurentian system of lakes and rivers was formed by the activity of cosmic forces in long past eras of the world's history, these vast powers—and they represent only a very small percentage of the total development that may be made—have been going to waste, and only within the last few years have they been seized upon and utilized. Four hundred thousand horse-power at the average value of power represents $3,000,000 a year income derived from hitherto useless sources. This sum is interest at a reasonable percent on $2,000,000,000,000, and the value to the United States and Canada of these great power developments may be justly measured by the latter figure; yet the harnessing of the energy of ths magnificent system of lakes and rivers has only begun. It has been caluculated that Niagara Falls alone as a power producing agency is worth somewhere about $4,000,000,000 if all its energy could be made available as mechanical or electrical power.

The colossal development of wealth and values has been entirely due to electrical engineering. Without the ability to distribute and transmit the power of the various rapids and cataracts by means of electricity they would be still practically useless, because the power developed could not easily be utilized. This one contribution alone to the resources of our country is sufficient to put electrical engineering and electrical application in the highest rank of industries. The case of the St. Lawrence system, however, is only illustrative. All along both the seaboards of the United States are other systems which, sooner or later, will be utilized in the same way and whose power will be put to work in the active service of man. The British Isles at present are fearful of a failure of their coal supply, but here we can face even a possible disappearance of our coal, secure in the knowledge that in our lakes and rivers, so long as the rains continue to fall and the snows to melt, we have an abundant and hitherto unused source of power which modern progress has enabled us to put to all of the manifold uses in which this agency enters in latter day arts and civilization.—Electrical Review.

He Went Mad.

"Beautiful scenery here, is it not?" asked the young man of a solitary traveler whom he found pacing along the seashore.

"Well, no," replied the stranger. "I can't agree with you. I think the ocean is too small. It is no such ocean as my mother used to have."

"Your mother's ocean was superior, then?"

"Oh, yes, vastly superior. What tumbling breakers! What a magnificent sweep of view! What amplitude of distance! What fishing there was in my mother's ocean!"

"But the sky is magnificent here, is it not, sir?"

"Too low and too narrow across the top," replied the stranger.

"I haven't noticed it," said the young man.

"Yes," said the stranger; "it is too low, and there isn't air enough in it, either. Besides, it doesn't sit plumb over the earth; it is wider from north to south than it is from west to east. I call it a pretty poor sky. It is no such sky as my mother used to have."

"Pardon me, but did your mother have a special sky and ocean of her own?"

But here an old resident came up and drew the young man aside.

"Don't talk to him," said the old resident. "He is a hopeless lunatic. He is a man who always used to tell his wife about 'the biscuits my mother used to make,' 'my mother's pies,' 'my mother's puddings,' and 'my mother's coffee.' The habit grew on him so much that he became a confirmed lunatic."—Tit-Bits.

Lots of fellows start out to pursue a certain calling and never catch up with it.