

Cuba's Great Sugar Crop

During the last year the world's output of sugar reached the enormous total of 11,000,000 tons. Of this Cuba furnished 1,000,000 tons. And the remittance of the sugar industry in the island republic is but just begun. The shortage of the beet sugar crop in Europe and an exceptionally good cane crop in Cuba is making this a real re-creation year for the island. Prices are high and the profits on sugar this year promise to run close to \$50,000,000.

The story of sugar in Cuba recalls the ancient problem of the frog in the well, which fell back a certain number of feet with each advance. Soil and climate have especially adapted the island to become the world's sugar bowl. With but one-fifth of her available sugar lands under cultivation, distracted by wars, loaded with taxes, and with legislation framed in Madrid for the benefit of Spaniards rather than Cubans, with security of suitable labor and with no agricultural banks to advance the necessary money, Cuba has yet been able, when not engaged in actual war, to produce a goodly portion of the world's sugar supply. Now, with her own government "by and for the people," with up-to-date machinery, with peace within her ports, and with more available labor, as well as assured capital, the little island republic is certain of a future which will turn the eyes of both capital and labor more and more in her direction.

The last insurrection in Cuba broke out in February, 1895. The year before had witnessed the island pass her previous high water mark in sugar production. Her crop was 1,054,214 tons, with but one-fourteenth of the island under cane cultivation. The grinding season begins in December and ends in May, and in consequence the sugar output of the year 1895 was greatly affected by the infant revolution. The figure of the crop of that year reached 1,041,254 tons.

Later the "Spartan" policy of Gomez came into play. "Spain will never relax her hold upon Cuba while Cuba is worth the keeping," said the General. "We must render it useless. The inhabitants of Cuba must be prepared for sacrifice."

And indeed sacrifice was demanded of them. In the cane fields and sugar mills the chief value of Cuba is being pressed. The mills must cease to grind, the fields to produce; and so the torch aided the sword. Orders were given to set fire to every mill which showed symptoms of activity, and to burn the cane in the fields. It was a sad time for the sugar interests of Cuba. Spain in her turn took on the role of destroyer, in addition to that of oppressor. Some of the sugar planters, indeed, escaped destruction by paying tribute to both armies; others fortified their buildings and mobilized small bodies of mounted men to guard their estates. They were able, under favorable conditions and in the less affected districts, to do a little grinding; but in 1896 the total output had sunk to a beggarly 225,221 tons, the smallest crop in half a century.

And now a new danger menaced the sugar planter. His trained cattle, without which he was unable to plant or harvest his crops, were taken for food or for harvest. His crops, were taken for food by both armies. Labor as the insurrection grew became very scarce both in field and mill; the sugar industry in Cuba was paralyzed. Cuba was indeed scarcely worth the keeping. With her sugar fields burned and no labor at hand to perform the work necessary to the saving of the roots; with neither labor, cattle nor money for the replanting where that was a necessity, with debts accumulated, and with her markets demoralized, she was indeed a poor possession.

In this state of industrial ruin the American occupation found the island. In 1899 Robert P. Porter was sent as special commissioner to Cuba by President McKinley. Mr. Porter investigated the industrial conditions of the island and received reports from the best informed men—the sugar planters and mill owners themselves. The report was almost invariably the same. The sugar interests of Cuba were paralyzed, the mills must either be rebuilt or undergo extensive repairs, and the fields must be replanted. No adequate amount of labor was obtainable, and in the provinces which had suffered most no cattle were left.

It was estimated that between one hundred and fifty and two hundred sugar mills had been burned, and an end of the scarcity of cattle may be gained from the fact that upon the Santa Lucia sugar estate, the largest in the province of Santiago, and employing in time of peace 2,000 men, but four head of cattle remained. In this province alone there were in 1894, 266,273 head of cattle. In 1898 but 5,000 head remained, and without cattle the sugar industry was dead.

And yet Cuba was not ruined. Soil and climate, her two most valuable assets, remained. The sugar producer was dismayed, but he was not hopeless. He who had suffered most stood in the midst of his blackened acres and planned a larger replanting and more modern machinery. He who had a few fields untouched or an opportunity to do a little planting, he who had saved his machinery by means of his little private army, set valiantly to work.

