SLAVES OF AMAZONIA

Major Kerbey, of Pittsburg, Tells How Young Indians Are Sold There.

ENGLISH BOATS IN IT.

A Beautiful Girl Put Ashore Hundreds of Miles From Home.

POLITICAL EXILES OF BRAZIL.

A River Whose Waters Are So Poisonous That a Cup Will Kill.

USING THE HAMMOCK IN THE TROPICS

The letter following was written for THE DISPATCH by Major J. O. Kerbey, of Pittsburg, while going up the Amazon on board the Joan Alfredo in his trip across South America:

The further up the Amazon one goes the less he sees of the American and Portuguese and the more of the Indian and Spaniard. The passengers are generally of that class that go up the tributaries at this season to manage the stores that furnish supplies for the rubber gatherers. Most of these traders are accompanied by women whom they have gathered from Para and Manaos. They sell or trade them off to the half-savage natives.

An English boat constructed for this river navigation is built precisely on the same lines as those intended for the ocean, i. e., like a block, as deep in the water as high and straight above. The rooms are seldom occupied. Each passenger on the Amazon brings his hammock along. Hooks are supplied both in the forward saloon and aft, where the ship's sides are open, and on these hammocks are strung, so thickly crowded that there is scarcely room to swing to sleep. As far as I have been able to observe there is no such thing as two persons sleeping in one hammock.

The Luxury of a Hammock.

My personal experience is that it is as much as a newcomer can do to sleep alone in one of them, but, like everything else in this country, one gets accustomed to it, and now I cannot sleep in a bed. This piece of expensive furniture is only used here as a sort of an ornament. Each house, however, has one bed, which I presume is intended for use in emergencies or in case of sickness.

The captain, with a significant smile, kindly observed to me that as my room was hot and the after-deck was crowded, he would have my hammock swung in the forward part of the ship, which favor I greatly appreciated. I slept in it not only all night, but most of the day time. It is only in tropical countries that a hammock can be fully appreciated. It is used not only as a bed, but as a chair, a rocking chair, sofa and tete-a-tete. People in this land do not sleep or lie lengthwise, but always stretch themselves out bias, i. e., the head high on one side and the feet lower on the other, thus leaving the body in almost a horizontal position. When tired of that they spoon over to the other tack. Using it as a rocking chair, they sit in the center, raising the other side for a back, and rock themselves to and fro, but to my notion the most charming thing is a tete-a-tete in a hammock with a pretty brown-eyed, laughing senhora.

A Tete-a-Tete in a Hammock.

As the feet of both occupants should barely touch the floor each is expected in turn to keep up the swinging motion by a gentle kick, all the while talking and laughing in a happy way that cannot be induced by any other method of getting acquainted. Two girls or perhaps two old ladies will put in an entire afternoon in this way. Sometimes one will read aloud, while the other does the kicking.

There has been some attempt at flirting on the boat, the captain's pretty nurse girl being the object. Following this the pretty nurse disappeared for a day. I inferred that she was sick and confined to her bed. The next morning as early as 7 or 8 o'clock, just as we were making a landing, I noticed the captain and wife at the girl's door. Still supposing her to be seriously ill I felt like offering my services as a physician, when I was astonished by the sudden appearance of the graceful little thing—all dressed in her best, looking as bright and fresh as it is possible for a yellow pine girl to look.

The captain motioned for her to move forward toward the stairs, and as the boat was landing it flashed upon me at once that the poor child was being put ashore, as is the custom or habit of captains who may take a lady passenger behaves improperly—a most arbitrary exercise of unjust authority that I would hardly have believed possible had I not witnessed it in this case.

The Exile of a Nurse Girl.

Ashamed of this harsh treatment, I asked permission to go ashore along with the landing party, hoping to have an opportunity of remonstrating with the captain, who also went ashore, but he said nothing whatever to me, and feeling that it was a delicate subject, I discreetly sought out the girl who was standing in the only house of the place and asked her if she was to be left there.

"Yes," she said, with a sad smile, and turned away to hide her tears.

I said, "Do you want to come on to Iquitos?"

"Si, si, Senor," she said eagerly.

"Then will you come by the next boat, and I will see that you get back to Para?"

"Si, si (yes, yes), I will go where you are."

