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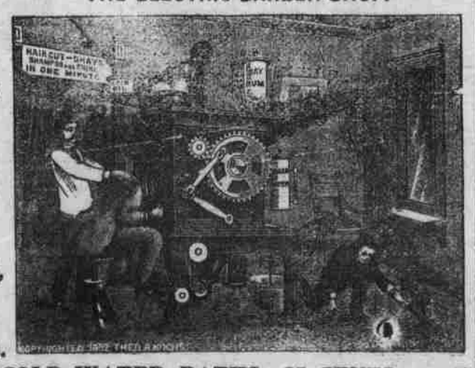

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A COMPLETE FAILURE.

Negroes in the West Indies Cannot Govern Themselves.

For More Than Fifty Years They Have Enjoyed the Greatest Freedom, But Have Made No Advance Socially or Morally.

In the last quarterly issue of the American Statistical association Frederic L. Hoffman gives a series of statistical tables bearing upon the social and moral development of the negroes in the West Indies. As he points out to the students of the race problem in the United States, the West Indies offer an attractive field for observation and study, for the reason that for more than fifty years the negro has there enjoyed those political and social opportunities which it is claimed are denied him in this country. Thus, says the Boston Herald, for more than half a century, he has had there presented the possibilities of progress and advancement in civilization, and considering that in 1834 those who were instrumental in bringing about emancipation in the West Indian colonies of Great Britain felt confident that the change would be of immense benefit to the colored people and to the world at large, it is interesting to see how far these hopes have been verified by experience.

Mr. Hoffman's tables include the Leeward islands, the Barbadoes, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Trinidad, Jamaica, British Honduras and British Guiana. He also has race tables as to the population of Cuba and Porto Rico. From these it appears that, while the negro race in the West Indies does not, on the whole, greatly increase, the white population is steadily diminishing. For example, a hundred years ago the white population of Jamaica was about 10 per cent. of the entire population, while it is now a little less than 2 per cent. In the Leeward islands the white population a hundred years ago was about 8 per cent; it is now about 4 per cent. In the Barbadoes the white population a hundred years ago was about 20 per cent., while at the present time it is less than 9 per cent. In some of the other colonies the relative decline is not so great, but the tendency has been for the white race to disappear, with the result that the colonies have fallen more under the control of the negro inhabitants.

Contrasted with this change is that presented by Cuba, where the white population in 1879 amounted to about 49 per cent., and in 1890 to approximately 70 per cent., and Porto Rico, where the white population in 1802 was 48 per cent., and in 1890 63 per cent. In other words, in the two Spanish colonies the white race, as in the United States, has tended to increase at a faster ratio than the colored race. This Mr. Hoffman holds to be due to the determined struggle that has been maintained in the Spanish colonies by the whites for political, as well as social, supremacy, and that under such conditions a race of inferior standing is not able to hold its own. In the British West Indies, on the other hand, the struggle is a hopeless one, and hence no effort was made to maintain it, ascendency passing, with all that it implied, into the hands of the colored population.

The result of this does not seem to have been specially advantageous. The colored race has grown in the West Indies at a rapid rate. Possibly the limitations of area and industrial opportunities may have something to do with this, but the birth rate has not been especially high, and, what is quite as material a factor in determining the growth in numbers of a community, the rate of mortality has been exceptionally high, so that the population has tended in some of the colonies to become almost stationary. In the group of Leeward islands there are now fewer people than there were a century ago, and Jamaica may be said to be about the only island which has shown a large increase in population, the number there doubling in less than a century. In those instances where a contrast is permissible it is found that the death rate is much larger among the colored inhabitants of these colonies than it is with the white population, a statement that also holds true of Cuba, where the death rate is high with both races, but about 15 per cent. higher with the colored than with the white race.

But the worst showing made in Mr. Hoffman's tables of statistics is found in those which relate to the moral condition of the people, for while the statistical evidence shows that in the matter of education there is a constant improvement, as, for example, in Jamaica the number of those able to read and write over 4 years of age has advanced in the last thirty years from 31 to 52 per cent. of the population, a corresponding improvement does not appear to have taken place in the moral condition of the people. In the Barbadoes 76 per cent. of the population is unclassed, in Jamaica 77 per cent. and in Trinidad, excluding coolies from the East Indies, nearly 82 per cent., while in all these colonies more than 60 per cent. of the births are of illegitimate children.

SHAKERS MOVING TO FLORIDA.

