

RARE AND CURIOUS.

A QUEER COLLECTION OF OLEAGINOUS SAMPLES.

Manner in Which They Are Obtained—From a Central American Insect—Young Bird's Grease—Dugong Oil—The Manatee.

[New York Times.] A resident of this city who has a penchant for collecting rare and curious commercial products has among his collection many specimens of oils of peculiar production which are used in various countries, and which, while entering largely into the domestic economy and business importance of those countries, are but little known, if at all, in the United States. The collector exhibited and described some of these curious oils to the writer a few days ago.

"Here is an oil," said he, holding up to the light a small vial containing a rich, bright yellow liquid, "which can not help but become a valuable article of general commerce as soon as its qualities are better known. It is extracted from an insect which abounds in Central America, the native name of which is nin. Naturalists have given it the name of Coccus Adipifera. It feeds on the sap of a resinous plant of the spondias family, and its nucleus in any locality are only limited to the extent to which this plant is found.

"Nin oil has a high value as a varnish producer. Melted in a porcelain vessel and the fluid kept at a high and even temperature for an hour or so, during which time certain volatile properties disappear, a tough flexible varnish-like residue is the result. It is but slightly affected by a high degree of heat or a low degree of cold. It is not soluble in turpentine, but ignited with turpentine it yields a thick, yellow gum—an oleo-resin in fact—which closely resembles a solution of India rubber. It will retain a semi-fluid condition for days, and its adhesive properties are remarkable. The turpentine solution of nin oil, run out in vessels to the depth of the sixteenth of an inch, is changed into a resinous varnish which is almost elastic to shellac, and becomes very hard and elastic by exposure for a day or two to the air. The most porous filter paper is rendered absolutely impervious to water when dipped in the turpentine solution of nin oil and then subjected to heat to volatilize the grease. Garments treated in the same manner are most effectively water-proofed, the coating defying most powerful solvents of oils.

"Here is an oil which is something of a curiosity," said the collector, showing the reporter a liquid of remarkable transparency and almost colorless. "It is guacharo oil from Ecuador. And what do you think it was made from? That bottle contains all that was left of the young of the oil bird, or Trinidad goat sucker, or I might better say that the fluid is two of the goat sucker's young, for what was left of them after this oil was tried out of them isn't worth speaking about. The goat sucker is a nocturnal bird, something like our whippoorwill, except that it lives in the deep, dark caverns that abound in Ecuador, Venezuela, New Granada, Trinidad and other South American regions, and that its diet consists entirely of the abundant oleaginous fruits of those countries. A few days after the young are hatched they become literally balls of fat, and are described as being the most curious looking creatures imaginable. When the fat is removed from the young birds there is scarcely anything left but their tiny skeletons. The fat is boiled down at once, fire being made at the mouth of the caverns as soon as the raids on the nests are over. The oil is run into earthen jars. It requires no further purification or refining, as its natural state is purity itself. It is limpid as you see it here. It is used both for cooking and illuminating purposes, and has been pronounced superior to olive oil. It burns in a wick with a white flame, which emits no smoke. Even with the careless methods of the natives the oil will keep sweet a year.

"This is a bottle of thick, muddy grease, 'is crude penguin oil. Vessels and crews are sent to Patagonia from England for the express purpose of taking a species of penguin, or manot, which swarms on that far-away coast. The capture of the unwieldy birds is easy, and from their exclusive fish diet they are described as 'freaking with oil.' The oil is extracted on the hunting grounds, and a cargo of 30,000 gallons is frequently taken back on a single vessel. Penguin oil is used as a dressing for fine leather.

"Here is an oil that is so susceptible to cold that it solidifies in a temperature that quickly melts ice. It is genuine grease from the crocodile of the Indus river, and came from the Punjab, its preparation being the chief industry of the Sarif tribe of India. There is no other oil that contains so large a proportion of solidifiable fat. It is a superior leather dressing, and is in great demand in the Orient. I believe it has been inquired for in this country by leather dressers, but it has never been obtainable.

"The delicate looking oil in this vial is known to the trade as melon oil, but it is rare, and so is worth keeping as a curiosity. It is taken from the nose of the pilot whale, and has, probably, the lowest congealing point of all animal or fish oils. It has positively no corrosive effect on metallic surfaces, and is therefore used as a lubricant for the most delicate mechanism.

"Here are two specimens of dugong oil—one from the animal by that name found in the Indian ocean, and the other from the dugong of Australian waters. The dugong is known to sailors as the sea hog, and is found in great droves in shallow places, where it feeds exclusively on bottom sea grasses and weeds. The Australian dugong is of an average length of fifteen feet and will weigh 1,300 pounds. About eighteen gallons of oil, found in a cellular substance between the skin and the flesh, are yielded by each animal. The oil has no odor, is of pleasant flavor to the taste, and is, as you see, almost as limpid as water. It has a low congealing point. Although it contains no iodine, it is valued more highly as a medicine in Australia than cod liver oil is. It is used in place of, and frequently in preference to, butter. As a cooking oil it is said to be unrivaled.

