

AN HISTORIC ISLAND.

Martinique, the Birthplace of the Empress Josephine.

A Picturesque Community and Some of Its Principal Attractions—A Fountain That Spouts Live Fishes.

Martinique is a garden of romantic beauty, extending from the edge of the pretty harbor to the foothills of the mountains, and looks like a fragment of France gone astray, says a writer in the Waverly Magazine. Every building is of venerable stone, antique in structure, large and roomy, and windowed by deep jalousies. The heavy tile roofs overhang the eaves like the eyebrows of man, and are covered with silvery mosses and trailing vines.

The streets are nearly all paved with Belgian blocks, and sparkling water rushes down the middle of each in the gutter, toward which the pavement slopes.

Everybody lives out of doors. The harbor is skirted by a wide boulevard, shaded by palm trees and furnished with iron seats, where the populace gather in the evening and chatter like magpies. During the day the women sit in the gardens and at night sleep in hammocks under the verandas, except in the rainy season, when they keep their houses. There is no glass in the windows and not a chimney in the place. All the cooking is done in charcoal stoves, or upon shelves of stone like a blacksmith's forge.

There are some fine churches, and one old cathedral that is worth a visit. The people are mostly Catholics, but there is a large colony of Jews engaged in banking and trade.

The town of Port de France, which was known as Port Royal during the time of the empire, is the seat of the government, where the lieutenant governor lives and commands a garrison of three hundred or four hundred colored soldiers. It is about twenty miles from St. Pierre and has ten thousand inhabitants, but the latter place is the commercial capital and the fashionable residence. The blacks and whites live together as brothers and sisters of the common family, often intermarrying. Many of the colored families are wealthy and aristocratic and send their children abroad to be educated.

The upper classes wear the latest French fashions and live with considerable comfort, but the colored women of the common class, as elsewhere in the tropics, are clad in a single garment of cotton, without any particular design of concealing or exposing their anatomy. They load themselves with a large amount of jewelry of peculiar designs, and on Sunday and feast days get themselves up in a most elaborate and outlandish manner, men and women both rivaling the plumage of the birds in the myriad colors they assume. There are no poor, no almshouses, no asylum for the indigent.

The women of Martinique carry their babies in a peculiar manner by placing them astride of the left hip, and strapping them there by wide strips of cloth. Martinique has a population of one hundred and fifty thousand, of whom twelve thousand are white, thirty thousand of mixed blood, and the remainder colored.

The island is covered with fields of sugar cane, mostly cultivated by the women, while the men do the heavier labor in the sugar mills and in the harbor. There are no carriages or carts, but the women and donkeys are the common carriers.

There is a good opera house where performances are often given by local talent and once in awhile an opera or a play by a company from France.

One of the most beautiful parks in the world is known as the Place Bertin, where there is a magnificent fountain of bronze, a most graceful water nymph fourteen feet high, bearing upon her head a basket, from the rim of which jets of water flow.

In August this fountain exhibits what to strangers is a most amazing phenomenon, spouting myriads of little fishes about as large as whitebait with bodies as transparent as crystal. These are called tithe and come from the mountain streams with which the fountain is fed. In the month of August they come from the sea and are caught by the pipes that feed the fountain. The people expecting them come down with baskets, scoop them up, and taking them home, fry them in oil; they make delicious morsels.

Martinique was the birthplace of Empress Josephine, whose family still live near Fort de France, and their old home, a little one-story house, is still to be seen.

AMERICAN WRITERS LACKING.

Complaint That Good Work Is in Demand While the Quality Is Poor.

There is an increasing demand for good American fiction. With all due respect to the galaxy of bright writers in Great Britain who have achieved such prominence here during the last few years, it is, nevertheless, a fact that publishers are looking eagerly for novels and novelettes dealing with American people and scenes. Said one of them to the Literary World the other day: "We have been publishing English and Scotch stories simply because we could not procure American fiction of corresponding worth. It is needless to say that there is a far greater demand for American novels than for those written about characters and incidents European and British. But it looks as if we could not succeed in our endeavor. We do not want a novel, for instance, that is dashed off, three or four chapters at a time, by a woman after she has given an afternoon tea before dressing for the evening. But we want American novels written by men and women whose brains surge and swell while they are at work. And I see no hopeful outlook excepting in the newspaper offices."

