

DESERT EVENING NEWS

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ACROSS THE WATERS. The water has been up, the boat has been down, the water has been up, the boat has been down.

CLAMS THAT CRAWL. SHELLFISH METAMORPHOSED BY A FREAK OF NATURE. A California Farmer Makes a Startling Discovery on Some Swamp Land Which He Had Reclaimed and Planted with Wheat—He Wants to Sell It.

A gentleman, who lives near Leavenworth, California, writes to a newspaper the following account of a most peculiar discovery that is greatly interesting to farmers in that locality. The gentleman, whose name is E. J. Smith, writes: "Last winter has fallen about four feet. This season, of course, that nearly a mile of low, nearly level land that borders the lake has been reclaimed and cultivated. There are large numbers of shellfish, such as clams and mussels, in the lake, and the receding water left some of them high and dry on the land. "I had quantities of these shells piled under, and the moist, warm ground preserved them and maintained life.

"But the most remarkable thing is that they have undergone a metamorphosis, or have been revolutionized, inasmuch as the clams and mussels that were deposited on dry land have grown well defined legs or claws from the upper part of the shells, or rather that part of the shell which first protrudes when the clam was in repose.

"My oldest daughter Kate first noticed this abnormal growth during a walk around the place. She gathered a few of the mussels by the roadside and brought them up and showed them to her mother, and to me. We did not inspect them closely, but saw that three distinct little protrusions, in triangular shape, marked the beached side of the shells. On one of them, which seemed larger or firmer than the others, we noticed a pair of tiny legs or feelers, waving about as if they were just dead, we didn't pay much attention at that time to the shells Kate brought us.

"However, I had occasion to go down over my land, where wheat had been sown. It was coming up nicely and was from one to three or four inches high in the most favorable portions of the field. I noticed many raised shells lying around. Some of the shells were split and broken, while others were intact.

"On the first of the land that had been reclaimed I observed that the wheat was stunted or that the little amount of soil that had been sown was being ground under. I was willing to attribute the stunting to the water flow and Jack rabbits, but I was for a time at a complete loss to account for the stunted appearance of the wheat shoots that dotted the ground in all directions.

"I stopped and began to think. When I noticed that the wheat shoots were quite plentiful where I stood, a sudden movement near my feet caused me to stoop and investigate. Here I saw the most surprising thing that ever came to my notice.

"The clams seem to have lost all desire for water. I was preparing to discard them, when I noticed that they had enough water to show them off the place, after which I will build a shallow trench around my trench, or other means to cause me to see them at the statement of what I found, and that they are to be preserved by a shallow of my neighbors, but I have not seen of them and affairs in the same way."—Fremont (Cal.) Reporter.

Things That Awey a Fever. The fever, as the reader may imagine, gets many names when below. A feverish look, checked, regulated by the water and making a healthy one, is sufficient to make the stoutest heart quake, in spite of the assertion that there have never been known to attack a man in life.

HOW GAR CROWS. We find in Gar's Gar's Crows from 180 to 200 Years.

The extreme limit of the age of the oak is not exactly known, but several well living specimens are at least 1,500 years old. The tree thrives best in a deep, temperate loam with roots in it. Stagnant water is one of the evils. It grows better on a comparatively poor, sandy soil than on rich ground perfectly drained. The trunk, at first inclined to be irregular in shape, straightens at maturity into a grand cylindrical shaft. The oak does not produce good wood until it is more than thirty years old. The acorn is the fruit of the oak; the seed germ is a very small object at the pointed end of the acorn, with the future root uppermost. The acorn drops, and its contents develops into a tiny imperceptible and almost undetectable embryo and chemical changes while it lies under its water covering of leaves and soil.

In the mild warmth of spring the acorn germs, the little root elongating, emerges from the end of the shell, and, no matter what the position of the acorn, turns downward. The root penetrates the soil two or three inches before the stalk begins to show itself and grow upward. The "head" of the oak nourishes both root and stalk, and two years may pass before its store of food is entirely exhausted. At the end of a year, the young oak has a root twice to eight times as long, with numerous shorter rootlets, the stalk being from six to eight inches high. In this stage it differs from the sapling, and again the sapling differs from the tree. To watch these transformations under the lens is a fascinating occupation.

If an oak could be suspended in the air with all its roots and rootlets perfect and unbroken, the slight weight would be considered wonderful. The activity of the roots represent a great deal of power. They bore into the soil and fashion themselves to penetrate a crack in a rock. Invariably the tips turn away from the light. The growing point of a tiny outer root is back of the tip a small distance. The tip is driven on by the force behind it, and searches the soil for the most fertile points of contact. When the tips are destroyed by obstructions, cold, heat or other causes, a new growth starts in varying directions.

The first roots thicken and become girders to support the tree on a longer footing. It directly, but serving as conduits for the moisture and nourishment gathered by the outer rootlets which are constantly boring their way into fresh territory. These absorbent water channels, with soluble earth salts—sulphates, nitrate, phosphates of lime, magnesia and potash, etc.—which pass through the larger roots, stem and branches, are the laboratory of new growth. An oak tree may have 700,000 leaves, and from June to October evaporates 225 times its own weight of water. Taking account of the new wood grown, the oak sheds some five of the enormous mass of matter and energy from the outside universe which goes on each summer.

Oak timber is not the heaviest, toughest, nor most beautiful, but it contains more good qualities than any other kind. Its fruit is valuable food and its bark useful to certain industries. An oak pile withers away for 500 years in London bridge cause up in sound condition, and there are specimens from the Tower of London which date from the time of William Rufus. To produce a good oak stove requires from 150 to 200 years. It seems a long time to an American, but forestry is a perpetual branch of economics when some established.—Ohio State Journal.

Seven Hundred Miles Above the Earth. It is now possible to rise above the atmosphere which surrounds the earth, the air would look like a sharply defined ball of fire, and everything else would be wrapped in total darkness. There could be no diffusion of light without an atmosphere or some similar medium for the sun's rays to act upon. But, on the contrary, if the earth's atmosphere extended to a height of 700 miles, the sun's heat and rays could never penetrate it, and we would freeze to death while wrapped in darkness blacker than the blackest midnight.—St. Louis Republic.

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