

A FLORIDA CRACKER.

Graphic Description of Those Lazy Lotus Eaters of the South.

THE POOR WHITES OF FLORIDA.

An Unprogressive, but Very Hospitable Class of People.

PROVING THAT THE EARTH IS FLAT

(CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DISPATCH.)



SOUTH FLORIDA, February 25.—The "Cracker" is the lowest grade of the poor whites of Florida. The derivation of the word seems to be unknown, but Cracker he is, a Cracker he always has been, and a Cracker he will be until Gabriel blows his horn.

UNPROGRESSIVE NATIVES.

To the discredit of this benighted class of the Caucasian, candor compels the admission that the Southern negro is infinitely



A CRACKER TEAM.

his superior in principle, education and public spirit. No association can change a Cracker, his childish view preventing any possibility of a reformation, while the negro, with his love of imitation, models after the best class of whites, and, although he often appears in many laughable lights, is gradually making improvements over the "old plantation darkey."

The Cracker, on the contrary, continues the same sluggish, selfish individual, opposed to the world's new opinions and progressions, blind and obstinate in the belief that the ways of his ancestors are better than the "new fangled Yankee ideas," and he finds him less progressive than half a century since. We find him to-day so inert, ambition and self-respect, such zero qualities in his composition, that he is satisfied with mere existence, and he is content to make any improvement in his character and life, and if Dickens's *Dumby* were to speak, he would substitute "crackers" for



Cracker Schoolhouse.

"papers," and say, "What have crackers to do with soul or spirit, either? It's quicker we let 'em have live bodies." Yet with all his shortcomings, the Cracker has his virtues, and unquestioning hospitality is a shining part of his simple life, for whoever heard of a Cracker turning a stranger away from his door. While his wife, his nine or a dozen lean, cadaverous looking children and numerous dogs stand in the background, he gives you the best home affords, which is generally corn bread, bacon and black coffee. Then, if you talk, he will "f" scath, the "radicals" and praise Florida swamp land, entertainment is insured for the season.

A CRACKER HOME.

The home of the Florida native is built of logs, the cracks stopped with mortar. There are generally two rooms, one for a sleeping porch in front, that is used as a storage place for the farm implements, guns, etc. The sallow, careworn looking women do most of the household work, but they do it with the same spirit of meekness and willingness of the Indian squaw, and more affection and kindness of feeling exists in their homes than in many brownstone fronts. Among these liege lords are many bloodthirsty desperados, but the devoted women see all the good that beams forth, and on the principle that "all men have their faults, and the stealing is Bill's," resent like a hunted tigress any insult toward husband or lover.

"When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," is exemplified in Crackerdom, when

one sees the characteristic Florida family lumbering along. Behold an exact, drawn by two or four lean, hungry, weary-looking oxen, the cart laden with women and children, the products of the little sand patch, a few jars, and perhaps, if luck has been an attending angel, a live alligator, may complete the outfit. All except the women and children are exchanged at the nearest town for the Cracker's tobacco and ambergris, and the millionaire in his

SLUMS AND SALONS.

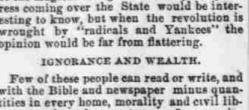
Fashionable Society Inquiring Into and Taking Interest in

THE WORK OF THE SALVATION ARMY

Mrs. Booth and Her Methods Discussed by Gail Hamilton.

A CALL TO THE RICH TO HELP THE POOR

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)



HERE are a good many of us who fight shy of the Salvation Army, and who, from inherited temperance and disabillity or fixed habits and tastes, always must. The drum and the siff, the poke bonnets and parading women rather repel than attract us, and we can but look askance at a worship which seems to invoke anything but a quiet spirit.

Yet there is another side to it, and when, with winning face and persuasive voice, Mrs. Ballington Booth presents that other side in the restful parlors of the Fifth avenue, it is not difficult to hear through all the blare of bugle and beat of drum the still small voice of human reason, human conscience, human sympathy—the voice of God in the soul of man.

With all the good which the Episcopal Church has wrought, with all the dignity of its services and the decorum of its ceremonial, she adds never more worthily to her dignity and decorum than in leading an earnest woman of the slums, whose professed mission is that of Apostle to the Lowly. I cannot think that Dr. Rainolds's parlors were ever devoted to a more sacred festival; I cannot think that the honored name of Courtland de Ceyster ever gathered or gave a purer radiance than when they lent the shield of ecclesiasticism and the countenance of fashion to a movement for the uplifting of a lower stratum of humanity.