That the sugar planter has worked the crop reports of 1904 abundantly prove. The highest record of the past—that of ten years ago—was approached. The coming crop is estimated at 1,200,000 tons. The sugar remittance of Cuba is just begun, but it has had a good beginning.

The exact date of the introduction of sugar cane into the island is uncertain. Many writers declare, with a showing of facts to support their assertion, that it was done by the first Captain General, Velasquez by name, in 1533. Since then the industry has had an eventful history, in which the labor question has played an important part. African slaves, Chinese coolies, Spaniards, Canary Islanders, Spaniards and Cubans have been tried in the cane field and sugar mill. The negro and the Canary Islander have stood the test most successfully, with Spaniards from the rural

provinces and white Cuban labor, of which there is never enough, also a necessity. Negro women are considered excellent hands during the cutting season. They are paid the same wages as the male field hands and have the additional value of keeping their husbands steadily at work while they are in the fields. No white women work in the fields.

Chinese labor has in times past proved faithful and intelligent, but the coolie has not the strength of the negro. The Spaniard is a good and intelligent worker; he is, however, independent, and will only work in the cane fields when he happens to prefer that species of toil, but unmoved otherwise by monetary and other inducements. The negro is the ideal worker in the cane fields. The hot sun and long hours do not affect or discourage him, and the fact that cutting must be done by hand is to him an argument in his favor. The entire readjustment of the sugar industry necessary in 1899 was not the first experience of the kind among Cuban planters. The industry had already passed through a number of crises from various causes. Among these were the growth of the beet-sugar industry in Germany during the years previous to 1870, the interdiction of the slave trade by treaty at about the same time, the Ten Years' War from 1868 to 1878, the subsequent progressive freeing of the slaves under the Morret law, the decline in the price of sugar in 1884, the total emancipation of the slaves in 1885 and tariff legislation in the United States, which has ever been the best sugar customer of Cuba. From all these troubles Cuba was just emerging triumphant when the insurrection of 1895 was begun.

It must not be concluded that the troubles already mentioned were all that fell to the industrial lot of the island during these years. The legislation at Madrid, in which Cuba had no voice, was always in favor of the mother country. The entire debt of the Ten Years' War was laid upon the island, which was already in an exhausted condition. Heavy duties that had always been levied upon cattle, machinery and supplies were lifted but temporarily, and then became heavier than in the past. Arbitrary, as well as heavy, these duties were, and from the decision of Spain there was no appeal, in spite of the brave words of the treaty of El Zanjón. There was nothing save sullen acquiescence and a struggle to proceed with the added burdens.

An idea of the duties demanded may be gained from the record of a single fact. In the matter of sugar bags Cuba required for a good crop about seven million. These bags were chiefly purchased from Barcelona and England, the duty upon raw material making it very high. The United States, to compete, offered Cuba the "colonia" system. On a sugar bag which cost in England 12 cents Spain demanded a duty of 9 cents. And yet, in spite of all these hindrances and drawbacks in the few years before the outbreak of the last insurrection, Cuba was prosperous. What may she not become in the future under the advantageous conditions now surrounding her industries?

Sugar cultivation in the Pearl of the Antilles has been carried on in the past, as it will probably be in the future, by what is known as the "colonia" system. This consists in dividing the cane lands tributary to the central mill into small holdings, each of which is worked by a tenant farmer "on shares." Seed, implements and all necessary money are advanced by the owner of the land and grinding mill. When the crop is harvested and the owner has been paid, the tenant gets his share in raw sugar, lot being taken for the grinding. It is estimated that a caballeria—33.16 acres—can be successfully cultivated by an experienced cane farmer with the help of his own family, save in the cutting season, when extra labor must be hired. This should, if properly worked, insure not only a good living, but a fair profit to the farmer.

