

WEST INDIA BELLES.

NOT AS CHARMING AS THEIR SISTERS OF THE TEMPERATE ZONE.

Pretty Girls Among the Lower Classes—Eyes Wondrous Black and Bewitching—Plaster on the Face—No Handsome Old Women.

[Porto Rico Cor. Inter Ocean.]

The upper classes are either Spanish or creoles, or "Sambos." The former are those who come from Spain—naturalized citizens we call them in North America; the second are natives of the island, of Spanish blood, more or less mixed; the third are remnants of the negro race, reduced by contact with their former masters to the shade of quadroon or octo-iron. The Spaniards are supposed to be the aristocracy, at least they set up a claim to that distinction, which the creoles earnestly dispute. They are carpet baggers; they come from Spain to fill the offices and eat up the taxes which the creoles and others pay. They live at government houses and put on airs, but the gentlemen usually end by marrying a creole or a "Sambo" and settling down into permanent citizenship.

In the country the negroes are black, but in the cities the mulatto, quadroon, and octo-iron are more common, but the social prejudice that exists in the state does not embarrass society here. A Spaniard can marry a "Sambo," as all who have negro blood in their veins are seriously called without losing caste, just as an American can marry a German or an Irish girl. The male "Sambos" often find wives among the creoles, but seldom among the Spaniards. Some of the best families in Cuba, as well as Porto Rico, have "Sambo" blood in them. The president of Venezuela is a "Sambo," as is the president of Mexico an Indian.

Are the ladies pretty? It is purely a matter of taste. Those writers who have extolled the beauty of the urban and other tropical belles have had very little knowledge of the girls of America. If one is fond of dolls he will admire the tropical plant. There are many pretty girls to be seen among the lower classes—more in Porto Rico than in Cuba—bright eyed, jolly, sylphlike beings; as graceful and supple as a panther, timid and modest, but with all the coquettish graces that budding womanhood is endowed with, and always has been in all ages and in all latitudes. None of them can read, none of them ever saw the inside of a school-house and do not know the existence of books; they call you an "Americano," but have as little idea of where an American came from as of the composition of the stars; they reply "Se Seno" to everything you say to them, and modestly droop their long, black lashes over such eyes as is supposed were the ruin of Antony.

The belles of the upper classes, those whose languishing eyes and rich bloom have been the topics of so much literature in prose and verse, may be beautiful and natural, but with what they choose to consider artificial adornment they are not. Their eyes are wondrous black and bewitching, and to be able to use them effectively is a matter of education. It is said that Cuban women—and by that I mean the whole West Indies—can throw more expression into a glance of the eye than any in existence, but the people who say it have probably flirted with them or seen the glowing of a heart in love. To me their eyes all look alike, beautifully black, sensuously languishing, and generally indicative of a bad temper, but otherwise expressionless. The haven't half the expression of the eyes of a thoroughly bred housewife, and a simple evidence of passion, not of intelligence.

And with the eyes end the Cuban woman's beauty. She would spoil them if she could, but as she can't she daubs the plaster on her face all the thicker. The chemists here sell a sort of paste made of powdered eggshells which the women paint their faces with until they have the appearance of plaster images. They take the same with them in the cars, to church, and to the opera—and when they think nobody is looking give their faces a dash. There cannot exist in the mind of any one of them a supposition that this plaster of Paris complexion deceives people, but why they think chalk is beautiful is a mystery. The neck and ears of a West India belle are about ten shades darker than her nose and cheeks.

Their mouths are usually large, their lips thicker than is consistent with classic rules, but their teeth are usually white, even, pretty, and well preserved. Although they make sweet meats or "duces" a great part of their diet for breakfast as well as dinner, you seldom see a woman or a man without good teeth.

