

## Curious Facts About Red,

GATHERED FROM THE BEST SOURCES.

BY LYDIA M. MILLARD.

EVERYWHERE Nature delights in red. It is, in a delicately graded state, the loveliest of all pure colors. In the rose there is no shadow except what is composed of color. All its shadows are fuller than its lights, owing to the translucency and reflective power of its leaves.—*Ruskin*.

Red is the most perfect color, from its relation to light and shade being equal. No flower will grow if the red rays of light are obstructed—the red ray has the greatest heat. Scarlet is the most perfect representation of abstract color that exists. Blue is associated with shade, yellow with light. Scarlet as abstract color stands alone.—*Ruskin*.

Red light is less than any other diverted from its straight path in coming to our eye. In red light the number of vibrations striking the eye in a second is about 450 billions—in violet, 800 billions.—*Schüller*.

The French scarlet inclines to yellow. The Italian scarlet has a tinge of blue. In its dark, deep state, red conveys an impression of gravity and dignity. In its light, attenuated state, of grace and attractiveness.—*Goethe*.

Yellow combined with red increases its warmth; in its combination with blue red becomes more cool and retiring.—*Hay*.

A red-letter day is a lucky day, a day to be recalled with delight. In almanacs saints' days and holidays are printed in red ink, other days in black.

Of all the colors of the visible spectrum, the red produces the highest heating power.—*Tyndall*.

Red undergarments are especially suited to kindle up the arterial blood, and may be beneficially worn in cases of rheumatism, bronchitis, dormant lungs, etc. Red is especially good for cold feet, ankles, hips, etc. Red stockings, or at least red lawn in the stockings, are desirable for many persons.

It is very desirable that these red undergarments should stand in the sun a few minutes and then be put on immediately while they are freshly charged with the light. A distinguished physician says that garments of red have cured rheumatism very decidedly. In many lung difficulties a red cloth over the breast proves very vitalizing. When a person is cold and bloodless, red stockings and drawers are admirable, and in case of dormant chest a red undervest is good. A red stocking or a piece of red tissue-paper worn next the feet will become much more warming by having its color stimulated by sunlight.

Baths of red light are said to have cured in three weeks cases of paralysis, and in a very short time to have alleviated serious troubles of the lungs. Many cases of consumption are reputed as being cured by red sun-baths. In these cases white light was combined with red.

Morbidly taciturn patients in an Italian lunatic asylum have become gay and affable after a three hours' stay in a red chamber, lighted by red glass. This may be because a torpid and melancholy condition often results from an excess of blue venous blood.

Most drugs that are healing and stimulating in their nature are of a red or reddish color.

Red is the balancing and harmonizing principle in cold and blue conditions of the system.

Cayenne pepper—a powerful arterial stimulant and rubefacient, most excellent in the beginning of fever and ague, and a powerful stimulant, producing a sense of heat in the stomach—is usually bright red.

Iron—ferre oxide—is reddish.

Ferrous trioxide wine—red color, a powerful tonic, raising the pulse, etc.

Balsam of Peru—a warm, stimulating tonic—is a dark reddish-brown.

Cloves—hot, stimulant—are internally reddish.

Ammonium carbonate, strongly red in the spectrum of its hydrogen, nitrogen, etc., is an arterial stimulant.

Alcohol—red predominates from its hydrogen.

Musk, red cedar, cloves are internally reddish and combine the same principle.

The red clover blossom has been proved beneficial in cases of diseases of the blood, cancer, salt-rheum, scrofula, etc. In an old medical work, nearly two hundred years old, we read of the virtues of the red rose leaves, red-clover blossoms and other red flowers. Red cures red diseases, says the old book.

Red brings objects nearer to the eyes, yellow retains the rays of light, and azure is a shade adapted for deep obscures.—*Lanzi*.

One Egyptian god was always represented red, the other blue. The oldest paintings were monochrome of a single color. All archaic paintings representing the human figure were of one color. The early statues and bas-reliefs were also of uniform red color.—*Wilkinson*.

On the oldest Greek statues the flesh was painted with the same tones of red throughout. The color was what we call vermilion. It was usually red ochre.—*Wilkinson*.

According to the ancient custom, all ships were painted of a red color.—*Herodotus*.

The obelisk of Sextus at Rome is made of the red Egyptian porphyry, Rosso-antico, so much sought after by the ancients.

The red damask rose imparts to paper a dark slate-blue, so does also the close carnation. The common red poppy gives to paper a most beautiful blue color.

