

nectar among the long list of American honey-plants. Unfortunately for us it is limited in this country to the extreme Southwest, but is very common in old Mexico where it is one of the most common and most sought-after plants in the country, being the source from which Mexicans derive their beer (pulque,) and also their brandy (mescal.) The sweet juice is tapped from the plant, and this is converted into liquors of varying degrees of intoxicating power. When in flower this juice ascends to the immense flower panicles, where it exudes through the nectaries, setting the bees wild with delight. It exudes so liberally it may be collected without the aid of bees at all. In addition, the agaves are liberal yielders of fine fibres, all of the sisal of commerce being collected from them; but the one here mentioned is seldom used for this purpose. The species commonly cultivated for sisal in Mexico (*Agave extli*) does not produce nectar at all, so far as the writer has seen. This plant is doubly interesting to a bee-keeper, because it is probably the only plant which can be cultivated in this country exclusively for the honey it will yield. It thrives on semi-arid land which can be had free, and the culture required is merely nominal, hence it promises better returns than any plant yet tried exclusively for the honey it will produce. In spite of its name it blooms as often as most other cacti, and it does not take long to grow. The long flower-stem seen in the illustration shoots up with marvellous rapidity; and when the golden-yellow flowers appear, hundreds of bees cluster on them as if they were taking syrup from a feeder. The nectar can be gathered by hand. There is a common impression that this plant takes something like a century to reach maturity; but where the climate is suitable it does not exceed ten years in any case; and once the plantation begins to flower, it keeps up its annual procession of blooms, though not from the same plant.

The most suitable localities for century plants in this country are in the vicinity of Yuma, Arizona; Needles, California; South Western Texas and Southern Florida—*A B C of bee Culture*, page 85.

CENTURY-PLANT, AGAVE.

• The agaves are an important group of long-lived perennial plants native to Tropical America, Mexico and, to some extent, to the southwestern United States. Each plant has a cluster of numerous fleshy leaves and, when blooming, a tall flower stalk. There are at least five species native to the United States. The range is southern New Mexico, Arizona and California. The best known is the common century plant, *Agave americana*, an introduced species cultivated for ornament. This is a conspicuous figure of ornamental planting in southern California.

In Mexico some species of agaves furn-

ish fibre, while others are the source of pulque and mescal, intoxicating drinks much used in the country below the Rio Grande.

The plants do not bloom until they are several years old. The flower stalks grow very rapidly and reach a height of 25 or 30 feet within a few weeks' time. When in bloom they secrete nectar in abundance, and the bees swarm over them in great numbers. As will be seen by the illustration, the flower stalks support innumerable blossoms, so that a single plant will yield a considerable amount of honey. The fact that the plants are nowhere abundant in this country, together with the long period which must elapse before they bloom, makes it improbable that they will ever be of much importance to American beekeepers.—*American Honey plants* by Frank C. Peilet, page 64.

AGAVE. A genus of plants of the amaryllis family, whose numerous species are peculiar to the warm and dry region of America. Along with forms of cactus and yucca, agave forms the characteristic American desert vegetation. One of the species, the American aloe, has received the fanciful name of Century Plant, from the mistaken notion that it must be a hundred years old before it blooms.

It is a native of Mexico and Central America. In native soils the plant usually blooms in its seventh or eighth year, but in hothouses, it rarely blooms until it is from 40 to 60 years old; whence arises the story that they flower only once in a hundred years. After flowering the plant dies down to the ground and new plants spring up from the roots. It has no stem proper, or a very short one bearing a crowded head of large fleshy leaves which are spiny at the edge. From the midst of these shoots up the straight, upright scape, 24 to 36 feet high, and at the base frequently a foot through, along which are lance-like flower branches, ending in clusters of blossoms some often numbering 4,000 flowers.

Although agaves are decorative plants in the United States and Europe, in their native home in Mexico they are among the most useful plants. There they are called maguey, and are a regular farm crop and valued highly. Some of the species supply fiber which is used in making rope, cordage, matting, clothing, thread, hammocks, bagging, burlap and other coarse textile stuffs, and the old Mexicans used it to make a coarse paper. Its introduction on our arid western plains is highly recommended, for it will grow in the dry lands of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. When pasturing is scarce the leaves are cut up and fed to cattle. From some of the species soap is made, while the two most common Mexican drinks, pulque and mescal are obtained from still

others. When the young flower-bud is cut out, the sap keeps on flowing into the cavity. The juice is sweet. It is gathered daily and fermented and becomes the great Mexican drink known as pulque. It is milky, sour, and bad smelling, looking like thin buttermilk, and has a rank taste; yet even Americans soon find it agreeable and refreshing. A distilled liquor is also made from it. The unfermented maguey, called honey water, is used as a substitute for milk.—*Student's Reference Work*, page 25.

TELEGRAMS.

ST. CROIX STATION.

Delayed In Transmission.

Rome, May 17th.—A considerable number of persons assisted at the ceremonies of canonization of Joan of Arc, including more than one hundred and fifty descendants of her family. The Pope pronounced the ritual, while the great bell gave the solemn signal to which all the bells of Rome replied. The papal benediction terminated the ceremony.

Mayence, May 17th.—The French troops this morning evacuated the cities on the right bank of the Rhine, amid complete calm.

Berlin, May 18th.—A police force comprising forty officers and four hundred men have entered Frankfurt and resumed possession of the barracks.

Paris, May 18th.—A court martial has acquitted all the accused concerned in the surrender of Maubeuge. General Fournier declared that he did all in his power and praised his subordinates, adding that the war had proved that cannon prevailed against fortifications.

Paris, May 19th.—The "Echo de Paris" announces that before proceeding to Spa Mr. Lloyd George and M. Millerand will meet at Ostend, in order to arrive at a definite agreement on the discussions to be undertaken with the representatives from Berlin.

Rome, May 19th.—The King and Signor Nitti have had another long conference and it is believed that the composition of the new cabinet will be made public tomorrow. Signor Scialoja keeping the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

Rome, May 19th.—The "Gaceta del Populo" states that serious disturbances have occurred at San Michel al Tagliamento, in the province of Venetia, the mob burning the town hall with all its archives. The officials were obliged to jump through the windows and the Royal Commissioner was seriously wounded.

Paris, May 19th.—The conference of Ambassadors today examined the question of Sleswig and the vote taken there.

Madrid, May 19th.—In consequence of disorders as a result of the bakers' strike, the gendarmes were compelled to charge the crowd, shots being exchanged and several persons wounded. A state of siege has been proclaimed.