Purchase of a Large Tract of Land for the Mount Lebanon Colony.

The Shakers of Mount Lebanon, who have for an age been a part of the picturesque rural life of New York state, are soon to abandon their historical town in the Berkshire hills, to cast aside old-time tradition and custom, and remove to pastures new. Within a few days the Shaker society of Mount Lebanon has purchased, through a real estate broker, no less than eight thousand acres of land in Florida, ranging southward from Lake Okeechobee, and comprising a large part of Osceola and DeSoto counties. The Shakers are now considering the purchase of eight thousand more acres, making sixteen thousand in all, which will include an entire township in Florida. Some time ago the Shakers purchased a small tract in California and another in northern Ohio, but neither has proved suitable for the establishment of a large colony, hence they turned their eyes to the south, and have concluded a satisfactory purchase. As a result of the deal the Shakers will establish the largest settlement in this country, and, as the land in Florida is rich and fertile, the settlement will begin with every natural advantage.

The removal to Florida of this historical sect, says the Florida Times-Union, will mark an era in the history of the very remarkable society of Mount Lebanon. Originally these Mount Lebanon Shakers were an offshoot from the society of Quakers or Friends. In 1747 some members of that society in Manchester, England, formed a distinct association under the leadership of James and Jane Wardly. For several years the little company was only noticeable through being more noisy than most of the assemblages of Quakers, dancing, shouting, trembling, etc., under the supposed influence of the spirit. But in 1770 one of the members, Ann Lee, professed to receive some peculiar revelations, testifying that the carnal nature of the flesh was the root of all human depravity; and, second, that she herself was Christ, or the incarnate deity, in the female form. The new sect became so roughly infatuated with Ann Lee's teachings; they called her "Mother Ann," and declared their belief that no blessing could descend to any person except through her. But outside of their small circle the new doctrines were regarded as blasphemous, and Ann Lee and her worshipers were imprisoned and fined.

In 1774, therefore, in obedience to another of Ann Lee's revelations, she and several of her followers emigrated to New York and settled in Niskayuna (now Watervliet), about seven miles from Albany. The death of Mother Ann occurred in 1847. She established the community in the form of a family, and the general plan which she laid down has ever since been followed. In 1787 Joseph Meacham, one of Ann's first converts in this country, collected her adherents in a settlement in Mount Lebanon. Within a few year Meacham had formed eleven other settlements in New York and other states. No other societies were formed until about fifteen years later, when some missionaries were sent to the west and founded four communities in Ohio and two in Kentucky. Part of these settlements are still in existence; others have been entirely dispersed. But the Mount Lebanon settlement has remained the "home," or original town of the society.

THE WATERMELON NET.

A Convenient Contrivance for Carrying Home the Massive Fruit.

The invention of the watermelon net was due primarily to a change in the shape of watermelons. Years ago the great majority of watermelons were much longer than they were thick. Then when a man carried home the watermelon which he had bought the dealer took a turn around one end of it with a stout cord, carried the cord along to the other end, and took another turn there, and the connecting length of cord between the loops served as a handle, while the shape of the melon kept the loops from slipping off. But with the change of the melon to the shorter, chubbier shape now prevailing this plan was no longer possible, and so the net came in six or eight years ago.

The watermelon nets, says the New York Sun, are made of a jute twine called melon twine. They are of one size. They are big enough for any melon, and with a small melon in a net it is easy to take up the slack. They are made altogether by hand, at odd times, by people accustomed to net making. They are sold at wholesale at two dollars a hundred. The melon dealer used to charge five cents for a net, but now most dealers give the nets away.

Notwithstanding their bulk many melons are carried home by the purchaser. The suburban resident may spot a particularly fine melon and take it right along with him in a net; a man living in the city may do the same thing. Whatever the circumstances under which a man wants to take a melon with him the net is a great convenience; it beats carrying the watermelon under the arm out of sight.

But while many melons are thus carried in the course of the season, still the great majority of watermelons are sent home just like other things, and so after all the sale of watermelon nets amounts to only a few thousands annually.

Youngest Sons Favored.

"If one looks about him almost anywhere in Maine," says an observing resident of that state, "he will find that in the matter of descent of property we have unconsciously put in force or have effected just the opposite of the English rule of primogeniture. Where there are a number of children in a family it is almost always the youngest son that stays with the old folks and inherits the homestead. Where I live I can point out dozens of such instances in the families I know, and I cannot now recall a single instance where any other than the youngest was preferred. Of course this results from the disposition of the older boys to seek their fortunes away from the parental roof tree as soon as they are old enough, while the younger, with the others gone, finds room enough for his activities at home, and stays there. As distinguished from the old world method this may be called ultimogeniture."