But the most disagreeable thing about a Cuban woman is her voice—that low, sweet, musical tone which is told about as one of the attractions of Turkish beauties is not heard here, nor is the bold accent of the English girl noticed anywhere in the West Indies. The voice of the most refined lady is usually as harsh and rasping as the cry of a parrot, and she always talks very loud and in a high key. They mature early and fade early, these tropical women. They either dry up and wither, or else become very obese. There are no beautiful old ladies to be seen, as in all parts of the United States. When they reach 40 years of age they are either gaunt and sour, like a crab apple, or else fat and greasy. Their complexions are ruined by the use of the plaster I have described, and the lack of exercise shows in their awkwardness, as well as their physique. The only exercise a West India woman ever takes is in a rocking-chair.

American Designs in Glass.

[Chicago Herald.]

In a letter about the glass factories of Belleaire, Ohio, where 25 per cent. of all the glass made in this country is said to be produced—much of it selling in England—a New York Tribune correspondent writes: The English are not expert in labor-saving machines or devices, and they continue to work by hand. The American makes a mold with an original design upon it, often using for his designs the forms of our grains or flowers or leaves, and the molten glass is pressed in these molds, and a good deal of the engraving on the glass is done by machines. The glass article being held in the hand and the embelisher drawing the pattern from his mind. This American glass undersells British glass at home, and many of our patterns are made especially to capture the British eye.

A Very Bad Time.

[New York Sun.]

It is a bad, a very bad time, for the American novelist who has not already won his spurs; and were it not for the magazines and the foreign market, even the men of great reputation would fare pretty poorly.

The annual salaries of the senators in congress aggregate \$380,000; for representatives \$190,000.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

The Financiers of England—The Yankee Mind—Hanging On—Waiting.

[Chicago Tribune "Street and Drawing-Room."]

"If I were writing an inaugural message for the president-elect I'd make an effort to get in something on this foreign-relations subject that might stir up the animals—don't you see?"

"Yes, but the difficulty doesn't appear to be entirely diplomatic," said a gentleman sitting by. "It is commercial and economic as well."

"Yes, that is true, and I'll tell you one reason for it. They know a mighty sight more over there than we do here—I mean with reference to the laws of trade, the great currents of traffic, and so on. The financiers of England, for instance, are heavy-weight students in their way. Our American business man is more given to studying schemes. That is the bent of the Yankee mind. In England and Germany big business men study the laws and science of the thing, and they are so used to dealing in millions that they handle us, for the most part, like children. I say what I know, for I have been there—only a year ago, too. Their commercial and financial magnates are men with great heads, great stomachs and great appetites. They think big, and eat big, and live big. I was interested and benefited in talking with some of them to see how they keep track of the development of the world. They know the conditions of the crop—equally well in America, Australia and India. They can tell you how much coffee there is in Brazil, and they know whether it will be more profitable to ship woolen goods to Mexico or to lower Africa this month as compared with last."

"Yes," said the other, "but there are some among them, so I'm told, who stand ready to take stock in Wabash—eh?"

"O, yes, the fools are not all dead in England any more than elsewhere, but as a rule they know pretty well in England where to make their investments, and they're not making many of them here—not at present, just you bear in mind."

"How does that idea dovetail in with your notion that in business it is generally a good thing to pick up what the other fellow drops?"

"Yes, but wait until it drops. I haven't heard anything drop yet—not clear down to bedrock, do you mind? That's half what's the matter. Most of our smart fellows over here are hanging on—bracing things up, do you see? That's another peculiar quality of the American mind—to hang on. In England they sit still and wait. In America they hang on and brace up. Although I must say I'm pleased to see that there is so much more cool-headedness, so much less of the panicky spirit that existed during the last great business depression a few years ago."

Bill App with the Toothache.

[Atlanta Constitution.]

When the teeth come, they come with pain and peril, and keep the poor child miserable, and when they go they go with a torture that no philosophy can endure. Oh, my poor jaw—just look how it is swollen. I am a sight. A pitiful prospect. I look like a bloated bondholder on one side of my face and no bonds to comfort me. I wonder what would comfort a man in my fix. I have suffered more mortal agony from my teeth than from anything else put together. Samson couldn't pull them hardly, for they are all riveted to the jawbone. I have been lying in dread for over a month, for I knew that my teeth was fixing up trouble, and so yesterday morning it sprung a leak at the breakfast table, and I jumped out of my chair. The shell caved in, the nerve was touched, and in my agony I gave one groan and retired like I was a funeral.

