

The Finest Language in the World

Benzo—my friend Benzo—is one of those inevitable men in whom one turns instinctively in times of tribulation. On that disastrous day when I left the familiar house in West Kensington in the character of a rejected suitor, it was to him I repaired.

"She's refused me," I said dejectedly. "Cheer up, Statistics tell us there are 192 unmarried women to a hundred unmarried men. Therefore—"

"Oh, hang your statistics! I want you to help me to get out of the country—to New Zealand."

"Why New Zealand?" "I want to get as far away from this country as I can."

"I am afraid I can't manage that. Put—do you know Calabar?" "Yes. It's a dog biscuit."

"It may be, but it's also a district on the coast of Africa. A firm of merchants I know have a trading station there. The manager who has been out three years, is coming home in less than six months' time. I think I can get you the job, if between then and now you acquire a knowledge of the language."

to walk on the beach when neither of us had any special engagement. Three months after I had agreed to leave, a letter came from Benzo, advising me that "the native princess of West Africa for whom I had earlier been engaged, had been betrothed to another man."

"What's that? The black missionary from Calabar arrives next week. Oh, he does, does he? Well, Mr. Trent, stick to your exercises till then, and after you've met him, come and tell me how you've fared."

"I will," I promised, "and I'll settle up then," for hitherto I had not paid the professor a farthing; he had put it off, saying that he preferred payment at the end of the course.

The week passed rapidly. I worked hard, and, when not studying Calabar, read books about West Africa and discussed my future there with Hope. We promised to exchange letters by every mail. I was also to fill up my leisure time by writing a long fairy tale in verse suitable for a Christmas Illustrated fairy book.

All too soon the Calabar native arrived, and an appointment was fixed at the office of the company, Benzo, at my special request, accompanied me, and punctually at the hour named we were ushered into the manager's private room and found him engaged with a big, black man dressed in European style.

"Now, Mr. Trent," said the manager, "just converse with our good friend here in his native tongue. I immediately burst into Calabar speech, welcoming the nigger to the land of King Edward, and trusting he had had a pleasant voyage."

But the man only stared, and at last, when I ceased, he said, "Me no understand," and then began chattering in some gibberish utterly unintelligible to me.

I retorted in Calabar, begging him to answer in his own tongue, but all to no purpose. Then I knew that Calabar was gibberish utterly different to the language I had been laboriously learning for three months.

WHAT PARAGUAY IS LIKE

A Country Rich Potentially But Poor in People.

A PLENTITUDE OF GIFTS

Its Government is One That Progressive Nations Would Call Bad, Yet Our South American Neighbors Are Contented—Utter Poverty in Which the Natives Live.

Paraguay is one of the sisterhood of Latin-American republics which enjoys a plentitude of gifts but remains poor in the midst of vast potential wealth. Its Government is what highly civilized people, rejoicing in the benefits of what we call Progress, ranging from porcelain bathtubs to luxurious express trains, regard as "bad," yet the Paraguayans are contented. Anglo-Saxon on-lookers in Paraguay lament that there are few factories, wire fences, cities with asphalted streets, policemen wearing helmets and the rest of the apparatus of civilization.

"How glorious the flowers and young leaves! All Uruguay is now one blossom, at a distance one sees a blueish haze in between the all-green of the forest. Farther, all a light yellow, and again a lightish pink. The fragrance one perceives miles off carried by the wind until lost, and for a moment one forgets the hardships and struggles of life upon earth and feels one's self more spirit-like among these glorious accomplishments of the Great Spirit, and one wishes to be better if only for one moment, and to peep into the soul-life of after-life, with that intense desire to learn more, and know more about this magnificent nature, and how dull to have to return to every-day life; no time for thought, no time for anything but business, and to once more see all the miseries of life and not be able to help the suffering millions of whom Paraguay also has its share; one trip into the camp will show anyone in what utter poverty these people live, and in what wretchedness their children are born, bred and finally die, if they ever do reach the age of maturity, for the greater part die before they are one year old. Happily for them, they have but little sentiment, and all is easily forgotten; they are not a strong people, physically speaking, if so they would in truth be sublime, as Longfellow puts it:

"O, fear not in a world like this And thou shalt know ere long, Know how sublime a thing it is To suffer and be strong."

"Nor do I give them credit for being a strong-minded people, with some few exceptions." Yet the correspondent depicts a country that has charms wholly lacking in the lands of cold northern mists and rains. The Paraguayans love their delightful country and probably find, though without conscious thought about it, that compensation which, after all, even up things in a much bemuddled world. The correspondent adds:

"This misery is of course greatly due to themselves and the great thing for Paraguay is to get labor imported. Good, cheap workmen, are essential for the progress of Paraguay and especially agriculturists are wanted. This problem the Government has been trying to solve and I believe they are well on their way to obtain satisfactory results, although it is impossible to see any change as yet, the time having been too short. The new immigration law with a splendidly fitted out 'Oficina de Inmigracion,' all will in the long run tend to induce immigrants from all countries to come to Paraguay."