A sugar mill to be profitable must be kept constantly busy during the grinding season, which covers about one hundred and twenty working days. In order to insure his ceaseless activity, the mill owner must not depend too much upon the tenant farmers, who are apt to temporarily suspend their labors without convincing reason. At least 40 per cent of the crop should be the property of land operated by the owner and ready to fill in the gaps in the mill and the size of the land under cultivation naturally vary. Some soil is richer than others and raises a larger crop an acre. The best lands for sugar purposes lie in Havana, Matanzas and Santa Clara provinces, although the sugar belt extends from the eastern zone of Pinar del Rio to the eastern half of Puerto Principe.

The capital invested in a sugar mill is necessarily large. The amount varies from \$500,000 to \$3,000,000. The largest mill on the island, built since the late war, is called the Chappara. It produced in the season of 1904 about 250,000 bags. A small mill will produce as little as 25,000 bags—seven bags constituting a ton of sugar. The Chappara is equipped with the newest and most economical machinery, which has also been installed in the rehabilitated mills of the island. This machinery is composed of the latest inventions for the purpose and makes possible a most economical grinding of the cane. By the aid of this machinery every particle of sugar is extracted from the cane. This is a great advance upon the older methods, which were necessarily more wasteful. Economy was not so important in the times when the price of sugar was higher and competition less keen. Sugar may be produced at a fraction less than two cents a pound in Cuba. The profit in ordinary years lies in the size of the fraction left by the most economical methods of production. Germany, the largest sugar producing country in the world, regulates the selling price of the commodity. The German producer is, of course,

beet sugar, and it is said that every pound of beet sugar manufactured in the United States costs three and one-fourth cents. It would, therefore, seem that the producer of cane sugar is possessed of great advantages.

So perfect is the new machinery that the juice of the cane is completely extracted in the grinding process, leaving the refuse so dry that it may be fed into the engine as fuel. Other machinery has also been perfected which takes the place of the labor of many men. This will aid in lessening the scarcity of labor in other branches of the industry. For instance, a machine now in use lifts the entire contents of a car of cane by a single sweep and transfers it to its allotted place in the mill, a result which could in the old days only be accomplished by hand labor. The large sugar mills—and there are many of them in the island—employ each a small army of men during the planting, cutting and grinding seasons. At other seasons only a sufficient work force need be kept to look after the cane, free from weeds until the leaves are large enough to shade the roots from the rays of the sun.

Cane is planted from cuttings of the stalk about three feet in length. It requires eighteen months to mature for the first crop; after that it will produce good crops for a term of years without replanting, the length of time varying with the richness of the soil. Virgin land will, of course, produce the largest crops. Cane is not, however, an exhausting crop to the soil, and the cutting the leaves are allowed to lie upon the ground for the double purpose of shading the roots from the sun and fertilizing the soil. No machine has ever been invented which will do the work of cutting the cane. For this work the machete is used, and the cane must be cut as far below the surface of the ground as the strength of the man armed with the tool will allow that the roots be uninjured. An additional reason why the machine cutter is not possible is the fact that the cane grows so tall, reaching a height of eighteen feet, that the stalk is unable to sustain its own weight and falls to the ground, where the crop becomes a sprawling, twisted mass. The operation of a large mill, with its self-operated fields, as well as its system of "colonia" or cane farms, requires not only large capital, but executive skill as well.

During the cutting and grinding season the men employed are housed in the buildings of the company and fed at the company's expense; this, of course, in addition to their regular wages. A series of rules, varying but little from the large estates, have been evolved in the daily routine of the cane fields. In the morning the bell calls the workers, who, after drinking the coffee, which in Cuba largely if not entirely constitutes the morning meal, march to the fields. At eleven comes the return for what is known on the island as "breakfast," a substantial meal. After partaking of this, the workers doze or lounge and smoke in the shade of the "bater," it may be mentioned here that because of the inflammable nature of the crop smoking is only allowed when the men are off duty. During this period guards keep watch in the fields in case of fire. At one o'clock the men return to the fields, remaining at work until six o'clock sounds the call for dinner. At eight the bell demands silence, which, save on special occasions, is strictly enforced.

