HISTORY OF SPICES INTERWOVEN WITH EARLY ROMANCE AND WAR

Nowadays the nations of the earth can get up a tremendous amount of excitement over oil wells and rubber trees. And it hasn't been so long either since some of our ancestors used to pop out from behind a palm-covered island to take a pot shot at the Spanish treasure galleons. But it has been hundreds and hundreds of years since cloves were a part of a bride's dowry and men sold the shirts off their backs or bartered their immortal souls to bring back a cargo of cinnamon, nutmeg and pepper to some chilly city in northern Europe. It may be gasoline the world needs nowadays or a good 5-cent cigar. But once upon a time, long before Queen Elizabeth was putting the flirty young princes of Europe in their places, merchants wanted ginger, rhubarb and the precious root called galingale.

In the Middle Ages the spices came across the deserts of Arabia by camel train, traveling at night usually to escape the burning sun. Sometimes the merchants came from the mysterious lands to the east by way of the freezing Caucasus, where men were alternately robbed, frozen and burned by pillaging tribes, mountain snow and desert sun.

Some Spicy History.

It was all very mysterious to people in the north. They knew that the spices eventually reached the rich city of Alexandria, in Egypt, where Germans from Bremen, Italians from Genoa and Venice and Flemings from Ghent used to go in their crazy little ships to buy their cargoes. There was a theory abroad that somewhere near the head-waters of the Nile was the Paradise of Adam and Eve. There was a river in Eden called Gihon, and the spice trees bent over it. They dropped the spice into the river, it floated down the Nile to Alexandria, and the Egyptians gathered it up to sell—the pirates! All they did was to collect it, but they charged enormous prices for it just the same.

Absolutely Necessary.

One thing was certain, however, cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs and mace were absolutely necessary in mediæval cooking. They even put pepper into their sweetened pastry, and their meats were always stuffed with everything from sugar and honey to subebs. They had to do it. Breeding fat cattle for food in those days was not what it is now. Besides, even Charlemagne or Frederick Barbarossa had no ice boxes. When the meat became a little bit rank the imperial cooks used to disguise it as best they could. Some of the recipes indicate that they were not unsuccessful. Our own mince-meat goes back to the days when everything was spiced to the limit. It is practically the only descendant we have of mediaeval dishes.

The kings and nobles knew that spices were indispensable to a well-kept table. A skylark was best cooked with raisins and cinnamon. A venison pasty needed cloves and nutmeg, and so did wine. When an ambassador went on a journey the king gave him an allowance of cinnamon and cardamon and other things to take along.

"Evil Communications Corrupt Good Manners."

"Train up a child in the way he should go," is an oft-quoted saying of the wise man, which is emphasized by the friends and workers of the Sunday school in the moral teaching of the youth of the land. Thousands of boys and girls have received excellent training in the Bible through the efforts of faithful and self-sacrificing teachers in the Sunday schools.

But what about music? Has the average Sunday school scholar acquired a taste for the higher and better music through the hymns that have been sung from Sunday to Sunday, or has he acquired a taste for the light and frivolous, one might almost say the "jazz" of so-called sacred music.

Some Sunday schools have bravely tackled the music problem, and have made serious effort to secure the best leadership in the best music available. But too often there is a haphazard selection of the hymns to be sung, and the light, lilting modern tune is used to some frothy rhyme that teaches absolutely nothing of the great truths of the Christian religion.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners," is another proverb that may be used in this connection. Children love to sing good music, but give them a few Sundays of the lighter stuff, and they lose their taste for the better. The best music is never too good for a Sunday school, and even though it may seem a little more difficult to introduce it, a few Sundays of careful prearrangement, and just as careful teaching, will give the scholars an added zest in the music.

Many Canadian people will respond to the national appeal for the protection of the forests for the sake of preserving the natural beauty of the land. Songbirds are heard most joyously where trees are plentiful, where they nest and live. Tree-planting on the prairies has been accompanied by a welcome increase in bird population. Happily the leaders of all parties in the Federal Parliament and in the provinces are united in indorsing the national crusade to save the forests.

The Home Town.

Man loved not Athens in her golden days
More tenderly than these the tree-lined town,
Which, lacking muses for a wilder praise,
Lives in their hearts in still and sweet renown.

The market square, the wagons in the dawn,
The streets like music when their names are said,
The Sunday spire, the green, untrammeled lawn—
These be the things on which their hearts are fed.

—David Morton.

Undismayed.

