

Science Siftings

By 'Volt'

British Inventions.

The recent classification at the British Patent Office shows that cooking is the popular subject of invention, having been the subject of 3575 British patents in 48 years, or an average of 73 a year. Umbrellas brought out 1457 inventions, and hats 1411. Invention tends to run in grooves, 1896 and 1897 reflecting the enormous development in cycles, while motor vehicle inventions have doubled since 1900.

Appendicitis.

While foreign bodies in the vermiform appendix are not rare, they do not seem to have the effects formerly attributed to them. In 1600 post mortem examinations Dr. L. J. Mitchell, a coroner's physician, has found one or more grape seeds in the appendix in eight cases, one or more shot in three cases, fragments of bone in two cases, and in single cases such objects as a piece of a shingle nail, a globule of solder, a piece of nut-shell, and bits of ash or stone. In no case was any evidence of inflammation of the appendix, past or present, to be found.

Classification of Woods.

Wood is classed as hard or soft, the main difference between these classes being that the soft wood tree has 'needle leaves'—slim, narrow, and almost uniform in breadth—while the hard wood tree has leaves of various shapes. Some soft wood trees bear cones—are conifers. Resin is more characteristic of soft than hard wood. To the class of soft woods belong the pines, spruces, and firs, and the most common examples are yellow pine, white fir, pitch pine, and spruce, or red fir. The commoner hard woods are the oak, beech, mahogany, ash, walnut, plane, elm, birch, and ebony.

Wonderful Silk of the Spider.

The astronomer after the experience of many years has found that the spider furnishes the only thread which can be successfully used in carrying on his work, writes Ambrose Swasey in the 'Scientific American.' The spider lines mostly used are from one-fifth to one-seventh of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, and, in addition to their strength and elasticity, they have the peculiar property of withstanding great changes of temperature; and often when measuring the sun spots, although the heat is so intense as to crack the lenses of the micrometer eye piece, yet the spider lines are not in the least injured. The threads of the silkworm, although of great value as a commercial product, are so coarse and rough compared with the silk of the spider that they cannot be used in such instruments. Spider lines, although but a fraction of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, are made up of several thousands of microscopic streams of fluid, which unite and form a single line, and it is because of this that they remain true and round under the highest magnifying power. An instance of the durability of the spider lines is found at the Allegheny Observatory, where the same set of lines in the micrometer of the transit instrument has been in use since 1859.

Why People Blush.

The blush is masculine rather than feminine. Such, at all events, is the opinion of an eminent French scientist, Professor Edouard Guyot, says 'Science Siftings,' who has made some quite elaborate experiments with a view to deciding the question. It is generally supposed that blushing is a symptom of modesty; but it seems that this is a mistake. Persons of little or no modesty blush as often as the most innocent and guileless, and men are much more given to the habit than women. In either sex, however, blushes are most frequent in youth, and they tend to become steadily more rare as age advances. A blush, explains Professor Guyot, originates in the brain, through the effect of some mental impression; the brain telegraphs through the sympathetic nerves to the muscles that control the small blood vessels which carry red blood (the blood when it flows through the veins is blue) and the crimson fluid rushes to the surface of the body. It is always an involuntary performance.

Tell me not of diamond gems,
Set in regal diadems;
There's a priceless gem on earth,
Of richer and of purer worth.
'Tis priceless, and is known to fame,
And you, perhaps, may know its name,
For coughs and colds, the remedy sure,
Is known as WOODS' GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE.

The Home

By Maureen

A Simple Milk Test.

A simple method of testing whether milk has been watered is to take a well-polished knitting needle and dip it into a deep vessel of milk and withdraw it immediately. If the milk is unwatered some of the fluid will adhere to the needle, but if it has been watered in the least degree the needle will come out quite free of the milky fluid altogether.

Biting Thread.

Ladies who sew a great deal often complain of soreness of the mouth and lips and do not know the cause of it. This has constantly been found to be the result of biting off thread instead of using a pair of scissors for cutting. In the case of silk thread the danger is well recognised, for to harden it and give it a good surface it is very usual to soak it during the process of manufacture in acetate of lead. In some cases where seamstresses and dressmakers have persevered in this practice serious results have followed.

When to Shake Hands.

When to shake hands is a subject which depends somewhat on circumstances, yet a few general rules may be given. When a man is introduced to a woman she does not shake hands with him unless he is decidedly elderly or distinguished. If he is the husband or brother of the woman presenting him it is natural to receive him cordially by shaking hands; but it is not form to do so if he is a mere acquaintance. A hostess should shake hands with every guest who comes to her house, both on their arrival and departure. Women do not shake hands when introduced to each other, but merely bow. When, however, a young girl is presented by a friend to a married woman, the latter shakes hands with her, but the girl must not make the first advance. Men shake hands when introduced to each other as an expression of goodwill. When leaving an entertainment a man shakes hands with the hostess, and he may do so with friends who are near, but he must not go about shaking hands generally.

A Good Cup of Tea.

There are four rules to be followed in preparing tea, and the neglect of any one of them will render the article valueless. Nearly every housewife neglects at least one.

In the first place, the flavor of tea never appears unless the water is fresh drawn from the tap and is boiling furiously when poured on the leaves. Nine cooks out of ten never empty the kettle of water which boiled for breakfast when preparing the tea in the afternoon, and if they should avoid this fatality, they seldom, in their haste, wait for the water to boil thoroughly before pouring it on the tea.

It seems sufficient for them that the slightest curl of steam emanates when the water is promptly used, with the result that the choicest tea in the world tastes like cat-nip. If both these pitfalls are avoided, then the tea is permitted to draw hardly two minutes when the maid with a mad rush pours it off into the cups, and again the superb aroma of the rose is invisible, and a wild, weedy solution offends the palate.

If, again, this mistake is escaped, then the leaf is allowed to soak for fifteen or thirty minutes while the family converse, and when served the bouquet has come and gone, and nothing but a bitter tannin has developed, which, when taken into the human economy, plays upon the nerves insidiously.

To have tea in perfection it is only necessary to follow the four following rules—

1. Let the water be fresh from the tap.
2. Let the water boil furiously five minutes before using.
3. Let the water remain on the leaves not less than five nor over ten minutes, and then pour off into another heated vessel.
4. Use one full teaspoonful of tea for every cup of water, and if too strong reduce the quantity.

Adherence to these simple rules procures the best and most harmless tonic, the most exquisite flavor, and the most inexpensive beverage known to civilisation.

Maureen

For Children's Hacking Cough at Night,
Woods' Great Peppermint Cure. 1s 6d.

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