

How a Toad Undresses.

There are many animals which only undress once a year, and that is to put on a new suit; among these is the toad. An eye witness to the process thus describes a toad taking off his clothes:

About the middle of July, I found a toad on a hill of melons, and, not wanting him to leave, hoed around him. He appeared sluggish and not inclined to move. Presently I observed him pressing his elbows against his sides, rubbing downward. He appeared so singular that I watched to see what he was up to. After a few smart rubs, his skin began to burst open straight along his back. Now, said I, old fellow, you have done it; but he appeared to be unconcerned, and kept on rubbing until he had worked down all his skin into folds on his sides and hips; then, grasping one hind leg with his hands, he hauled off one leg of his pants the same as anybody would, then stripped the other leg in the same way. He then took his cast-off cuticle forward, between his fore legs into his mouth, and swallowed it; then, by raising and lowering his head, swallowing as his head came down, he stripped off the skin underneath until it came to his forelegs, and then grasping one of these with the opposite hand, by considerable pulling stripped off the skin. Changing hands, he stripped the other, and by a slight motion of the head, he drew it from the throat and swallowed the whole. The operation seemed to be an agreeable one, and occupied but a short time.

RANCID BUTTER, pork, and lard casks may be purified by burning straw or shavings in them.

IN TAKING UP BELTS, the time used in carefully cutting the belt square is always time saved.

IN PARIS the right to gather the fallen leaves on the public streets and avenues has been sold to the highest bidder for a considerable sum.

A WESTERN EDITOR, in speaking of a recent political victory, says that even the sheep celebrated the glorious event with an unusual display of bunting.

BELTS AND PULLEYS.—Adding to the width of a belt and of the faces of the pulleys increases immensely the power of conveying force. A wide belt is always better than a narrow one strained to its utmost capacity.

GAS FROM WOOD.—In Michigan, it is said, gas of 16 candle illuminating power is being obtained in the manufacture of charcoal, one cord of wood making 3500 cubic feet of good gas, at a cost of only 18 cents per thousand feet.

HOLLAND HAS 12,000 windmills in operation, each doing a six or ten-horse power service through the twenty four hours. They are kept up at an annual cost of \$1,000,000 and perform all the service required of steam engines at one-twentieth the cost.

WOODCHUCK TANNING.—The best way to tan woodchuck skins with the hair on is to sprinkle salt and alum on the hides, roll them up and let them lie until the salt is melted. To tan without the hair on, put the hide into a bucket of ashes and water, let it lie until the hair comes off freely, then take the hair off, then put it (the skin) into soft soap, let it lie there until the lye eats the flesh off, then take it out and rub it dry over a smoke.

THE BRIGHT SPOTS of a man's life are few enough with out blotting any out; and since for a moment of mirth we have an hour of sadness, it were a sorry policy to diminish the few rays that illumine our checkered existence. Life is an April day—sunshine and showers. The heart, like the earth, would cease to yield good fruit were it not watered by the tears of sensibility, and the fruit would be worthless but for the sunshine of smiles.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF VENUS.—The atmosphere of the planet Venus was distinctly visible during the recent transit, and was seen by the astronomical party stationed near Thebes, in Egypt, as a pale white circle around a part of the planet's edge, totally different from the brilliant sun light. "The general remark," says one of the observers, "was that it reminded us of moonlight." It is the opinion of many astronomers that the atmosphere surrounding Venus is much deeper than the atmosphere of the earth.

DRYERS FOR PAINT.—A correspondent of the English Mechanic says:—"As an old, experienced hand, there is no better I can give you than these few hints. All dryers have a tendency to destroy the virtue of lead. If dryers must be resorted to, litharge and white copperas are the best. Dryers often sold as patent dryers are no other than lime and white copperas. Terebinthac and other dryers, as sold, are often injurious. It is well to let colors dry slowly."

THE SIX FOLLIES OF SCIENCE.—The six follies of science are said to be the following:—The quadrature of the circle; the establishment of perpetual motion; the philosopher's stone; the transmutation of metals; divination, or the discovery of secrets by magic; and lastly, judicial astrology. It is unwise to say that anything is impossible, until the impossibility is demonstrated. It is not at all improbable that the present century may see that one of these so-called follies is a reality.—Journal of Applied Science

PORTLAND CEMENT.—Portland cement, says Mr. H. Fajja, of London, consists of carbonate of lime mixed with silica, iron and alumina, and is made by mixing chalk with mud obtained from the banks of the Thames and Medway, in the proportion of about four of chalk to one of mud; in some cases gault clay is used instead of mud. The materials are mixed in wash mills, and the result, called slurry, is run into large reservoirs or backs and allowed to settle. It is then dried and calcined at a high temperature, and afterwards ground between millstones to the requisite fineness.

FEMALE RIGHTS.—Only the female spiders spin webs. They own all the real estate, and the males have to live a vagabond life under stones and in other obscure hiding places. If they come about the house so often as to bore the ruling sex, they are mercilessly killed and eaten. The spider's skin is as unyielding as the shells of lobsters and crabs, and is shed from time to time in the same way, to accommodate the animal's growth. If you poke over the rubbish in a female spider's back yard, among her cast-off corsets you will find the jackets of the males who have paid for their society with their lives—trophies of her barbarism as truly as scalps show the savage nature of the red man.

ESQUIMAUX METHOD OF TANNING.—The Esquimaux's mode of tanning is very simple, and the material employed the cheapest and most accessible of any used in the art, viz., the urine of man and beast. The skins are prepared in the fur, and softened and tanned in urine, which is usually kept in tubs in the porches of their huts, for use in dressing deer, seal and other skins. They show great skill in the preparation of whale, seal and deerskins, and these, on the whole, are equal to the best oilskins made in England. It imparts to them firmness, durability, and makes them waterproof. The boots worn by the Esquimaux are generally made from seal or walrus hides, and resist the encroachments of water.

UTILIZATION OF SAWDUST.—Some exquisite specimens of work, vying with the finest carvings, have been turned out by the cabinet-makers of the Faubourg St. Antoine, Paris. It appears that by the simultaneous application of great pressure and heat, these ingenious workmen have succeeded in causing the particles of sawdust to agglutinate, so that, if compressed in a mould, the result is a solid mass, of any desired shape, presenting a brilliant surface, and endowed with a durability and beauty of appearance not found in ebony, rosewood or mahogany. This product is known as bois dure. Another very peculiar body, which approximates more to boxwood in appearance, is formed by the admixture of glue, phosphate of lime, alum and sawdust, a kind of dough being formed with boiling water, which admits of being pressed into moulds. This compound also takes a very high polish.

THE USES OF BORAGE.—This plant, the Borago officinalis of botanists, is of sufficient use to render it worthy of more cultivation among us. A writer in the English Mechanic enumerates some uses for this plant not commonly known. The large leaves and tender stalks, dipped in butter and fried, make an excellent and savoury dish. The brilliant blue flowers are very pretty as a garnish for salads along with Balsam flowers. The young leaves boiled are a good substitute for Spinach; or, if dressed with hot butter and grated cheese, an excellent and new vegetable. The plant contains a certain amount of saltpetre, as may be proved by burning a dried leaf. For this reason it is used with great benefit for the relief of sore throats. The root is rich in gum, and if boiled, yields a mucilaginous emulsion, excellent for irritations of the throat and chest. Very violent attacks of toothache, where the nerve has taken cold, are often cured by holding a portion of the leaves, previously boiled in milk, and applied warm, in the mouth, against the affected tooth. Lastly, bees are extremely fond of Borage, and it appears to repay them well for their attention.

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