

duced one of the kings to insist upon the inhabitants living upon the water, on the supposition that their dwellings would be more cleanly, and consequently the inmates less subjected to the baneful effects of that scourge of the East. This is a remarkable fact, that an uneducated, nay, uncivilized barbarian should have entertained such notions as to the conduciveness of cleanliness to health and vigour; but, alas! so slothful are the people, so frightfully indifferent to their own interests and health, that, although with very slight exertion, their cabins or floating houses might be more easily scrubbed and scoured out every morning, they are seldom ever so much as swept. There is another and great disadvantage to which this system has exposed the inhabitants; it is this; cattle, dogs, cats, nay, even sometimes human bodies, that have been drowned on the river higher up on the Yuthia side, are perpetually being swept down by the current, and getting entangled underneath the houses amidst the bamboo or poles that moor them: the inmates as well as the neighbours are assailed with pestilential odours which they have no possible means of ridding themselves of; and they have no alternative but abide patiently till time and tide carry away this nuisance, being subjected in the interval to local miasma quite sufficient to breed typhus in a malignant form, another inconvenience is, that these houses, being so little elevated above the water's edge, are necessarily damp and humid, and consequently rheumatic fevers are extremely prevalent during the monsoons.—*Neal's Residence in Siam.*

### MILK, BREAD, AND BUTTER TREES.

"We had heard several weeks before, of a tree, the sap of which is a nourishing milk. It is called 'the cow-tree'; and we were assured that the negroes of the farm, who drink plentifully of this vegetable milk, consider it a wholesome aliment. All the milky juices of plants being acrid, bitter, and more or less poisonous, this account appeared to us very extraordinary; but we found by experience during our stay at Barbula, that the virtues of this tree had not been exaggerated. This fine tree rises like the broad-leaved star-apple. Its oblong and pointed leaves rough and alternate, are marked by lateral ribs, prominent at the lower surface, and parallel. Some of them are ten inches long. We did not see the flower: the fruit is somewhat fleshy, and contains one and sometimes two nuts. When incisions are made in the trunk of this tree, it yields abundance of a glutinous milk, tolerably thick, devoid of all acridity, and of an agreeable and balmy smell. It was offered to us in the shell of a calabash. We drank considerable quantities of it in the evening before we went to bed, and very early in the morning, without feeling the least injurious effect. The viscosity of this milk alone renders it a little disagreeable. The negroes and the free people who work in the plantations drink it, dipping into it their bread

of maize or cassava. The overseer of the farm told us that the negroes grow sensibly fatter during the season when the palo de vaca furnishes them with most milk. This juice, exposed to the air, presents at its surface (perhaps in consequence of the absorption of the atmospheric oxygen) membranes of a strongly animalized substance, yellowish, stringy and resembling cheese. These membranes, separated from the rest of the more aqueous liquid, are elastic, almost like caoutchouc; but they undergo, in time, the same phenomena of putrefaction as gelatine. The people call the coagulum that separates by the contact of the air, cheese. The coagulum grows sour in the space of five or six days. Amidst the great number of curious phenomena which I have observed in the course of my travels, I confess there are few that have made so powerful an impression on me as the aspect of the cow-tree. Whatever relates to milk or to corn inspires an interest which is not merely that of the physical knowledge of things, but is connected with another order of ideas and sentiments. We can scarcely conceive how the human race could exist without farinaceous substances, and without that nourishing juice which the breast of the mother contains, and which is appropriated to the long feebleness of the infant. The amylaceous matter of corn, the object of religious veneration among so many nations, ancient and modern, is diffused in the seeds, and deposited in the roots of vegetables; milk, which serves, as an aliment, appears to us exclusively the produce of animal organization. Such are the impressions we have received in our earliest infancy: such is also the source of that astonishment created by the aspect of the tree just described. It is not here the solemn shades of forests, majestic course of rivers, the mountains wrapped in eternal snow, that excite our emotion. A few drops of vegetable juice recall to our minds all the powerfulness and the fecundity of nature. 'In the barren flank of a rock grows a tree with coriaceous and dry leaves. Its large woody roots can scarcely penetrate into the stone. For several months of the year not a single shower moistens its foliage. Its branches appear dead and dried; but when the trunk is pierced there flows from it a sweet and nourishing milk. It is at the rising of the sun that this vegetable fountain is most abundant. The negroes and natives are then seen hastening from all quarters, furnished with large bowls to receive the milk, which grows yellow, and thickens at its surface. Some empty their bowls under the tree itself, others carry the juice home to their children.'—*Humboldt's Travels in the Equinoctial Regions of America.*

**MATCH-MAKING.**—A new machine for splitting the timber used in making matches has lately been introduced at Augusta, Ga. It splits with ease 20,000 a minute or 1,000,000 an hour, and turns them out ready to be dipped. Mammals will say it is much better a split should precede a match than follow it.—*The Builder.*