The "misery" may be evident from one point of view, but when we turn our gaze to the horrible slums of great cities in distant lands, we are inclined to regard the lot of the Paraguayan as something vastly better than that of the dwellers of the "East Sides," of London and New York. Doubtless many things in Paraguay may be "improved," but usually where civilization, with its immense complexities and demands, enters much that is satisfying to the soul of man departs forever.

The strenuous white race seeks to make over all people according to its approved model, but nowhere has it achieved contentment, and so it cannot bestow it as a gift upon the backward nations. The Standard's correspondent wants to see "good, cheap workmen" in Paraguay, but in the Argentine itself the workmen league themselves in guilds and unions and clamor for their "rights," while in more advanced lands the labor problem puzzles the wits of statesmen and employers. If the "superior" nations have not been able to conciliate the workmen, there is small hope of Paraguay's realizing the ideal of the Standard's correspondent.

Not Sisters

Now and again you see two women passing down the street who look like sisters. You are astonished to learn that they are mother and daughter, and you realize that a woman at forty or forty-five ought to be at her finest and fairest. Why isn't it so?

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DECLARES VICE A BENEFIT.

Dr. McElroy Says Drink and Drugs Destroy Human Perversities Who Can Be Spared.

Chicago.—"Vice is a benefit to society. It aids nature by sweeping out her overcrowded workshop, ridding her laboratory of misfits, defects and other worthless creatures."

"Vice performs the office of judge and executioner, cutting off the careers of its victims at an early age, generally in the twenties or early in the thirties."

"People who have done much in the way of reforming drunkards have been surprised and astonished to find how little real manhood remained after whiskey had been removed from the equation."

"If the world were to suddenly quit manufacturing, importing and selling intoxicants I believe that the defective and delinquent classes would invent some other means of self destruction."

MINOR SHARE HORSE'S MEALS.

Minor Surprises Buck and Doe Calmly Munching From Manger. Wallace, Idaho.—George Heller, a Wallace mining man, returned from a trip to the New Chicago property, near Murray, in which he is heavily interested. He was at the mine for several days, driving a horse from Wallace and keeping the animal in a barn at the workings.

One morning when he went to harness the animal he heard strange sounds in the barn, and approaching cautiously, was surprised to see a large doe and a yearling buck standing on either side of the horse eating from the same manger.

It was well for Mr. Heller that he approached the door cautiously, for as soon as he was sighted by the doe she made a furious charge in his direction, and he escaped injury only by jumping behind the door and using it as a shield. The doe and buck then ran out and made for the timber, and Mr. Heller, having no gun, could merely watch their flight in surprise.

DIGS UP MASTODON BONES.

Farmer Finds Teeth of Great Prehistoric Animal. Mason, Mich.—Teeth and bones, supposed to be those of a mastodon, have been unearthed on the bank of Willow creek on the farm of Charles Eckhart, three miles southwest of this city. Frank Warfield, who works the farm, recently found one perfect tooth, the crown of another and half of another split diagonally across the crown. The perfect tooth is about five inches long three inches thick and five inches from the crown to the end of the roots, which are broken off. The crown is black and highly polished. Some of the bones are apparently from the limbs, and two fragments of the lower jaw bone, which show where two back teeth had been imbedded, are together about twenty inches long.

A Parisian Character Dead.

Paris, France.—The revolutionary Libertad died recently in a local hospital from a kick which he had received during a stormy meeting. Libertad was one of the most curious figures in contemporary Paris. He wore no hat, but long tangled hair and a long beard. Over his scarlet shirt he wore a black blouse, and he was never seen without a crutch and an enormous cane. His language was terrific, and he rarely attended any public meeting without calling for blood. The man was a complete mystery. His most intimate disciples knew nothing of his history. On his death bed he begged his friends not to arrange a funeral for him, as he had left his body by will to the Paris School of Medicine.

Maharajah's Wife a Beauty.

Paris, France.—When the Maharajah of Kapurthalla fell in love with the dancing girl in the streets of Madrid, Anita Delgado was not only exceedingly graceful but very pretty. He brought her to Paris to be trained for the position she was to occupy, and she developed into a handsome, stylish girl. He took her to his home in India and made her his wife with Oriental ceremony amid great splendor. Recently he returned to Paris, his favorite city, and brought his bride, now become a woman of surpassing loveliness. Copies of her latest photograph are eagerly sought.

Thumbless Monkeys.

The radical difference between the hand of man and of the monkey lies in the thumb. In the human hand the thumb has the "opposing power," which means that the thumb can be made to touch the tip of each or any of the other fingers on the same and; the monkey's thumb is non-opposable.

Miles of Human Hair.

The average woman carries 50 miles of hair on her head.

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