MEDICINAL PLANTS OF CANADA

The gathering of medicinal plants, the bark and leaves of trees, does not appeal to the average Canadian farmer perhaps because of lack of knowledge of the varieties and parts which may readily be converted into cash. And yet, in many districts, this would prove to be profitable employment for spare time and certain medicinal plants could be cultivated with profit.

The ginseng plant found in the woods of Ontario has for many years been much sought after because of the high value of seven dollars or more per pound which the roots command. It has been largely exported to China where it is prized as a tonic and stimulant by the Chinese. Ginseng and mandrake (the May apple or wild mandrake is a native of the woods of Ontario and Quebec) are regarded with much superstition by the Chinese, who ascribe to them almost miraculous powers. According to an old fancy the mandrake shrieks when pulled from the ground. The resemblance of its commonly forked root to the human body, a resemblance also shared by the ginseng, is probably the ground of this superstition. The mandrake has been regarded as an anthrodisiac, and used in amorous incantations, as a love amulet, etc. C. Elton, in "Origins of English History," says that the mandrake was found beneath the public gallows and was dragged from the ground and carried home with many religious ceremonies. When secured it became a family spirit speaking in oracles if properly consulted, and bringing good luck to the house in which it was enshrined.

Cure Mankind's Ills.

Ginseng and mandrake are only two of the many native roots from which medicines having well-understood effects are prepared for modern use in the treatments of the ills of mankind. Among the medicinal plants which grow wild in Canada and for which there is a considerable demand is golden seal, seneca snakeroot or mountain flax and wintergreen. Many other plants of medicinal value native to Europe, but which have escaped from cultivation, now occur as more or less common weeds in Canada, particularly in the eastern provinces. Included in this category are white and black mustard, caraway, horehound, peppermint, spearmint, thornapple, and even the dandelion. All of these foregoing plants can be cultivated as well as other varieties of medicinal plants such as coriander, dill, fennel, thyme, deadly nightshade or belladonna, garden chamomile, etc.

Among the trees or shrubs from which bark is gathered for medicinal purposes are the cascara tree, slippery elm, witch hazel, wild black cherry or rum cherry, prickly ash or toothache tree, burning bush or wahoo. Then there is the fruit of the juniper and Mexican tea, the flowers of the hop and the small roots or rhizomes of ferns, couch grass, white helebore and black snakeroot which yield medicines; and the well known Canada Balsam comes from the resinous exudation of the Balsam fir.

Carloads of Cascara.

It is, perhaps, not well known that carloads of the bark of the cascara tree are shipped annually from British Columbia to firms which manufacture the well known cascara sagrada medicine from it. The cascara tree belongs to the northwest coast of America, and British Columbia has the distinction of being the only portion of the British Empire in which it is a native. Owing to its rapid depletion in the States of Oregon and Washington, manufacturing druggists are looking to British Columbia for further supplies of the bark, but the tree is so little known that in land clearing operations it is ruthlessly slaughtered when patches of it might be left to yield from time to time profitable crops. Prof. John Davidson of the University of British Columbia says that on one lot 140 by 110 feet (one-third acre) which came under his notice, 94 cascara trees were burned. The immediate value of the bark on these trees he estimated to be worth about $80. A piece of waste land in cascara trees may be managed to yield a perpetual crop and new trees may be easily started from seed. Cascara grows both in tree form and as spreading shrubs, and harvesting of bark may begin when the trees are eight or ten years old.

The climate of many parts of British Columbia, as the Natural Resources Intelligence Service points out, is particularly favorable to the growth of drug yielding plants, but one drug is not sufficient for the establishment of a manufacturing industry and so Professors J. Davidson and R. H. Clark, of the University of British Columbia, have been making an investigation, with financial assistance granted by the National Research Council, to determine whether or not other trees, herbs and plants can be grown to advantage. The results have been very encouraging. It has been found that not only the bark of the cascara tree but also its wood possesses active medicinal properties. The British Columbia foxglove has been found to be equal or superior in content of the drug digitalin to that found elsewhere, while for the production of of the drug stramonium similarly good results have been obtained from the thornapple which grows wild in many parts of British Columbia. The spotted hemlock was found to contain a higher percentage of alkaloid than the average found elsewhere.

The investigations commenced in British Columbia might well be carried on in other parts of Canada. The medicine-man's drug chest must continuously have its stock replenished and why not with medicines made in Canadian factories from home-grown plants?

TWENTY-SEVEN FOOT BOAT
In which six Canadian seascouts sailed from Montreal to New York. The oldest is 18. They had some thrilling adventures and they are seen after arriving at New York.

Kind But Firm Discipline.

Not all parents or guardians are able to manage or control a vigorous, self-willed child from nine or ten years upwords, writes J. J. Kelso. It happens frequently that boys and girls are sent to Reformatories simply for the lack of firm discipline in their own homes. Recently an urgent request was made to have a young girl sent to a Reform School owing to her wilful conduct. The matter was delayed until at length a home was found for her with people spoken of as being "firm and exacting but just in their demands and ready to show appreciation when it is deserved." The girl was placed with them and under their guiding care the necessity for commitment to a Reformatory has apparently disappeared.

