
NATURE RAMBLINGS

By Frank Thone

*Kansas B'Gosh*

WHEN the long trains of covered wagons toiled across the hot western plains, back in the days of our grandsires, the most cheerful sight on the monotonous horizons, next to the lines of cottonwoods and willows that bespoke water, were the great masses of yellow sunflowers. Across the wide bottoms of the Platte and all those other rivers that were "a mile wide and an inch deep" these golden armies marched, plucky and optimistic as the settlers themselves.

When the comers into the new land literally dug themselves in, holding out against drought, winter, Indians and grasshoppers in their meager sod shanties, they often had to fall back on the stalks of these sunflowers for something to burn in cold weather, for often there was little firewood in the land.

In the days of our prosperity we often pluck up some familiar thing we had with us when times were harder, and wave that as a proud banner. So it comes to pass that wherever there is a national convention of any kind, be it Rotarians, or Elks, or Shriners, or Professors of Classical Languages, the delegation from Kansas invariably blossoms a flaring sunflower from each button-hole.

But the common sunflower is far from being confined to the state whose badge it has become. It shines around the whole world like a golden crown. In Russia, where there are areas much like Kansas, it has been developed into a highly respectable crop plant that figures in national economics as a source of oil and cattle feed. And you can no more stop the Russian peasant girl from nibbling sunflower seeds as we eat peanuts than you could keep her from looking in a mirror. For doesn't she know that sunflower seeds are good for the complexion?

*Science News-Letter, August 16, 1930**Vitamins and Variety*

THE most important factor affecting the vitamin C content of apples is the variety of the apple. The character of the soil, age of the tree and season of picking have practically no effect. These are preliminary results of an investigation on the vitamin contents of different kinds of fruits and different varieties of one fruit which is being conducted by Mary F. Bracewell, Edward Hoyle and Dr. S. S. Zilva at the Lister Institute, London.

The English cooking apple, Bramley's Seedling, was much more active in antiscorbutic properties than any other cooking or dessert apple which was tested. This indicates that this variety contained the most vitamin C.

There was very little loss of vitamin C when the apples were stored at one degree centigrade in the air for three months. When stored for the same period at 10 degrees centigrade in a gas mixture of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and oxygen, there was slightly more deterioration. One of the most interesting results was that after Bramley's Seedlings had been heated in their skins they showed practically the same antiscorbutic power as before.

*Dietetics**Science News-Letter August 16, 1930**Deafness Pre-Natal*

DEAFNESS is a part of disordered growth, beginning far back in pre-natal life and becoming more severe with increase in age.

This is the most striking conclusion reached from a series of investigations into causes and conditions of deafness, conducted by the Department of Psychology of Temple University at Philadelphia under the direction of Dr. Thaddeus L. Bolton.

Results of the investigations, just made public, show that in some children the auditory organs were missing altogether. In other cases, the ears were so deformed that they could not function. The investigation would indicate that all forms of impaired hearing, with the exception of deafness caused by accident, are due to abnormal development of the hearing organs, beginning with pre-natal life. The psychologists believe that "the comparative timing of the cycles of growth of the various structures may play a part" in the disordering of the ear structures.

*Physiology**Science News-Letter, August 16, 1930**Weather—Continued*

Finally, the temperature within a cloud may be considerably below freezing and the droplets still liquid, in which case the front portions of a passing plane become more or less coated with a sort of tufted frost, but seldom if ever to a dangerous extent as it is shaken off by even moderate jolts and jars.

What then must the aviator know about the air and its ways? That depends on the kind of an aviator he wants to be. The fair weather aviator, one who flies only when the weather is ideal, can get along pretty well if brought up on one or more of the various recent books of meteorological misinformation, for there is nothing to bother him. The devil-may-care aviator has no business in the air anyway.

The safe and sane aviator, however, can and does use to great advantage all the correct information and clear understanding he can get of every mood and manner, from the mild and peaceful to the madly tumultuous of the medium in which he flies. The pilot that knows the air and knows that he knows it is the safest of all. Fly with him.

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