

CURIOS ISLAND THAT TRAVELS

In its recent address before the American Geographical Society Elmer L. Corbell showed a map of the large island just a little north of the Argentine city of Rosario in the Panama River. The island has for years been moving down the stream, narrowing the passage between it and the city.

The fact that the island has moved from its old position will not appear so strange when the phenomenon is explained. It seems after all to be a simple matter.

The vast volume of water coming down the Panama impinges upon the wide northern front of the island and tears away great masses of earth from the banks, carrying the same to other parts of the river from the northern shore. The island so obstructs the current that an eddy is formed on the south side of the land mass, and into this eddy most of the earth that is torn away from the northern bank is carried and deposited against the south shore in this quiet part of the waters; so that while the north side of the island is constantly wearing away, the southern shore is being built up and extended, and thus the island is gradually traveling down the stream.

The engineering problem does not seem to be a very difficult one. It is proposed to protect the northern bank so that it cannot be further eroded by the current. Of course if this bank is kept intact there will be no earth to carry around to the southern shore, and that part of the island will remain in its present position.

Mr. Corbell told some very interesting things about Rosario which is now well known as a very important river seaport of Argentina, with ocean steamers from Europe constantly discharging and taking on freight at its docks. It has grown from 50,000 to 112,000 in population in the course of a few years. Vessels drawing 21 feet can ascend to its docks, and it is expected to deepen the channel so that larger steamships may make Rosario their destination.

Rosario is the largest exporter of the millions of bushels of wheat which Argentina now sends to Europe. Mr. Corbell showed an interesting view of a small mountain of rocks piled up with wheat that had been piled up for carriage to Rosario. We send our wheat to Europe from Atlantic ports in bulk.

But Argentina, like our Pacific states, is not a grain country.

Another picture showed the process of loading these sacks on the steamers. The sacks are hauled up to a considerable height above the vessel, from which an inclined plane extends to the deck of the ship; down this smooth plane the sacks slide into the hold, in which they are stored.

This is, of course, a very slow and inconvenient method of handling the grain in comparison with the elevator system, which does the work much more cheaply and expeditiously. Mr. Corbell says that efforts are being made to interest capitalists engaged in the elevator business in this country in the introduction of this labor-saving invention into Argentina. It is very likely that in the course of a few years an elevator or two will rise on the banks of the Panama at Rosario and substitute the present clumsy method of handling export wheat.

Where Wives Are Bought.

A famous marriage fair is held yearly at the village of Mengueliet, in the oasis of the Wady Jamma, in the Kabyle district of Tunis. There at the end of the head of the valley the men of the country, flushed with money, as money is reckoned thereabouts, think of adding a wife to the other purchases they always make for the ensuing 12 months. In the open space the dancings are ranged ready for inspection in the marriage market. There they face the visitors, separated from the holy part of the fair, ranged in four separate rows and numbering between 500 and 700. Each damsel is seated on a bright-colored carpet spread upon the ground, and each has a negress—a sort of nurse, attendant and duenna combined—seated beside her. Conspicuously displayed in front of each, moreover, is a big roll of woven stuff. This roll of material plays an important part in the marriage negotiations, and is always woven by the girl herself. The young women are attired in the most expensive and richest garments the parents and relatives can secure.

They are painted, patched and powdered as in the invariable costume of Kabyle belles, and wear sufficient rings, bangles, bracelets, chains and brooches to stock a small-sized jeweler's shop. These jewels are not by any means always the property of the girl or her friends. In fact, they are mostly borrowed or hired for the occasion. The would-be buyer has only to walk up to the carpet upon which the girl he wishes to own is seated, touch with his finger the roll of woven stuff in front of her and ask the price. If the girl's woman, on looking over the inquiring tribesman, is satisfied with him, she names a very low figure, the small sum of 10 pieces, which is agreed upon among the several clans as the equivalent of acceptance.

