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VEGETATION AND SUNLIGHT.

Experiments Conducted Comparing Action of Chemicals and Sun.

Experiments are being actively pursued on both sides of the Atlantic to see whether it is not possible to discover some light which would have the same effect on vegetation as has the sun. Science is familiar with the composition of the solar rays to a large extent and it is not regarded as unreasonable to seek for an artificial substitute. As a matter of fact, the rays from an acetylene lamp have been found to approximate very closely to sunlight. So much is this so that fairly well-developed plants have been produced which have never known the daylight, the whole course of their existence having been spent under the influence of acetylene light.

Capacity of Great Dam.

At McCall Ferry, Pa., forty miles from Baltimore and sixty miles from Philadelphia, there is in course of construction one of the greatest dams in the country, intended to develop from the waters of the Susquehanna river electric power to the delivered capacity of from 75,000 to 100,000 horse power. When completed the electricity generated there will be supplied to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Lancaster, Harrisburg, York and a number of other cities.

Painting on Metal.

Carl Lunde, a Norwegian artist, has made himself famous by painting on metal, an art even the Japanese have failed in, great as they are as metal workers. Lunde decorates ordinary tin with characteristic designs in colors and illuminates an ordinary tray or plate that would otherwise be cheaply japanned. The method is his secret and only one of many clevernesses he employs to render utility artistic and decorative.

"One by One" Working Band.

The movement carried on by the "One by One" Working Band, started by Thomas Higben in England in 1885, has spread into the colonies, the European countries and even to Russia and Japan, and now numbers nearly 10,000 members. More than 30,000 cases of conversion have been reported in the "praise notes" since the beginning. It is perfectly adapted to any place or person.

Popularity of Dahlias.

The dahlia, that fine and large flower which adorns our autumn gardens, is reconquering the place which has been usurped for some years by its Japanese sister, the chrysanthemum. The gardeners have given to it what it formerly lacked, money, and its shades now rival those of the more popular flower.

SUPERSTITION AND OPALS.

How They Came to be Regarded as Unlucky Stones.

The world is full of superstition, and one of the worst is that the opal is unlucky. This superstition arose when the "black death" swept Europe. At that time the opal was very popular, and some noticed that when a victim of the disease was dying the opal on the finger brightened and when he was dead it became dull. Of course, this took the popular fancy and at once opals became "unlucky," and have remained so ever since. Very likely they do not change at all on the fingers of a dying person, and the whole matter is like the question which once caused so much discussion in the scientific world, i. e., why is it that when you put a fish in a bowl of water the weight of the bowl of water is not increased? Many learned answers were given, but finally one duffer weighed a bowl of water with and without the fish in it, and thus settled the matter.

Origin of Skull.

"Skulls" and "skullies" are really one word in origin, and both at various times have been spelled capriciously with a "c" or a "k." Pepys, the diarist, tells how he went on the Thames at one time "in a skull," at another in a "skuller." The origin of the word is "skulle," or "sculle," a bowl or a goblet. While the cranium was obviously bowl-like in shape, a distant resemblance to a bowl was also detected in the scooped-out blade of a "skull" as opposed to the flat blade of an oar proper.

Mothering a Mouse.

A mouse caught in a trap in a Rishton, Lancashire, house was thrown to a dog, which would not touch it. But the house cat picked up the mouse, carried it to a place where her kittens were lying, and has since treated it like one of her own offspring. The strange thing is that the cat has killed and eaten other mice since.—St. James' Gazette.

Czar's Private Railroad.

Between St. Petersburg and Tsarekoei Selo there is a special line, with a private station at each end, for the use of the Imperial family. Every yard of it is constantly guarded, and the Czar himself often drives the locomotive—of course, under the superintendence of the driver proper.

Remarkable Haven of Refuge.

German papers are commenting on the sagacity of a swallow which was being pursued by a hawk, and flew through the window of a law court. Flying about the court, it at last rested on the head of a figure of Justice, and there it remained until the hawk went away.

The Bicycle in South Africa.

The bicycle is now a favorite means of transportation in South Africa, to which place hundreds of discarded wheels are shipped by jobbers who buy them up in America and England. The natives take kindly to them, and these Zulus in their simple costume are full of pride in their possession.

Long Winded Speech.

Dr. Kenealy's speech in the English Tichborne trial lasted 110 days, but the longest continuous talk is supposed to have been achieved in the Legislature of British Columbia, when a member, who was in a minority of one, succeeded in "talking out" a bill by speaking twenty-six hours without intermission.

Italian Superstitions.

Children in Italy are not allowed to rub their eyes. When an infant bursts into tears no effort is made to repress the emotion, but the youngster is allowed to have its cry out. It is asserted that this beautifies the eyes and makes them clear, while rubbing the eyes injures them in many ways.

Tons of Bibles Given Away.

The Bibles distributed during the nineteenth century weighed 30,000 tons. That is heavier than the whole population of Manchester, Eng. These Bibles would make a book 202 feet high, 140 feet wide, and forty-one feet thick, each page of which would weigh sixty tons.

"Flower Name Weddings."

"Flower name weddings" are fashionable in Europe. At one recently, where the bride's name was Violet, the bridesmaids wore Parma violet-colored satin dresses, with velvet capes of darker shade and hats to match. They carried bouquets of Parma violets.

Dresses of Gold and Silver.

The women of Sumatra wear costly dresses, many of them being made of pure gold and silver. After the metal is mined and smelted it is formed into a fine wire, which is woven into cloth and afterward used for dresses.

Widows Not Sought After.

Fewer widows are sought in matrimony by Englishmen than formerly, according to official statistics. In 1870 the percentage was 21.1 in 1,000 marriages; now the widows led to the altar number only 12.5 a 1,000.

Burmese Use of Coins.

The Burmese have a curious idea regarding coins. They prefer those which have female heads on them, believing that coins with male heads on them are not so lucky and do not make money.



How the King of Obbo Travels.

The King of Obbo travels on the back of one of his faithful slaves, and when he reaches a stream he remains in his seat while his human steed walks through the water.

French Hair Dressing.

The Boutet de Monvil style of hair dressing is not original, with the French portrait painter. The Black-foot Indian chief always wears his hair with a lock over his brow.

Fishing in China.

The Chinese fish with a net suspended at the end of a bamboo pole. The fisherman, when he desires to raise or lower his net, walks up or down the balance board.

Exporting Honey Vinegar.

One of the latest food products coming from Holland, that land of agricultural industry, is honey vinegar, which is now manufactured there on a commercial scale. The particular characteristics of vinegar made from honey are its agreeable aroma and pleasant taste.

Moscow's Cab Driver.

Varvara Smolnoff, who drives a cab in Moscow, is the only woman licensed driver in Russia. Her father, a cabman, lost his life in trying to save that of a police sergeant, and the authorities thereupon transferred his license to his daughter, in whose cab many ladies like to ride.

Telling Her Age.

A Japanese woman's age can be told from her dress. It is probably the only country in the world where women are not ashamed of their age.

Waiting Room in Sweden.

In Sweden the depot waiting rooms are provided with beds for passengers, and porters call the travellers ten minutes before the arrival of trains.

Population of Hawaii.

When Hawaii was discovered by Captain Cook in 1778 it had a population of 200,000. There are now only 21,000 natives on the island.