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 NATURE RAMBLINGS
 

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By Frank Thone



Wild Rose

IF you like MacDowell's music, you surely like his "To a Wild Rose"—unless over-repetition by the radio has dulled you with a surfeit. But that gentle, graceful, informal rambling air, like a poem of Whitman's written on a staff, really does express the kind of a thing that the wild rose is. There is an evenness, a regularity, in its five-petaled flower, in its balanced compound leaves; there is an unevenness, an irregularity, in its loosely branching, often sprawling bush. It is a half-tamed gypsy, or a demure cottage girl playing truant for the nonce, as you prefer. It is not domestic enough for a garden, not rough enough for the real wilderness.

There are many species of wild rose, of many diverse habits and habitats, forming a great garland round the north temperate zone during the months of May and early June. Most of them have the orthodox, five-petaled flower that is basic to the whole botanical order to which the rose has given its name. So faithful is the rose to this pattern that the great circular windows in the old-world cathedrals, with their radiating patterns of colored light, have long been known as "rose windows."

But some of the wild roses have ambitions. You will find specimens in almost every thicket that are increasing the number of their petals, until with a little more selection under the artificial care of man they might easily assume the beginnings of doubling. The encouragement of this doubling tendency, incipient in many wild rose species, has in the course of the ages given rise to the highly conventionalized but still beautiful flowers that fill our rose gardens, or empty our purses when we go into a florist's.

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 Blistering Gas Made From Corncobs
 

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Chemistry

A BLISTERING compound, or vesicant, very similar in its properties and action to the much-feared mustard gas of war-time fame, has been prepared from corncobs by Dr. Henry Gilman and A. P. Hewlett of Iowa State College. And, on the principle of curing the bite with a hair of the dog that bit you, it has also been shown that charcoal made from corncobs may find application as an absorbent in defensive gas-masks.

The full chemical title of the newly prepared blistering chemical is beta-chloroethyl-2-furfuryl-sulfide.

It was not prepared in the first place with any idea of using it in war. The two chemists were looking for something that would put an unerasable mark on the hide of a hog, to identify it during its path of sorrow through the packing plant, preparatory to its metamorphosis into hams and side-meat. It seems to be very satisfactory for this pur-

pose. It does not raise blisters on the porcine rind as it does on human skin, but merely makes red marks that will remain unchanged for at least twelve hours before killing. None of the original compound remains on the marks, so that it is safe for packing house employes to handle the hogs.

And just as the corncob charcoal could find use in war, so also does it have a possible peace-time application, with these same hogs. Fed to swine, it improves their digestions, possibly by absorbing troublesome internal gases.

Dr. Gilman and his associates have been carrying on a long series of experiments to find new uses for all parts of the corn plant. In the course of their researches they have evolved a great variety of substances of possible commercial value, including drugs, perfumes, flavoring extracts and a compound sweeter than saccharin.

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 Anti-TB Inoculations Not Used Here
 

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Medicine

THE Calmette-Guérin method of antituberculosis inoculation of new-born infants, which has recently resulted in a number of deaths in a German baby asylum, is not used in the United States. American physicians in general have not advocated the method as have Continental doctors. Those American physicians who have favored it have advised a period of trial on animals before using it for human infants.

The method was developed by Drs. A. Calmette and C. Guérin, of the Pasteur Institute, Paris. A kind of half-starved strain of tuberculosis germs from cattle is injected into the infants during the first few hours or days of life. The germs are supposed to have lost their disease-producing power but to have retained the faculty of producing immunity or resistance to the disease. The originators of the method claim that it gives the babies protection against tuberculosis to which they may later be exposed.

The method is claimed to be particularly suited for the protection of children, born of tuberculous parents who would be continuously exposed to the disease during the first year of life, before they have a chance

to acquire any immunity or resistance to it.

The method has been used at various European centers and even in Indo-China. At Luebeck, Germany, the deaths of 17 infants following the inoculations are being investigated by health authorities. Well over 50,000 infants born into tuberculous households have been inoculated in France. The mortality among these children is very much less than among other French babies who do not receive the inoculations and who are exposed to the disease in their homes.

Prof. C.-E. A. Winslow of the Yale School of Public Health recently advised that the method be given a thorough trial of animal experimentation in this country. Dr. M. H. Soule of the hygienic laboratory of the University of Michigan was even more enthusiastic about the method after visiting Dr. Calmette's clinic in Paris.

Other American scientists, among them Dr. S. A. Petroff of the Trudeau Sanatorium, Trudeau, N. Y., and Dr. Ralph Mellon of the Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburgh, have warned against the method.

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