"Fall in!" sounded the silvery notes of the bugle, and the men rushed to take their places.

"Dress by the right!" roared the sergeant.

The men shuffled into a straight line.

But the sergeant, an old soldier, was not satisfied.

"Come forward, McGinty!" he cried.

"McGinty's not here," said a voice.

The sergeant frowned but was undaunted.

"Come forward, the man next to him, and sharp's the word!" was his command.

'Twas Ever Thus.

The leading soprano of a touring opera company (not in this country, be it added) was an extremely attractive lady. Her charms one night inspired a young man in the audience to try to see her behind the scenes. Interviewing the manager, he begged to be allowed to speak to the prima donna, and went on to say: "You're lucky! You see her every day. Aren't you in love with her?" "Rather!" was the reply. "Oh," said the young man, "her husband, perhaps?" "No," said the manager "her son." The enamoured one left, hurriedly.

Spider Eats Birds.

The bird spider of South America catches and eats small birds.

FRANKNESS AND TRUTH

By Mary E. Stover.

A neighbor had volunteered to stay with little Ruth and Ellwood while their mother went shopping. "Do they know that you are going?" this woman asked, when she appeared in the kitchen doorway with a knitting bag over one arm.

"No, I haven't told them yet, but there'll be time enough before I start for my car."

"Don't say a word to them! They're playing all right now, and you can slip out this back way without their suspecting a thing. They may not miss you for an hour."

The mother hesitated, but only for words with which to make a tactful reply. She decided that candor was best. "I couldn't slip away from the children so. It would be too great a strain on their faith in me. They have a right to suppose that they will find me at home or else know when and where I went just as it is my right to expect the same of them. If I should slip away in secret, they might feel themselves justified in following the same course."

The accommodating neighbor is childless; but her troubled eyes have watched big and little children, even to those of six-foot size, slinking away to places and companionship of which their parents would not approve.

"I don't know how often deceitful children are the result of deceitful parents, but I guess your way is best, though it must bring on a lot of teasing and fussing every time you leave home," she sighed.

"No, it doesn't. From babyhood both the children have been accustomed to my bidding them good-bye for a little while. They know that I will never leave them uncared for nor stay away an unreasonable time. Come, let me introduce you as their temporary auntie; then listen to our farewells."

The good-hearted neighbor followed outdoors with some misgivings, but she found that these children took their mother's going sensibly. After watching to wave their gay "hankies" as she turned the corner, they contentedly went back to their play.

The neighbor recalled thoughtfully the scenes in which her young nephews and nieces always indulged when they found their parents gone. "This must be another proof that honesty's the best policy with children—especially when you begin with it from the first," was her comfortable decision as she sat knitting in peace.

It is the best policy to be honest and frank with children. Deceit may seem more profitable for a while, but it brings a penalty in suspicious children who naturally fall into deceitful ways themselves. Indeed, whoever is troubled by deceitful traits in a child should scan her own ways and speech with care. Deceitfulness and candor both seem to be highly contagious to children. It is for us to choose which they shall "catch" from us.

Rt. Hon. George H. Roberts
Former minister of labor and food controller of Great Britain during the transport strike in 1919, who believes that the great strike in England goes beyond the immediate question of wages, but is aimed at nationalization of the mines. Failure of the strike, he says, will mean crippling of the unions for many years to come.

Marvellous Memories.

Among the various feats of memory which have been recorded from time to time, the achievement of a member of the staff of the Prussian State Library deserves a special niche.

He has specialized in weather reports, and claims to remember exactly what sort of time we had on any day that can be mentioned between 1881 and the present year. Name the day, and he will tell you all about it—he will even give you the official thermometer and barometer readings.

His claims have been tested by the Meteorlogical Society of Berlin, and, according to reports, that body has been quite unable to "catch him out."

Memory, of course, is largely a matter of training, and some marvellous demonstrations of the extent to which it can be cultivated have been given from time to time.

Datas, for instance, would put a date—and the correct date—to any event you liked to name; while another cultivator of the same branch of knowledge, a stoker, memorized the whole of Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates."

One of the pioneers of steeplechasing, Colonel Charratie, had also this amazing knack. He once memorized the day's issue of a newspaper, advertisements included, for a wager.

After these feats, the ability, enjoyed by Macaulay and Lord Randolph Churchill, to repeat a page of print after a single reading seems a small thing.

A Two-Ton Carpet.