MRS. BOOTH'S WORK.

It was not indorsing the Salvation Army, but it was giving the Salvation Army an opportunity to present its argument and show itself worthy of being indorsed. The professed work of the Salvation Army is in a field so remote, so low, so impossible to most of us, yet so threatening to all, that it is of the first importance not to discourage it, but to enter it and to encourage and sustain and strengthen especially those who are already in and are eager to continue and to work.

The introduction of the Salvation Army into ranks of fashion may be only a fashionable caprice. The output from that army of a young and pretty woman into the haunts of the Four Hundred may be because she was young and pretty; but can youth and beauty be better employed than in bridging the awful chasm between society and the slums? If, however, she is really and honestly endeavoring to do good, she is doing a noble and a praiseworthy thing. She is doing a noble and a praiseworthy thing.

WOMEN WHO WANT DIVORCES.

Peculiar Cases Which Come to the Attention of a Lawyer.

"It is nonsense to talk as if lawyers had any sympathy with lax divorce laws," remarked a Pittsburg attorney. "I don't believe that a man of any standing in the profession anywhere, even in Chicago, likes to take up a divorce case. It's a disagreeable business at best, and respectable lawyers try to dissuade their clients from divorce proceedings except as a dernier resort.

TOBACCO A TEMPTATION.

Why Tobacco Smokers Are Unusually Numerous in Pittsburg.

"I believe that there are more men who use tobacco in Pittsburg than in almost any other city," remarked a Penn avenue tobacconist a few days ago.

The Birch of a Blizzard.

A man in Western Dakota saw a blizzard born. It started on the top of a large hill and was a ball of white fog no larger than his hat when he first saw it. He should have carried it home and looked it up, but he did not think of it until too late.

SWEET WILLIAM NYE

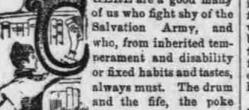
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A DEMAND FOR TOWELS OR A FUNERAL

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)



I do not think that such an "uprising" will ever come, but it will be forestalled less because of the prophetic, to the silks and velvets of Delmonico, or because Miss Van Etten's blood is stirred to demand legislation and organization to fight against the cause. Booth goes down into the pit with her dressed pinned up from assail, washes the filthy baby with warm water, binds up softly, cooingly, the wailing infant, and, with a sympathetic in her soothing tones and friendly words, and bringing back the dazed, despairing mother into the circle of love.

If Fifth avenue and the restorers will do something besides make a fad of Mrs. Booth, will stay her hands as Hur and Anson perhaps, the lawyer has had to refer to the wall of a plaintiff when he has tried to enforce the payment of a bill, and finds that the lawyer has had it, but cannot really refund it without personal inconvenience to himself.

This music, to which I at first so feebly alluded, comes from the volunteer band of an aviator army. They are playing beneath my casement for my benefit. They desire to snatch me as a brand from the burning, and I, in Michigan, I would rather be a brand at this season of the year than to be outside, making a large money-colored sea of myself.

AN UNPROFITABLE CAMPAIGN.

The leader is a large, red-nosed man, who weeps easily and pulls out the tremolo on his voice at all times. He wears a beard around it, which matches his nose, and as the night is intensely cold, he wears a pair of ear muffs which were formerly used by the baby, and besides that, he has a black waste of purple buck, knocking a poor and defenseless tambourine silly, wearing a green veil tied over her lower jaw, in or about the middle of the year, and of her favorite husband's socks over her shoes to keep out the bitter cold from her massive feet, stands a woman, who wears in the work that she does, and a vast, long, hard, cold eye. I was just going to say she ought to be at home with her family, but at all once it occurred to me that it would be a great blow to the family. So perhaps it is better as it is.

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CRANKS WHO BUY BOOKS.

What a Perveyor Is Reading Matter Says About Peculiar Customers.

"I suppose we have about as many cranky and peculiar customers as other merchants, if not more," said a Pittsburg bookseller the other day. "As a rule we deal with an intelligent class, but intelligent people are just as apt to be eccentric as any.

CREATING A NEWS ITEM.

Well, what do you 'pose I'm ringing the bell for? I am ringing for a clean towel or a funeral. If I get the towel there will be no funeral, but if I fail, you'll just wait a minute and I'll give you the first view of the corpse for your bright and happy paper."

A CHILD OF DESTINY.

