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SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

The Japanese in Formosa are discouraging the use of sun-dried bricks. During the typhoon of 1898 there were 1398 mud-brick houses totally destroyed within a radius of two miles, from the American consulate at Tamsui, while not more than one building made of kiln-burnt bricks suffered any damage.

Among recent novelties in electric lighting is an incandescent lamp having two independent filaments, one giving 16 and the other only one candle-power. The low power light is intended for burning in a sick room, or wherever a faint illumination is desired. The current is changed from one filament to the other by turning the lamp in a screw socket.

Recent reports from both French and English botanists say that the "tu chung" tree of China contains a valuable rubber or gutta-percha. The substance is believed to be a true caoutchouc, and it is thought that the tree will become of great commercial importance. This is mentioned as one of the good effects that will follow the "opening up" of the country.

Recent improvements in the processes of making wool out of turf fibres have resulted in the production of a soft material that can be spun as readily as lamb's wool. Besides, it has excellent absorbent qualities, and is capable of being bleached and colored for use in various textile industries. Much of it is now used at Dusseldorf, Germany, for manufacturing cloth, rugs, hats and other articles.

It is well known that many insects bear a close resemblance to leaves, twigs and other things, and there is no doubt that this is for their protection against, or their concealment from, their enemies. One of the most remarkable cases of this kind was recently made known to the Entomological Society of London. It is that of a spider that lives in the rocks near Cannes. A certain kind of moth inhabits the rocks also, and their cases are to be found all about. It was noticed that the spider, when at rest, looked exactly like one of the moth-cases.

A scientific problem of much interest will confront the engineers of the Transvaal gold mines when the war between the English and the Boers is over, and that is the depth to which shafts will be sunk in search of gold-bearing veins. Some of the shafts already opened will descend 4000 to 5000 feet, but it is thought by some of the engineers that a depth of 12,000 feet will be reached in other cases. The temperature at that depth will be about 100 degrees, the warmest, perhaps, at which man can work, but the suggestion has been made that a still greater depth may be found practicable if means be devised for cooling the air.

Consul Frederik W. Hossfeld thinks there is a splendid opportunity to increase the volume of sulphate of copper exported from the United States to Greece, where there is a big demand for it. It is estimated that from 7000 to 8000 tons are used annually by the currant growers. The wholesale currant trade of Greece is practically in the hands of banks and commercial syndicates, and they have arranged to import sulphate of copper in large quantities and to sell it to the farmers at cost, in order to encourage the growers to spray their vines. Nearly all the importations have so far been from Great Britain, but it is the opinion of the consul that the United States could easily secure a goodly portion of the trade. There is no tariff on the commodity.

There are five rivers in the world which drain over 1,000,000 square miles. They are the Amazon, La Plata, Obi, the Congo and the Mississippi.

Rev. Percy H. Gordon, of Burgettstown, has accepted a call to the First Presbyterian church of Freedom.

The Eighty-fifth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, will hold a reunion at Washington, Pa., November 12.

Copperhead snakes drove a party of Altonia railroad men from their camp at Alexandria.

Seven foreigners at South Sharon were poisoned by eating toadstools for mushrooms.

THE OPTIMISM OF NATURE.

JAMES M'ARTHUR.
"Ah, what do the lone waves say,
In their low surge-sob on the beach?
"We kiss the shore as we may,
And gladden as far as we reach;
"And, bending low down, hangs many a spray,
The blessings we give to beseech."
"And, sweet flowers, we ask of you,
What returns for the storm's rude blast?
"We drink of the sun and the dew,
When the frown and the terror are past;
"We lift up our faces, cheerful and true,
And smile on the world to the last."
Ye stars of the distant sky,
We ask why ye twinkle so bright,
Methinks I hear your reply,
"Our home is a region of light;
"We learn with a rapture pure, from on high,
To lessen the gloom of the night."
They hail us from every side,
And our visions of life expand;
Sweet voices!—they're near to abide,
Their missions could we understand.
As a shower of good they're near us to guide
With touch of a magical wand!
We may not dispel the cloud,
Nor the lightning's scathe the avert;
With troubles we may be bowed,
Though ever upon the alert;
But why should our folly the soul enshroud,
Or fear from the right divert?
Font nature, so kind and so true!
She treats us with never a slight;
She spangles the nights with dew,
And wakes our affections with light;
Her blessings, her gifts, her rewards are
Not few,
"In all and through all to requite."
—Success.

THE WARDEN'S RECRUIT

A TRUE STORY.
By John Dickinson Sherman.