Wages are about the same in the various provinces. A cane cutter receives \$21 per month; a stevedore, employed in loading cane, the same amount; a ploughman, \$23, and a mounted guard \$25. The list of employees is a long one, from the manager whose salary varies with the size of the mill and his own qualifications, to the last of the master's assistants, who receives \$12 per month. Field work during the summer months is roughly estimated to cost \$17 per man each month.

The workers are well fed and the approximate cost of feeding them is estimated at \$7 per month for ordinary workers and \$12 for those of higher grade. If a man is injured in the performance of his duty his expenses at a hospital are paid by his employer. A third employer makes two rounds of the fields daily, checking the workers. Each one then receives a brass cake, which he turns in at breakfast and dinner. When the name of a laborer is placed on the roll he receives a plate, tin cup and spoon. These are charged against him, and will be used by him at meals and returned at the end of the season. Wages on many of the estates are payable any day between the hours from eleven to one.

It is hoped that the payment of the Cuban patriots of the late war, which began last June, will enable many of them to rent or purchase small holdings, thus becoming small producers. In the bygone days the cane farmer was compelled, through lack of transportation facilities, to live in close proximity to the mills, as cane must be quickly ground after cutting. Each mill maintains its private line of railroad, varying from ten miles to fifty miles in length upon the estate. This is used in carrying the cane to mill and taking out the product. These private lines are now supplemented by greatly improved railroad facilities, since the Cuba Company has given the interior of the island transportation facilities which are undreamed of. This will allow the small producer to live at a greater distance from the mill than was possible in the past, when the bullock train was often the fastest means of transportation. Under the old system small holdings were not to be purchased, since the mill controlled the available land in its vicinity; hence the tenant farmer could never hope, even under the most favorable circumstances, to own the land he worked. In the new Cuba, however, the man with a small capital has a future as well as the large land owner. The cost of clearing and planting (including seed, implements and cattle) and raising a crop of cane on a caballeria varies from \$1,000 to \$1,500, the vesting, of course, being extra. The size of the crop, as has been said, varies with the richness of the soil. In new

Small Chance at Sea for American Boys

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14, 1905.—The discussion of measures for the revival of the American merchant marine has incidentally revealed the fact that the American boy has not lost the spirit of adventure and the love for a calling which would take him to distant parts of the world and give him a chance to show his courage and enterprise. Men who are familiar with shipping matters have recently received letters from all parts of the country asking how young Americans may fit themselves for service in the merchant marine, but just now it is impossible to give the writers of these letters much encouragement or advice, for American ships today carry less than nine per cent of the country's foreign commerce, a proportion in striking contrast to that which obtained during the first three quarters of the last century. With the disappearance of American ships from the seas there has been a corresponding opportunity enjoyed by young Americans to enter upon an honorable and lucrative career, and this is a matter which is likely to receive a good deal of attention during the discussion of the general subject.

In the palmy days of the clipper ships, the merchant marine was largely managed by young men. Vessels were captained by youth who had scarce attained their majority but they carried the flag to all parts of the world. It was then the ambition of boys born in the coast town to walk the quarter deck and in their estimation at least the captain of an American deep water vessel was as great a power as an Admiral of the Blue. In those early days to every captain there was open the prospect of retiring from the sea with a competence sufficient to establish a trading house of his own. The average sailor of 30 was often the wealthy merchant of 50 and even if he remained at sea he was usually able to leave his family a comfortable sum when he died. At the beginning of the 19th century William Sturgis shipped at 17 before the mast; two years later he was captain and manager in the China trade and at 29 he had left the sea to establish his great firm which controlled half the trade with China. Captains in those days were something more than the pilots of a deep sea ferryboat. Where there were no telegraph lines, no cables, no railroads and but few letters, the master of a trading vessel was as much of a merchant as he was of a sailor and to him the financial fortunes of the owner were entrusted as well as the ship and the lives of his crew.