I walked around the corner, took all the paper money I had in my pocket at the time, and making a roll, held it in the palm of my hand, and as I shook hands with her, she intuitively felt the money, and with a squeeze of her hand and a hearty "obrigado, obrigado," we parted. When I again looked after her she had disappeared behind the house.

A Slave Pen on the Amazon.

During this time the captain had been discussing with the ugly old Indian Portuguese hag of the place as to her keeping, in blissful ignorance of the fact that I had quietly arranged for her escape by next boat. I was shown by the captain as one of the curios of the place, a sort of cat-o'-nine-tails whip, made from the withes of vines, that is used upon the backs of the Indian girls, while a heavy paddle-shaped club hung alongside, which is used for the tough backs of the Indian boys. It is a veritable slave pen on the Amazon, and the vessels of the English company who permit such conduct are aiding and encouraging the worst sort of slave trade, which they so much condemn. These vessels carry to the swamps every trip young Indians whom the officers all know are being taken up to the traders, precisely as they do their cattle. I ventured to ask the captain if he was leaving that girl, to which he tersely answered: "Yes." "But," I continued, "you will take her up on your return?"

"No, I don't want her any more."

"Is she no good?" I persisted.

"No good," and the subject dropped. A girl counts for nothing at all here. Upon closer investigation I ascertained that the poor child had committed no wrong at all—her offense consisted only in the fact that she was attractive and many of the ship's company had dared to admire her.

Taught to Expect Slavery.

The Captain's wife, whom I must record as a cruel, heartless Portuguese woman, seemed to be happier after this, as during the day her laugh was to be heard all over the ship. This poor girl, if she does not escape, will doubtless be taken to the forest as the slave of some rubber gatherer. Perhaps the child is herself indifferent to her fate; at least she is reared to expect or hope for nothing better in this life. I have since written to the proprietor of this hacienda, offering to take her to her friends. This is a true story, and those interested may verify it by writing to the lonely landing to "Luzia," care of Carlos Weill, Santa Rita, Upper Amazon River, Brazil.

The hours on board seemed to become more painfully lonely the further we got away from the point where we had left alone the little girl "Luzia." On the morning following we reached the Peruvian frontier, our boat landing at the little military post of Brazil established at Tabatinga. There is nothing but a lonely looking Brazilian flag, a couple of old cannon, the ruins of a former Government house, out of the windows or through the roof of which are now growing tropical trees. Close by this is another half demolished Government house, which is occupied by the few slovenly Brazilian soldiers and the distinguished Deportados, who were banished from Rio to this distant part of a republic because of their political opinions. Certainly a more desolate spot could not have been selected in which to punish by a slow torturing death those who might become troublesome on account of their superior intelligence.

Banishing Political Offenders.

The Czar of all the Russias in banishing his victims to the cold regions of Siberia does not do them so great an injury personally as the President of the so-called Republic of Brazil, in compelling these men to live in the antipodes of Siberia, in a spot so hot that life is unbearable all during the day, while at night the mosquitoes, the mopueens on every blade of grass, the snakes, scorpions, centipedes and other creeping things are so numerous as to have compelled the abandonment of the place by the military under Dom Pedro some years ago. When the boat put into the muddy banks the captain courteously invited me to go ashore with him. I began to suspect that my turn had come, and that I was to be landed like Luzia. To be left with a party of political cranks, who can talk as only Brazilian politicians do talk, would have been equivalent to leaving me in an insane asylum. The jolly captain laughed at my apprehensions, assuring me that he would not go off without calling me. I went ashore in the mud. The two or three hours spent with the exiles were, indeed, interesting as well as hot.

Among the Brazilian Exiles.

I had brought with me a paper containing a printed account of the interview I had held with the prisoners while en route, on board the Pernambuco at Para, which I desired to give to Capt. Carvalho, but he being absent, I ventured to address a pleasant-faced elderly looking gentleman, carelessly attired in a woolen shirt and duck trousers, who had attracted my attention at once. Finding that he spoke English very well, I gave him the latest news from the outer world, which only comes to them once a month, and incidentally mentioning that I should like to see the celebrated exile Rear Admiral Woldenkolk, who, it will be remembered, was a member of the Emperor's cabinet at Rio, and as a naval officer is well known in America. One of the exiles present smiling observed, "You have been talking with the Admiral for some time." I took off my hat, saluted and apologized, the Admiral laughing heartily at my embarassment. We had a glass of beer all around, which is one of the things they cannot deprive even exiles from finding away on this rotten edge of civilization, in the heart of the Amazons. We parted with a hope of meeting again soon, either as travelers together over the Andes to the Pacific, or perchance in Rio, when they are pardoned.