Red is a color not easily defined. The color of the original Verbena Melendres is one of the purest types. Near the Plata River and the town of Maldonado, there are boundless plains of turf and whole tracts so thickly covered by the Verbena Melendres as, even at a distance, to appear of the most gaudy scarlet.—*Darwin*.

Darwin, in the Chonos Archipelago, climbed a hill 1,600 feet high, and found there brakes of the scarlet fuschia so densely covered with the most beautiful drooping flowers that it was very difficult to crawl through them.

There is a beautiful brilliant bird in Canada called the Tanagra Rubra, or scarlet Tanager. Its plumage is of the richest scarlet, with wings of jet black. It sings its pensive tones of chip-chum at intervals, and when the bird is just over your head its voice sounds far off. This gift is bestowed upon him, no doubt, to protect him, and to compensate for the danger his glowing colors expose him to.

The Pointsella grows at Port au Spain about fifteen feet in height. It has long, bare curring sticks, carrying each at its end a flat flag of scarlet.

The red coral and tomato and the mineral cinabar are beautiful examples of vermilion red.—*Werner*.

The shrubby pimpernell and the mineral porcelain jasper are tile red. The precious garnet is crimson red, the red tulip is lake red, and the mineral oriental ruby. The raspberry, coxcomb and carnation are all beautiful carmine red.

There are other shades of red best defined by their name—peach-blossom red, rose red, the hyacinth red, and the flesh-color red, or flesh red, as the human skin and the heavy spa limestone.

Most beautiful and purest of all is the carmine red, a pigment made from the cochineal, an insect that lives upon a plant of the cactus species. Whole plantations of this flower are raised in

Mexico for the sake of the cochineal, which Indians take the greatest care to preserve and cultivate. The plant is shaken gently, and they fall upon cloths purposely spread to catch them. They are dipped in boiling water, and dried and packed for sale. The carmine made by Madame Cenette, of Amsterdam, is said to be of so brilliant a hue as to be almost painful to the sight. The French make very beautiful carmine. An English manufacturer offered a Frenchman \$1,000 for the secret of making so superior a color, when it appeared that the only difference was that the Frenchman selected such fine, bright weather as the Englishman could not hope to have in his country. Pliny avers that the beautiful pink pearls are produced only on sunny days, while the dull, brick specimens are due to a cloudy sky. A laborer can pick off only about enough cochineal in one day to make two ounces, and some of this is lost in the process of drying. It takes 70,000 insects to make one pound of cochineal. When dried the cochineal insect looks like a little grain one-eighth of an inch in diameter, convex on one side and concave on the other. In the Annales de l'Industrie this rule is given for making the most beautiful carmine: Two pounds of the finest cochineal, in powder, are to be put in a vessel containing six pailfuls of boiling soft water, and the boiling is to be continued for two hours, when three ounces of pure saltpeter, and soon after four ounces of binocalate of potash, are to be added. After ten minutes the boiling is to be discontinued and the liquor is allowed to stand for four hours. It is then to be drawn off with a siphon into flat glazed dishes, and left for three weeks. A coating of mold forms upon the surface, which is to be nicely removed in one piece, or if any fragments remain they must be taken out with the greatest care. The liquor is again to be drawn off with a siphon, leaving the cake of carmine in the dish, when it is to be carefully dried in a clean, shady place.

Carmine is very expensive, and is often adulterated by mixing with it a cheaper vermilion; but as the pure carmine is wholly soluble in ammonia these ingredients are easily detected, separated and estimated.

For the brightest glow we have in the robes we wear, the birds or flowers we paint, we are indebted to a little insect, so small we can hardly see it, whose silent death makes all the world's homes bright.

While everywhere in galleries of art we see its rosy In Memoriam, how can we ever be proud of our own fading beauty?

If different colored papers are placed in a room and dusted over with sugar, and free access is left for insects, certain insects will always select certain colors. The sugar on all the papers being the same, the red and blue were the colors most often selected by the bees.

Says the charming French writer, Alphonse Baer, from whom we have gleaned so many beautiful thoughts:

I don't know whether you have observed, as I have, the useful power which small things derive from their littleness itself; perhaps you have not on so many occasions been overcome by them as I have.

Little things do everything and undo everything; they pass across everything and over everything. No one is on his guard against them, and they always end by hitting you.

People who write history strive in vain to find great causes for events, and to prove the premeditation of the ills which fall upon the head of the world.

There is a crowd of small habits which we struggle against at an immense disadvantage, and over which I have never seen a victory obtained.