

The "Gardens of Adonis" were baskets or pots in which various seeds or grain were planted and tended by the women for a period of eight days, after which they were thrown into a river or stream with an image of the god. Sir James Frazer, who has collected a large number of similar customs in his "Golden Bough", suggests that this custom was a charm to secure a plentiful supply of rain or water for irrigation to promote the growth of the crops.

A similar purpose underlay the harvest custom in England and other European countries in which those who brought home the last load of the harvest, or sometimes the last sheaf of corn, were drenched with water when they reached the farmyard. If the practice were omitted there would be a deficiency of rains in the coming year. In the parts of the east of Asia where the staple crop was rice, the fertility of the fields and the prosperity of the crop depended upon the care with which a small plot of rice plants was tended and of which the produce had to be mixed with the seed used in the following year. In Sardinia pots of plants were sometimes placed in the windows of the houses with a similar intention and their resemblance to the Syrian custom was made more marked in that little figures, male or female, were placed in these pots, but this feature of the custom was firmly forbidden by the Church, suggesting that it was thought to be a survival from pagan times.

SCIENCE SOLVES PROBLEM OF TARDY WORKMEN

Four thousand employees in a big refining plant in Philadelphia may chant, "Oh, how I hate to get up in the morning," but most of them get up while chanting. For the factory has made a scientific study of the lateness of its workers and as a result tardiness has been cut almost in half.

Ralph E. Motley, who surveyed the plant and found the remedy, says that the lateness of employees is a cause of much expense to companies, and that the cure for the situation can be found only after a satisfactory diagnosis of causes has been made.

In his report on the Philadelphia refinery, which will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Journal of Personnel Research, Mr. Motley says that in 1921 there was an average of nine persons per thousand late to work every day. Traffic delays sometimes held up street cars, and only about one-fifth of the workers lived within walking distance of the plant.

"But some of the workers had the 'lateness bug' in their systems," says Mr. Motley, "and took long chances on reaching the plant on time, while others had gradually acquired the habit of reporting late simply for the reason that little determined effort had been made by the management to curb the increasing tardiness."

The first remedy tried was deducting one-half hour's pay from the envelope of the man who reported late for work. This proved only a temporary remedy, for the workers soon became accustomed to this slight penalty and paid no attention to it.

The most successful plan was to report regularly to the superintendent of each department of the plant the names of those men in his department who were late each

day. Then a monthly report was sent to each superintendent showing the names of those men who were late three or more times within the month. And if an employee was late five times in a month for three months, or eight times a month for two months he was subject to dismissal unless he showed marked improvement. Competition between departments for bettering records was aroused, and during 1925 the rate of lateness was cut to five persons per thousand each day.

There is a seasonal trend in tardiness, Mr. Motley finds, December being the record breaking month for lateness, and March showing the fewest cases of tardiness.

LITTLE KNOWN ALASKAN ISLANDS TO BE SCIENTIFICALLY EXPLORED

The Aleutian Islands, a string of thirty or more volcanic peaks rising above the surface of the sea and forming a chain of stepping stones between Alaska and the northeastern corner of Siberia, are at last to be systematically explored by scientists. Hitherto they have remained almost as unknown as they were when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, but at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union preliminary steps were decided upon that are expected to unlock their secrets.

Many scientific agencies are interested in the Aleutians: the U. S. Geological Survey and the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in the volcanoes, the U. S. Department of Agriculture in climate, soils, forests, and wild animals, the Coast and Geodetic Survey in the accurate charting and mapping of the land and water areas, the Army and Navy in their relation to the national defense. These and other institutions expect to cooperate for a considerable number of years to come in obtaining and making available accurate information about this little known territory.

COWS MAY BE SAVED BY NEW VACCINE

Thousands of dollars may be saved to cattle breeders if experiments being carried out at the Michigan State Agricultural College prove successful. Prevention of premature calving in cattle, responsible for large losses annually, is being sought by scientists with vaccination. This condition is caused by infection from a specific bacteria, hence the possibility of combatting the disease by inoculation.

Dr. I. Forest Huddleson of the bacteriological section of the State Agricultural College has been conducting a series of experimental inoculations of cattle to determine if this method can be successfully used as a preventive. The idea is much the same, according to Dr. Huddleson, as that of smallpox vaccination. It is necessary to evolve a strain of the causative organism so weakened that it will not cause harmful effects but will still stimulate the production of enough antitoxins to confer future immunity to the disease.

He has found that the cattle he has inoculated have attained a certain degree of immunity and it is hoped that further research will develop a strain of bacteria that will confer complete immunity.