A Veritable River of Death.

Close by Tabatinga is also the Peruvian outpost station, where we land to take up a Peruvian customs official; this interchange of courtesies consumes all of one day and unlimited quantities of warm beer. In the evening of the same day we debouched to enter the Rio Javary, which is the dividing line between Brazil and Peru, where we unloaded some cargo, and disembarked most of our passengers at the several landings. This important but deadly stream may be likened to the River of Death. The first town, or rather the site for a proposed town, at the mouth, is appropriately named "Esperanza," or Hope. It may truly be said of those who ascend this river to remain long in its dreadful malaria, "All ye who enter here leave hope behind."

The Javary is a most valuable rubber territory, and probably for the same reason it is most productive of the most malignant type of fever. The lands on each bank are low, while the interior is covered with numerous swampy lakes when the river falls. In this season the waters in these lakes soon dry up under the hot sun and the innumerable fish, alligators and other marine animals die.

One Drink Enough to Kill.

Of course the air must become filled with this poison, but it is said the real danger comes only after the rivers rise, when the bad waters are washed into the Javary, which supplies the inhabitants with their only drink. It is said a draught of this water is at certain seasons almost fatal, and that it is equally as injurious when used for bathing, so that the people who live there drink and bathe in Cachasi.

The Javary has the appearance of a very important business stream, there being more activity in the way of steam launches, canoes and trading houses than we had seen in the 1,000 miles of the main river. It reminded me of the rush and enterprise shown in our oil regions where everybody was busy and contented, even in distress, being buoyed with a hope of becoming suddenly rich. Men and women risk even the deadly air and water for months for the liquid gold.

In three days more of this monotonous life, tired and anxious, we are gladdened by the voice of the steam whistle announcing our approach to Iquitos, in Peru.

J. ORTON KERBEY.

THE NURSERY CLUB OF FRANKLIN, PA.

THE BEAUTIFUL CLUBHOUSE.

Franklin is one of the oldest and most substantial towns in Western Pennsylvania, and many of her sons have become distinguished in public affairs—"soldiers in war and statesmen in times of peace"—for which reason the complimentary title, "Nursery of Great Men," has been conferred upon the pleasant little city. She boasts, also, of a famous social organization, the "Nursery Club," which is known from one end of the State to the other through the hospitality dispensed by its members on many occasions. The beautiful and commodious clubhouse is one of the ornaments of the town and the center of its social life. With a home centrally located, and of modern architecture and convenience, and with a membership representing the wealth and culture of Franklin, the Nursery Club is an honor to the town.

The club is purely a social one. Politics is laid aside and numerous religious denominations are represented in the membership. It was organized in 1877 by a few young men who occupied rooms in one of the business blocks of the town, and from an humble beginning gradually evolved into a strong organization, moving into larger quarters as the membership increased, until 1889, when the clubhouse was purchased.

The clubhouse proper is a two and a half story brick structure. Reception rooms and hall comprise the first floor. On the second floor are the library, card rooms, bath rooms, secretary's office, etc., all handsomely furnished. In 1891 an annex was erected immediately in the rear of the clubhouse and adjoining it, consisting of a large hall or ballroom, billiard rooms, bowling alleys, etc. The ballroom is probably not surpassed, in size or beauty, by any in the State. Its dimensions are about 100x75 feet, and it is finished entire in panels of Carolina pine, with a two-inch maple floor, highly polished. Entrance to the ballroom is made through the reception rooms on the first floor, and also from the second floor of the clubhouse proper into a balcony. Adjoining the balcony is a smoking room on the right, and on the left a grand staircase leading to the dance floor. Opposite the entrance to the ballroom is a beautiful fireplace, 14x18 feet, which is a reproduction of the famous fireplace in the Metropolitan Club of New York City. The large room under the ballroom is used for a supper room, and here also are the bowling alleys, billiard tables, etc. In all departments the Nursery Club is complete.