The publisher does not understand the conditions of newspaper work nowadays, or he might not be hopeful. There are young men and young women scattered through newspaper offices

here and there who are capable of developing into novelists; but they have no chance, while on morning papers, at least. The average reporter goes to work at noon, and then until midnight, or an hour later, he or she is hastening from one point to another, oftentimes unable to eat regularly or to secure sufficient sleep. By the time the afternoon assignment is covered and the "story" written the reporter has a chance to breathe sometimes; and then when he reaches the office with his evening assignment covered, provided he has but one, he sits down and writes when too often he is greatly fatigued. At midnight, or one or two o'clock in the morning, he goes home. Is it reasonable to expect a man or a woman after such a siege to write fiction? How can it be done? Leaving entirely aside the fact that newspaper work, with its plain statement of events, precludes the development of thought and literary style, the reporter's very existence, with its hurry and rush and exhausting physical labor, makes it very doubtful if we can look to him as a class from whom to expect fiction. With men and women on evening papers the case is different. They have more leisure, in the evenings, at least; but the fact remains that as a usual thing the brightest men and women prefer morning papers, because they pay so much more.

JAPANESE PIPES.

Smoking Has Been Reduced to a Fine Art in the Island Empire.

To be quite Japanese, says a writer in Scribner's Magazine, we will begin by taking from our girdle the little brass pipes and silken tobacco bags, filling the kiseru and inhaling one or two fragrant whiffs of the delicate Japanese tobacco. In their use of the nicotine herb, as in many other things, the Japanese display a supreme refinement.

The rudest coolie, the coarsest farm laborer, equally with the lady of rank, the pretty geisha and the minister of state, are content with this tiny pipe, which does not hold enough to make even Queen Mab sneeze.

They stuff a little rolled pill of the fine-cut leaf into a bowl smaller than the smallest acorn cup, thrust it in the glowing charcoal and inhale deep into the lungs just one fragrant whiff of the blue smoke, which they expel by mouth and nostrils.

Then they shake out the little burning plug into the bamboo receptacle and load up again for a second up uku, valuing only the first sweet purity of the lighted luxury and always wondering how we can smoke a great pipeful to the "bitter end" or suck for half an hour at a huge Havana puro. "Kiseru no shita ni shiku arimasu!" they say—"at the bottom of a pipe there lives poison."

Much fancy and fashion are displayed in the appurtenances of the pipe. Ladies carry them in little, long, embroidered silk cases, with silken pouches attached, fastened by an ivory, bronze, silver or jeweled clasp. Men wear stuck in their girdles a pipe-sheath of carved ivory, bone or bamboo, and the pipe itself may be a small, commonplace article of reed and brass or an exquisite object in bronze, silver or gold, worked up with lovely ornament in lacquer or enamel.

LAYING TELEPHONE WIRE.

Cavalry Officers Make an Interesting Experiment in Germany.

An interesting experiment of installing a telephone by trotting cavalry was recently successfully undertaken by some Prussian Uhlanen between Berlin and Potsdam. Two sets of one-officer and two non-commissioned officers proceeded in the early morning respectively from Berlin to Potsdam. Each set, says the Scientific American, was equipped with a complete telephone apparatus which one of the men carried in a leather case on his chest, he sides the requisite quantity of wire. The end of the wire was connected with the respective towns' telephone stations, and the wire was, by means of a fork fixed at the end of the lance, thrown over the tops of the trees along the road. As each kilometer of wire was thus suspended a halt was made, and it was ascertained whether there was connection with the station. A new kilometer of wire was then connected with the former, and on went the men. The two sets met at Teltow. The wires, having been respectively tested with their respective stations, were connected, and telephonic connection between Berlin and Potsdam was established. The distance is about twenty miles, and the whole thing was done in about four hours.

Rome's Earthquake and Lottery.

The earthquake recently felt in Rome has already produced a result that to any except an Italian would seem incredible. It has augmented naturally the receipts of the national lottery. The occurrence was so unusual that gamblers saw their opportunity and quite a series of figures became popular. The first shock was felt on November 1 at 4:38 p. m. One, four and thirty-eight were obviously factors in the lucky series. And then the lottery manual helped the gambler out by supplying him with other figures, chiefly 11, 90 and 30, so that among the six success was certain. Eleven was most run on, as it was equivalent both for "November" and "earthquake" and also represented the fete of St. Martin, a saint very popular since the battle of San Martino. In fact, the lotteries received such an impulse from the earthquake that the offices had to be kept open on All Saints' day, contrary to all usage. When the winning numbers were actually exposed to view not one of the popular six was in the category.—London Daily News.

