

A CUBAN GOVERNOR.

GENERAL TACON WAS A BENEVOLENT SORT OF TYRANT.

He Administered the Island Well, Put Down Oppression, Released the Unjustly Imprisoned, and Was Accessible to All.

In the Century there is an article on "Life and Society in Old Cuba," made up of extracts from the Journal of Jonathan S. Jenkins, an American painter of miniatures, written in 1839. Mr. Jenkins says:

Prior to the administration of General Tacon in Cuba (who assumed office as Captain-General in 1834), particularly during the rule of Vivas, society had become so disorganized that neither life, property, nor social rights could be said to have any protection. Truly "might was right," and this was the only law. The robber, the pirate, and the assassin were recognized institutions, and none dared oppose them. To right such disordered times required unflinching courage, stern justice, and a rule approaching oppression. All these virtues were found in General Tacon, as the sequel will show.

One of Tacon's first public cares, after his appointment, was to visit the state prisons. He interrogated every prisoner as to the cause of his confinement and the length of time he had been there. He found that some of them had been imprisoned over twenty years, their bodies wasted with wretchedness and their minds crushed with despair. Having no friends to be interested in their fate, they had been forgotten by the world. This was a favorite means with the wealthy to rid themselves of a debtor or a rival.

One of the prisoners stated that he had been *major-domo* on the estate of the Count of Phillameno, who was then auditor of war under Tacon. The count owned him six thousand dollars for services, and to avoid making the payment had him imprisoned in the castle. Tacon was mortified and surprised, and cautioned the man to be sure and tell him the truth, for he was determined to investigate the matter thoroughly. The prisoner insisted that what he said was true. Thereupon Tacon had the Count of Phillameno summoned to meet the prisoner before him the next day. As the captain-general had before this refused persistently to receive the visits or the presents of the nobility, the count was flattered by the summons, and came at the time appointed, very much dressed up, as if on a visit of ceremony. The prisoner was there when he arrived, and he started at meeting his victim face to face. Tacon, with a stern and searching look, asked the count, "Do you know that man?" pointing to the prisoner.

"Yes; I think he was once my *major-domo*," he replied, with an anxious look.

"You had him imprisoned, did you?" said Tacon, not taking his eyes off him.

"Yes, I did."

"And the cause?" was quickly asked. "Because he insulted me, and I am a gentleman, and must be protected," replied the count, recovering his courage.

"That is not the true reason. You owed this man six thousand dollars for honest services and had him imprisoned to avoid payment. This debt must be paid instantly"; and with his pen Tacon calculated the amount of the debt with compound interest. "This debt must be paid forthwith."

The count, evidently surprised and again fearful, replied:

"Your Excellency, I will return home and settle with him."

"No, sir," firmly responded General Tacon. "Here is a pen. Write to your secretary to bring the money here; this matter must be disposed of before we separate."

The count did as he was ordered, and the secretary brought the money. The *major-domo* was paid and released, and then the noble was permitted to return home, humbled, but filled with the bitterest enmity to Tacon and his justice. This affair was noised abroad, and created a great sensation among the nobility, who had heretofore enjoyed perfect impunity in their wrongs to the humble classes. Tacon was warned of the danger he incurred in thus antagonizing them, as they had often procured the removal of his predecessors for this very reason. He then announced that supreme power had been conferred on him as the only condition upon which he would accept the office of captain-general of Cuba, and this announcement brought astonishment and consternation to the upper classes.

The Count of Phillameno was not content to acquiesce in the just sentence of Tacon, but manifested his hatred on several occasions. This caused Tacon to issue an order that "the count must not hereafter pass the threshold of his own house, but must exercise the duties of his office as auditor of war in his residence." This was rigidly enforced, and he remained a close prisoner under this order until his death, about two years later.

Tacon sought in every way to encourage the people to make their wrongs known to him, and to this end he removed all the restraints and ceremonies with which rulers are usually surrounded, and made himself accessible to all.

Fruit Consumption in Australia.

