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MARVELS ARE PRODUCED BY PLANT SURGERY; VEGETABLE LIFE SECRETS ARE UNFOLDED

One of the oldest arts in the world is that of grafting one plant on to another. Its origin may be even prehistoric. At least, it has been known for many centuries, both in the European world and in China. For generations fruit trees have been made to bear fruits true to variety, grape vines have been grown in regions unfavorable to them and many agricultural marvels have been accomplished by plant grafting.

One of the first things that the young farmer has to learn is how to make the tiny cut in a tree into which he inserts the bud that is to become a graft, and how to cover up this wound with grafting wax so that both the host plant and the new bud which is to live with it thereafter will survive the shock of the operation and will do well, writes Dr. E. E. Free in the New York Herald Tribune.

Nevertheless, in spite of the familiarity and age of this procedure, it has remained one of the things that botanical science knows little about. Just what happens when a graft "takes" or refuses to "take" is still a good deal of a mystery. Plant surgery is older than human surgery, but much less is known about it.

Unexpected Has Happened.

During the last four years, however, Prof. Lucien Daniel, of the University of Rennes, in France, has begun to repair this lack. Undertaking to perfect himself as a plant surgeon, able to manipulate the living tissues of plants as successfully as the real surgeons manipulate the parts of the human body, Prof. Daniel has finished by doing things which animal operators cannot accomplish at all. Not content with the usual procedure of grafting two plants of the same species together, he has grafted potato plants on tomato plants, cress on cabbages, sunflowers on the roots of artichokes and a dozen other unexpected combinations.

The results are not mere monstrosities, useful only as museum specimens. On the contrary, much has already been learned concerning the nature of plant tissues and the things that make plants come true to type or the reverse. The practical technique of making grafts between one plant and other has been improved. Most promising of all, Prof. Daniel believes that he will be able, by the use of such grafted vegetables, to modify certain vegetable varieties so that they will be hardier or otherwise more useful. This, it must be admitted, is still a hope rather than a fact. Only time will prove whether the professor is right about these particular practical values. The interest value for botanical theory already is evident.

Why Trees Thicken.

In the usual grafts of one kind of tree to another what is done is quite simple. Underneath the bark of every tree or other woody plant there is a thin layer of tissue which is alive and growing. During the growing season of each year this living layer thickens a little, pushing the bark outward and depositing a little more wood against the core of the tree. That is how trees grow in thickness.

When a graft is to be made the problem is to attach the new branch or bud or other living part to the living layer of the tree in which the graft is to be placed. The procedure is essentially surgical. A cut is made in the bark, exposing the living layer. The graft which is to be inserted is freshly cut from the desired kind of tree and it too is trimmed down to the living layer. Then this trimmed piece is inserted into the other cut, so that the two bits of living tissue are closely in contact. There it is left, being covered usually with grafting wax or some other material which serves, in fact, exactly the same purposes as the aseptic dressing which a surgeon puts on a wound in the human body.

Grafted Piece Lives.

The curious thing in the case of plants is that the grafted piece lives and grows as though it were planted in the soil all by itself, not as though it were a part of the plant into which it has been grafted. Suppose, for example, that a bit of an apple tree producing fine, sweet apples, is grafted into a tree, the fruit of which is small and sour. The grafted branch will live and grow like a part of the whole tree, but it will produce its own luscious apples, not the smaller and less desirable apples which the ungrafted branches will continue to bear.

This is just why grafting has been so useful in fruit growing. There are many varieties of fruit which do not breed true from seed. You have, let us say, a variety of plum which you especially like. You plant the seeds of some of these plums; they sprout and little plum trees come up. Will these bear plums like those which the parent tree bore and like the ones

from which you took the seeds that you planted? Not necessarily. The new plums may be totally different from the old ones. The tree does not repeat itself by its seed.

But the kind of plum that you like can be obtained by grafting. Plant any kind of a plum tree, one of the seedlings from the same tree, if you like. Let it grow awhile and establish a sturdy root. Then graft into this new root a piece of the original tree. The grafted branch will grow.

May Renew Tree.

You can cut off all the original branches, if you wish, and make the new tree consist entirely, so far as its branch are concerned, of the grafted stock. This will produce the kind of fruit you desire. But the root will be different. Root and branch are really different trees; producing different kinds of fruit and consisting, we must imagine, of different kinds of living tissue.

Another important use of grafting is in providing roots that have some desirable quality. Some years ago the vineyards of California, where some of the finest of American grapes are grown, began to suffer severely from an insect pest known as phylloxera. These insects live in the soil and attack the roots of the grape vine. Many of the vines were killed. Others were damaged so severely that the fruit was meagre and of poor quality.

There exist, however, certain varieties of grape vine which the phylloxera insects will not attack. Unfortunately, however, these resistant vines do not produce very good grapes. Some of the fine large grapes, highly prized for eating purposes, do not grow on the resistant roots. And these good grapes will not grow on their own roots in a country infested with the insect.

Problem Solved.

The California vineyardists solved the problem by grafting. Roots of the resistant kinds of grapes were planted in the vineyards and allowed to grow until they were well established. The insects left them alone. Then shoots of the desired varieties of grapes were grafted into these roots. The shoots produced their kind of grapes. The roots kept off the phylloxera. Everybody was happy, except, possibly the phylloxera.