"In this bottle is the only oil or fat that I know of that does not become rancid or putrid from exposure to the sun, but which, on the contrary, acquires not only a fine flavor but a most agreeable odor through such exposure. It is oil taken from the manatee of South African rivers. This animal has a layer of solid fat an inch thick next to its

skin, and from that the oil is extracted by boiling. An average-sized manatee will yield fifteen gallons of oil. There are two qualities taken from the animal, the fat of the tail yielding a more delicate oil than the body fat. The oil is used as a table oil, as a lubricator, and as an illuminant, and in cooking.

SOMETHING ABOUT BELLS.

[Largest in the World—Liberty Bell—Swiss Bell Ringers—Bells in Literature.

[Chicago Herald.] The Russians boast of the largest bells in the world, and the greatest number. The great bell of Moscow weighs 144,000 pounds, and they have one that was cast 150 years ago that weighs 400,000, but it has never been rung. That would be as large as one of our two-story-and-a-half-dwelling houses. After the Russians the Chinese rank as makers of large bells.

The most famous bell in the United States is the Liberty bell in Philadelphia, which has lately made a successful trip to New Orleans and back. It was first cast in England, in 1753, but cracked on the first trial after it reached this country. It was then recast at Philadelphia, was hung at the state house, and on the Fourth of July, 1776, rang out the Declaration of Independence. The inscription on it is: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." It continued to ring every year until 1848. In that year, on the occasion of the reception of Henry Clay at Philadelphia, it rang out so joyously that it cracked, since which time it has rested in honorable ease and retirement. Philadelphia also boasts of the oldest set of chiming in this country. They belong to Christ's church, and were cast in England during the reign of Queen Anna. At the time of the British advance on Philadelphia during the revolution they were taken down and sunk in the Delaware river, where they remained until the war was over. They were again rung, and still summon the devout to worship.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago the Swiss bell ringers were all the rage, and drew vast crowds to their concerts. Who that heard them will ever forget "The Wrecker's Daughter," "The Carnival of Venice," "The Monastery Bells," and "Meet Me by Moonlight Alone?" The music of those sweet bells has long been hushed, but concert-goers of that time will still maintain that we have no music nowadays at all comparable to that. The music and sound of bells have never been more exquisitely described than in Poe's beautiful poem of "The Bells," the language of which is as resonant as the bells it describes.

If there ever was an observer of how bells rang, and who could translate their sounds into wise and witty English, Dickens was that observer. In some of his stories the bells sound forth only dirges, in others they are monitors to warn from crime, and in others marriage bells, the merriest and most gleeful of all. He marries some of his characters without a good deal of ringing. The door bells are great favorites with him, and he makes the bell handle reveal many of the peculiarities of his characters. Mr. Dowler "rings the bell with great violence." Mrs. Clannam "with a hasty jerk," Mr. Watkins Tottle "with a faltering jerk," Bob Sawyer, "as if he would pull the bell out by the roots," the poor relation, with "apologetic softness."

Tricks of an Old Smuggler.

[Thousand Islands Letter.] "There was an old man here some years ago of the name of Gregg; he's dead and gone now, and has left no relatives, so it won't hit any one to let out on him," said a river boatman recently. "But when you talk about genius as a smuggler, he was right there. He took it from the first. He was rocked in a smuggled cradle and dosed with smuggled medicine, and so it grew into him. I'll give you a sample. You know in the winter about here the rivers freeze up solid, so that teams can go all over from the lake to the rapids, and when the mercury gets down among the twenties it makes things uncomfortable for green hands if they happen to be revenue officers.

"But this sort of winter weather was just the kind that old man Gregg liked, and it was a cold day when they nabbed him. You could make a sure guess that every snow storm would see more or less brandy brought over, and the way he fixed it was this: Knowing that an ordinary team would be seen on the snow and ice when a long way off, he always started out with a white horse, a sleigh painted the same color, and wearing a white rubber coat and hat, so that on the ice looked like a big snow heap, only for the motion. They say that the officers often passed him so near that he could hear them breathing.

"Once when the old man was taken sick some one went to his place, and in fooling around the barn, found 4,000 or 5,000 yards of rubber piping. One line smelt of kerosene and the other of liquor. It was concluded that he had tried to force kerosene over into Canada through one pipe, and to draw Canadian brandy into the United States with the other. It was a big scheme, but I guess it didn't work.

"One day the old man was seen hauling ice on the river. He was coming up from Chimney island. Up he goes to his ice house, unloads, and starts off after another load. One of the officers thought it queer for him to go so far for ice when he had it right along his own door yard; so he hopped on the sled and they started off together. The old man gave him a ride down to Chippewa bay, then over to the other side, covering about forty miles in all with the thermometer down to ten below zero. When the officer got home that night he was so stiff he nearly broke in two when he tried to get off the sled. He said that old Gregg was the most particular man for ice he ever saw. He'd taken a block here and there all down and up the river. But there were people that knew the old man's dodge, which was to have plugs of brandy frozen into snow ice and cut into blocks and piled so that no one would suspect it in the world. Some loads of ice would clear the old man \$50 or \$100 in brandy."