There is no portion of the globe in which fruit is more abundant or more extensively consumed than in Australia. Pineapples, grapes, and bananas are grown in Queensland; grapes, oranges, apples, and peaches in New South Wales and South Australia; grapes in Western Australia,

and apples, pears, strawberries, raspberries, and currants in Tasmania. The supply is so ample that during certain seasons of the year pineapples may be purchased for three cents each, grapes for eight cents a pound, mandarin oranges for one cent a dozen, and bananas for two cents a dozen. The belief, once almost universal, among ignorant people that fruit freely eaten was conducive to intestinal disorders, is now thoroughly exploded. In Australia, where its consumption is universal and unrestricted, the death rate is notably low, not only among native born, but among foreign residents as well. In all the towns of that continent are established special shops where for twelve cents may be had a large plate of fruit with a cup of tea or coffee or milk. Moreover, the consumer is allowed to have as much fruit, without extra charge, above the original portion, as he may desire. A writer in an English technical journal, in speaking of Australian fruit lunches, says that those who patronize them are mostly employees in professional or mercantile establishments. In summer, fruit lees are largely consumed. For women, there are many tea rooms, in which the tables are decorated with ferns and palms. The attendants are women, who wear black dresses, white aprons and caps. The charges are six cents for a cup of tea or coffee, bread and butter, and fruit. No tips are given, for tips are unknown in Australia, except in the large hotels. The Australians are equally large consumers of meat. The mutton of the country is as fine as that of England. The lavish use of flesh and fruit has, probably, much to do with the remarkable physical development of Australians, both male and female.

Aluminum Tags for Fish.

Claude Rutter, assistant United States fish commissioner, has arrived in San Francisco after several months of experimental work and scientific investigation on the Sacramento river. He has been studying the salmon, their habits and their development.

Rutter has made two rowboat trips down the river, the first from Red Bluff to Sacramento and the second from Redding to the same destination. He says that the river has been stocked with 40,000,000 young salmon during the past few months. But the novel part of his labors is yet to come. The adult salmon will be tagged with three-quarter inch plates, either of copper or aluminum fastened to the fins or gills. Their movements up stream will then be noted and observations made accordingly. The public are requested to return all tagged fish to the river in the event of a successful angling.

In order to determine the rate of growth of salmon several hundred specimens of young fish will have their adipose fins cut.

The adipose fin is on the back in front of the tail fin and is of fatty nature. The cutting will leave a scar, which will be the means of identification should any of these abbreviated fish return to the scenes of their youth. A single specimen of one of these finless fish found in the river will be the best evidence that he was launched in 1898, and his rate of growth may be accordingly judged. The general belief is that the salmon gets out to sea soon after hatching and does not return until it has reached the age which places it in the class of adults. The tagging and cutting will be the means by which the habits of the salmon may be ascertained by the fish experts.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Canary Women.

Now that Uncle Sam is in an annexing mood, who knows but that the fabled Atlantis of Plato, the Garden of Hesperides and St. Brandon's Fairy Isle, all known to modern geographers as the Canary Islands, may not soon become a part of the United States? Certainly no spot on earth offers a more curious illustration of primitive women.

When the Canaries were conquered by Jean de Bethencourt, a Norman baron, in 1402, in the name of Juan II, of Castile, they were peopled by two races which had emigrated from the mainland. Each race had different laws, habits and customs and was possessed of mutual hatred, which engendered constant warfare.

The inhabitants of the western Canary Islands were small, fair, energetic, brave and amiable; some of them even had blue eyes and red hair. In *Fuerteventura* and *Lanzarote* they were taller, darker and more indolent, lazily obeying their hereditary rulers, whether the latter were men or women. The dark skinned inhabitants are supposed to be of Arabic or of Phoenician origin. They were conquered easily because they were more indolent than the Spaniards, and then the fairer race was subjugated.

A Tablet for an Invalid.

There are some invalids who are compelled to occupy a recumbent position who find a tablet fixed to a writing-board a great convenience. Take a board about eight inches wide and eighteen inches long and cover it with soft cotton flannel, and attach the tablet to it. The board can be propped up at any desired angle, so that it can be used by a person lying on his left side. The lower part of the board will serve as a partial rest for the head and arm. It is a mistake for an invalid or any one to make much use of his eyes while in a recumbent position. Reading or writing in a recumbent position are always prohibited by oculists, even where there is only a slight trouble with the eyes.