A good example, said William Gray, a Boston merchant who owned a fleet of 60 ships, "will sail with a load of fish to the West Indies, hanging up his stocking in the cabin on arriving, putting therein dollars as he sells fish and paying out when he buys rum, molasses, and hand in the stocking on his return in full of all accounts. With such a system it was necessary to trust the captain and to provide liberally for his welfare. It was a natural outgrowth of these conditions that on every voyage the captain had either a portion of the hold given to him in which to store his own goods or else received a share in the owner's profits. These were great. The trade was growing, the demand for men continually increasing and promotion rapid. New England boys went to sea in great numbers and when 21 were old masters and part owners of valuable ships. Nathaniel Silsbee, who was afterwards United States senator from Massachusetts, was master of an East Indian man before he was 20.

Under such conditions the merchant marine was to New England in the latter part of the 18th and the earlier years of the 19th century what Wall Street is to New York today. The sons of the great shipping merchants began life on their fathers' ships, sometimes as supercargoes and not infrequently as common seamen. In general, however, they served as apprentices, known in the slang of those days as "sailor's cousins," and were regarded as brevier officers. Naturally they were spared some of the ordinary drudgery of the sailor's life, but their training in seamanship was as thorough and practical as that of the roughest sailor before the mast. The Puritanism of New England was not infrequently carried on board ship. Nathaniel Ames, a Harvard graduate, has recorded the fact that on the first vessel on which he served, every

ground a caballeria will produce as much as 2,500,000 pounds of cane, and with grinding, according to the improved methods now in use, 2,500 pounds will produce 275 pounds of sugar.

The world demands its annual quota of sweets, and Cuba, with her climate, soil, and a government "by and for the people," is now prepared to become with an expenditure of capital, brains and labor, the world's sugar bowl. E. A. Bengough, in N. Y. Herald.

to castle and was obliged to bring a certificate of good moral character from the clergyman whose church he had attended last.

With the establishment of fast pack- et-lines and the growth of the rich trade with China there was developed a new career of the sea which rapidly supplanted the old-time merchant captain. The master of the packet or the China clipper was now the highest dignity of the marine service and his ship was the wonder of all other nations. It was not uncommon for a first-class packet to reach Liverpool from this country in thirteen to fifteen days, and on the China service equal speed and efficiency were maintained. The Yankee skipper was feared and worshipped by his crew and admired by European seamen for his ship and for his seamanship. F. T. Bullen has drawn a vivid picture of this despot of the sea, striding up and down his quarter-deck in spotless white flannels, ruling his ship with a rod of iron and possessing a perfect rage for discipline and cleanliness. Bullen records an instance of one captain who made a practice of taking down a saucy crew from the cook's galley and wiping it out with a white handkerchief. If the handkerchief bore any traces of dust or grease the cook heard from the skipper in no mild way. Another captain was accustomed to put his handkerchief on the end of a stick and then poke the stick into every corner or crevice of the carved woodwork of the saloon. Dust upon the end of the stick meant a stormy day for the saloon steward.

While in America, the deep sea trade no longer offers opportunity for the exercise of the talents of ambitious young men, the great maritime nations are adopting new means for training officers of their merchant marine. In England, where the merchant service represents a capital of \$125,000,000, the training of men competent to take charge of it, is facilitated in every feasible way, and the calling of an officer of the merchant marine is recognized as honorable and of importance in the extension of British power and influence. For the education of future commanders of merchant craft, training ships are maintained. In the Thames and the Mersey two of these vessels, the Worcester and the Conway, are anchored. On board, well-to-do young men of good family are trained for the merchant service as systematically and as carefully as are the future officers of the Royal Navy. Such seamanship as can be taught on a stationary ship is, of course, the main subject in the curriculum of these floating colleges, but naval architecture, foreign languages and engineering are also considered necessary for the proper equipment of a first-class officer of the merchant marine. In addition to these high class training ships, life on board of which involves some expense, there are a number of other vessels designed to afford a somewhat similar training to boys whose parents are unable to afford the expense of sending them to the Worcester and Conway. Moreover every well-known firm of ship owners carries on its rolls a number of apprentices, many of whom pay more than \$50 for the privilege of four years' experience on board ship. When their four years are over these boys are entitled to examination for a certificate as second mate, and from then on to the time when they find themselves in possession of the much prized master's certificate, their rise is watched jealously by the Board of Trade.