The great event of the holiday week in Franklin will be the annual reception of the Nursery Club, which occurs Tuesday, December 27, on which occasion the "youth, beauty and chivalry" of that and adjoining cities will be present. It will be a gala affair to which probably 1,000 invitations will be sent out, the larger part of which will be accepted eagerly.

General John A. Wiley, A. A. Plumer, Hon. Christopher Heydrick, Judge of the Supreme Court; Hon. S. C. Lewis, Hon. J. C. Sibley, Congressman-elect from the Erie-Crawford district; Judge Charles E. Taylor, Hon. C. A. Myers, Mayor of the city, and others equally well known throughout the State are among the membership.

A REAL AMERICAN PRINCESS.

She Is the Daughter of Chief Seattle and Over a Century Old.

[Detroit Free Press.]

A notable personage, frequently pointed out to new-comers and strangers at Seattle, Wash., is a real, live American princess. She is often seen seated on the sidewalk, in an old faded calico dress, and a common woolen shawl wrapped about her shoulders. Her skin is brown, and her hair hangs in long, straight lines down her back and around her shoulders. This is Princess Angeline, the daughter of Chief Seattle. She is very well treated by the older residents, and has only to ask them for anything she may want and it is given her.

This is all owing to the fact that at an early day in the history of that part of the country, when the people were in constant danger from attacks of hostile tribes of Indians, she, at great personal danger to herself, and after a long journey, came into the white settlement and warned the "pale face" of a very formidable threatened attack of the Indians, and by her timely aid saved the entire settlement, thus preserving their homes from destruction and their wives and children from captivity and massacre.

Her father, Seattle, was very kind and true in his friendship for the white race who had made their home in the vicinity of Puget Sound, sheltered by the snow-capped mountain height, and now the grateful people have erected a monument to his memory upon his grave.

Well may the inhabitants of Seattle pay the Princess Angeline all honor for the services she rendered, for she has become a part of the history of their country, even if as she sits by the roadside, with her little short-stemmed black pipe held between her teeth, her old woolen shawl is her only "royal mantle" by day and her blanket by night.

It is not known just how old Princess Angeline is, but that she has passed the century mark seems beyond doubt.

SCINDA IS A DEMOCRAT.

Something About the Colored Female Leader of a New Religion

An old negro woman has established a new theocracy at Grenada, Miss., Senator Walthall's home. Her name is Scinda and her followers are called "Scinda Band." They number about 400. Scinda is their queen and rules her flock with an iron rod, says the St. Louis *Republic*.

They use no Bible at their meeting, for each member is supposed to know it by heart. If Scinda asks them a biblical question they are supposed to have an answer at once. They have their meetings every Sunday evening, and they are interesting to observe.

The congregation, men and women, is decked out in costly ribbons and beads. Their chants are as weird as the sobs and sighs of graveyard trees. They dance to the music of the banjo and tambourine until they are nearly exhausted, and then they go home.

Scinda is a Democrat and compels each male member to vote that ticket. She insists that they shall be cleanly in person, and pay their debts. No merchant in Grenada county will refuse credit to a member of her band, for if they were to fail to pay it Scinda would "dance their souls into hell," as she call sit.

Mel. J. Cheatham, the only white man ever executed in Mississippi, was hanged for murdering one of Scinda's members about three years ago.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

Lessons Drawn From the Story of the Shepherds by Mr. Hodges.

UTILITY OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

Why the Manger Was Selected as the Cradle of Christianity.

EXTENDING THE SPIRIT OF THE DAY

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

"And there were shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them."

Was there a feast that night in Herod's palace? That great, strong, frowning, battlemented palace that the king had at Bethlehem, furnished with all the luxurious adornments that could be bought with Roman money—were there lights at the windows that night, and feasting and merriment within?

Were there watchers in the Temple at Jerusalem, where the sacrificial fires burned low, where the glimmer of the candles touched the gold of the altar, and the veil hung before the Holy of Holies? Were there priests and holy people silently praying that night in that sacred place, waiting for the consolation of Israel?

We only know that there were shepherds abiding in the field that night, keeping watch over their sheep, and that the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. We know that before their eyes the whole wide sky was bright with heavenly radiance, and that from out the splendor came an angel, and a great choir of angels following, and that the shepherds heard the news for which the world was waiting, and that over the fields where they watched their flocks sounded celestial music.

