SACRED LAKE IN ASHANTI

Natives Believe it to be Haunted by Powerful God

In Central Ashanti, West Africa, there is a sacred lake, Bosumtivi, which lies about eighteen miles southeast of Coomassie, and is the only real lake in the country. It is roughly circular in shape, with a diameter of four miles, and lies in a deep depression with sides rising to six hundred and seven hundred feet above its surface. It has never been fathomed. An attempt was made to sound it by A. J. Philbrick, acting chief commissioner of Ashanti, but the line broke after five hundred feet had been lowered. The water is fresh, though the lake has no outlet, and only a few small annual streams flow into it. The Ashantis regard the lake as a great fetish, believing that it is the abode of a powerful and energetic spirit which manifests itself, among other ways, by flashing lights on the surface and making noises like the discharge of artillery. There are numerous villages round the lake, but no canoes, paddles, fishhooks or brass pans are allowed on or near to it. The natives do, however, permit themselves to catch the fish which abound in the lake, and they resort to an ingenious method of overcoming the disabilities imposed on them by its sacred character. Plaited reed mats with gaping mouths are taken out from the shore by men lying face downwards on cigar shaped logs of wood. They propel themselves by paddling with their hands, and, having set the mats as a trap, they retire long enough to allow the fish to enter. They then return very quickly in the same fashion, pull together the two parts of the trap, and retire with their haul.

SCREENING GRAIN

It is certainly not economy to ship dirty grain, as the farmer hauls from thresher to his car at expense of his man loading and unloading and his team drawing, pays freight on same to the terminal elevator, and then gives it away. Those who get it must consider it valuable as they insure it. I noted some time ago that my insurance company's report showed an item $29,000 paid for loss on screenings by fire at terminal. How many others were on the risk? These screenings (dockings) are treated and used for feed by chopping, steaming or boiling. Wild oats chopped fine enough to destroy power of germination or boiled makes good feed. The smaller seeds, as pig and mustard, are also good when so treated, and when cooked are relished by animals which will not eat them when raw.

The up-to-date threshing machines are so equipped that these smaller seeds are left in a heap under the mill and paid for at threshing by estimating the number of bushels in the heap. The farmer might pay two prices and leave this dockings, so left rather than have to separate it from his grain before shipping. Threshing machines should be so equipped with separators to grade wheat, as to run off different screens or through a similar separator to "Jumbo" from elevator, and bag the screenings and small and broken grain, running the good into wagon boxes for the granary or elevator. If the machine does not do a clean job, then the farmer should certainly separate himself at home before teaming or run it through an elevator having a good cleaner, and use the screenings as stock feed.

Old Customs Explained

There is no good reason nowadays why the bow or other ornament on a man's hat should be confined, as it usually is, to the left side; but in the days when every man had to be prepared to battle for his life there was a very good reason for this custom. In those days long plumes took the place of bows as ornaments for hats, and if they had been on the right side there would have been serious danger of their getting in the way of the sword and thus causing the overthrow or even death of their wearer.

DOOR WITH SEVEN LOCKS

Westminster Abbey Has Many Interesting Parts

A London paper writes: Few who explore Westminster Abbey are aware that there are many of its most ancient and interesting parts of which they have never had a glimpse. For instance, in the eastern cloisters there is a door so guarded against unauthorized intrusion that it can only be opened by seven keys, which are in the jealous custody of as many Government officials. Five of the keyholes of this wonderful door, which is covered with human skins, are concealed from view by a stout iron bar which traverses it. This door gives access to a vaulted chamber, known as the Chapel of the Pyx, the walls of which were standing as they stand to-day before even the Norman Conqueror landed in Sussex. The chamber was once the Treasury of England, to which were brought "the most cherished possessions of the state." The regalia of the Scottish kings and the Holy Cross of Holyrood were deposited here, and for many years it served as a mint for coining silver and gold. It was centuries ago, the scene of a daring robbery, and to-day it contains in addition to a stone altar, some old chests one of which is said to have held the jewels of Norman kings.

WOOD FUEL VS. COAL

Comparisons by Government Expert Value of Various Varieties

The fuel value of two pounds of wood is roughly equivalent to that of 1 pound of coal. This is given as the result of certain calculations made in a Government forest service laboratory, which show also about how many cords of certain kinds of wood are required to obtain an amount of heat equal to that in a ton of coal.

Certain kinds of wood, such as hickory, oak, beech, birch, hard maple, ash, elm, locust, longleaf pine, and cherry, have fairly high heat values and only one cord of seasoned wood of these species is required to equal one ton of good coal. It takes a cord and a half of shortleaf pine, hemlock, red gum, Douglas fir, sycamore, and soft maple to equal a ton of coal, and two cords of cedar, redwood, poplar, catalpa, Norway pine, cypress, basswood, spruce and white pine.

Equal weights of dry, non-resinous woods, however, are said to have practically the same heat value regardless of species, and as a consequence it can be stated as a general proposition that the heavier the wood the more heat to the cord. Weight for weight, however, there is very little difference between various species; the average heat for all that have been calculated is 4,600 calories, or heat units, per kilogram. A kilogram of resin will develop 9,400 heat units, or about twice the average for wood. As a consequence, resinous woods have a greater heat value per pound than non-resinous woods, and this increased value varies, of course, with the resin content.

The available heat value of a cord of wood depends on many different factors. It has a relation not only to the amount of resin it contains but to the amount of moisture present. Furthermore, cords vary as to the amount of solid wood they contain, even when they are of the standard dimension and occupy 128 cubic feet of space. A certain proportion of this space is made up of air spaces between the sticks, and this air space may be considerable in a cord made of twisted, crooked and knotty sticks. Out of the 128 cubic feet, a fair average of solid wood is about 80 cubic feet.