SCARCITY OF LEATHER.

French Government Cannot Supply Its Army with Shoes.

Principal Causes of the Great Falling Off in the Supply—No Practical Solution of the Distressing Problem.

Leather is so scanty and high of price just now in France that the minister of war is greatly perplexed over the question of how to secure the necessary footwear for the great number of men which that nation keeps continually in readiness for its defense. Not only this, says the New York World, but a sufficient supply of leather for the saddles, harness and other furnishings of the cavalry and artillery is lacking.

When the government invited bids recently for the equipment of the troops with shoes and horse furniture the only contractors who dared make an offer demanded so high a figure that their propositions were rejected, and those who have yet contracts to fill for these articles are seeking every means possible to break them, fearing that ruin will be the result if they are compelled to carry out their agreements.

Hides have doubled in price since the beginning of the present year. This unusual state of affairs in the leather trade was thought at first to be the result of a corner in the market, but it has since become evident that the remarkable scarcity in that commodity is produced by a variety of simple and natural causes.

Three of the principal reasons for this dearth of leather are: The recent war between China and Japan, the many revolutions and bloody conflicts in the South American republics and the scarcity of fodder and pasturage owing to the unfavorable weather of last year and the year before in the countries of the world from which the principal supply of hides comes.

The catastrophes of the climate and of war in South America, although serious enough in themselves, would not alone have been sufficient to bring about the present state of affairs. It is the war between China and Japan which is more directly responsible for the dearth which now prevails. When war was declared Japan placed large contracts in the United States for the equipment of its infantry and cavalry with footwear and other furnishings. To fill these promptly the contractors in this country bought up nearly all the visible supply of leather suitable for that purpose.

Since the war closed Japan has sent new orders of equal importance to the merchants here for fresh supplies of shoes and military trappings, and the markets have been swept bare to fill them. The price of "green" hides has therefore risen so high that the tanners are buying as little as they can, and a large percentage of the tanneries throughout the world are closed.

In France especially the wholesale manufacture of shoes is in a deplorable state. Generally the product of one season is made up to sell the next, but owing to the high prices prevailing this year for the necessary raw material a great number of the shoe factories are closing and throwing out of employment a large number of workmen.

An immediate and practical solution of the question seems impossible. The crisis has not yet been reached, and the ultimate outcome will be interesting to notice.

WEALTH IN CIGAR STUBS.

Remarkable Work of a Collector of the Refuse.

The story told by Mr. Jonathan Pinchbeck at North London police court the other day is so remarkable as fully to deserve the prominence that has been given it in the press, says London Truth. Mr. Pinchbeck, among other striking statements, asserts that from January, 1876, to January, 1893, he picked up on his way to and from work in the neighborhood of Clapton 600,000 cigar ends, which he valued at £1,800. He estimates the distance covered in these daily walks at 11,823 miles. Even allowing him a walk on Sundays, this would mean that for seventeen years he picked up very nearly 100 cigar ends per day in the course of less than a two-mile walk. Each walk would not have taken him much over an hour. Further, in seventeen years he collected tobacco to the value of £1,800, which means a return of about £106 per annum, or over 40 shillings per week, for an hour's work per day. If this can be done in the neighborhood of Clapton, the returns would be vastly greater in the West End, where cigar ends are presumably more plentiful. The vicar of All Souls', Clapton, has written to the papers to guarantee that Mr. Pinchbeck is a deserving man. If the vicar can also guarantee that he is a truthful one, a new and lucrative industry has been discovered.

BAFFLES COUNTERFEITERS.

The Unlucky Opal Defies the Imitative Skill of the Moderns.