IN Pekin, upholding the dignity of the Stars and Stripes, there is a young United States marine with an unusual history. The warden of a State penitentiary is willing to guarantee that the young marine will serve his country faithfully and well. William Simmons is not the marine's name, but so we may call him; and this is his story—the true story of the value of a kind word.

Simmons's boyhood was passed in the slum districts of the West Side of Chicago. His companions were ruffians and thieves, and in time he became the leader of a gang, and a bold and reckless criminal. His history during his young manhood is written in the blotters of the West Side stations and in the records of the criminal court.

Two years ago a series of daring highway robberies raised an unusual outcry. Simmons was under suspicion, and thought it best to leave Chicago. He hung about a town in Indiana for several weeks. Then the safe of a storekeeper was blown open one night and several hundred dollars taken. A week or two later Simmons was caught at Fort Wayne in the very act of opening a safe. He was sentenced to the penitentiary for one year.

Simmons did not make a model convict. At first his sole thought was to break jail. After two weeks of planning he assaulted a guard with a file and made a desperate effort to escape, but was overpowered and punished by confinement in the dungeon. When, after a reasonable time, he was brought back to his cell, he was far from being subdued; he was as ugly as a caged wild beast, and refused to work. Back he went to the dungeon. In the meantime the warden had kept an observant eye on the young convict, had seen that he was intelligent, and resolved to appeal to his reason. After Simmons had been long enough in the dungeon to quiet down, the warden went to him and said:

"Now see here, young man, you are gaining nothing by acting like this. You are no fool, and you can reason the situation out for yourself. You've no chance at all along your present line. If you are ugly, you've got a bad year ahead of you. I've been watching you, and I believe you have some better traits than you have shown. Why not try the other tack? I want you to live up to the rules of the prison and behave yourself. It's a much easier proposition than the one you've mapped out. You turn over a new leaf and the guards will treat you well. What do you say?"

Simmons finally agreed to give the warden's plan a trial. Before long he became one of the model prisoners of the institution. He kept his temper, worked well, and was respectful and obedient. He attended to his own business strictly, and made no attempt to curry favor with the officials.

When it came time for Simmons to leave the prison, the warden had him brought into his private office.

"William," said he, "your time will be up to-morrow. You will get a decent suit and ten dollars. I suppose you will go back to Chicago. The ten dollars ought to keep you two weeks, and in that time you may get something to do. Now here's twenty dollars more; it's a personal loan. I will take care of you another month, and in that time you surely ought to get a job of some kind."

"But why should you lend me twenty dollars?" asked Simmons.

"Well," replied the warden, "I think you have the making of a very decent man in you. I'm afraid you will be tempted to go back to the old gang if you don't get work, and I want to give you a chance. You've got six weeks' leeway, and if you do right you can get a new start in that time. And whatever you do, don't get caught stealing in Indiana."

Simmons did not say much either then or the next day, when the warden saw him off at the station. He made no promises at all. A few days later came a letter that brought him

NO MIRACLE IN MANNA.

An Edible Lichen That is Still Found in Parts of Asia and Africa.

"It is manna!" exclaimed the people of Israel as they gathered the food which seemed so miraculously to appear at their very feet in answer to their cry for sustenance, but though they ate and were satisfied, yet, we are told, they "wist not what it was."

And during the ages that have passed since its first appearance on that memorable dewy morning in the wilderness of sin, men have declared again and again that they "wist not what it was" that thus fed the Israelites in their need, though numberless conjectures have been made and discussions held on the matter.

The chief opinion which had sway for a long time was that manna was the sap of the tamarisk, but now authorities, seeing in the light of widening scientific knowledge, declare that manna was without doubt a certain lichen (*Lecanora esculenta*).

This is borne out by the fact that well-authenticated rains of manna, absolutely believed by the inhabitants to be showers from heaven, have been reported at least six times during the past century by reliable travelers in the East, and the descriptions of the deposit given in precise present-day language leave no doubt upon the point.

If a piece of manna be examined under the microscope its peculiar compound structure can be clearly seen; there is a delicate network of interlacing fungal threads glistening in the light, while inclosed in their meshes are a number of round, bright green cells, each a tiny algal plant. Thus fungus and alga live together in most intimate connection.

It may be asked how fresh manna-lichens arise, seeing that it is difficult to imagine a frequent coincident meeting of a particular fungus and a particular green plant. But, granted the meeting has once taken place, the rapid reproduction is easy to understand.

At certain times in the year a yellowish dust appears in little green cups growing on the surface of the plant, and each of the grains of dust is a minute bundle containing a few of the green cells wrapped up together, so that wherever this dust may fall each grain can become a new manna-lichen.