Sulphur in Popocatepetl.

The crater of Popocatepetl contains thousands of tons of the purest sulphur ever mined. The natives who gather the sulphur secure small packages of it, which they fasten to their backs. Then they slide down the snow on the mountain, after the manner of the woodcutters of France. For this venturesome work they get about twenty cents a day.

SOME SAILORS SWIM.

And Others Do Not, Yet Manage to Live Along.

Swimming in the Shark Infested Waters of the Tropics—Sailors Never Dream of Drowning—Life Preservers.

The percentage of blue jackets in the navy who are unable to swim is sufficiently large to warrant some surprise on the part of an inquirer. Apprentices enter the naval service with no more knowledge of how to keep afloat in the water than they have of starboard, mainmast, blockship, thimble, seizings. In time, of course, the youngster is bound to make the acquaintance of the latter, but he may become gray and salty, and perhaps rise to be a boat's mate, and never learn to swim.

In nine cases out of ten, says the New York Sun, the lack of accomplishment is due to Jack's not taking advantage of the opportunities offered him, because he has many chances to learn if he only would. When ships are riding at anchor in warm waters permission to swim is often given to those who wish it, and there are enough swimmers in the ship's company to give instructions to the others. To counterbalance the ones who do not swim there are many expert swimmers in the navy. From the work he has to do, Jack, after a year's service, is likely to be a splendidly trained fellow. His muscles are developed to the highest, and his food and hours are such as to keep him in the best of physical trim. So, when Jack is a swimmer, the conditions combine to make him at once a strong and graceful creature in the water. He knows his abilities, and this leads him into what the sedate landmen might consider foolhardiness. When the ship lies in temperate waters, and swimming permission has been given, the ship's port lower boom is let down into the water. This boom lies against the ship's side when she is under way, but when at anchor is used as the mooring place for such small boats and launches as may be in service at the time. A life line runs from the ship to the topping lift, which supports the boom. The lowering of the boom into the water gives Jack a convenient but slightly hazardous way of getting down. But the sailor swimmer generally prefers to use the boom as a means of getting back to the ship after a dive from the rail or some other vantage point. A dive from the rail means a descent of eighteen feet in the case of a frigate, and more in the modern cruiser. This height is not so great as to daunt Jack's courage, and many sailormen have plunged headforemost in the sea from the tip of the flying jibboom, which is upward of thirty-five feet from the water.

In swimming in tropical waters there is one drawback to the sport—sharks. The sight of a triangular black fin knifing its way through the water, and the sudden churning of the water by the flick of a tail, is chilling enough when seen from the safe deck of a ship, but is no doubt marrow freezing when viewed from the green level of the sea. If Jack went swimming unprotected in such regions there would likely be an unanswered name at roll call some morning. But Jack has his swimming pond in the tropics—or had in the days of the great hulled frigate—just as he does further north. This is accomplished by tricing up the four corners of a topsail, thus forming a bag, and sinking it over the ship's side. When it has filled the four corners are lifted several feet out of the water, and Jack has an admirable natatorium, secure from sharks and large and deep enough to admit of any amount of diving and swimming.

The fact that a bluejacket cannot swim has no more effect upon him in the discharge of perilous duty than if he were a merman. He jumps into a boat on a lifesaving errand when the sea is mountain high, and he knows he may never tread a deck again if an angry wave throws the boat upon her beam ends and tumbles all hands out. He goes aloft and lays out to the end of a yard when the ship is tossing about like a cork, and there is nothing below him but an endless stretch of roaring waves. The yard quivers and groans, and Jack has to hold on like grim death, for one moment's loosening of his grasp and he is snapped off into space. This means nothing short of drowning, and yet that thought never seems to occur to him. His life goes on, and perhaps the emergency of his having to make some effort to swim may never arise.

Each ship of the navy is fitted with two life buoys on the starboard and port rails. These are constructed of a frame holding two large air-tight copper vessels. The apparatus floats upright, and there is a place on which the man overboard may find a footing. The buoy readily sustains a man's weight, and holds him comparatively high out of the water if he stands on the footrest below. When a man has tumbled overboard at night, and one or both of the life buoys have been ordered over, the sailor at the rail pulls one of two knobs over the buoy. This fires a cap, which ignites a long tube of red fire inserted in the main upright of the buoy. The other knob, when pulled, releases the buoy, and it drops into the water. The red fire burns a long time and guides the luckless bluejacket. Many a sailorman who could not swim has been saved by the celerity with which the life buoys have been dropped.