In the extreme left wing of this detachement, in front of the hotel, there is a woman wearing a gray shawl and a pair of red yarn mittens. She is carrying a little child in her arms and a small basket by means of a strap over her shoulder. Perhaps I ought to say that each one carries his own baggage. But I would like to know the future

HE OF ROOCHON

A Legend of Bay St. Louis.

WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH

MAURICE THOMPSON.

CHAPTER I.

A PLACE FOR AN ARTIST'S PICTURES.

Early in the present century, on a bright morning soon after the beginning of March, a small schooner sailed up the Bay of St. Louis and cast anchor off what was then locally known as Magnolia Point. There had been a thin, gray fog on the air, but the sun had shined brightly, leaving the water and the sky blue and dreamily brilliant to the far horizon of the Gulf.

On the west shore of the bay, not far from where the little vessel lay, stood a mansion recently built by Gaspard Rochoon and now occupied by him and his niece with a numerous household of servants. One or two other plantation houses, but less pretensions in every way, were visible here and there, even as far as to the mouth of the Jordan river.

The scene was one to please the eye of poet or artist, and there was an artist on board the schooner, a young man of leisure whose love of the picturesque and the strange coupled with passion for adventure which was more prevalent than than now, had led him to explore this nook of the South where, since the days of Bienville, had lingered a trace of that wild life which made the Gulf coast so long a time a region of romance and mystery.

Looking from the water to the land the shores, which were mostly high white bluffs, were fringed with a broken and billowy line of woods made up of all the semitropical trees, notably pines, live oaks, cedars and magnolias. A somber dulleak, as of slumber and deep rest, pervaded the vistas running back under moss-hung boughs into the flowery and fragrant wilderness. Down to the verge of the white and steeply sloping bluffs the undergrowth,

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"The Creole drew up his shoulders and spread out his hands half comically. His face was gripped between his yellow teeth, and he spoke with his lips only as he said: "Certainly, my son, certainly that is where the Lily lives, the Lily of Rochoon, but her name, what flag is that fluttering among the trees?"

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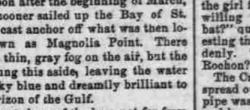
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set in scattering clusters and wisps, came in green-leaved and flowering luxuriant, and the air was fresh and grateful fragrance. It was a place of birds. Overhead flew clamorous water fowl; along the sandy beaches and in the rippling shallows the plovers and sandpiper were feeding and the tall herons here and there stood stately and motionless in the marsh grass that fringed the outcroppings of the low salt meadow.

The schooner had come round from the Rigolots through Lake Borgne, past the chandeliers, having set out from a landing on the Poucharrain near New Orleans. All the way the sailors had been charming to the artist to whom all this wild region was as new as it was sunny, luxuriant and stimulating to his imagination. He had remained on deck all night, waking and sleeping by turns, the sound of the slumberous waves in his ears and the shifting scenes of shore and sea delighting his half-closed eyes or passing into his dream world.

In those days a trace of the buccaner was scarcely erased from the southern seas, the deeds of Lafayette were still fresh in the memory of living men, while the story of the slay smugger was no uncommon apparition cruising about through the intricate channels and passes of the Gulf coast. There were no railroads connecting the region with the great commercial centers of America, therefore no place on earth was more isolated or more a law unto itself than the Bay of St. Louis.

Most of the white people were Creoles of French or Spanish descent, but there were a few Anglo-Americans of that restless, adventurous spirit that has been left in every quarter of the globe, and here and there was a planter from Georgia or the Carolinas who had come with his family to the bay, and who, in the absence of loneliness in the woods. Naturally a place so free and so easy to live attracted a number of the wandering and lawless, and who sought here a hiding place from punishment or a refuge from persecution. Society had no clearly defined basis, of course, but regulated itself in degrees with light and pistol whenever regulating seemed necessary; still there was a good measure of peace, and certainly necessities and even the physical comforts of life were not wanting on every hand.

The forests abounded in game, the waters swarmed with fish and oysters, tropical fruits grew to perfection and the soil, though light and poor, produced unusually under the stimulus of the warm, generous climate.

Wendell Orton, the artist and dreamer, reached this secluded nook just at the opening of the present century. He had been he looked forth from the deck of his little schooner over the shining water to the rich, dark masses of woods, to the flowering thickets, to the masses of the amber, over the grove and to the scattering cabins of the slaves, the sense of a new existence and a new world took possession of him.