If not, she merely quotes a high price, something up to the hundreds, and it is then understood that the offer is respectfully declined and a deal is not likely to be effected. The actual money price to be paid for a girl depends upon the standing of her family and the kebab to which they belong. It is a fine more or less, by immemorial usage, so that every young man knows pretty well what he will have to pay for a wife. It should not, however, be supposed that these young Berber beauties are by any means prepared to yield themselves to the first comer who can afford to pay the recognized equivalent to the parents. Kabyle women are anything but the docile and obedient drudges many Western readers imagine. They enjoy a good deal more freedom, in many respects, than a European wife in a like rank of life.

On Heart-Break Road.

"Oh! the road is hard," laughed one.
"Bitter the weather;
Let's hide at the inn of Forgetfulness,
Drunk together—
Heigh, Heigh!
Drunk together!"

"Oh, the road is hard," wpt one,
"Sorry the trying;
Let's lie 'neath the walls of our Heart's
Desire.
Wretchedly dying—
Alas! Alas!
Wretchedly dying!"

"Oh! the road is hard," prayed one:
"Grant us tomorrow
To knock at the gates of Thy Perfect
Peace,
Purged by our sorrow—
Spare us, good Lord,
Purged by our sorrow."
—Emery Pottle, in May Smart Set.

A Tragic Lament.

"Did you say that you were wedded to your art?"

"Yes," answered Stormington Barnes, "I'm tied to it for life, all right. But I don't hesitate to confess that the honeymoon was over some years ago."—Washington Star.



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A Waste of Noise.

H. O. Havemeyer, who, it is reported, will retire from the presidency of the sugar trust soon on account of his poor health, is at times extremely nervous, so that the least noise jars him.

Mr. Havemeyer's butler, while serving dinner one evening not long ago, let fall a tray of crockery. A tremendous crash, of course, ensued.

"I suppose you have broken all the plates," said Mr. Havemeyer.

"No, sir; not one, sir," replied the butler.

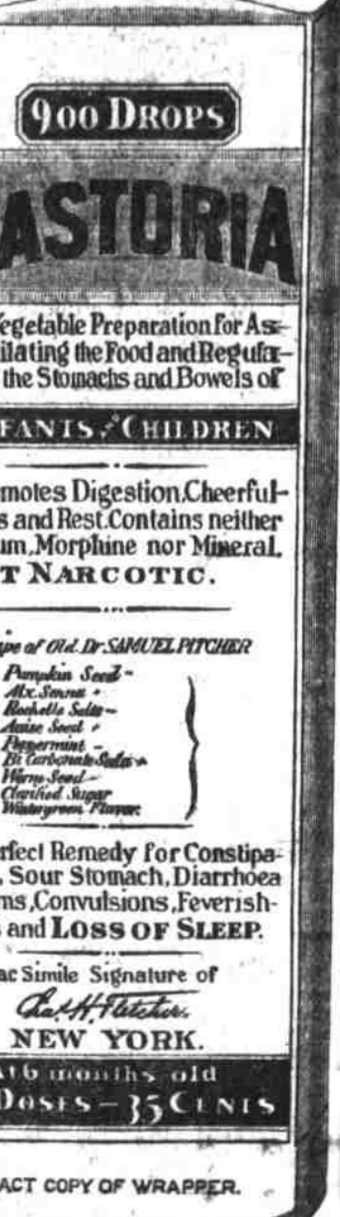
"Then you have made all that noise for nothing, eh?" said, testily, the sugar magnate.

Thomas B. Reed's Last Jest.

Thomas B. Reed was the center of a group at the Century Club in this city the night before he was stricken with his last illness. The talk got around to Mr. Roosevelt.

"Y-a-a-a," drawled Mr. Reed, "I admire him very much, indeed. What I admire most about him is his enthusiasm over his discovery of the Ten Commandments."—New York World.

Prof. Wilson of Columbia will continue work in embryology at Naples, aided by the Carnegie Institution.



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