The Telephone Abroad.

The telephone has been introduced into almost every town of consequence in England and Scotland. There are 12,000 telephone exchanges in England and over 41,000,000 messages were shouted through them last year.

Secrecy of Snipe.

The snipe-shooting season has begun, and the complaint arises that birds are less in number than usual, on account of the fashion of ornamenting ladies' hats with the stuffed skins of all species of small water birds.

NDLING THE DEAD.

INTERVIEW WITH A VETERAN UNDERTAKER'S MAN.

A Popular but Erroneous Belief—Some Affecting Scenes—What Poor People Desire—Preparing for Burial—Being Buried Alive.

[Cincinnati Enquirer Interview.]

"That makes the 1,100th body that I have prepared for burial during my time," said a faithful chief employe of the city undertaker, the other day, as he pushed the frowzy hair of a corpse in the dead-room of the establishment.

"How long have you been in business," asked the reporter.

"Nearly twenty years, and in that time I have had some rather queer experiences. You see this business is not a pleasant one, and no one adopts it as a matter of choice. To me it was especially distasteful, and when I first started it was because there was nothing else open to me. Why, to tell you the truth, I would then just about as lief stood up before ten good live men and fought them, but I did not overtake my nervousness for a long time. Now, however, it would take something remarkable to give me a serious fright."

"You must witness some affecting scenes in the performance of your duties?"

"Well, I should say I did. Why, you have no idea what hard times some people have to get along in this world. Of course, every family, no matter in what straitened circumstances they may be, want to give a relative a decent funeral. They are bound to have a first-class funeral, and I have known people to deny themselves even the necessities of life to secure an expensive coffin, carriages, and a lot in a tony cemetery. Then there are the poor of the city. Why, it would make a stone heart melt to see to what emergencies these poor souls are sometimes pushed to save themselves the mortification of having one of their family buried at the expense of the city."

"What class of dead people is the hardest to prepare for burial?"

"This establishment has to take care of all the city dead; that is, people that are killed in railroad accidents, drowned, burned to death, stabbed, run over, in fact, any one that is killed or commits suicide and is not claimed by friends. In that way we come in contact with all classes of dead people. About the worst kind to handle are the 'floaters' that are every now and then taken from the river. Generally they will remain in the water a number of days before they come to the top, and when they are taken out and turned over to us they are so badly bloated by their long stay in the water as to be unrecognizable except by their clothes. Often it requires a very delicate touch to handle them and keep the remains from falling to pieces.

"You think many people are buried alive?"

"No, very few. Although when an epidemic like the cholera or small-pox is raging such awful mistakes are liable to occur. Then the dead are carted off so soon after their demise that they are not given a fair test to determine whether they are dead or not. Often when remains are disinterred it is found that the corpse has turned clear around in the coffin, and sometimes their hair and finger-nails have been pulled out by the roots, showing that the poor victim had come to consciousness only to die the horrible death of being buried alive. Too much care cannot be taken in this respect."

She Knew How to Walk.

[Cor. Boston Herald.] There are things which a man finds out slowly, and one of the things that I found out at the White mountains the other day, when I was the guest of the club, was that I didn't know how to walk. Had a man told me this I should have knocked him down. Had a woman told me I should have made the best of it. No one told me, but take everything else, good and bad, in the world, it came through a woman, not "the girl I left behind me," but the girl behind whom I struggled as we were climbing a mountain, to see why she walked better than I could.

Most people walk like a pair of bar posts. They walk from the hips, without using the upper part of the body. They think if they keep arms and trunk motionless, it is more respectable. They would be horrified if they should see "men as trees walking," and the sight of Dr. Johnson going up Fleet street, using the whole sidewalk as if it were a cow path in the country, would give them a sensation hardly short of hysterics. They think that the undemonstrative walker is the gentleman or lady, as the case may be. Not so, thought I, as a little woman was putting me out of breath, while every moment she grew to be to me "a thing of beauty" if not "a joy forever," as her quick and easy step threw fresh light into her bright eyes and into her clean-cut face.

Her unconfined waist gave her lungs free movement; her short skirts gave no chance for entanglement in brush or underwood; her stout shoes were the things to make a square step with; and thus well equipped in dress, she was free to use her whole body in the act of walking, which she did. Her step forward passed over her whole figure, and each step repeated the process, so that each muscle felt its share in the movement of the body. There was not a mechanical motion visible. Virgil says of Dido, I think, when Seneca was in love with her: "She showed the goddess in her step."

This young woman, whose name I did not then know, had unconsciously acquired that almost inimitable elasticity and ease in walking, which is not so much graceful as fitting. It was a movement that did not fatigue her, because the play of the muscles, one against the other, rested the body by a constant interchange of forces, and the vitality was so evenly distributed that all effort was concealed. Here was a matchless walker, and the walking was of that unconscious sort that made a rather plain looking girl, for the moment, the queen of the mountain.

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