BAGNIO OF GUIANA

Penal Settlement Where Life is Worse Than Death.

AMID THE NAMELESS HEAT.

Besides the Merciless Severity of the Labor to Which the Convicts Are Held the Terrible Climate Enervates Every White Man.

The pardoning of the French murderer Soleilland created so much indignation because his deportation is looked upon as an encouragement of murder, and probably the murderer himself, too, in his solitary confinement, thinks that after escaping death he is destined to live there a happy, idyllic life and end his days in peace. This is, however a great mistake. The bagnio of French Guiana is worse than death. It is hell on earth. A political criminal Liard-Courtois, who after living five years with the deported, was pardoned on the occasion of the amnesty granted in the Dreyfus affair gives this description of the penal settlement: "There the most terrible torture ever devised by the modern penal law awaits the unforunates. Death is a hundred times more desirable than this punishment. Beside the merciless severity with which the convicts are held to their hard labors there, threatens the terrible climate that enervates every white man, however strong his health. No one can stand this nameless heat. During the summer the mean temperature by day is 30 degrees R. in the shade. In the evening it yields to a cold humidity. During the winter there are incessant rain showers, but the heat is not less enervating. If it does not rain for any length of time the swamps become partly dry and produce noxious vapors that are the cause of fatal diseases. The air is permeated with infectious miasma, to which more than half of the new arrivals immediately succumb. After six months the number of the remaining is still less. The statistical inquiries go to show that of every hundred prisoners eighty die in the first six months. Marsh fever and consumption accomplish with great rapidity the work which the President's mercy spared the executioner. To breathe means, in Guiana, to become infected. Add to this, at night, the swarms of flies and mosquitoes whose sharp stings pierce all covers, of insects that dig into the pores of the skin and carry poison into the body; of vermin of every description that attack the unfortunates when asleep."

There are, to be sure, some privileged prisoners, who are allotted a piece of land and can live with their families, but their number is insignificant—five to every thousand. In 1899 there were 35 of such privileged of 7,000 deported. And all those who do not enjoy this privilege know nothing but their place of work, where they wear themselves out by incessant hard labor, driven by the whip of the cruel warden, tormented by hunger, despite fever and disease, without a word of complaint that would only entail the severest chastisements.

In a few weeks the new transport of prisoners to which also Soleilland belongs will arrive on the vessel La Loire at the Safety Island (between Royal and Joseph islands) and at the floating wharf they will be subjected to a narrow search. Everything they possess is taken away from them, the dearest article of memory that unites them with the world of yore they have to surrender. "Abandon hope," that dreadful inscription on the entrance of Dante's Purgatory, slowly engraves itself with flaming letters on the hearts of the convicts. In herds of one hundred they are being driven to their places of labor in the interior, and a hopeless life, terrible in its monotonous cruelty, begins for them. They have to cut trees and transport wood. Profound silence by day and by night, interrupted only by the whizzing of the whip, the curses of the supervisors and the groaning of the exhausted. When the convict has borne this wretched life for a number of years and, however dulled and brutalized, is still capable of keeping up his courage by a faint glimmer of hope, he may, perhaps, advance from the third class of convicts, to which he hitherto belonged, to the second class. This, however, means only an insignificant change of life; there is the same hard labor, the same suffering, the same privations, though he has the satisfaction of looking down upon others who fare even worse. And after a number of more years he is admitted to the first class. And, if during the whole time he has not been guilty of the least infraction of discipline, if his superiors are kindly disposed toward him, if all the conditions required by law are complied with, then he may perhaps be recommended for the dreamed of privilege of being allotted a small piece of land that, despite hard work, affords him a scanty existence and at least allows him to breathe freer. But how many dream this dream in vain, and the only relief offered them is a small spot of earth surrounded with mango tree—the grave.

New York's Water Supply.

New York city's water supply will come from a watershed of 900 square miles when the Catskill system is completed.

HOW FLOWERS HIDE HONEY.