They Knew Not the Day.

And we know that of all this, the princes who dwelt in palaces, and the priests who prayed in temples were quite ignorant. The sky was opened, but they did not see it. The angels sang their chorus, but they did not hear it. In the little stable beside the crowded inn the Light of the world was shining; it was Christmas Day; but neither priests nor princes knew it.

One of the mysteries of life is the mystery of the distribution of privilege. The doctrine of election, so far as it touches the side of life of which we have actual experience, is one of the truest doctrines in the world. Men and women, through neither fault nor merit, as it seems, of theirs, are born some of them into conditions of advantage, others into conditions of disadvantage. Some have all the opportunities of enjoyment and of betterment that come into human life, others breathe, from the earliest beginning, a poisoned atmosphere which seems to doom them almost inevitably to degradation and perdition. Some see the glory of the Lord visibly shining round about them; others are asleep, or blind.

Blessings Unevenly Distributed.

But the Christmas story teaches that temporal privilege and spiritual privilege are not distributed together. And we know very well which of these is the greater blessing. We know that the soul is infinitely more precious than the body, and that treasure in heaven is infinitely more worth having than treasure down here. And Christmas comes to correct our ideals. If we have been thinking that wealth or position is the most desirable thing in human life, and that we have some ground for complaint against the Father in heaven because he appears to love some others of His children better than He loves us, giving them pleasures from which we are shut out, we will do well to go back to this story of the shepherds and the stable.

If the people who lay warm that night in Herod's palace felt themselves a great deal better off than the shepherds who watched in the winter fields, under the frosty sky, they were very much mistaken. If the priests in the temple thanked God—as very likely they did—that they were blessed above all the inhabitants of Galilee, and especially despised the dwellers in that little town with such a bad reputation, named Nazareth, they erred greatly. If the guests at the inn thought themselves privileged beyond the poor people out in the stable, they missed the truth. There was a blessing of God out in the fields that night, and among the cattle of the stalls, which was not known in any house of comfort all the world over.

Riches That Are Free to All.

What an inspiring and encouraging assurance. Every soul of man has its spiritual opportunity. The very richest blessings of God lie within reach even of the most ignorant, of the obscurest, of the poorest people. They who have not even a place to lay their heads are therein no worse off than was He who was cradled in a manger, and who lived all His life long the poorest of the poor, and yet who was loved above all who ever lived by the great Father in Heaven. It is not everyone who can be rich in this world's goods; but there is no one, no matter where he lives nor who he is, but can be rich in another would's goods. Even into the tenement houses, among our brothers and our sisters imprisoned there by the unremedied evils of our present industrial conditions, even there may the angel of the Lord come this Christmas, where there would seem to be no Christmas at all, even there may the glory of the Lord shine.

The shepherds were abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. That was their business. That was their daily duty. The Christmas story teaches that the revelation of God comes to people who are diligently doing the humble tasks of common life. The Christmas truth itself teaches the consecration of common life. Christ might have come in the palace or the temple. He might have lived the life that is lived in kings' houses and among people of position.

The World's Interest in a Stable.

That would have left the great majority of us out. We could have looked to Christ neither for sympathy nor for example. But coming as He did, born in a stable, visited by shepherds from the neighboring fields, at home in the house of the village carpenter of Nazareth, a poor man all His life, He touched those simple essentials of our human existence which are common to us all. He dignified, He consecrated the humblest and homeliest conditions.

I rejoice that the princes in Herod's palace looked not out of their windows at Christmas night; and still more that the ecclesiastics and philosophers, the intellectual and religious leaders, were blankly ignorant of the supreme event; and that the people to whom the angel of the Lord appeared and about whom the glory of the Lord shone were simple shepherds, men who knew no more than we do. And I am glad that the Christmas revelation came to the shepherds when they were watching their flocks, that they were not in the church when the vision came, but out under the universal stars, that they were not saying their prayers when the sky grew bright above them, but were only busy with their ordinary tasks, plain workingmen, doing their daily work.

No Extraordinary Conditions.

