

the *Victoria regia*.—Sir R. H. Schomburgk.—also discovered and named this remarkable nut. He first saw it in Demerara, and gave it the name of *ophiocaryon paradoxum*, or paradoxical snake nut. The snake-nut tree, which bears this singular seed, is said to belong to the soap-nut family. Specimens of this remarkable vegetable production were sent to the exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London, in 1851; also at the exhibition in Dublin. A few of these nuts were recently brought to New York, by Mr. Bernhard Ries, who was a resident of Demerara for twenty years, and for several years the Venezuelan Consul in British Guiana. To him are we indebted for the possession of a specimen of this great curiosity, and for most of the facts pertaining to it.

The snake-nut is truly among the most remarkable, and seemingly paradoxical, productions of the vegetable kingdom. Why the kernel of a nut growing on a certain kind of a tree should invariably assume the form of a snake in a coiled position, is one of the mysteries of nature which she does not reveal to casual observers. Having made extensive, yet fruitless researches in the most complete works on natural history and botany for some account of this mysterious nut, we have come to the conclusion that its history has not been recorded.

The natives regard this nut as a warning of danger, because where it grows, there is found a venomous snake, the bite of which is certain death. While the voyagers into the interior are selecting a place for their night's encampment, should they chance to discover any of these snake-nuts upon the ground, they quickly abandon the site, return to their boat, and proceed to select another place where the nuts are not found. The coexistence of this nut and the snake in the same locality, is a subject which will be left for the imagination of our readers, as we have not been able to glean any facts which serve to explain why they are thus companions.—*N. A. Calkins.*

A. D. AND A. M.

There are certain letters often placed before dates with the meaning of which we should be well acquainted. Thus, the present year would be written A. D. 1862; the A. D. being abbreviations of *Anno*

Domini, two Latin words, which signify, in the year of our Lord, or the year of the Christian era. For the era, or the particular time and event from which we begin to reckon, as well as people in all other Christian countries, is the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We also frequently see the letters A. M. attached to dates. These are abbreviations of *Anno Mundi*, signifying, in the year of the world, and are reckoned from the creation. This era is sometimes employed, as A. M. 2513, the date of the Israelites' departure from Egypt; but in general the dates of events which occurred previous to the birth of Christ have B. C. (before Christ) prefixed to them; as B. C. 55, the date of Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain.

SUBSTITUTE FOR COPPER—A discovery is said to have been made in China, which, if true, must soon do away with the expense of coppering ship bottoms. The object of coppering as every one knows, is to protect the ship against the attack of worms, which prevail to a greater or less extent in all the seas; and it is now said that no worm will trouble wood which has received a coat of Gambia. It is estimated that \$50 will coat the bottom of a large ship; and it is said to harden and preserve the wood. The experiment has been tried in China on a small scale, and found to succeed admirably.

BEAUTIES OF TREES.

What can be more beautiful than the trees? Their lofty trunks, august in their simplicity, asserting to the most inexperienced eye infinite superiority over the imitative pillars of man's pride, their graceful play of wide-spreading branches, and all the delicate and glorious machinery of buds, leaves, flowers and fruit, that, with more than magical effort, burst from the naked and rigid twigs, with all the rich, and heaven-breathing delectable odors, pure and animating essences, pouring out spices and medicinals, under brilliant and unimaginably varied colours, and making music from the softest and most melancholy undertones to the full organ peal of the tempest. We wonder not that trees have been the admiration of men in all periods and nations of the world. What is the richest country without trees? What barren and monotonous

spot can they not convert into paradise? Nerves, in the midst of his most ambitious enterprise, stopped his vast army to contemplate the beauty of a tree. Cicero, from the tiring, and exertion, and anxiety of the forum, was accustomed, Pliny tells us, to steal forth to a grove of palm-trees to refresh and invigorate his spirits. In the Sceptan grove, the same author adds, Thucydides was supposed to have composed his noble histories. The Greek and Roman classics, indeed, abound with expressions of admiration of trees and woods, and with customs which have originated in that admiration; but above, as the Bible surpasses in the splendor and majesty of its poetry all books in the world, so is its sylvan ordorescent imagery the most bold and beautiful. Beneath some spreading trees was an ancient patriarch revealed to us, sitting in contemplation, or receiving the visits of angels; and what a calm and dignified picture of primeval life is presented to our imagination at the mention of Deborah the wife of Dapidoth, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, between Ramman and Bathal, in Mount Ephraim, beneath the palm-tree of Deborah. The oak of Bashan, and the cedar of Lebanon, are but other and better names for glory and power. The vine, the olive and the fig-tree are imperishable emblems of peace, plenty and festivity. David in his psalms, Solomon in his songs and proverbs, the prophets in the sublime outpourings of their awful inspiration, and Christ in his parables, those most beautiful and perfect of all allegories, luxuriate in signs and similes drawn from the fair trees of the east.

THE WEATHER.—When you wish to know what the weather is to be, go out and select the smallest cloud you can see, keep your eye upon it, and if it decreases and disappears, it shows a state of the air that is sure to be followed by fair weather; but if it increases in size, you may as well take your great coat with you if you are going from home, for falling weather will not be far off. The reason is this: when the air is becoming charged with electricity, you will see every cloud attracting all less ones towards it, till it gathers into a shower; and, on the contrary, when the fluid is passing off or diffusing itself, even a large cloud will be seen breaking to pieces and dissolving.