



NEWS NOTES

By AGRICOLA

A Botanical Census

In my spare time I am checking over the latest list of wild plants known to have been found upon the Island, and on counting the number of species and varieties, I find that there are just over seven hundred. Thirty years ago the number recorded was just over four hundred. By this it will be seen that we have made some progress in our botanical knowledge, and it is not unreasonable to expect that as time goes on, our list will be further augmented. The very earliest times mankind has been interested in the vegetable kingdom. It has provided his food, drink, medicine, clothing and shelter. It is woven into his legends and utilized in his rites and ceremonies. The wisest men of whom we have record have studied it: Solomon knew the Cedar of Lebanon as well as the "hyssop that grew on the wall."

Two Books

I have been renewing acquaintance with Robert Louis Stevenson. I read his collection of tales called "The New Arabian Nights" almost half a century ago, and my mind there is an added delight in re-reading such classics, for one gets a glimpse of the change wrought by time—not in the book, but in the reader. Many a work of fiction, eminently satisfactory to youth (which is the time of my action), proves flat or else over-strained, and its season of reflection. Stevenson stands the test, and gives pleasure to both seasons. It may not be generally recognized by a younger generation that "The New Arabian Nights" gives a delicately flattering portrait of that Prince who after the death of his throne as Edward the Seventh. That Prince (referred to in the book as Florizel) was very urbane, very confident in himself, and very sure of himself. He was a man in which he found himself. But he (like Shakespeare's Prince Hal) justified Stevenson's story by making companions of many in much rougher walks of life than were not few among the miners of the North, who seeing this, prophesied a Republic on the death of Queen Victoria. As all know now, he made a good king, and goes into legend as "Perseus."

News From Yorkshire

I have just received a letter from my farmer friend in the "County of broad acres" as Yorkshire is termed, and some of his news will be of interest to the general reader. He writes that he is not living in a country where you don't get air raid warnings every day, but he says "I went through the last war and came out BILL, so I am called up. But he is only a reservist, and for agriculture is 21 years here." (The last sentence is not very clear, but I take it to mean that "Bill" is in no immediate danger of conscription.) There is not much travelling after dark now, as no lights are to be shown and car lights have to be dimmed so much that it is not worth while risking going out at night. So when we get "blacked out" we spend our evenings listening to wireless or reading. The women knit, etc. We are rationed for petrol (gasoline)—our car is 10 1/2 h.p. and we are allowed six gallons per month for private use, but as we take milk to town we are allowed some extra for the truck. I have not been North to Newcastle since February as railway travelling is not very convenient and a bit uncertain now.

Odds and Ends

Gas for Cars. A new fuel for cars is being tested out in Manchester, England. It is gas—not gasoline but illuminating gas. It is contained in a bag which is attached to the engine, and propels the vehicle ten miles. A "refill" costs between 2d and 3d; say 5 cts. The evacuated Londoners. I see by a paragraph in the local press that an Anglican clergyman in the South of England has been fined \$125 because he closed his doors on a family evacuated from the Metropolis and billeted on him. The account is too brief to allow of judgment in the matter. There may have been contributory causes for the Rev. gentleman's refusal. As may be imagined, among the 1,220,000 evacuees from London, native and foreign, there were many undesirable. Country people in England are proud of their homes and tidy in London schools, many of the complaints in the press about the billetees and their doings. Householders, says one newspaper, were horrified to find some of the newcomers introducing insect pests, which others objected to the Saturday night bath; many had questionable manners. The houses in which they were billeted were sometimes overcrowded. At first the children were over-ruled by country scenes unlike anything they had witnessed in the wilderness of bricks and mortar from whence they came. Afterwards the "bored" homesick little city lads gravitated together into gangs and made themselves a nuisance. "beating up the village children, throwing stones at the policemen, letting the pigs out of their pens, and skrimishing with the enraged farmers." In the end, 200,000 of the million-and-a-quarter evacuees went back to their city homes. With all London schools closed, there was no choice but to run the streets, presenting another problem to the harassed authorities.

The Planets.

We are having most unfortunate weather just now and seldom that we get a night fit for star-gazing; but when we do, there is a magnificent display of planets across the southern sky. Mars distinguished by his rather reddish light shines steadily towards the West. In the centre, and brightest of all, is the "giant planet," Jupiter; to the Eastward

Heating With Wood

With Canada's annual bill for fuel wood exceeding thirty million dollars, the Department of Mines and resources offers a few timely pointers on the most efficient methods of burning wood.

Tests made by the Department show that if a wood-fired stove is of inferior construction or is in poor condition it may not deliver more than half the heat it should. In other words as much as one dollar out of every two spent on fuel may be needlessly wasted. A leaky stove which admits air through a dozen places besides the regular draught opening is a bad offender and in a very short time may waste more dollars up the chimney than would be required to correct the fault. The amount of air admitted to a stove or furnace should be completely under control particularly when burning wood because this fuel requires very little air for satisfactory combustion in comparison with the requirement for other fuels.