There is, moreover, a second method of reproduction in which the fungus alone takes part and sends out tiny offspring to take their chance in the wide world of finding a suitable host as their parent has done, but the details are complicated and at present involved in some obscurity.

Thus, then, *Lecanora esculenta*—manna—is in its very nature one of the most remarkable phenomena in the vegetable world. It is found over great tracts of southeast Asia, near Constantinople, in the Crimea, the deserts of Arabia, in the Sahara and the deserts of Algeria.

It is easy to pass it by unnoticed, for it is grayish yellow in color and grows on gray limestone rocks and fragments of rock in the form of a wrinkled crust, which seems to a casual observer part of the very rock itself, and needs care to distinguish it.

Cut through, it is white like coral within, dry and powdery; it is, moreover, extremely light in weight. It is obvious that there is not much nourishment to be obtained from the bare face of the limestone rock—hence all the sustenance of the two plants must be obtained from the atmosphere and the rain by the little green plant, which must thus work doubly hard to be able to pass on sufficient food for its partner's living, in addition to providing its own.

By degrees, as it grows older, it becomes loosened, or even detached from the rocks, and then, when the sudden whirlwinds and violent storms which affect many of these regions blow, the featherweight pieces of lichen crust are torn up and blown into the air at the mercy of the wind, and carried, it may be for immense distances.

The rains, too, that descend with such sudden vehemence, sweep it away into water channels, where it is borne along on the stream and deposited in hollows, and left there in heaps when the water subsides.

At times, too, a waterspout will gather it up, carry it along and ultimately deposit it in a place where it is left to had been practically unknown.—Sunday Magazine.

This Insect Carries a Gun.

There is a curious insect known to French scientists as the Bombardier. It carries on its back two symmetrical organs which are in effect minute cannons. On being attacked one may justly hear what sounds like a small explosion, and two tiny streams of liquid are squirted out very much after the manner of a boy's squirt gun. At the same time the insect is lost to view in a cloud of smoke, or, more properly speaking, a humid fog, which, being corrosive, is successful in holding at bay all the creature's enemies. Such is the composition of this liquid that it boils at eight degrees above zero, which accounts for the artificial cloud. This method of defense is also employed by certain melusks, which, in order to cover a retreat, excrete a black liquid that completely blinds them from view.

A Useful Invention.

The latest invention in the way of improving methods for printing newspapers is a machine that will set type by telegraph, although the operator may be a thousand miles away. Western newspapers, who say the inventor is a young Iowan, named Frank Pearce, assert that several telegraph companies are striving to secure the patent rights to the invention.

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Red snow is frequently seen in the Arctic and Alpine regions. Chemical experiments have led to the conclusion that the red color is due to the presence of a vegetable substance.

A resident of Vermont has a fish pond in his own house. He has about two feet of water in his cellar, so it is reported, and has placed some fish in it that he caught in the river, so that he does not have to go out of his house for fishing.

An historic mansion in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, is about to be pulled down. It was built in Charles II's reign for the Earl of Lindsay from designs by Inigo Jones. Charles Dickens took one of the rooms as the scene of the assassination of Sir Leicester Dedlock in "Bleak House."

While digging for pier foundation for a bridge over the Wanebeck, at Sheepwash, Northumberland, England, the arch of a very old bridge was discovered twelve below the bed of the river. The old structure was strongly built and intact. Nobody knows when this bridge was built.

In Korea visiting cards measuring afoot square are in vogue. The savages of Dahomey announce their visits to each other by sending in advance a wooden board, or the branch of a tree artistically carved. When the visit is paid, the "card" returns to the possession of its owner, who probably uses it for many years. The natives of Sumatra use for a visiting card a piece of wood about a foot long, decorated with a bunch of straw and a knife.

Birds are made to take their own pictures by the ingenious apparatus of Mr. O. G. Pike, an English photographer. A bait of fat is placed on an electrical wire which is so connected with a camera that, when the bait is removed, the camera shutter is released, giving an instantaneous exposure of the sensitive plate. An excellent portrait of the song thrush is among the interesting results that have been shown. The arrangement may be used with other timid creatures, and for getting pictures of nocturnal animals the electrical wire can be made to ignite a little magnesium as it releases the shutter, giving a strong light at the instant of exposure.

One of the Customs Inspectors. At the "Cheshire Cheese," the famous restaurant in Fleet street, where Dr. Johnson and the other literary characters of his time used to do their loafing and take their meals, are several famous dishes, which are served daily to American tourists and other patrons. One of the delicacies for which the "Cheshire Cheese" is peculiar is a lark pie, which can be obtained nowhere else in London. A young Philadelphia gentleman who was over here not long ago took a decided fancy to the lark pie and arranged with the proprietor of the inn to send him one after he got home to be served at a birthday dinner. The pie was sent in good time and condition, but when it reached Philadelphia it did not look very appetizing. The customs inspectors of New York suspected that it was a new trick of the diamond smugglers and dug it all out. After examining the crust and the contents minutely they dumped it back into the pan and forwarded it to the consignee.—Chicago Record-Herald.