About 65,000,000 pounds of beet-sugar were raised in California last year.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

One out of every six inhabitants of France has an account in the State savings bank.

This is a great country. Between her wheatfields and the battlefields she has glory and money to burn.

Recent events suggest that a new leader may soon be needed to wield the baton over the concert of Europe.

Russia's disarmament plan would leave the German emperor with an alarming pile of old junk on his hands.

Events have spoken so loudly that there is no need of people who used to make sport of the United States navy to go to the trouble of making retractions.

Admiral Dewey's comfort when he returns to this country would be greatly enhanced if he could find some man who looks like him to do the hand-shaking.

It is said that many people in Maine are so offended at the advertisements painted on boards and fences along country roads that they refuse to deal with the firms which so advertise.

Considerable trouble was recently caused in a Chicago court, when P. R. Barnes, a prominent lawyer of that city, brought suit against a butcher because his meat caused "scleromatous-plague-colitis."

It is a humorist who suggests the formation of a society for the protection of Admiral Dewey from promiscuous kissing. From recent happenings it would seem as if such a society would have plenty to do when the gallant Admiral returns home.

Medical examiners say that the high collars so much worn by both men and women are productive of dire physical results. The head is thus thrown forward to relieve the back of the neck, and this narrows the chest and decreases the lung space.

America's conquest of a large slice of the tropics is a boon to the people in the light of science, and it would be folly to surrender one inch, facetiously remarks the *New York Herald*. Professor Crookes declares that tropical foodstuffs must be the reliance of the world in the future, wheat already showing signs of a failure to keep pace with the world's population.

Writers in the press in France are making a strong protest against what they are pleased to term a new and dangerous attack of Anglomania suffered by the graceful French women, who are arraying themselves in modifications of masculine attire, carrying canes and wearing monocles. Some of the blame for this is laid to the bicycle and the boulevards in feminine taste which it has wrought.

The taxpayers of New York city will be asked to contribute \$77,600,000 for the maintenance of that municipally owned city. This is more than the combined budgets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Washington, Buffalo and Cincinnati. The denizens of Gotham may reasonably inquire of each other if they are deriving benefits that justify such a vast expenditure.

Not the least difficulty with which Gen. Kitchener had to contend was the liability of his troops to sickness from the trying climate of the Sudan. Yet he seems to have managed it admirably. At no time was there more than five per cent. of the force in the hospital, and the fatal cases were comparatively few. Special attention was given to keeping the men busy and cheerful, the latter by sports thoroughly enjoyed. Football, theatrical performances and river excursions were lively variants on the stress of war, and did much to maintain the health of the command.

A curious plan for elevating morals has been formulated by a well-known citizen of Atlanta. He proposes that each country shall decide by vote on January 1 of each year who the worst man in the country is, and that the man receiving the highest number of votes shall on the ensuing February 1 be hanged. It is claimed for the plan that it would induce bad men to emigrate, and that the "complimentary vote" received by those who had just begun to be bad, but were not generally recognized as such, would tend to create a desire within them to be enrolled among the well-behaved.

A Chicago police justice holds that the word "lobster" applied to a human being is not one of reproach, insult or abuse, and that the person to whom it is applied has no reason to complain. As the lobster minds its own business and is one of the most important and cherished elements of civilization, a contemptuous use of its name is not to be admitted, says the *New York Sun*, with quiet humor. To call a man a "lobster" ought to imply that he is a public benefactor and a person of taste. Even slang should respect one of the chief characters of sea and land.

The Treasury Department figures up the deposits of our people in savings banks at an aggregate of nearly two billion dollars. The exact figures are \$1,939,376,035. This represents the savings of more than 5,000,000 people. It averages \$372 for every depositor. This is a remarkable showing. It is an astounding testimony to the comfort and economy of our people, says the *Boston Post*. One in every fifteen of our population, counting infants and children, as well as men and women, have something of their earnings put by for a rainy day. This can be said of no other people on the face of the earth. Nor in those other coun-

tries in which the savings bank system is well established is there anything like the average of individual deposits. And in Prussia there are more depositors in savings banks than in the United States, but the aggregate amount thus deposited is less than one-third as great. In fact, the United States stands fairly at the head in this great test of popular well-being.