Its Where Sweets Are Stored in Lily—Concealed Nectar.

Before "the bee sucks," as Ariel put it, he must find the wonderful places where the flowers hide away their honey, to be found like the secrets hiding holes in ancient mansions by the right sort of visitor, and to keep away all intruders.

In the recesses of the crown imperial lily at the centre can be seen six large honey pits, one on every floral leaf, and each is brimming over with a big drop of honey and glistening like a tear drop. Shake the flower and it weeps as the big drops fall from it, soon to be replaced by other tears in the rapidly secreting flower. The simple folk call the flower Job's tears.

The snowdrop is literally flowing with honey for its swollen veins traversing its fragile whiteness are rivers of nectar. The petals of the columbine are [illegible] and elaborately designed with a view to providing good places of [illegible] for the honey. [illegible] shaped like a horn [illegible] honey [illegible] what would be the [illegible] of the horn and the flowers are [illegible] honey [illegible] yet the insects who would [illegible] must [illegible] into the flower and [illegible] ing [illegible]

Some [illegible] petals are all [illegible] together into a tube and the [illegible] nectar [illegible] from the [illegible] side of the wall and [illegible] bottom. This is the [illegible] nettle [illegible] tube of which forms [illegible] [illegible] a morsel [illegible] [illegible] suckle [illegible] planned and [illegible] sweet [illegible] striking as [illegible] furnis [illegible] name.

The monkshood has quaint nectaries. If the hood is drawn back there suddenly spring into sight two objects on long stalks which [illegible] sometimes like a French horn, sometimes like a cowl or hooked at [illegible] ways [illegible] unlike a pair of doves. Their presence within the hood has provided the nicknames Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark. Thus the honey bags are carefully tucked away, and protected.

County Larger Than State.

Although the New England states are small the average size of the counties is greater than in most of the middle, western and southern states. Worcester county, in Massachusetts is an example of an eastern county that is at the same time large in area and very populous. It is larger than the adjoining state of Rhode Island.

Dishonest Heroines.

The steady increase of crime among stage heroines is beginning to get serious. It used to be the men who did all or most of the dreadful things in plays. I mean the picking and stealing the forging and embezzling and offenses of that kind. Now it is the women, and it is all the fault of the late Henrik Ibsen. Heaven rest his soul notwithstanding.—M. A. P.

Fine Language.

As a rule the educated native of West Africa like his Indian brother loves highflown language. A [illegible] some time ago sent a report complaining that the carbines of the police at his station often misfired. This is how he put it: "It is ridiculous to report that the firearms of the police when pointed at the firmament, refuse to give explosive sound."

Sticking to Facts.

Little Miss Margaret is nothing if not literal. To her a well known sound upon her ear a simple sound is unto her and it means nothing more. Consequently when she was asked in a store whither she and another small friend had been taken for a treat, "Will you have a chocolate sundae?" Miss Margaret replied with decided emphasis: "No'm, I'll have it now!"

Southern California Fish.

The shellfish known as abalone abounds in southern California water in quantities sufficient to export at the rate of hundreds of tons per annum. A market for any amount could easily be found in China, where the natives consider it a great delicacy. It used to be dried for the market, but is now being canned.

Scarcity of Humor.

It is to be feared that if the papers reserved a special corner once each week for the witticism of the week it would be often left blank. There is no wit to speak of to-day, only a feeble imitation of it which people are fond of calling the saving sense of humor.

Had Small Brain.

A healthy, regularly-formed brain of 24 ounces, scarcely half of the normal average, seems to have been the smallest ever recorded for an adult. It was recently found in Daniel Ryan, a New York coachman who died suddenly at the age of 46.

Tea a Germ Destroyer.

Tea is now elevated to the dignity of a germ destroyer. Dr. McNaught, the medical investigator, has found that typhoid bacilli placed in cold or lukewarm tea are greatly diminished at the end of four hours, and have completely disappeared at the end of 24 hours.

WHIMS OF THE RICH

Millionaires Who Spent Fortunes on Merest Fancies.