It means that if we want the Christmas glory to shine about us, it we want to be directed from on high along the road that leads to the sight of the Lord Christ, we need not seek any extraordinary conditions, we need not forsake our common duties and try to find uncommon duties which may the better commend us to the favor of God. We will do best to go on daily doing the nearest task, trying to do our common work with uncommon diligence, following the best religious light we have as far as it will lead us—then will the Heavenly Father some day in His own wise time meet us, and the angel of the Lord will come upon us, and the revelation of the blessed truth of God will be made clear before us, and we will find Christ even as the Bethlehem shepherds found him, and will know Christ as they did, and better.

The shepherds were watching their flock, the astronomers were studying the stars, the fishermen were mending their nets, when the word of the Lord came. Every day the Lord Christ comes to us in the opportunities, in the temptations, in the decisions, in the blessings of our daily business. Every day, in the persons of his brethren, the down-trodden and poor, the Lord Christ lies cradled in a stable.

The Element of Beauty.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God. There begins the making of Christmas beautiful. God himself painted the night sky with Christmas colors, and sent the angels to sing the Christmas anthem. We do well to make the house of God as fair as we can make it, and to bring into the service of God the harmonies of the loveliest music. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." That old prophecy finds fulfillment here to-day.

The Christmas story teaches us the lesson that is taught by all the flowers and all the glowing skies, the lesson of God's love of beauty. God was not satisfied to make this great world useful; he made it lovely. It was not enough that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem in the midst of significantly humble surroundings, in the stable, but the sky outside must blaze with glory, and the blessed angels must chant praises. A plain voice out of the clouds, speaking simple words of common prose, telling the Christmas truth, would have been a sufficient revelation; but no; there must be strains of poetry, and choruses and anthems with celestial orchestration, taking up the words and glorifying them with glad, resounding voices, repeating them over and over, strophe and antistrophe, refrain and antiphone, lifting them up with acclamations and alleluias.

Transformation of the Centuries.

Thus have we taken that plain upper room in which the church began, and we have made it as worthily beautiful as our hands have been able all down the centuries, built it out of stone, adorned it with color, brought into it more and more our best and loveliest, of carving and embroidery and painting, and glorified it into magnificent cathedrals.

And we have taken that homely supper which is the central service of our religion, and we have changed the simple table into marble, and made the earthen dishes into plates of gold, and set the words of the Master, like a gem in a glowing jewel, in the midst of praises and adoration.

And we come to-day with the church garnished with green, and with the service ringing with sweet music, into the presence of Him who sent the Christmas angels into the glory of the midnight sky of Bethlehem.

"And the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." And so the night changed into day, and every cloud was touched with heavenly color, and every drop of dew on the dark grass of the hill pasture shone like the jewels in the high priest's breastplate.

The Source of Best Sunshine.

That is the miracle which the Christmas angel works all the world over. The Christmas story teaches a wonderful secret that will make the sun shine at midnight, that will turn the blackest clouds into the curtains of Heaven. For the bightest sunshine does not depend at all upon the sun, it comes out of the heart. If we have the Christmas spirit in our hearts the very glory of the Lord will shine all round about us. The light that glimmered in the stable, the light that beamed out of the Bethlehem sky—it lighteth every man even to-day who will let it burn within his breast. It is the blessed light of love. The Christmas spirit is the loving spirit, the spirit of unselfish love.

There is a story how the devil, coming once to earth at Christmas time could find no entrance anywhere, could not get any of his evil thoughts into human hearts, for every heart was full of the blessed Christmas spirit. There is no place for the devil in an unselfish world.

Now what we want is to have this good Christmas time continued, kept over to-morrow, and the day after, and the month after, and all through the year. We want to have that year which begins next week a year full of Christmas spirit, a year in which the unselfish love of this holy season shall not at any time be absent from our hearts. Then shall the Christmas lesson be learned as Christians ought to learn it. Then shall we receive the fullest measure of the Christmas benediction.

GEORGE HODGES.

HOW AN OYSTER GROWS.

Each Overlapping Layer of Shell Means One Year of Its Age.

[Boston Herald.]

The oyster at the commencement of its career is so small that 2,000,000 would only occupy a square inch. In six months each individual oyster is large enough to cover half a crown, and in 12 months a crown piece. The oyster is its own architect, and the shell grows as the fish inside grows, being never too small. It also bears its age upon its back, and it is as easy to tell the age of an oyster by looking at its shell as it is that of horses by looking at their teeth.