TEXAN HOSPITALITY.

The Passing Stranger Always Invited In and Taken Care Of.

"The latch string hangs out" expressed the hospitality of the southern frontier in the days "before the war." If a traveler rode up before the fence that separated the log cabin from the road he was greeted by "Light, stranger, 'light!" Without this salutation no one dismounted, but it was rarely withheld. Mr. Williams, in his recent book, "Sam Houston," thus describes the impulse of hospitality,

which made every traveler a guest during the early settlement of Texas:

The traveler who rode up to the front fence was instantly invited to alight. His horse was staked out or hobbled to feed on the prairie grass and the visitor sat down to exchange counter. The setting of it up in its natural position will cause it to explode with fatal result.

The head of the cane holds two glass vessels, oblong in shape, and each filled with an explosive liquid harmless in itself so long as it is kept away from the others. The cane is carried by the anarchist in perfect safety by being held horizontally. But when lifted up and placed against the wall the fluid in the upper bottle runs into the lower and the explosion takes place.

PRODUCTION OF MEERSCHAUM.

Where Some Rich Deposits of the Quaker Substance Are Found.

Mr. Cumberbatch, British consul at Angora, in his latest report, says that rich deposits of meerschaum are found twenty miles to the southeast of Eski Shehir, an important station of the Anatolian railway. The Belgian consul in Constantinople, who recently visited the place, states that it would be difficult to determine the exact arena in which the meerschaum is to be found. Judging from the number of pits at considerable distances from each other, it must be extensive.

The meerschaum is extracted in the same way as coal. Pits from twenty-five to one hundred and twenty feet deep are dug, and as soon as the vein is struck horizontal galleries, sometimes of considerable length, are made, but more than two galleries are seldom to be found in one pit. The stone as extracted is called "ham tash," or rough block, and is soft enough to be easily cut with a knife. It is white, with a yellowish tint, and is covered with a red, clayey soil of about one inch thick. In this state the blocks are purchased by dealers on the spot, not by weight or measurement, but according to approximate quantity, either per load of three sacks or per cart load, the price varying from five to thirty pounds sterling per load, according to quality. These blocks are dried and subjected to certain preparations before being conveyed to Eski Shehir. Some of them are as small as a walnut, while others attain the size of a cubic foot. Those which combine regularity of surface and size are the best. The manipulation required before they are ready for exportation is long and costly. The clayey soil is removed and the meerschaum dried. In summer exposure for five or six days to the sun's rays suffices, but in winter a room heated to the required temperature is necessary, and the drying process takes eight or ten days.

When dried the blocks are well cleaned and polished, then they are sorted into about twelve classes, each class being packed with great care in separate cases, and each block being wrapped in cotton wool. The bulk of the meerschaum is sent to Vienna, where it is worked, and dispersed all over the world. Most of the finest specimens are sent direct to Paris. Certain American dealers have visited Eski Shehir with the object of obtaining the raw material direct instead of through Vienna, thereby saving the higher custom house duty payable on the worked meerschaum. The quantity annually exported is put down at eight thousand to ten thousand cases. The various taxes levied by the Turkish government amount to about thirty-seven per cent. ad valorem.

Litigation Is Declining.

The English courts are making complaint of the decline of litigation. Cases are quickly disposed of and the number of new cases arising is not sufficient to keep some branches of the court occupied. Lord Justice A. L. Smith, an eminent member of the judiciary, in addressing a body of solicitors recently said that the judges were not to blame for the fact that few litigants sought the courts. One difficulty, he thought, was that a person having a case might go to law and be successful throughout and yet his costs would be heavy. Justice Smith believed that the losing litigant should pay all the costs, as is done in this country.



A man's life may be saved in many ways. A man may commit suicide in a great many ways. Shooting himself through the head is quicker, but it is no more certain than neglecting his health. If a woman saw her husband with a pistol to his head, she would take prompt and vigorous measures to save him; but the same woman might see her husband on the down-grade to disease and death without seeing the seriousness of it. One-sixth of all the people who die, die of consumption. Consumption doesn't come all at once. It is insidious. The seeds of it are seemingly insignificant. Most people do not know how it starts. Thousands of people are on the road to consumption and don't know it. Whenever there is loss of flesh—paleness—wasting away—look out. Consumption easily finds a foot-hold in a weakened body. Low vitality, impure or poor blood, imperfect digestion, nervousness, sleeplessness—all these lead to consumption.

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