It is homes of this description that many of our wayward and homeless young people require, and when parents fail we should make every possible effort to find people who will recognize this opportunity to help in the training of a boy or girl who otherwise might be sent off in disgrace to a public institution.

The Christian name of Isabel is a corruption of Elizabeth. It was first corrupted as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth, who was called Elizabella. Afterwards the first syllable was dropped.

Uses for Slag.

Even slag from the steel furnaces has many economic uses. Two of its major uses are as a basis for cement and as a fertilizer. Soil requiring lime and phosphoric acid are improved by the addition of crushed or screened slag and some 15,000,000 barrels of Portland cement are being made each year in the United States with slag as an ingredient. In Nova Scotia slag is used in road construction and as railway ballast. Just as the presence of certain base metals in ore used to make the ore undesirable to handle, but now through new processes of recovery represent values sufficient to provide a profit, so, too, some day, the slag may prove a source of additional revenue to Canadian steel companies.

Wasn't Ambitious.

"How high are we now?" asked the timid aeroplane passenger.

"About four thousand feet," said the pilot. "I haven't started to climb yet."

"I don't know whether I mentioned it before we started," quavered the passenger, "but I'm not at all ambitious."

When washing flannels, never let them lie long in the water. They should be washed and hung out to dry as quickly as possible.

Mystery.

The wonderful thing about man is the way he builds his life on mystery, draws his inspirations out of mystery, hopes where he does not know, dreams where he does not see and believes where he cannot prove. Knowledge is no more than an island here and there, which lifts itself a little way above the waves while the great ocean of mystery round about laps all the shores of thought.

Mute and mum and mystery are companion words, grown out of the same ancient root and signifying that the world without speaks no language that man can clearly understand, while the world within also is without the power to utter its hidden meanings; and both fade away into dim frontiers where mystery sits in voiceless silence with her fingers on her lips.

Religion, of course, has been man's greatest adventure in mystery. But philosophy has followed close behind, while all the arts have found in it their fruitful source and inspiration.

Music, architecture, poetry and painting derive all their glow and rapture from the subtle and mysterious forces which move invisibly behind the face of things, beyond the reach of sense, and work their magic upon the spirits of men.

But, stranger than all these exploits of imagination and dream and love and hope is the way the solid and practical adventurers of business and politics and all the purely physical labors of life root themselves deeply in the same world of mystery. How is all this enchantment of weaving and sewing and dressing and decoration which makes all the business in the world to be accounted for except by some mysterious elements of desire and delight, within which science so far has been totally unable to define or even to say where they reside or how they go and whence they come?

And here is the mystery within the mystery: Man lives far more by what he doesn't know than by what he does know. The known grows stale and commonplace. It is the unknown that lures and beckons.

Apple Export.

Export shipments of apples from the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia for the past season, included the following: 65 cars to Scandinavian countries, 8 cars to China, 29 cars to Germany, 4 cars to Newfoundland, 18 cars to South Africa, 42 cars to New Zealand, 55 cars to the United States and 405 cars to Great Britain. In addition, 108 cars were shipped to Ontario and Quebec, which are often considered as export markets. Distance is apparently no handicap when high class products are for sale.

Polite.

Little Emily had been to church for the first time. On her return her grandmother asked if she had been a good little girl.

"Yes, Grandma," she said. "A man even offered me a plate full of money, and I said, 'No, thank you.' "

The "Golden Step."

I can hear the stalwart sailors singing chanties
As they weigh the dripping anchors at your bow.
The tropic sun's aglare upon your mainsail
And the spray is flashing up before the prow.

There's a pungent smell of tar upon your rigging
And the salt of seven seas—if all were told—
While the air is heavy-sweet above the hatches
With the perfume of the spices in the hold.

'Tis thus I see you sailing out of Malta
With your black hull eager for the spray.
How can it be you're just a dusty model
In an antique shop, I saw the other day?

—Anne Robinson, in "The Singing Blue."

Why He Looked Stuck Up.

"Why are you looking so stuck up to-day?"

"I've a right to. Don't you see those two pretty girls have their eyes glued on me?"

Iris.

Now iris, like a flock of birds,
Down to the pool's green water flies,
Sunning small, lovely, curving wings
And radiant, scented dyes.
As in a mirror, on the pool
The gold and purple lies.

I waited, hoping for a song,
I saw the tall leaves bend and swing,
It seemed to me some violet throat
Might open presently and sing,
But they were still as birds at night,
Each with his head beneath his wing.

Profitable Side Line.

It is estimated that less than half of our maple trees are tapped each year. The manufacture of maple products is one of the most profitable side lines a farmer can develop when one considers the shortness of the season required and the fact that trees may be used as fuel when they pass maturity. The supply of maple products is much less than the demand and this is a situation that will become increasingly apparent when the people of other countries learn of the delicious flavor of maple syrup.

Before you use a new toothbrush, soak it in hot salt water. This not only cleanses it, but makes it last twice as long.

Ascension Island Turtles.

Ascension lies in the middle of the Atlantic and is supposed to have taken its name from the suddenness of its arrival on this planet. It was said to have shot up in a night. It was used as a naval depot, and here we came for stores.