I've miles from town and no doctor. Don't put down what I suffered all that day and the night following, for you can't. Mush poultices and camphor and paregoric and bromide and chloroform, and still the procession moved on, and the jumping, throbbing agony sent me rag o' truce—no cessation of hostilities. What do I care for anything? Don't tell me about Hendricks being in Atlanta. I don't care where he is. Yes I do. He is a good man, but I've got no time to think about him now. Please give me some more of that camphor. I've burned all the skin off my mouth now, but it is a counter-irritant and sorter scatters the pain around. If I had some morphine I would take it, for I want rest. I am tired. Oh! for one short hour of rest.

The Soudan Desert Tribes.

[Detroit Free Press.]

It is customary to speak of the opponents of the English in the Soudan as Arabs. This is chiefly due to the fact that they are desert tribes, and the best known of the desert tribes are Arabs. But most of the population are no more Arabs than the Mexicans are American Indians. The Soudanese are negroes—Nubians chiefly, some mixed with other races. They are not the negroes of the Congo, but a more fierce and warlike race.

For a Wedding Breakfast.

[Exchange.]

It appears the latest wrinkle in the way of ornamentation for a wedding breakfast table is to have the photographs of the bride and groom inclosed in a block of transparent ice. This display of coolness between them would be much more appropriate about a year later.

A Host of Shining Stars.

[Inter Ocean.]

An English astrologer having predicted the death in the autumn of the foremost American statesman, it is understood visions of the grim destroyer disturb the multitude, and insomnia is again becoming a fashionable malady in Washington.

A Tire on the Gold.

[Chicago Herald.]

The English chancellor of the exchequer is considering the propriety of placing a thin, steel tire on the gold coins of the realm, to prevent loss by detrition. It is alleged that \$225,000 is annually rubbed away from the coin in circulation.

Another View of It.

[The Current.]

It is well that the millionaire's daughter, who married the coachman, and who sought a position upon the concert stage by virtue of the fact, should have failed. Such adventurers bring art into disrepute.

A Man's Growth.

Investigations made by a committee of the British association show that a man really grows in stature up to his 50th year, although the growth is very slow after 20.

Heavy Laden.

The fully equipped Swiss infantry soldier is the most heavily loaded of any nation. He lugs enough on his back to weary a camel.

Kansas City Times: In America all doctrines and shades of belief live side by side. In the effete civilizations of the east there is always the triumph of one belief, one religion, or one idea of government.

IN THE TURRET.

ABOARD THE MONITOR WHILE SHE FOUGHT THE MERRIMAC.

A Novel Situation and a Desperate Combat—Imperfections of the Machinery—Shut Up in a Revolving Drum—Damage Done.

[Com. S. D. Greene in The Century.]

The drawbacks to the position of the pilot-house were soon realized. We could not fire ahead nor within several points of the bow, since the blast from our own guns would have injured the people in the pilot-house, only a few yards off. Keeler and "Foggy" to me, and my inquiries and answers to him, the speaking-tube from the pilot-house to the turret having been broken early in the action. They performed their work with zeal and alacrity, but, both being landsmen, our technical communications sometimes miscarried. The situation was novel; a vessel of war was engaged in desperate combat with a powerful foe; the captain, commanding and guiding all, was inclosed in one place, and the executive officer, working and fighting the guns, was shut up in another, and communication between them was difficult and uncertain. It was this experience which caused Engineer Newton, immediately after the engagement, to suggest the clever plan of putting the pilot-house on top of the turret, and making it cylindrical instead of square, and his suggestions were subsequently adopted in this type of vessel.