One kind of opal, the hydropane of Mexico, loses its beauty and becomes dull and colorless when exposed to water. The same stone, says the Westminister Review, it is said, can be restored to its color and beauty by subjecting it to a certain degree of heat. A writer on the subject says that the opal is always much more brilliant on a warm day, and that a sharp dealer will always hold one in his hand a short time before showing it to a purchaser. In ancient times the opal was most successfully imitated by a glass paste, which could only be distinguished from the real gem by the most careful experts. The art has been entirely lost, for the best counterfeiters fail to produce a stone that in the least baffles the connoisseur. The finest opal of modern times, says King, was one which belonged to Empress Josephine, and which was called the "Burning of Troy," because of the innumerable red flames blazing upon its surface, while the reverse was perfectly opaque. In the troublous times that followed the Napoleonic period the gem was lost sight of, and there is left no trace of it. There are two wonderful opals among the French crown jewels, one of which is set in the clasp of the imperial cloak. Empress Eugenie is said to have a most superstitious dread of them and would not wear an opal for any persuasion. Queen Victoria does not share this feeling with her. She, on the contrary, admires the gem very much, and has given to each of her daughters, on their marriage day, various pieces of jewelry set with the iridescent gem. There are many varieties of opals coming from almost as many quarters of the globe. The opal found in Hungary was thought to be harder and more durable than those found in Mexico and South America, but since the better development of the mines in those places stones have been found quite the equal of Hungarian gems.

HUMORING THE GREAT PETER.

How the Sovereign of Wurtemberg Carried Out His Little Joke.

It seems that the czar, who has determined on retaining his incognito in traveling through Europe, absolutely declined to take up his quarters at the royal palace at Stuttgart, but insisted on going to an inn. Having learned of this prior to his arrival, says the New York Home Journal, the Wurtemberg sovereign caused all the hotel and inn keepers to remove their signs. Over the principal doorway of his palace he had a huge sign hung out stating that within there was cheer for man and beast at cheap prices, and that the name of the hotel was the Konigsbau.

On the czar's carriage and retinue entering the city the postilions, previously instructed by the Wurtemburg officials, drove straight to the palace, and there, standing at the main entrance, was the sovereign, fat, burly and jovial, arrayed in the traditional costume of a boniface, with a white apron and cap, etc., while the various princesses, princes, nobles and dignitaries of his court were costumed as waiters and witresses, ostlers and other servants. Peter the Great, greatly amused by this witty and kindly manner of humoring his wishes, entered thoroughly into the spirit of the joke, which was kept up until the following day, when he proceeded on his journey. Noticing that the postilion mounted on the wheeler of his traveling carriage was a man of singularly unkempt appearance, his clothes ragged and covered with mud, he made a remark to one of his attendants that there was at least no mistake as to the social condition of that man, and that there could be no danger of his being a nobleman in disguise. And yet, when at the end of the first stage, the postilion came to the carriage door to receive his gratuity and raised the cap from his head, the czar to his astonishment recognized in him the heir to the Wurtemberg throne, who had assumed this disguise for the purpose of speeding his father's imperial guest.

THEY SLEEP THROUGH SUMMER.

Animals That Lie Dormant During the Heated Term.

When the heat of a tropical or semi-tropical summer dries up every pool and parches the ground to such an extent that it is difficult for animals not endowed with great powers of locomotion to obtain water, they compromise with nature by sleeping off the season of heat and scarcity. The winter sleepers, says the Brooklyn Eagle, are pretty well known, but, owing to the summer sleepers being for the most part inhabitants of tropical countries, far removed from the path of trained observers, we are less acquainted with the species practicing that means of escaping the heat and drought of summer. Indeed, at present only one mammal, the tenec, a hedgehog-like beast of Madagascar, is known to do so. In South America and Africa various reptiles estivate. In the plains of Venezuela the alligator, the land and fresh water tortoise, the boa constrictor and several sorts of the smaller kinds of serpent lie motionless during the hottest period of the tropical summer. But their dormancy is not so perfect as that of some hibernators. In Brazil, Australia and Cape Colony lizards, frogs, tortoises and insects pass months of the rainless season inclosed in hard earth, and in India many species of fishes live during the hot season in a torpid condition, embedded in the hardened clay.

In countries where snow is common every winter there are ethics of snowballing, just as well as of any other sport or business. There the fun is only indulged in between friends and acquaintances who consent to liberties taken, while to strike a stranger or an unwilling person with a snowball is as much an assault as would be striking with a stone. Of course some allowance must be made here for the extraordinary excitement caused by so rare an occurrence as a snowfall, but even the maddest of the revelers ought to understand that a ball of ice or one mixed with mud, lumps of coal and oyster shells is capable of inflicting a serious wound upon the head and face, and the deliberate use of such missiles is more like an act of malice than sport.

Broad-Minded Leo.