Hard maple, yellow birch, beech, oak and hickory are among the best Canadian woods for fuel, a cord and one-quarter of any one of them being approximately equal in heating value to one ton of anthracite coal. Regardless of what fuel is used, it should be as dry as possible. Wood that is not only does not give out less heat than dry wood but it is also apt to cause fouling of the pipes. For this reason on firewood seasoned for less than one year should not be used, and to achieve the best results wood should be cut into suitable lengths for the stove or furnace as soon as possible so as to permit the most thorough seasoning.

is Saturn, not so bright. There is still another, a little way from Saturn; it is Uranus, but he is not known as a planet. My experience (empirical, of course) has been that we always have disturbed weather, with strong winds, when these planets "cooperate" so closely. There may perhaps be noticeable earthquakes, also, but that is the fruit of seasoned judgment. The law was enacted with a majority of nearly 300,000. It is not to be supposed that Mr. Mills with his hands on the pulse of the fur trade does not know these facts, yet he says of the people of Massachusetts: "They did not know that this hubbub about the cruelty of trapping had sprung from various spurious causes or on conditions that did not prevail in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They did not know, as the legislature did not know, that the bear, the wolf traps of great size and power are unknown in this state and that over ninety per cent of the traps used in this state were of the small size."

NOTES ON ISLAND PLANTS

The Rosaceae (4).

The name Potentilla probably originated with the ancient herbalists who always studied plants from a botanical point of view. The word "Potentia," meaning "power" or "added a diminutive ending, as much as to say the plant had "little strength."

The writer once found a plant of Queen of the Meadow (Filipendula) growing in a roadside ditch on the Island, and maintaining itself. It was, I think, a garden escape. The plant is rather ornamental, and is a very beautiful specimen of creamy-white fragrant flowers. It occurs as an escape at several points in P.Q. Out of the ten species of Geum listed in Gray's Manual, we have three. (This name was first used by Pliny, the Roman Naturalist, but we have no means of knowing what plant he gave it to.) The largest of the three (G. macrophyllum) is a very common plant inhabiting rich alluvial ground near streams right across Canada. The name "Avens" shows it was well known to the Ancient Britons for "Afon" (akin to the Latin "fontis" was their name for a stream. Perhaps they found the plant "good medicine." The Yellow Avens (G. altissimum) is said to have come from Asia, but is now found all over this continent. On the Island it is not as plentiful as the former species. About four years ago Dr. Holman of Toronto University, found the Water Avens (G. rivale) near Summerside. I was greatly interested, because this plant grew near my home in England, where it was called the "Purple Avens," and is very different from the others which are yellow-flowered. There I have sometimes found its flowers in a profligate state, i.e., with a branch or a second flower growing from the centre of the first one. Linley's "Treasury of Botany" names this plant "Indian chocolate root."

There is a double-flowered Geum which has been adopted as a garden plant and much improved by plant breeders. Now we come to the extensive genus Rubus, also a Roman name, connected with the Latin "ruber" or red. The very first species noted is the Red wild Raspberry. (R. idaeus). This plant is found in Asia, Europe, and North America, and is the parent of our garden raspberries. There is a "white" or "anemone" colored sport cultivated; it has a distinct but delicious flavor. This white variety has been found growing on the mainland, but not here, exactly the same. In Switzerland, land the seeds of R. idaeus have been recovered from the debris of the prehistoric lake-dwellings. On this side, all the Indian tribes used the berries fresh for food or dried them for winter use; the leaves were dried and used like tea. An Omaha Indian stated that the root was scraped and boiled, and the decoction used as a remedy for bow-leg trouble. Our red raspberry is the variety R. idaeus aculeatissimus, the last meaning "most bristly." The rest of the Rubi will be noticed next week.

CONSERVATION

A WEEKLY COLUMN OF PRACTICAL OPINIONS OF THE VITAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE USES AND ABUSES OF NATURAL RESOURCES BY MR. LUDLOW JENKINS.

ANTI-STEEL TRAP LAWS

An Open Letter in Answer to David L. Mills. (Anti-Steel Trap League News)

By MRS. EDWARD BRECK

In the April issue of Hunter-Trapper-Trapper, published in Columbus, Ohio, there appeared an article written by David L. Mills, director of the American Fur Institute (I believe I am right in the title), under the caption "Anti-Steel-Trap Laws."

The immediate inspiration of the paper was to be found in the past the opponents of the anti-steel-trap law in Massachusetts, enacted by referendum in 1930, recently came to the fore seeking an amendment to the law which, if successful, would vitiate the value of the law throughout. The amendment sought was obviously an effort to bring back general trapping with the steel-trap in provision to extend the distance of fifty yards from farm buildings and cultivated plots of ground, in which it is now smaller sizes of Fur-Fish-Game, to a distance of 2.8 miles, or 5,000 yards.