As plum-trees have been taught, in an arid section of Texas, to bore for a subterranean water supply, so fruits, grains and the like have learned to accommodate themselves to the climate of Minnesota. A few years ago corn could not be raised in that state. Now it is matured all the way to the northern boundary. The hardy varieties which were introduced have learned to do their growing and ripening within the season's limits. In experiments in the same line made with fruit trees, it has been observed that the plum and apple trees brought from more northern latitudes begin to make preparations for winter about the middle of August, while those from more southern latitudes continue their fruitage until the cold weather injures or kills them. Success is hoped for from the northern stock, as, of course, that is not injured by going into winter conditions early, while in time it may learn to accommodate itself more closely to the changing seasons.

Artificial irrigation in rice-cultivation is an innovation in Louisiana. In rice growing the ground needs to be submerged at certain seasons of the growth. Hitherto natural means have been relied upon for the submersion, and thus the area of cultivation has been limited by the physical conditions of the rice-growing country. Water is abundant in Louisiana—and by the use of it in irrigation ditches the rice area may be definitely enlarged. Success has attended the first attempt at cultivation with artificial submersion, and high hopes are entertained of the growth of the industry. New Orleans papers are already looking forward to the time when the rice-growers of the Carolinas will be attracted to Louisiana, "the natural home of the rice plant," and when New Orleans will be the largest rice market in the world, with mills and all other facilities for handling the crop.

Statistics as to the comparatively few deaths from lightning may not avail to lessen the nervousness of those who view every "thunder head" with alarm, but they may avail to quote to children old enough to be apprehensive and who may have many summers ahead of them. Investigations made a year or two ago showed that of 298 classes of objects of which 1,767 confessed fear, lightning was dreaded by the greatest number. Yet in the record of fatalities there is a very small record against lightning, as compared with other causes of accidental death. Statistics prepared by the United States weather-bureau show that for four years the average number of persons killed by lightning annually in the whole country was 196. More than that number are drowned annually, in the waters about New York city, and many more than that number annually lose their lives throughout the country in bicycling. It might even appear that one is in greater danger of being fatally kicked by a horse, or of being killed by a falling chimney, than of being struck by lightning.

There Was a Law to Fit His Case.

A case possessing peculiar features was heard at Marlborough street, Harry Wilkinson, twenty-eight, described as a "checker," having no fixed abode, was charged before Mr. Hannay with begging in Piccadilly.

Sergeant Brown (the jailer)—The man is in such a deplorable condition he is not fit to be brought into court. He is absolutely alive with vermin.

Mr. Hannay—There is an act of parliament which deals with verminous persons.

Mr. Lyell (the chief clerk, referring to the act)—Persons must apply personally under that act to be cleansed. (Laughter.)

Mr. Hannay—I have gone out of court on a previous occasion in a similar case. Bring me my hat, please.

The case was then tried in the yard at the back of the court. The prisoner was placed under the tree in the yard, and a plentiful supply of strong disinfectant sprinkled in a circle around him.

The magistrate stood facing the prisoner, and the officials and witnesses formed a semi-circle around the tree. Mr. Lyell balanced the official note book upon his knee, and wrote down the evidence with a stylographic pen.—London Chronicle.

A Trick of Trade.

That there are tricks in all trades is shown by a peculiar circumstance surrounding the import of British hams, bacon and salt pork into Italy, which by law is prohibited, placing restrictions upon the porcine products of any country for sanitary reasons. By simply making the request, most other countries have secured the setting aside of this regulation in their favor. But it is not generally known that there is a method, without an expensive one, of evading the terms of the regulation. If a ham were packed in a hermetically sealed tin, it could be passed as preserved meat, even if the label frankly declared that the tin contained an entire ham. This point has been successfully tested.—Boston Herald.

Bicycles have made their way into the British Museum, the authorities having established a cycle stable in the basement, for as many as a hundred cycles a day had been left unpropped against the railings.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

A Horse That Was Swallowed Alive by a Hair from His Own Tail.