HOW THE MONEY DOES FLY.

Spendthrift Young Banker Who Lit a Cigarette with a Fifty Pound Note Got Two Black Eyes as a Sequel to the Escapade.

No man is more careful, as a rule, with his money than your millionaire. He would never have made his fortune if he had not acted on the principle of taking care of his pennies. But when a very wealthy man dies and leaves his fortune to irresponsible heirs, then it is that the money flies.

We have all heard of the man who uses five pound notes to light his pipe with, and most of us have put him down as a myth. But he really exists. At a fancy dress ball a younger member of the well known [illegible] banking family lit [illegible] cigarette with a note, not for five but for fifty pounds. The sequel was rather amusing. An attache of the Austrian embassy viewing this [illegible] bit of swagger called Bleich [illegible] a young ass. The juvenile millionaire resented his remark with a blow, whereupon the other sailed in and administered a well deserved thrashing. When the police stopped the fight the millionaire was found to be the possessor of two beautiful black eyes.

In France there is a law by which the family of a spendthrift can apply for an injunction to control his wild expenditures. Such an injunction was recently obtained by the relatives of a youth named Lemaire. It appears that the boy he was hard [illegible] was at Cherbourg during [illegible] military service when [illegible] [illegible] into a menagerie. Greatly pleased with the animals on exhibition he went to the proprietor and asked what he would sell the whole [illegible] for.

"One hundred thousand francs," was the reply.

Without a moment's hesitation the youth wrote a check for that amount and so became the owner of a large and miscellaneous assortment of savage pets of which he had not the faintest idea how to control or manage.

A [illegible] millionaires are credited with all kinds of eccentricities and really [illegible] could hardly outvie [illegible] with regard to their whims. A man named Fleischmann is so devoted to baseball that he keeps two teams at his country place where they play before him every day that he is at home. Board, lodging and salaries are all on a lavish scale. Another named Sands has a passion for models of cathedrals, abbeys and churches. These are executed to scale in solid silver, and already fill a large room. Their cost to date has been 65,000 pounds.

Speaking of silver the Rana of Oodeypore, a Hindoo prince, not long [illegible] of helmet, cuirass, buckler and gauntlets, made entirely of virgin silver, the edges being decorated with 22 karat gold. Another Indian prince ordered last year in London a complete set of bed room furniture all of solid silver. The four posted bedstead alone accounted for a tone of silver and the total cost of the order exceeded [illegible] pounds.

It is not Hindoo magnates only who go in for costly articles of personal use. We read with amazement not long since of the Sultan of Morocco's golden camera. The Khedive of Egypt's pet extravagance is harness. His four horse set for state occasions has buckles and ornaments of solid gold and cost 14,000 pounds.

Rich women are not behind men in weird and amazed extravagance. The wife of a certain Chicago millionaire has a scent distilled from a rare variety of water lily, which costs her 5 pounds a drop. It takes over a hundred tons of the lilies to make a small bottleful.

Another millionairess, namely, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, actually closed one of the most important theatres in New York, the Knickerbocker, for a night in order that the company might present the first act of the play, "The Wild Rose," at an entertainment she was giving at her Newport home.

The fact that she had to pay 700 pounds for the concession, besides salaries and other expenses, running to another 300 pounds, did not trouble her in the slightest.

Riddle of the Universe.

The world is still in the making. At this point science joins hands with Christianity, which teaches that the world is in the remaking. When, however, we ask how far natural selection goes to explain the secret of the universe, we are forced to recognize at once its extremely narrow limitations.

The Gullible Public.

"Sometimes," said Uncle Eben, "it 'pears to me like de public was composed of people hangin' 'round wantin' to be fooled. An' dars allus more or less competition among de smaht men of de country 'bout who's gwinter hab de pleasure of tendin' to de job."—Washington Star.

Have You Thought of This, Girls?

The girl who gets married during leap year must be very beautiful in order to escape suspicion.