FOR RETURNED SOLDIERS

Canadian Pacific Railway Houses and the West

The houses which the C.P.R. is building in the West for the returned soldiers will cost them about $1,000 each, with out offices. They will consist of four rooms each—two bedrooms, dining room and kitchen. Each farm will consist of 160 acres and there will be 80 additional acres which may be availed of in the course of time, and as the settler concludes that he can work it. The C.P.R. has several designs for homes which will be submitted to the intending settlers. These offer a variety of design to suit different tastes and different pockets, it may be said. The settler can choose a house which will cost him $2,000, but the payments will be made exceedingly easy. In all there are probably 8,000,000 acres of land held by speculators in the West; but, apart from that, there are literally hundreds of millions of acres of cultivable land lying idle over the West—not close to the tracks, of course, but good land which many have longed for so ardently that they have sat on the steps of the land office all night to be the first in the morning to get their application in. The C.P.R. is going on on its own account with the colony homes; but it expects that the Government will shortly outline a plan of a comprehensive nature which can be generally applied to the situation.

Cool Kettle Handle

Although a wooden handle on a kettle is supposed to protect the hand it frequently happens that the handle absorbs enough heat from laying on the metal part of the kettle to cause severe burns. Besides, it has frequently happens that the handle is burned or charred. A good way to prevent both of these happenings and keep the handle cool is to attach a coil of wire to one side of it, as shown in the sketch. This keeps the handle away from the kettle, and while it may get warm will never get hot.

Start Lawn From Seed

A well kept lawn adds a finish to the home as nothing else can. Experience has proved that the finest lawns can be started from seed, providing that the requisite preparation is given to the land, and that pure and equitable grasses in sufficient quantity and of uniform variety are sown.

The best soil for a lawn is one which is moderately moist and contains a considerable percentage of clay—a soil somewhat retentive of moisture, but never excessively wet and one inclined to be heavy and compact rather than light.

EXPANSION OF ME

Effects of Temperature on Railways and Bridges.

An ordinary poker, such as is used in our homes for stirring up the fire on a winter's night, if allowed to come to the temperature of boiling water will be found about one two-hundred-and-fiftieth of an inch longer than when at the freezing point. This does not mean much to the everyday man, but the expansion of metals due to heat is a very important subject for the bridge engineer or the maintenance of way superintendent.

An accident occurred not long ago in England due to the expansion of rails. The variation of temperature between winter and summer in many parts of the world is not more than 80 degrees F. Yet this range of temperature is competent to produce a variation in the length of the rails of about two feet in the mile. The effect of this expansion if it is not allowed for in the track is usually to cause the outer rail on a curve to bulge out more than the inner one and thus throw the track out of gauge. The force exerted by an expanding rail is estimated at about 1,000 pounds for each degree of temperature.—Railway and Locomotive Engineering.

Novel Railroad Record.

The Grand Trunk Pacific railway (Canada) has commenced a novel undertaking whereby a record of the growth of the west so far as the railway is a factor in its growth will be kept, says the Scientific American. The official photographers of the company have begun to work on the plans of the company, and towns along the line will be photographed, each photograph being duplicated yearly, so that a continuous record may be obtained and kept of each individual town from the time it sprang up throughout the period of its growth. The record kept is expected to be of invaluable importance in years to come.

GREAT ARTIFICIAL HARBOR.

Naval Port at Dover Is Largest Area of Open Sea Ever Inclosed.

The opening of Dover naval port marks the completion of the greatest artificial harbor ever built entirely in the open sea. The scheme includes an extension of the admiralty pier for 2,000 feet, the formation of reclamation works for the protection of the shore at the eastern end of Dover town extending in the direction of St. Margaret's bay for 3,900 feet, a protecting arm extending from the eastern end of the reclamation for a distance of 2,900 feet into the open sea and an island breakwater approximately parallel with the shore line and extending from the end of the admiralty pier extension on the west to the end of the easterly pier already referred to, with wide entrance openings between the heads of the several breakwaters. If we include the eighty acres which constitute the present commercial harbor there is inclosed by these works a total area at low water of 690 acres of deep water harbor capable of floating the largest of modern battleships and ocean liners. This is the largest area of the open sea ever inclosed by solid masonry protecting works.

Although that portion of the inclosing breakwaters which is visible at high water gives an impression of their great length and of the wide extent of the harbor, it is a fact that the visible masonry represents only a small proportion of the work actually done. The total length of the sea works is two and a half miles, two miles of which are in exceptionally deep water. Thus the 2,000 foot extension of the admiralty pier measures from the top of the parapet to the foundation nearly 100 feet in height and the eastern pier has a total height above foundations of eighty-seven feet. The total width at the base of the piers is over fifty feet and at the top forty-seven feet six inches.

The fears which have been expressed that this, like other harbors won from the open sea, might be subjected to shoaling up by drifting sand have not been verified, the depth remaining practically constant.—Scientific American.

They Have an 'Arbor.

A member of the London county council was regretting the lack of art sense displayed by his fellows when they place an open space at the disposal of the people. He pleaded eloquently for fountains, goldfish in ornamental basins, lions and unicorns in stucco and emerald green garden seats.

"Why," said he, in a splendid peroration, "we want something homely and countrylike—a little arbor here and there. If a foreigner came to this country and asked to see one we've never an arbor worth showing to show him."

Then up and spake another member, who, prior to attaining the height of his civic ambitions, had been a petty officer in the navy.

"Oh, we 'aven't 'aven't we? And wot about Portsmouth 'arbor?"—London Strand.