Cleaning at Windsor Castle is a herculean task. The special dread of the royal spring cleaners is beating the two-ton carpet which covers the floor of the Waterloo Chamber—the royal diningroom, during Ascot week, when the King and Queen make Windsor their headquarters.

It takes sixty men to carry this massive "rug" downstairs to the lawns. Eighty feet long and 40 feet wide, it is the wonderful carpet which took the prisoners of Agra seven years to weave.

Hockey Among the Irish.

The rather active game of hockey does not fit the temperament of Irish lasses of to-day. It would appear from complaints made by spectators, who assert that the players are addicted to "bad language" on the field. Officials of Ireland's governing body for that sport are little concerned, believing the colleens will denovate their utterances without compulsion.

Red-Letter New Testament.

Bind up three hundred pages in a book,
Typed large for wondering childish eyes to claim
And wear it in your pocket where none look
Upon your treasure in morocco frame;
Print all the Master's words in crimson ink
And you wil see how very few they show;
But on the least of all their phrases think—
The seed of beauty thousand-fold shall grow.

I am the Light of the World. If ye believe
Ye may remove this mountain to the sea.
All things ye ask in prayer ye shall receive.
Lo, I am with you always. Follow me.
And, if it were not so, I would have told.
Oh, these are words with more than edge of gold.

—Isabel Fiske Conant in Christian Science Monitor.

Eating Sunlight.

When the scientists began to investigate the riddle of cod-liver oil they found that this oil had more disease-fighting properties than any other known substance. What made it so potent in combating ill-health?

It was ultimately ascertained that cod-fish, from whose livers this oil is prepared, feed entirely upon a sea-vegetable which floats upon the surface of the water. In other words, they feed upon sun-drenched food and nothing else.

But it was a long time before anyone thought of applying this knowledge in a practical way to other foods. That has now been done.

The action of sunlight upon disease has long been known and understood. The unseen, but potent ultra-violet rays fortify the blood against invading germs. The same results are obtainable by means of artificial sun lamps.

But it is not yet possible to give this treatment to all sick people. Many ailing people, especially little children, live in remote districts, far from the nearest artificial sunlight clinic. How were these patients to be treated with sunlight?

The solution came when it was decided to see what effect food radiated under these powerful light-batteries would have upon the sufferers. In a northern hospital food was radiated, packed, and distributed to remote patients.

How were results to be checked? One of the diseases readily curable by artificial sunlight is rickets, which leaves bones soft. A number of small rickety patients were X-rayed before the sun-impregnated food treatment was started. And they were again X-rayed after a course of sun-food. The pictures showed that bone had actually been formed by the sunlight absorbed into the food.

Sure Proof.

A particularly sour and plain-looking woman had come to consult the doctor, and was explaining her symptoms. "Do you know, doctor," she said, "I'm always thinking that a man is following me. Do you think I suffer from hallucinations?"

"Absolutely certain you do, madam," came the prompt reply.

Clamps for Concrete Moulds.

Notched metal clamps have been invented to hold the forms used for making concrete columns, to save time and labor.

By the overflowing of the Yellow River, an area of more than 1,500 square miles of China has recently been flooded. This is stated to be the worst flood since 1887.

TEN GOOD HINTS FOR PAINTERS

Every one about the farm and home should be able to do a little occasional painting, and do it skillfully. The following simple hints have been gathered from practical experience, and from cabinet-makers of the old school; all of them are tried and tested. They should help the amateur.

1. Turpentine will soften putty as quickly as oil. To keep putty moist and pliable, place on a pice of glass or tin.

2. In thinning prepared paint, always follow directions printed on the label.

3. If you stand brushes in water over night, do not sink them below the bristles, or the wood will swell and burst the casings. The best stunt is to hang them in raw linseed-oil, so the bristles are just covered, in a covered vessel.

4. To remove fresh paint from anything, including brushes, use gasoline. Its action is far more rapid and perfect than turpentine, and it is much more pleasant to use.

5. To put a new brush in proper condition for painting, dip it in paint and lay it aside for several hours, turning it over once during this time.

6. An oil stain like mahogany can be put on a hard and glossed surface without any roughing of the surface.

7. To paint wicker-work, thin the paint so that it is runny, and use a long-bristle brush that is limber in the bristles.

8. To refinish a hard surface that has become scratched and bruised, it is not necessary to burn away and scrape away all of the old surface. All that is required is that it be roughed slightly yet evenly with medium-grained sandpaper. Such a roughed surface will grip the first coat of flat paint.

9. Before using paint that has been standing, strain carefully through a wire screen with a fine mesh so as to remove all foreign particles.