As the engagement continued the working of the turret was not altogether satisfactory. It was difficult to start it revolving, or, when once started, to stop it, on account of the imperfections of the novel machinery, which was now undergoing its first trial. Steiner was an active, muscular man, and did his utmost to control the motion of the turret; but, in spite of his efforts, it was difficult if not impossible to secure accurate firing. The conditions were very different from those of an ordinary breech-loading gun, under which we had been trained on wooden ships. My only view of the world outside of the tower was over the muzzles of the guns, which cleared the ports by a few inches only. When the guns were run in the port-holes were covered by heavy iron pendulums, pierced with small holes to allow the iron rammer and sponge handles to protrude while they were in use. To hoist these pendulums required the entire gun's crew and vastly increased the work inside the turret.

The effect upon one shut up in a revolving drum is perplexing, and it is not a simple matter to keep the bearings. White marks had been placed upon the stationary deck immediately below the turret to indicate the direction of the starboard and port sides, and the bow and stern; but these marks were obliterated early in the action. I would continually ask the captain, "How does the Merrimac bear?" He replied, "On the starboard beam," or "On the port-quarter," as the case might be. Then the difficulty was to determine the direction of the starboard beam or port-quarter, or any other bearing. It finally resulted, that when a gun was ready for firing, the turret would be started on its revolving journey in search of the target, and when found it was taken "on the fly," because the turret could not be accurately controlled. The Merrimac tried to ram us; but Worden avoided the direct impact by the skillful use of the helm, and she struck a glancing blow, which did no damage. At the instant of collision I planted a solid 150-pound shot fair and square upon the forward part of her casemate. Had the gun been loaded with thirty pounds of powder, which was the charge subsequently used with similar guns, it is probably that this shot would have penetrated her armor, but the charge being limited to fifteen pounds, in accordance with peremptory orders to that effect from the navy department, the shot rebounded without doing any more damage than possibly to start some of the beams of her armor-backing.

Mortgages on Farms.

[New York Tribune.]

"Do you know," he added, changing the immediate topic, "that it is a fact that the largest volume of money invested in securities of any one kind is in mortgages on farms?" I confessed to surprise. "The total is greater than the debt of England; several times greater than our own; and larger than the sum invested in railways. Some years ago the farmers got prosperous and paid off some mortgages, and the total was considerably reduced; but I notice that it is again annually increasing."

The Earth as a Magnet.

[Scientific Journal.]

Gauss, the illustrious German astronomer, has computed (taking as a unit a magnet 14 inches long, one inch wide, one-fourth inch thick, weighing one pound, made of the hardest steel and of the strongest magnetic force possible, the earth's magnetic force as equal to 8,464,000,000,000,000,000 such magnets. The attracting or lifting power of such a magnet is about ten pounds, which would make the attractive power of the earth 42,310,000,000,000,000 tons.

For Medicine-Takers.

[Exchange.]

A New Orleans doctor calls attention to a very simple fact which merits attention from medicine takers. If the medicine is mixed with very cold water, and a few swallows of the water be taken as a preparatory dose, the nerves of the organ of taste become sufficiently benumbed to make the medicine nearly tasteless. The method will not disguise bitter tastes, but acts well in oils and salines.

Wood Will Sink.

[Chicago Herald.]

It is common to suppose that a ship loaded with wood cannot sink. Yet according to the latest returns of the British board of trade it appears that during the past three years no fewer than 140 ships laden with timber were totally lost, with 457 human lives.

A Profitable Paper.

[Chicago Herald.]

The London Daily Telegraph nets its owners \$1,000,000 a year, and runs ten H. O. presses. Of the four original proprietors the sole survivor is the owner of a country weekly and another died in a poorhouse.

A Straw House.

[Inter Ocean.]

An Indiana man has patented a model for a straw house. The walls are to be made of bales of straw or hay, and then plastered and bolted down. It is said to be preferable to brick and as endurable.

The desire for Egyptian curiosities has assumed the proportions of a craze in London.

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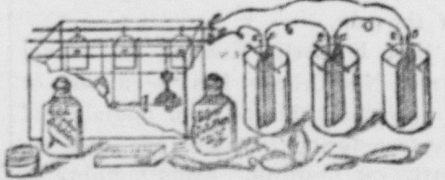
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