Everyone who has handled an oyster-shell must have noticed the successive layers overlapping each other. These are technically termed shots, and each one marks a year's growth, so that by counting them the age of the oyster can be determined. Up to the time of its maturity—that is, when four years of age—the shots are regular and successive; but after that time they become irregular and are piled one upon another, so that the shell becomes built and thickened.

Fossil oysters have been seen of which each shell was nine inches thick, whence they may be guessed to be more than 900 years old. One to two million oysters are produced from a single parent, and their scarcity is accounted for by the fact that man is not the only oyster-eating animal. The starfish loves the oyster, and preys upon it unceasingly. A variety of whelk is also very fond of young oysters, to get at which it bores right through the shell and sucks the fish up through the hole thus made.

A COUGH SYRUP.

Directions for Making a Syrup That Cures Coughs, Colds, Catarrh, Bronchitis and Consumption.

Get a bottle of Pe-ru-na of your druggist; get two ounces of pure rock candy and add it to the bottle of Pe-ru-na. It should be shook up occasionally until the candy is all dissolved, when it makes a cough syrup which is simply delicious to the taste, prompt in its results and permanently cures. It should be taken according to the directions on the bottle. This cough syrup is not like so many others which simply quiets a cough temporarily, but it cures radically. Children like it; it agrees with the weakened stomach and has no disagreeable effect of any kind. This syrup can be relied on to cure catarrh, acute or chronic, coughs, colds and all chronic diseases of the lungs and throat.

Any who prefer to can use the Pe-ru-na without the addition of rock candy, as it is not very disagreeable to the taste without it. Everyone should avail themselves of the holiday gift of The Pe-ru-na Drug Manufacturing Company, who are sending during December and January a free copy of the Illustrated Ills of Life, a treatise on catarrh and winter diseases. Send in your order early and receive a free copy postpaid.

Dress Suits,

Trouserings, silk vestings and overcoatings to order, at Pitcairn's, 434 Wood street.

EDITOR WILLIAM T. STEAD.

LONDON'S GREAT EDITOR.

William T. Stead as Carpenter Found Him—Some of His Famous Interviews—His Attack on the Social Evil and the Result.

[CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DISPATCH.]

LONDON, Dec. 14.—I have just had an interview with one of the great men of the world. I refer to Mr. William T. Stead, late editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and now of the *Review of Reviews*. Mr. Stead is now 53 years old. The son of a Congregational minister, he left school at 14 to take the place of an office boy in a mercantile establishment. After working here eight years his salary had risen to $325 a year, when he gave up his place to be the assistant editor of a half-penny daily. He at once showed his talent for newspaper work and soon became editor in chief. He rapidly advanced from one journalistic position to another, working on various newspapers until along about 1883 he became the chief editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which, under him, soon got to be one of the greatest newspapers in London.

I called upon him not long ago in his office, on Norfolk street, just off the Thames embankment and between the houses of Parliament and the Savage Club. I sent in my letters of introduction and a moment later I was seated in his workshop. This is a big room which looks out on the river Thames, and every part of which is packed with marks of individuality and ideas. Upon its doors in letters of brass are printed the words, "The Sanctum." Its walls are covered with photographs and upon the mantel over the open fire were many portraits of the most famous men and women of the times.

The King of Belgium.

He Talks Like Lightning.

Over the doors of the office were texts of the Scriptures and between the windows was a roller-top desk which was littered with manuscripts, and near it a wide divan which was also covered with papers of various kinds. A large bust of Cardinal Manning looked down from the top of the desk, and as I entered Mr. Stead rose from a chair in front of it and took my hand. He at once plunged into business with me, and in five minutes he told me more about London than I had been able to learn in the week I had spent in trying to find out about things before coming to him. He is more like an electric dynamo in clothes than any man I know. He talks like lightning and a blaze of intellectual sparks follows his words. He looks more like a practical American Methodist preacher than a London litterateur. He is plain in his dress and habits. His soft brown hat is crushed in at the top and his snuff-colored suit of business clothes looked as though their owner had been on a roughing tour and had just got home. He talks more like an American than an Englishman. He has no cockneyisms or anglicisms in his conversation. He never says "you know," and the only English slang I noticed in his talk was the word "blooming," by which he would now and then refer to some people whom he held in contempt as the "whole blooming set." He is, I judge, about 5 feet 7 inches high and he weighs about 150 pounds. He has a florid complexion, bright blue eyes and a bushy, reddish-brown beard. His hair is combed up from a high, broad and full forehead, and he stoops a little in his shoulders. He laughs easily, and tells a story as well as he writes it.