When Not to Volunteer. "Always obey orders, but never volunteer," said General Fitzhugh Lee, recently, "is the rule with army officers, and it is a good one, as I know to my cost. In my early career I nearly lost my life by volunteering to round up a band of Indians in the Southwest when there was no occasion for my action at all. To make a long story short we met the Indians in a strongly entrenched position, and had all we could do to rout them out. In the midst of the fight, which was extremely lively while it lasted, an arrow passed clean through my body, and it was almost a miracle that it did not kill me. As it was I nearly died in the rough ride back to camp, and I had to stay in the hospital a long time. Since then I have found that a soldier can get all the fighting he wants by simply obeying orders.—Washington Star.

Surely a Gentleman. In far-off years Sir Walter Scott visited the first Lord Munkett, who was then Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and was taken to see the ruins of the Seven Churches of Glendalough, one of the sights of Ireland.

One of the most romantic spots is St. Kevin's Bed, a cave which requires a scramble over rocks to enter. Sir Walter, in spite of his lameness, peccated the "shrine," an old peasant woman lending him a willing hand.

On the return, the Lord Chancellor asked her if she knew how great a man she had assisted, adding, "He is Sir Walter Scott, the illustrious poet."

"Begorra, your honor," the old woman replied, "he's no poet! He's a gentleman born and bred—for hasn't he left in me hand a piece of silver?"

Truly, there is more than one way of knowing a man by his works.

Secret of a Happy Home. If a mother is at all clever she can train her baby by the time it is six weeks old to cry to go to its father as soon as he comes in the house.—Athenaeum.

Explosions When Box Cars Collide. "Did you ever hear a freight wreck?" said a railroad man the other evening.

"You mean did I ever see one, do you not?"

"No; I said 'hear' one, and your not understanding the question shows that you never have been within carshot of a collision between two trains of boxcars. I was at a little station on the Iron Mountain a few years ago, when a long file of empty cars rushed past, rounded into a deep cut, and must have been half a mile away when we heard a frantic whistle from the engine, answered by another in a different key, and then there followed a series of explosions as if fifteen or twenty dynamite cartridges had been set off in succession. We knew that something horrible had happened, manned a handcar and started for the scene. We found the freights telescoped, several dead trainmen and as fierce looking a wreck as ever happened. What caused the explosions, you ask? A man on one of the cabooses told me that as the engine on the down train struck the first empty boxcar it blew up like an empty candy bag popped by a boy, and then each succeeding car went off with the pop! pop! pop! we had heard away back at the station."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A National Experiment Farm. There are now fifty-four agricultural experiment stations scattered through the country and maintained by the States. Hitherto the general Government has had nothing of the kind on an extended scale. But a 300-acre model farm is now to be established by the Agricultural Department. It will occupy a part of the old Arlington estate, lying along the Potomac opposite Washington. The work of getting this big tract in shape for scientific cultivation is now going on. The object will be to demonstrate here the culture of every sort of useful plant that can be made to thrive in this climate. There will be a six-acre model home plot to illustrate what can be done to make rural home surroundings pleasant. While all the familiar fruits, vegetables, cereals, grasses, berries, etc., will be grown and studied, another object will be to introduce new species. A cranberry bog will be maintained and an attempt made to cultivate the buckleyberry, which has so far not been domesticated. With the facilities and resources at the command of the Agricultural Department this big experiment farm will be made an institution of the highest value to the American farmer.—The Pathfinder.

Killing Rats by Gas. Some interesting experiments have taken place at the London docks to show the effect of a new system for the extermination of rats on board ships. The vessel is charged with sulphur dioxide gas, which apparently has the effect of attracting the rats from their hiding-places, and as soon as they breathe the fumes they become suffocated. In the experiments on the steamer Gaurikha several hundred rats were destroyed in a few minutes by means of the gas, which has no injurious effect upon the decorations of the saloon.—Tit-Bits.

How New York Has Grown. The ancient game of bowls upon the green has been revived in England with some fashionable approval. Our Dutch forefathers in the time of Peter Stuyvesant flocked to the Bowling Green to divert themselves with that fine old Holland pastime. But if our honored Dutchmen of to-day sought a green for bowling they would be compelled to cross Spuyten Duyvil Creek or to pass by Hell Gate in order to find a suitable field for that ancient pastime.—New York Tribune.