

OUR BLUENOSE CLUB.

After we had settled down one evening and had discussed the weather and crops, the doctor remarked:

"The London *Times* states that an air balloon railway is about to be constructed on the Gaisberg, near Salzburg, a mountain of no great height; but offering a magnificent view over the environs of the town. The balloon, which will have grooved wheels on one side of its car, will ascend a perpendicular line of rails."

"I notice you have an oil stove in your office," said Mr. Rod to the Superintendent; "do you find that it works well?"

"Yes it is a great convenience. I use it in the early autumn before the steam heating apparatus is started. It takes the chill off the room. I find it works much more satisfactorily if not set on the floor, but elevated sufficiently to be out of the floor draft."

"Is it necessary to use the best oil or will commoner grades do?"

"Use the best white oil. Spill no oil on the stove. Never fill the stove while lighted."

"Have you much trouble with the dirt clogging the perforated tin?"

"Keep the stove perfectly clean. The perforated tin should be cleansed perfectly with a brush by taking it off and laying it on a flat place to prevent bending. Be sure the perforations are all open, otherwise the combustion will be imperfect."

"Do you trim the wicks often?"

"Trim the wicks no oftener than is necessary, and take off the incrustation only; use sharp scissors cutting smoothly, and round the corners a trifle. Do not turn the wicks up to obtain the full amount of flame required immediately after lighting them for as the heat increases, the flame will increase."

"What is the best method of extinguishing them?"

"Turn the wick down to extinguish them, leaving a small flame that will go out of itself, then turn them a little below the top of the wick tube to prevent the oil overflowing."

"It is said," observed Test-tube, "that a piece of zinc placed on the coals of a hot stove will clean out the stove-pipe. The vapour produced carries off the soot by chemical decomposition."

"Can you tell me," inquired the doctor of Rod, "how the crimson stain is made that is used for decorative woods in musical instruments?"

"Yes, I saw a receipt in the *Boston Journal of Commerce* lately. This is it. Ground Brazil wood, one pound; water, three quarts; cochineal, half an ounce; boil the Brazil wood with water, strain, add the cochineal, boil gently for half an hour, when it will be fit for use. This is first applied, and then the varnish, consisting of rectified spirits of wine, half a gallon, six ounces of gum sandarac, three ounces of gum mastic, and half a pint of turpentine varnish; put the above in a tin can by the stove, frequently shaking till well dissolved, strain and keep for use. If it is harder than is wished, thin with more turpentine varnish."

"I saw a very useful item the other day," remarked the doctor, "to the effect that not only the ink of a blot but also the blot itself can be removed by blotting paper saturated with a solution of oxalic acid, if there is no indigo or aniline colour in the ink. A trace of the writing will remain and can be made legible by adding ferrocyanide of potassium or gallic acid. Otherwise it might be dangerous in removing signatures from important papers."

"How can I cement two pieces of iron together," asked Test-tube of the superintendent.

"No cement for uniting iron surfaces is more adhesive and durable than the oxide of iron itself. It will make a joint so perfect that the iron will break sooner than the cement will part."

"I see," said Mr. Rod, "that the well known opinion of lumbermen that timber cut in the spring is not durable for building purposes has been sustained by recent scientific investigations. It is shown that the richer the wood is in phosphoric acid and potassium, the more likely it is to rot and mold; wood cut in the spring contains eight times as much of the former and five times as much of the latter as that cut in winter."

"What is the most convenient way to find out where to file the wards in fitting a new key to a lock that you do not wish to take apart?" asked the doctor turning to Mr. Rod.

"Smoke the key blank over a candle, insert into the hole and press firmly against the opposing wards of the lock. The indentations in the smoked portions will show where to file."

"Doctor," said Test-tube, "has any filtering material been discovered that will remove microbes from water?"

"Water filtered through porous unglazed porcelain is absolutely free from microbes. With a single such vessel 0.20 meter long by 0.25 meter in diameter, C. Chamberland obtained about 20 litres a day of physiologically pure water."

"How is railroading progressing in Japan, Mr. Rod?" asked Cago.

"Very well. The railway system of Japan has attained a length of 225 miles, and is steadily increasing. It has been mainly built by the Japan-ese government with native capital. The business results up to the present time have given no cause for dissatisfaction."

The *Scientific American* states that General Annenkoff proposes a sea canal from the Caspian into St. Michael's Bay, to render transshipment from deep into light draught vessels unnecessary. Such a work will greatly facilitate transport over the Caspian," remarked the doctor. "Nearly 20 million eggs are shipped across the Atlantic to the United States, chiefly from Antwerp and Hamburg, during the summer months of each year. A patent has been secured for making imitation maple syrup. Hickory bark is soaked in water and an extract is thus obtained which, added to cane or glucose syrup, gives it the maple taste and smell."

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