From the Southern home of Senator Quay comes the following letter from a veracious correspondent:

"Being an ex-soldier and having only fifteen months to serve to acquire a title to a quarter section of land, I went to Florida in 1885 to put my plans into execution. Not being posted as to the landmarks, I had to hire a settler to locate the land for me, and as we had to go about eight miles through woods over bad roads, with no bridges, we went horseback, and in crossing a stream I noticed that my friend's horse's tail caught in an old pine stump, pulling a hair from the tail and leaving the hair fast to the stump.

"As you know, a horsehair will turn to a snake when in water, and I made up my mind to watch that particular hair. So, after locating my land and getting a log house built, I took my gun and started out on a hunt, and during my rambles I came to the stream that my friend and I had crossed, and, sure enough, there was the horsehair snake as big as my thumb and over four feet long. As he was fast to the stump I let him alone and continued my hunt, bagging some quail, a rabbit, and two squirrel, which gave me a good mess of fresh meat. As I was very busy for the next three weeks, I had no time to visit my pet snake, so you may judge of my surprise when on my next visit to find the snake as big as a stovepipe and over forty feet long. As I was going to have a log rolling the next week I kept my secret so that we could have some fun after we were through our day's work. I got everything ready and sent out my invitations. My friend that showed me the land came with the rest of them and told me his horse was lost or stolen. We all pitched in and did a good day's work and had a good dinner. I told them my secret and we went to the branch. You can imagine our surprise when we found the snake as big as a saw log, with a bulge in the middle as big as a sugar barrel.

"Well, to make a long story short, we killed the snake and cut him open and my friend's horse tumbled out. We thought the horse was dead until he commenced to move, and soon ran around all right, and my friend rode him home. I have heard a great deal about horsehair snakes, and this is the only instance I know of where a horse was swallowed alive by a hair from his own tail."

Roads in South America.

There are few good roads in South America. The ways along the mountains are mule trails, and in many cases steps have been cut along the sides of precipices so that you crawl along within an inch or so of destruction. Now and then a mule train falls 3,000 feet or so, and is usually left to lie where it falls. You often have to dismount to help the mules. There are in the whole country, which is only one-sixth the size of the United States, only 725 miles of stage lines, embracing roads to the capital, the city of Sucre, to Potosi, the famous silver mining center, and to Cochabamba, which is a big interior town in what is called the granary of the country. The best road in Bolivia is one over which I have just traveled. I doubt whether there is a finer long stretch of wagon road in the United States. This dried-up sea basin forms a natural road bed. We galloped for hours over a road level, smoother and harder than any in Central Park, New York, and dashed along at a breakneck pace over the plains on a track that would have been accepted as excellent by any American jockey. The only work that seemed to have been done upon the road was the picking off of the stones. In some places it was as flat as a floor for miles, and in others there was a gradual rise or fall, but not enough to impede the galloping of the mules.—Frank G. Carpenter in *Atlanta Constitution*.

The Grave of Columbus.

Apparently unmindful of the fact that after a period of four hundred years dust has so far returned to dust that there is not much left, one of our exchanges says:

"When peace has been fully restored, when Cuba has become a part of this country, and the American flag floats over the palace of the governor general at Havana, the first duty this government should set itself to perform is the removal of the body of Christopher Columbus from the cathedral in Havana to Washington, and there under the shadow of the Capitol he should rest forever."

Columbus was a great traveller when living, and his "remains" have had a somewhat similar experience. According to the best authorities he was first buried at Valladolid, in the north central part of Spain, but his body was soon after transferred to the Carthusian Monastery of Las Cuevas, Seville, where the bones of his son, Diego, the second admiral, were also laid. In 1536 the bodies of both father and son were exhumed and taken over sea to Hispaniola (San Domingo), and interred in the cathedral. In 1795-96, on the occasion of that island to the French, the relics were re-exhumed and transferred with great state and solemnity to the cathedral in Havana, their present resting place. Omaha Bee.

It is said that many people in Maine are so offended at the advertisements painted on boards and fences along country roads that they refuse to deal with the firms which so advertise.

For a neat and stylish tailor-made gown the panel is universally liked.

Arizona Wells Turn Suddenly Hot.