The training given these British boys illustrates the changes in the demands made upon the merchant sailor of today as compared with his predecessor of the last century. A sea captain is seldom nowadays out of reach of the cable and accordingly he is not called upon to secure cargoes. That work is done by owners and agents. But the commander of the modern vessel must know many things strange to the old-time skipper. He commands a ship equipped with steam and electric machinery and of much more complicated construction than were the old timers, and these new conditions call for special training and knowledge, and of a kind which makes their possession especially valuable to his country in time of war. Britain's Royal Naval Reserve composed of officers of the merchant service, affords material which could be relied upon to aid in offering the war ships in time of hostility, while the great number of seamen employed makes it much easier to find crews for cruisers and battleships than is the case in this country. The three trading vessels now being built by the United States Government and two extra training ships, the St. Mary and the Saratoga, maintained at their own expense by the cities of New York and Philadelphia, are the outcome of the realization of the fact that without sailors to man them the most powerful of modern battleships are useless and that seamen cannot be made in a day.

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Warning to Powers of Threatened Up- rising in China Is to Bring About a Prevention—All Money in Port Ar- thur Divided Among Officers.

ST. PETERSBURG, Jan. 13.—Russia's notification to the powers of the imminent danger of an uprising in China as a result of the Japanese propaganda which threaten foreign interests, coupled with China's repeated violations of neutrality by really warning the powers, Russia regards the time as having come for joint action by the powers for the protection of their interests. Russia feels Japan has broken her pledge made as a result of Secretary Hay's note at the beginning of the war, and the further persistence to resolve Russia and leave her free to act for her own protection. To diplomatic circles it is believed the warning is intended to induce Hay to bring pressure to bear to prevent the extension of the zone of hostilities and to compel China to suppress the agitation in the interior at that empire.

Why Port Arthur Fell.

London, Jan. 13.—The Times' correspondent says: The number of soldiers, seamen and civilians in Port Arthur at the beginning of the siege was 55,000. There were no signs of privation. Food sufficient for two months. Surrender inexplicable.

Report Is Denied.

Port Louis, Mauritius, Jan. 13.—It is denied the Japanese officers were sighted at Cape Amber. It is rumored the warships are west of Mauritius. The Russian cruiser Kulbin arrived at Diego Suarez bay.

ALLEGED BOX CAR THIEVES.

Men in Jail at The Dalles Believed Part of Organized Gang.

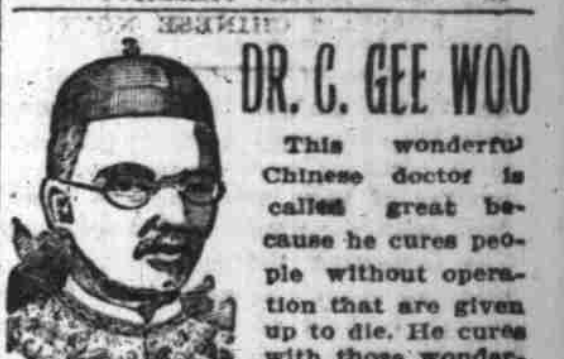
THE DALLES, Ore., Jan. 13.—Two alleged box car thieves, Ed LaSage and "Bill" Dorman, were bound over yesterday to the circuit court by City Recorder J. M. Fillin. A freight car was broken into between The Dalles and Umatilla, and a case of new merchandise stolen. The theft was reported to City Marshal Wood, who soon located the men selling second-hand goods on the streets. This was reported to the railroad agent here, who discovered that a package of clothing shipped by a man named Bogley, from Lincoln, Neb., to Goldendale, Wash., was missing. This gave the officer a clue, and he arrested the two men. They acknowledged the theft of the package of clothing, but denied taking the case of merchandise. They claim to have come here from Miles City, Mont. The authorities believe they have caught two of a gang that some time ago carried on a successful series of box car robberies on the line of the O. R. & N.

MULTNOMAH FAIR PURSES.

PORTLAND, Jan. 14.—The Multnomah Fair Association today decided to offer in the aggregate \$80,000 in prizes for the race meet next August. The daily purses will amount to \$1500, being \$300 more than in 1904.

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