10. A hard or enameled surface can be given to anything painted if to each coat of the flat paint there be added clear varnish, in the proportion of two of paint to one of varnish, or half-and-half. This varnish wil set the surface hard, and will not chip off so easily as cheap enamel. The varnish can be added to paint of any color without affecting that color.—A Rutledge.

When May Arrives.

When May arrives, all hearts forget
The winter time of dark regret.
With lilac fragrance on the air,
And blossoms bursting everywhere,
Could any mortal grieve or fret!
The winter's timid sun has set,
Rude March a sombre fate has met,
And Princess April seems less fair,
When May arrives.

Old Nature is not bankdupt yet:
Now Beauty comes to pay her debt.
The gardens ridicule despair:
Could any weep—would any dare?
When May arrives!

—Thomas Curtis Clark.

In a Straight and Narrow Way.

Dryden—"Drunk again! My friend, do you know where drinking leads a man to?"

Wetmore—"Sure! It leads him right to the places where they sell it."

The Poet.

Wide must the poet wander
To garnish his golden cells,
For in yesterday and in yonder
The secret of poesy dwells.

It is where the rainbow resteth,
And the gates of the sunset be,
And the star in the still pool nesteth,
And the moon-road lies on the sea.

—F. W. Bourdillon.

Brought to the Bar.

A lawyer is a member of the bar simply because he has been actually admitted past the bar used in courts to separate court people from the witnesses or spectators. The expression, "brought to the bar," was used in France when an average of fifty persons were daily taken before the actual bar before being sent to execution.

Of Course.

School Teacher—"Now, who was the father of the Black Prince?"

Bright Lad—"Please, sir, old King Cole!"

Canadian Capital's Centenary.

In the plans for celebrating the Centenary of Ottawa, the Capital of Canada, next August, the fact that Marquis wheat was originated at the Canadian Government Experimental Farm in the city is to be emphasized. By this discovery in 1904, Dr. Charles E. Saunders, who was then the government cerealist, has increased not only the agricultural wealth of Canada by many millions of dollars, but also that of the hard wheat growing area of the United States, for 90 per cent. of the spring wheat grown in Canada and 60 per cent. of that produced in the States is Marquis.

This famous variety of wheat, which has won more world's prizes than any other, is the product of the development of experiments with a number of other hardy strains. Marquis wheat not only revolutionized wheat growing in Western Canada and the northern states of the middle west, but it reduces the period between seeding and harvesting from 120 to 110 days. This meant that wheat of the finest quality could be garnered well in advance of the time necessary for the ripening of the former varieties and diminished the risk from rust, frost, etc. It also meant that hard spring wheat could be cultivated much further north, and brought millions of acres in Western Canada within the wheat belt that hitherto had been thought to be beyond the cultivable zone.

This year a new variety of wheat known as Garnet is being introduced that by proven tests promises to bring about a further revolution in the growing of hard spring wheat, for it is hardier than Marquis, will ripen quicker, and can consequently be grown much further northward. It will, therefore, open up millions more acres in Western Canada to successful wheat growing. Marquis wheat will, however, continue to be a popular variety throughout a large section o fthe Canadian West and the United States and in view of its contribution to the food supply of the world and the agricultural wealth of North America, its discovery is properly to be noted in the features connected with the centenary celebration of Ottawa, now a city of such engaging beauty and charm that it is often called "The Washington of the North"

Dr. Saunders is now living in retirement in Ottawa, his birthplace, on a handsome annuity granted by a country that appreciates his great contribution to the science of agriculture.

Readers of Classics.

I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practice it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience they are more truly than other under the empire of facts and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live.—Matthew Arnold.

Proof Positive.

The twin sisters had been misbehaving and had been sent upstairs without supper and with strict injunctions to go to bed and stay there.

"Mother," called Betty, "what do you think? Susie's got out of bed and is walking about the room, and you know what you told us."

"Yes," answered her mother, "I know what I told both of you—not to get out of bed. But how do you know that Susie's not in bed? There's no light in your room."

"How do I know!" cried Betty indignantly. "Why, I've just bumped into her in the dark."

Vegetables.

Long before some sleeping folk
Are thinking to begin
Their daily tasks, I take my knife,
Clean and sharp and thin.

And with my basket on my arm
Gardenwards I go,
Where so wetly and so green
The vegetables grow.

Chinese Medical Women.

A medical school for Chinese women has been established in Shanghai.

ADAMSON'S ADVENTURES