When investigating the vatican records Pope Leo XIII. said to Dom Gasquet the librarian: "Publish everything of interest—everything, whether it tends to the discredit or credit of the ecclesiastical authorities, for you may be sure that if the gospels had been written in our day the treachery of Judas and the denial of St. Peter would have been suppressed for fear of scandalizing weak consciences." So Lord Halifax told the English Church union the other day.

THE CURFEW CRAZE.

It Is Seizing Upon the People of the Northwest.

In Minnesota and the Dakotas Children Must Keep Off the Streets at Night—Revival of an Inquisitorial Custom.

In our western states there is so much faith in the mysterious power of legislation that not merely commercial advantage and political honesty are ordered by law, but even private morality is often made the subject of legislation. This is done, says the New York Sun, as hopefully as if all the laws of the past had done what was expected of them. The latest of these experiments is the Minnesota process for making children good. It is a revival of the curfew custom, which does not seem original until one considers that its application to life on the edge of the twentieth century is in reality making a new thing of it. This revival affects all persons under sixteen years of age, and is the device of a Minnesota editor, who hit upon the discovery that children of evil inclination will change their natures if they can be kept off the streets. The plan was first put in operation in Stillwater last winter, and has swept like a fire over the state until today nearly twenty cities have passed ordinances reviving the old cover-fire law which was borrowed from or else gave rise to the military institution of the reveille. Only the largest towns, like St. Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth, have held back and given reason for the belief that parents are still entitled to the exercise of their judgment in the ordering of their home government.

Without considering the prerogative of parents the mass of the common councilmen, preachers and editors of the state declare the system an excellent one, as it undoubtedly is if the rights of the parents and of the individual generally are not worth consideration. The new practice has spread into South Dakota, where four or five towns have already adopted it, and it is prophesied that by next January all the towns in both Dakotas (the same that were carried for prohibition by the strength of the Swedish vote) will put it into effect. Then, as one enthusiastic Minnesota editor predicts, "the curfew bell will ring in an order of things that shall, in the not far distant future, raise the standard of manhood and womanhood both morally and physically and make better citizens of the rising generation."

In some of the towns and cities the church bells are rung at the curfew hour, and in all of them the town bell, either in the fire tower or the town hall, rings out the command for the police to clear the streets of children. Then, where the law is enthusiastically enforced, a stern search and chase after children is begun. They are pursued along the streets, and barns and sheds are ransacked for them. The police lurk near their haunts, and, no matter how innocently they may be spending their time, they are caught and warned and dragged off to the station houses. The ordinances prescribe the ringing of the hour, which is nine o'clock in some towns and ten o'clock in others, but the law is usually clear in its declaration that the hour, and not the notice of its arrival, shall be heeded. No boy or girl can escape arrest by reason of deafness or the bare assertion that he or she did not hear the alarm. This curfew does not spread in this way without the accompaniment of protest. Men have declared in print and in emphatic speech that the curfew ordinance is not only unconstitutional, but that it is productive of worse conditions than those it seeks to cure. They have shown that it is born of a population wherein some other element—whether Scandinavian or whatever—is stronger than the Anglo-Saxon with its unalterable love of individual liberty. They have argued that it is as un-American as it is unprogressive. The essence of the new rule has been shown to be this: That if a child roams the street at night he is in danger of becoming a criminal, and in order that this narrow view shall triumph the law slips in and makes him a criminal by arresting him and locking him up in the company of hardened characters and with a stain upon his reputation. But these protests have made no impression upon any common council because the new idea has been adopted with enthusiasm, especially by the half million foreign-born persons in the Minnesota population. "What if it is unconstitutional?" they ask (and this question is repeated editorially in the country press). "It is not more unconstitutional than many another statute that graces the law books, and it is a good thing because it will make good citizens of bad children."

Paris has eighty thousand registered dogs, says the Eleveur, which means that there is one licensed dog to every twenty-eight inhabitants. Granting that there are as many unlicensed dogs as there are licensed ones, the canine population of Paris is a very large one indeed. The largest number of dogs is found in the poorest quarters. The estimated cost of feeding the eighty thousand dogs is two million dollars per annum, and they in turn afford a living to twenty-five manufacturers of dog collars and muzzles, four bakers of dog's bread, five factories where dog biscuits, consisting of meat fiber, are made, three special dog pharmacies, a dozen infirmaries and two hospitals.

Instead of paying taxes as ordinary mortals the citizens of Klingenberg-on-the-Main, Germany, received each three hundred marks from the income from several factories owned by the town. The division was made after the expenses of administration had been paid by money from the same source.

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