

Strange Tree With Many Uses

Forestry

ALEXANDER PORTEOUS, in *Forest Folklore, Mythology, and Romance* (Macmillan):

In Africa, particularly in Senegal, and in some of the islands not far from the African coast, grows the Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*). Of all the trees in the world it is supposed to be the largest as regards the thickness of its whitish, conical trunk, which, however, rises only to a height of about fifteen feet before it branches, while its circumference is often more than one hundred feet. From the summit of this trunk numerous thick branches, from thirty to sixty feet long, branch off horizontally in all directions, and, as they gradually become shorter farther up the stem, the tree takes the appearance of a gigantic dome. The leaves resemble the fingers of the human hand, from which the naturalist Adanson gave it the specific name of *digitata*, its generic name being his own. The blossoms are of a proportionate size, are of a snowy white, and are regarded with a peculiar reverence the moment they burst into bloom. The fruit, large, oval, and resembling a cucumber, is a great favorite with monkeys, the tree being sometimes called Ape's-bread Tree, Monkey's Bread, and Ethiopian Sour Gourd. Adanson stated that these trees grow in plains of barren movable sand, and where the water of a river had washed this sand away the roots were left exposed. These roots, he said, measured over 110 feet in length. The short, thick trunk is necessary to support the overwhelming superincumbent mass of leaves, and seen from a distance the Baobab resembles a small forest rather than a single tree. Under the vast shadow, often 450 feet in circumference, cast

by this tree, the negroes enjoy repose, and often find refuge from the storm. The negroes of Senegambia are said to worship these trees as divinities. When time, in the course of ages, has hollowed out the stem of one of these noble trees, it often becomes the abode of a negro family. Sometimes the hollow forms a place of amusement, sometimes a prison, and one tree is known in Senegambia which has been converted into a Council Hall, the entrance being covered with appropriate sculptures. Another use to which the negroes put these hollow trees is for the burial of their poets, buffoons, and musicians in the cavity. They consider them to be inspired by demons, so they will suffer the bodies neither to be buried in the earth nor thrown into the sea, lest the fruit or the fish should perish. Thus, to avert their doing harm to land or sea, they are placed in these hollows where they soon dry up. As these trees commence to decay downwards at the point where the branches spring forth, the hollow space thus formed fills with water during the rainy season and forms an excellent cistern, the water being kept cool by the overhead foliage. Those villages which are fortunate enough to possess such a tree sell the water to travelers. Many of these trees in Senegal are computed to be about five or six thousand years old. In one of the Cape Verde Islands Adanson found a Baobab bearing in its interior an inscription which had been traced there by the English three hundred years previously. From that, and by measuring the stems of many of the trees, he calculated that the most vigorous specimens might be at least five thousand years old.

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Citronella oil is obtained from a grass cultivated in Ceylon and Java.

There are more than half a million domesticated ostriches in South Africa.

Some native tribes of South America believe that moonlight is bad for babies.

A survey in New York state indicates that there is 60 per cent. more sickness in villages than on farms, largely because there are more older people in the villages.

In early times the Greeks used Phoenician vessels to carry their cargoes overseas.

Because of the sugar content of honey, bacteria harmful to health do not multiply in it.

Specimens of the extinct Labrador duck are rarer than those of the famous great auk.

The boundary between the United States and Canada is to be marked on all the international bridges between the countries.

Reading Character—Cont'd

is macrosplanchnic is most likely to be extroverted; that is, somewhat of manic-depressive makeup. In contrast, most of the microsplanchnic students are introverted or, in other words, slightly schizophrenic in mental make up.

All the experimental trends indicate that for some outstanding but complex mental make-ups there are closely associated body builds or constitutions, which are also complex. They do not indicate any simple and infallible way of reading the character of our enemies, or supposed friends. But in the hands of a skilled person even the present findings can be of tremendous helpfulness in laying out a program for mental hygiene for an individual or in indicating precautions each individual should follow to maintain good physical health.

Perhaps within the year some modern Fritsch will announce to a waiting scientific world the results of researches which will simplify and strengthen the findings I have outlined for you. While I am not expecting any such announcement, the progress of the world of science has been so astounding within the present decade that I refuse any longer to be of a closed mind.

NOTE. In the three pairs of photographs on page 45, James is more intelligent than Robert, Frank is more intelligent than Richard, Orville, is more intelligent than Edward. And just to show how clothes may alter judgment, Robert and Edward are the same person. Lines 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 of the samples of handwriting were written by women.

And as for the woman on the cover page—"she" is a railroad shop woman as he appeared in a church play. Undoubtedly, "she" is not to be trusted!

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