In all such instances the two kinds of plant tissue that are made to grow together are essentially of the same kind. Although varieties of plum tree or of grape vine may differ in the exact kinds of fruit that they bear, they remain, nevertheless very similar to each other. The living cells of two different varieties of grape vine are presumably much alike and quite able to get along comfortably together in the hybrid plant produced by the graft.

SAYS QUEBEC IS THE CRADLE OF LIBERALISM

Quebec, Oct. 10—The Liberals of Quebec City and district gathered Saturday afternoon to extend their best wishes to Premier King and Hon. Ernest Lapointe before their departure to the Imperial conference.

Eight hundred attended a luncheon at which the guests spoke and after shouts of "Dunning, Dunning," the Minister of Railways spoke a few words.

Premier King told his hearers of the rise of the Liberal party to power since 1919. It had been, he said, accomplished by the slow welding of the forces which held great common interests. The lesson of unity had been learned slowly. It had taken two general elections to bring the forces together.

Liberal Doctrine.

"Self-governing nations within the Empire" had always been the doctrine of Liberalism in Canada, he said. "I do not believe that position will be questioned by anyone who understands the basic principles of the British Empire," said Mr. King.

Mr. Dunning spoke of Quebec as the cradle of Liberalism and of western Ontario as "that other cradle of Liberalism from which our great Prime Minister comes." He knew that, in the heart of the Empire the doctrines of Liberalism in Canada—respecting the Empire—would be accepted.

COMING TO AMERICA.

Paris—Raquel Meller, Spanish singer who says she was treated like a queen in the United States last year is going to live there permanently. She made a lot of dollars on her first visit.

HIGH BELL TOWER MOVED BY ITALIAN IN 1776 FOR \$12

Crescentino, Italy, Oct. 8—Big structures such as belfry towers were moved about in this city without the aid of modern machinery 150 years ago. The city is now celebrating the sesquicentennial of Crescentino Serra, an illiterate workman, who moved the huge cathedral bell-tower 10 feet in 1776.

Serra, knowing nothing about mathematics or engineering, performed the feat in less than two hours. So sure was he as to the success of his undertaking that he placed his son on the steeple ringing the bells as it was being moved, while the crowd of excited and cheering onlookers feared that the structure would fall any moment.

In principle, there was no difference in Serra's method and the method used today. A bridge of beams was built under the structure, while eight ropes and windlasses were used to drag the belfry along the bridge to its new site. Serra did all his figuring mentally and intuitively.

Sixty lire in gold, or \$12, was all he demanded as compensation.

MAORIS ACCEPT WELSH RULE

Clermont Ferrant, France, Oct. 7—It is now definitely stated that the New Zealand Maori Rugby team, who are touring the United Kingdom and France, will play four games in Wales under Welsh rules and with Welsh referees. The information was contained in a letter from the Maori London representative to the Newport club, which said that the Maori manager had telegraphed to this effect.

The Maori manager stated that he had decided to do this in view of their friendly relations with Wales and also to keep faith with the French Union which was responsible for the tour.

Controversy between the Maori team and the Welsh clubs, which they were scheduled to play, arose over the Welsh rule which calls for the scrum half or wing forward being not allowed to advance beyond the scrum until the ball was clear. It was also stated the New Zealanders had refused to accept as referees any of the four Welsh names which had been submitted for their approval.

Yesterday the Maori manager was reported as saying he was prepared to play the Welsh clubs and submit the question of rules to an international board.

MAY MAKE TOUR.

Belgrade—Queen Marie's pet black spaniel is likely to make the grand tour of the U. S. A. with her. He looked so forlorn in the leavetaking at the station that her majesty decided to take him as far as Paris. But some of the royal party think he is wise enough to stowaway on the Leviathan if he has to.

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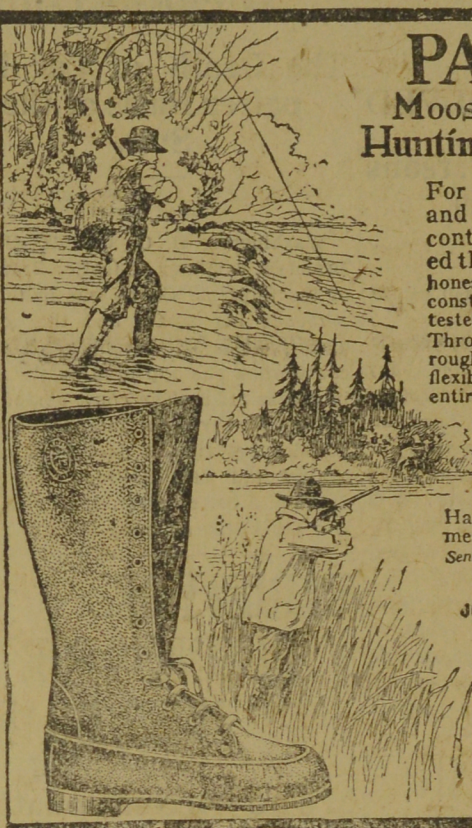
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