HABITS OF HINDOO SERVANTS.

If Not Watched Will Sell Household Stores and Rent out Washing.

Excellent servant as the Indian is in many respects, honesty is not one of his qualities, and he has to be strictly looked after when either money or goods are entrusted to him. A mistress cannot go into her kitchen, consult the cook as to what the meals should be and what should be ordered from the shops and leave the rest to him. She has to give him out from her locked up stores every spoonful of everything that is required for the day's cooking, else the goods would be sold outside.

The dusters, the name in India for every description of kitchen and pantry and stable towel, have to be doled out every day or every two days, the soiled ones being counted and locked up till they are given to the dhobi (washerman), who must not be allowed to keep the clothes of the household longer than is absolutely necessary or he will let them out to his friends for small sums—silk handkerchiefs for feast days, stockings and woolen undergarments in the cold weather, so that holes appear in unaccustomed places.

A [illegible] stable servant was observed to wear a pair of cotton [illegible] one day, silk ones the next, [illegible] ones the next, not belonging to his master. Detection would be too easy in that case, but hired from some one else's dhobi at a price (a farthing) a pair. As the house servants of course never wear shoes indoors the stockings suffer considerably.

The cook goes to the bazaar every morning to buy meat, fish, ghie (native butter), vegetables, all the food in fact that cannot be stored, and his book is brought for inspection every day or else expenses would increase in a surprising manner. He of course pockets a percentage on all he spends and so long as it does not exceed an anna in the rupee (6¼ per cent) no one objects. But it is only by long experience that one gets to know proper prices, and new comers are woefully imposed upon, 100 or 200 per cent being often charged.

The cook arranges his prices to suit the circumstances of his master, and as soon as promotion with increased pay comes up goes everything so that a Colonel's beef or mutton costs more than a Major's, a Major's than a Captain's, a Captain's than a subaltern's, though there may be no change at all in the style of living or in the number of the family.

In the civil service the same thing happens. The pay of every post in the various services is published in the official lists and the servants know to a halfpenny what their master gets. Some ladies try to do their own marketing, but things are always much dearer for them than for the natives in the bazaar, so that there is no advantage in it and it is besides extremely disagreeable, for the less one sees of the stalls there, particularly the meat stalls, the better.

Big Nose a Mark of Beauty.

In Japan the nose is the only feature which attracts attention. The nose determines the beauty or ugliness of the face according as it is big or small. This is probably [illegible] the fact that [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] about [illegible] distinction between one Japanese face and another. The eyes are invariably black, the cheek bones high and [illegible] receding. In Japan a [illegible] has a huge proboscis is always a great beauty and a reigning belle.

Unique Among Inns.

The Chequers Inn at Slapstones [illegible] Osmotherly, must be unique among English inns in one respect. It boasts of a fire which for more than a century has never been allowed to go out. The place is a quaint little building, to which many visitors resort on account of its never extinguished fire and the turf cakes baked upon its hearth. It has been in the occupation of one family for over one hundred years.

New Form of Chromium.

Chromium prepared in the electric furnace by Moissan proved to be slightly soluble in molten copper. Further investigation has revealed a new form of chromium, which is crystalline, has a density of 7.1, is chemically active, and burns with a brilliant flame when heated alone in the air, being attacked at red heat even by nitrogen.

The Reform of Society.

It is a mistake to imagine that human society can be reformed by mere organization, for the church at least, treatment in the mass can never take the place of treatment of the individual. You must have that personal effort, the one life bending down to lift up the other.

Needed an Hourglass.

A clergyman made an unusually long call at the home of a parishioner recently. He talked and talked, until finally little Edna, who was present, whispered: "Mamma, did the preacher forget to bring his 'amen' with him?"

Thoughtful Girl.

"Can you take a little care of that card of mine?" implored the impecunious girl to the office boy who was idly rolling it into a wad, "and bring it back to me so I can send it somewhere else? Cards cost me a cent apiece."

NEW WATCH ON CHINAMEN.