A peculiar thing about this island was that the people didn't refer to the seasons as Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter as we do, but as the Egg, the Turtle, the Fish and the Vegetable seasons. Great flights of Wideawakes, a bird about the size of a seagull, came to lay their eggs in such droves that sometimes they actually hid the sun, while the air was raucous with their cries. They dropped their eggs on a wide plain called Wideawake Fair, which in the season looked like a field of snow. . . . Huge marine tortoises came in swarms to lay their eggs.

Mother turtle would waddle up the beach, her faithful mate following, scrape a hole in the sand, deposit her treasures, cover them up in a little mound, and then make for the water again. . . . The beach would be lined with these egg-mounds, and it was fascinating to watch the little turtle appear when the sun had hatched him. If you had the time and the patience to wait, or better still the good fortune to be on the spot at the right moment to witness that sight—then you considered yourself lucky! The mound would seem to enlarge, the sand slip, and the first layer of eggs come to light.

Suddenly out would pop a small black head from a shell, a wee neck would crane, and you would see the head slowly rotate, taking a first, long, wondering view of its new surroundings. A short pause would ensue. Then you would see a convulsive heave, a wriggle, and out from the egg would flop master turtle, sit upon the sand for a minute, as if taking the air, and then make a bee-line for the water. As you saw the little creature breast the first wavelet licking the shore, you said to yourself in the words of the psalmist, "How wonderful are Thy works, O Lord!"

I liked coming to Ascension, there were so many interesting things about it—the "blow holes" out of which, far inland, the sea water would spout like fountains twenty feet high or so and break into spray; then the most beautiful "rainbows" you could imagine would form amid the spray, hang in the air a minute or so, then vanish; the strange rock-formations, and craters ful of dark, motionless water. . . It was like a trip to the moon.—From "Sam Noble, Able Seaman," an Autobiography.

An Education Thrown In.

"Can you read that bottom line?"

"No, suh."

"These glasses will fix you so that you can read it," declared the optician confidently.

The negro customer brightened up at this.

"Dat's more'n what I expected, boss," said he. "An eddication and a pair ob glasses, all for five shillin'. I nebber learned to read."

Historical Sites Board Reports Progress.

At the annual meeting of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, held recently in Ottawa, it was reported that 130 sites had been reviewed during the year and that in addition to the several siteas previously recommended for commemoration 12 others were selected as being of national importance. The Board, which is an honorary body comprised of recognized historians, acts in an advisory capacity to the Dominion Government on historic sites matters. The administration of historic sites set aside on the recommendation of the Board is carried out by the Department of the Interior through its Canadian National Parks Branch.

Brigadier-General E. A. Cruickshank presided at the meeting and the other members in attendance were: Dr. J. C. Webster, representing New Brunswick; Dr. J. H. Coyne, representing Ontario; His Honor Judge F. W. Howay, representing Western Canada; Mr. J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of Canadian National Parks, representing the Department of the Interior; and Major A. A. Pinard, secretary.

The more important of the places and events selected for commemoration at this year's meeting of the Board include, Louisburg, N.S.; the naval battle of the Shannon and Chesapeake at Halifax, N.S.; the Yorkshire settlement, Chignecto, N.S.; Fort Lennox on Ile-aux-Noix, near St. Johns, Que.; Fort Three Rivers, at Three Rivers, Que.; Fort Frontenac, Kingston, Ont.; the embarkation point of Brock's troops to capture Detroit in 1812, near Sandwich, Ont.; the western terminus of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's farthest point west, near Bella Coola, B.C.; and the old Hudson's Bay Company's posts of Fort Augustus and Fort Edmonton, near Edmonton, Alberta. In addition to the above sites, it was also decided that the eminent public services of the following outstanding personages in Canadian history should be suitably commemorated: Nicholas Denys, at Bathurst, N.B.; Joseph Wallet des Barres, at Sydney, N.S.; Sir Howard Douglas, at Fredericton, N.B.; Bishop Alexander MacDonell, at St. Raphael, Ont.; and Sir Charles Bagot and Lord Sydenham, at Kingston, Ont.

The work of selecting for commemoration historic sites of national importance is steadily growing and as the recommendations are approved the sites are being acquired by the Department of the Interior. Eventually it is hoped that every historic site of national importance and interest in the Dominion will be marked to be handed down to future generations and keep green the stirring romance of Canadian history.

Classified.

The Old Crow—"You don't look like much of a man."

The Scarecrow—"I'm not. I'm just the common or garden variety."

Winter Field.

Sorrow on the acres,
Wind in the thorn,
An old man plowing
Through the frosty morn.

A flock of dark birds,
Rooks and their wives,
Follow the plow team
The old man drives;

And troops of starlings,
A tittle-tat and prim,
Follow the rooks
That follow him.

—A. E. Coppard.

His Reason.

Wife—"I want you to tell me, Harold, why, when I start to sing, you always go out into the garden. Don't you care to hear me?"

Husband—"It isn't that—I don't want the neighbors to think I am beating you."

MUTT AND JEFF—By Bud Fisher.

This Tickled Jeff's Funny Bone.