Before commenting further on Mr. Mills' paper I may say that the amendment failed of passage and the anti-steel trap law is still in force. The fur interests presumed to say that the law was "put over" on the people of the Commonwealth. The fact is that the voters of the state abolished the steel trap because it is an instrument which inflicts an amount of torture upon living creatures for which there is no commensurate purpose. This has been done after a campaign had been waged for eighteen months and every available agency for publicity concerning the steel-trap had been employed to the best advantage of fruit of seasoned judgment. The law was enacted with a majority of nearly 300,000.

It is not to be supposed that Mr. Mills with his hands on the pulse of the fur trade does not know these facts, yet he says of the people of Massachusetts: "They did not know that this hubbub about the cruelty of trapping had sprung from various spurious causes or on conditions that did not prevail in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They did not know, as the legislature did not know, that the bear, the wolf traps of great size and power are unknown in this state and that over ninety per cent of the traps used in this state were of the small size."

"The belief that skunks feed mainly upon birds and birds' eggs is so general that statements to the contrary are often challenged. The animal occasionally eats wild birds and poultry, the evidence furnished by stomach examinations is overwhelmingly favorable to skunks and proves that, on the whole, they are beneficial. The list of fur-bearers whose economic existence is well justified by their destruction of rodents, while of the weasel, so savagely persecuted and exterminated, is a list of the Breble, U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, says: "In the creation of this tribe, it would seem as if nature had in mind a check for keeping the rodent check the hordes of mice and other rodents that, without some restraining agency, would devastate the earth. The predatory habits of the animal, into bad habits on the farm, but the majority are not harmful."

While Mr. Mills is moved to tell his readers that he thinks the fox is a pest, he fails to mention that the quail in Massachusetts, Dr. Hornaday may again be quoted as saying that the deprecations of that animal which are limited to its servile use as a trap bait, do not suffice to deprive it of legislative protection.

In upholding the use of the steel-trap, Mr. Mills says: "I am partisan of course. My business in life is to serve the fur trade by guiding legislation to conserve the natural resources in fur-bearing animals throughout the United States."

One is moved to inquire what the success of Mr. Mills' life business has been, with this inquiry to investigate the results that have come through activities designed to increase the wild life of the United States. Every report of the U.S. Game Warden shows that wild life resources points to a rapidly diminishing stock of fur-bearers. Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn tells us "The fur trade threatens the extermination of the species in which he has been a million years ago." The fur laws published by the Federal Government began in 1927, and before to warn the trappers and the fur trade that unless the general tendency to class every fur-bearer as "vermin" to be shot on sight was overcome there would soon be none left for any purpose. The U.S. Government's Survey of the Trade in Raw Furs and the Causes Contributing to Overtrapping reported that "trapping too early and too late has resulted in a loss of approximately 75 per cent of the annual catch. A special committee finds convincing evidence of the rapid disappearance of wild life. The evidence supporting this conclusion comes from every source. It is not disputed."

WEEKLY LIVESTOCK MARKET REPORT

Ottawa, November 16.

SUMMARY

A somewhat mixed trend prevailed in the livestock markets this week. Toronto market was dull but unchanged in price, while Montreal and Winnipeg were active centres with prices strong to 25c higher, especially on slaughter cattle. Bulls, however, due to an unsatisfactory trade to the south were 25c easier at Winnipeg and Calgary. Elsewhere, cattle sold generally steady. Cows were steady to strong throughout with Winnipeg and Saskatoon recording gains of 50c. The hog market was rather unsettled. Dressed sales were unchanged at Toronto but live sales gained 10c in the west markets as a result of a little higher than last week, made further slight advances only to lose all of the gains by the close. Lamb trade was steady to firm throughout.

Eastern Cattle Markets

Cattle trade was dull at unchanged prices on the TORONTO market. Common eastern cattle were plentiful and a few hundred receipts were sold at \$17.50 to \$18.50, with a few at \$17.00, and good butcher steers and heifers were weighed up at \$23.50 to \$25.00. Stockers ranged between \$4.75 for common and \$7.50 for good westerns. Trading was active with prices close to 25c higher at Montreal, where one load of good steers made \$7.75 and good kinds mostly \$7.00 to \$7.50. A few loads of good western cows brought \$5.25 to \$5.50 and other grades downward to \$3.50.

Western Cattle Markets

Favourable weather conditions served to check any liberal movement of cattle to western markets and the moderate deliveries made for a sellers market. Prices at WINTERPEG ruled strong to 25c higher on slaughter steers and heifers. Bulls, however, declined 25c to 50c under the influence of a poor trade in the south. A few strong-weight steers were eligible to make \$7 and up to \$7.25, while most slaughter steers sold at \$5.50 to \$6.50. There was no activity in the stocker and feeder division and this week's prices ruled barely steady with the better grades at \$5.50 to \$6. Other western markets were steady to firm with good trade in the south. A few strong-weight steers were eligible to make \$7 and up to \$7.25, while most slaughter steers sold at \$5.50 to \$6.50. There was no activity in the stocker and feeder division and this week's prices ruled barely steady with the better grades at \$5.50 to \$6. Other western markets were steady to firm with good trade in the south. 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