The wells in parts of Arizona have recently become producers of hot water, and apprehension is felt by many of the residents of the region affected that they are about to become participants in a grand volcanic drama.

In some of the water rose twenty degrees in a single night. In a few the phenomenon disappeared soon after its appearance. In a majority of cases, however, the wells fairly steam from their newly acquired heat. The first known of this curious state of affairs was a report that the wells at Maricopa, on the Southern Pacific Railroad, thirty miles south of Phoenix, had suddenly become hot.

It was four days thereafter that the phenomenon first was noticed a dozen miles west of that place. A test at one well showed a temperature of nearly 100 degrees. No difference is noted in wells in the immediate vicinity of Phoenix.

The line of subterranean heat wave follows the general direction of the Sierra Estrella Mountains, a volcanic chain, lying immediately south of the Gila River. Thence it appears to continue on in the direction of the Harqua Hala Mountains near which are a number of large and modern volcanic cones and hills of drifted volcanic ash. Further to the east the lava flows are so geologically modern as to have overwhelmed in a number of places the cliff dwellings of the ancients.—National Review.

The Fate of Andree.

The *Deutsches Volksblatt* of Vienna, Austria, publishes an interesting interview with Dr. Blessing, the medical officer of Nansen's polar expedition, on Andree's fate. Dr. Blessing expressed the opinion that it was a great mistake to conclude that Andree is hopelessly lost because a few false reports as to his whereabouts have been circulated by practical jokers and others. Andree's expedition was not a wild and reckless undertaking, but a well thought out, carefully organized scientific experiment. Andree and his companions carried provisions for a lengthy period, and could well be living in some part of the polar regions, probably in Franz Josef Land, or some of the islands which form that archipelago. Dr. Blessing added that he thought it would be well to wait until the end of September before considering the outlook for Andree's escape black. If no news is received before then, some efforts should be made to search for traces of the heroic explorers.

A Novel Exhibit.

A novel feature of the Burlington Railway Land Department exhibit is the work of the extraordinarily clever wife of a Nebraska farmer. It includes a group of five figures seated at a dinner table and four pictures. The pictures are made of corn, corn husks, corn tassel silk, and the leaves of the silver maple, and they have been done so well that they would pass for paintings. The first scene shows the young farmer coming to the country with his ox team. The second his sod house and primitive mode of breaking the prairie. The third and fourth scenes reveal the changes which thirty years have wrought in the farmer's home and in means of transportation. The family at dinner are clothed in corn husks, and even the table cloth is woven of the husks.—Omaha Correspondence Boston Transcript.

He'd Seen 'em.

The young man who knew all about everything, and was willing to tell everybody else, was talking to the new boarder, who was a school teacher, and who had come to the little summer hotel for her vacation.

"Have you ever seen Hampton Roads?" the young woman finally asked.

"Seen 'em?" he cried, with enthusiasm; "I should say so. Took a bicycle trip over 'em last summer."

The school teacher did not ask him any more questions about his travels, and privately the young man told his room-mate that he thought he had impressed her.—Chicago Record.

New Lightning-Rods.

A new lightning-rod, which emanates from Paris, France, consists of short discharging points on all the chimneys or elevated parts, connected among themselves by ribbons of copper-plate in such a way as to inclose the building in a sort of cage like that suggested by Faraday. For platinum points, as in the old conductors, they substitute a copper cylinder 2½ feet long and inclined 15 degrees from the vertical. The "earth" is made of a volute of copper ribbon sunk in a well. The cost of this new system is about one-third that of the ordinary system with thick stout stems of copper.

The Smallest Public Loan.

The parish of Wiggshall St. Mary, Norfolk, England, has the honor of a pioneer position among rural parishes. Its parish council is the first to float a public loan. Corporation stock is generally issued in large sums, but the Wiggshall consols only run to the modest sum of \$2,000, which the parish needs for a new burying ground. It is to be hoped that our financiers will not all speak at once, or the resources of the city may be unduly strained.—Westminster Gazette.

At one time it was the custom on Ash Wednesday to appoint an official of the English palace to crow the hours of the day like a cock. The cock-crower was a salaried officer at the court as late as 1823.

The stars on the United States coinage are six-pointed, while the United States flag carries five-pointed stars.