Uncle Sam Has Inspectors on Trains at Interior Points.

The Federal Government employs in New York State at least five men whose duties are to board trains at important junction points and search them for Chinese who may be illegally in this country. One of these men is located in Binghamton, another in this city, one in Rochester and a couple in Utica and Syracuse. The work under the direction of the new Department of Commerce and Labor.

While no great secrecy has been maintained in their work, there has been no careless advertising of it, and, as a result, very few travelers are aware of the mission of the men who enter trains and carefully inspect the appearance of all foreigners who look as though they may have come from China.

Seeing a Chinaman on board a train these men first inquire for his papers. If the suspect does not have [illegible] the inspector may remove him from the train and place him in the [illegible] to the disposition of the case before a United States Commissioner.

If the [illegible] convinces the inspector that he has a right to be in this country, that is the end of it. Now [illegible] the Chinese have been so [illegible] watched that if one possesses the required papers he seldom lets them get out of his sight.

The [illegible] have been stationed at [illegible] points with the idea that if any Chinese are smuggled across from Canada and escape the officers at the border they may be detected while trying to reach New York city. The inspectors say that the business of smuggling Chinamen into [illegible] is [illegible] very [illegible] the offices at the border [illegible] and imagine that a successful [illegible] has been made. But [illegible] the person of the [illegible] man who enters the car and [illegible] and asks to see their papers.—N. Y. Sun.

TESTING CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES.

Absolutely Flawless to Withstand Enormous Pressure.

The testing of these bottles is attended to by an expert who, by striking two bottles lightly together, with the sides, recognizes by the sound whether they are perfect or not. The bottles are purchased in summer and are [illegible] cleansed with alcohol, closed with a temporary stopper and put away until used in March. The stoppers are selected from the best stock and cost from $16 to $20 a thousand.

When the bottles are filled they are placed in cool cellars stacked in piles one on the other from fifteen to twenty feet in length and three and one half to five feet in height without any shelving. Such a wall of bottles is as strong as iron. Still an one of them may be pulled out without interfering with the rest, which is frequently done to observe the development of fermentation. The hot season is dangerous to champagne on account of the burst [illegible] [illegible] If it rises to 15 per cent the place must be made cool [illegible] [illegible] 20 per cent [illegible] remains but to open all the bottles.—Milwaukee Free Press.

English Civil Service.

Once a civil service [illegible] servant [illegible] [illegible] unless one proves disloyal or an extraordinary [illegible] he is retained in service until the age [illegible] is reached and the salary is exchanged for the pension roll.

Unlike the civil service in the United States there is no strict partisanship. Appointees hold their positions no matter which party may be in power.

The pay is not large even in view of the small cost of living in England. Fifteen dollars is about the limit of weekly payment in the Post Office Department, though some of the executive positions pay as high as $2,000 a year. The Excise Department is a favored branch, the pay starting at $2.0 a year. This is raised by a yearly increase of $[illegible] until the pay reaches $400, and after a year is jumped to $5[illegible]. From there on the pay jumps rapidly to $1,250 yearly, and if the officer is fortunate in at last arriving at the dignity of collector he draws $4,000 yearly.

Parliamentary clerkships run from $500 to $2,000 a year, and the Navy Department will run a clerk up to $3,000 if he reaches the importance of fleet paymaster.

In spite of the small salaries the places are eagerly sought since it means a life position, with a pension for one's declining years.

Mr. Edison's Watch.

To Mr. Edison time is so valuable that he does not waste it even by taking account of it. Time to him is only the chance to get things done, and no matter how long it takes, they must be got done. In his office safe there is carefully locked away a $2,700 Swiss watch given him by a European scientific society. It is never used. He buys a stem winder costing a dollar and a half, breaks the chain ring off, squirts oil under the cap of the stem, thrusts it into his trousers pocket—and never looks at it. When it gets too clogged with dirt to run, he lays it on a laboratory table, hits it with a hammer and buys another.—The World's Work.

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