Story of a Great Interview.

It was during a lunch with him at Gatti's on the Strand that the conversation turned to newspapers. Mr. Stead is one of the greatest interviewers of the world. He knows how to make a man think as well as talk and he gets out of every man he interviews the best that is in him and expresses it more clearly and fully than the man himself.

"The field of the interviewer," said Mr. Stead, "is one of the most attractive in journalism. The newspaper is for the communication of thought. The interview is one of the best methods of such communication. It brings the reader and thinker close together, and such talks sometimes change the face of history."

"How about your talk with General 'Chinese' Gordon just before he went to Egypt? That affected history, did it not?" I asked.

"Yes," was the reply. "That was perhaps one of the most important interviews ever taken. It resulted in the loss of more than 20,000 lives and it cost England millions of pounds. It was at the time of our troubles with Egypt. The Government had decided to give up the Soudan and General Gordon was at Southampton, about to proceed to Egypt. He had, I knew, positive orders as to what was to be done and I wanted an interview with him upon the situation. I wrote him at Southampton telling him I would like to see him and asking him when he could receive me. He replied at once, saying that it would be impossible for him to talk to me and that he had nothing to say. I thereupon telegraphed him that I must see him and that I would leave for Southampton on the next train. I have been told that he spent the rest of that day walking up and down and debating whether he would see me when I came or not.

His Meeting With Gordon.

"When I got off the train I went at once to his house and rang the bell. In a moment the door opened and a little fellow, whom I took for General Gordon's butler, asked me in and helped me off with my top coat and hung up my hat. I asked him if General Gordon was in, and he replied that he was and motioned me to go into the next room. I went in and the little man followed me. I took a seat and then told the little man to please tell General Gordon that Mr. Stead, of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was there and would like to see him. Whereupon the little man said:

"'I am General Gordon,' and he reached me his hand and then took a chair and sat down beside me. We then went over the whole situation together, and his ideas were such that they resulted in an entire change of Government policy. I listened to them and when I went back to London I laid them before the Government Ministers and they decided to accept them and to send him to the Soudan. I urged them to let him carry out his ideas in his own way, and had they done so in all probability the war would have been speedily closed. It was his idea to have taken a camel and to have gone alone to the camp of the Mahdi and to have discussed matters with him. But no! the Government would have its own way, and the result was the death of Gordon.

"The best interviews I have ever had," continued Mr. Stead, "are some which have never been published. One of the most remarkable I have ever had was with the Czar of Russia, but the Czar insisted that no mention of it should be made in print, and though I wrote a long series of letters on Russia for the English and American newspapers and published a book on Russia the public do not know to this day that I met the Emperor and talked with him.

His Interview With the Czar.

"The Countess Novikoff arranged the meeting," continued Mr. Stead, "and the audience was given me much to the surprise of the English Minister at St. Petersburg, Sir Robert Morier, and the other diplomats. It is, you know, not considered proper for a Minister to present one of his countrymen to a monarch unless he has been presented at court at home. I have never been presented to the Queen, and have never considered it worth the trouble and expense of buying a court dress, and it seemed to me at St. Petersburg that our Minister did not want me to meet the Czar. I did meet him, however, and he received me in one of the rooms of his palace at Gatchina. He sat at one side of a table during our conversation and I sat at the other, facing him, and the conversation was free and open, and there was an entire absence of red tape about my reception. The Czar smoked a cigarette during the talk, though, by the way, I remember he failed to offer me one. He knew of me, for I had been writing in favor of Russia for the past 20 years, and I began my conversation by saying:

"'Your Majesty, I am accredited in England with being your agent. I am said to have been fighting your battles for years, and if this is so I want a supply of cartridges from headquarters. You know I am predisposed in favor of Russia, and I think I ought to understand the situation and I want you to give it to me as it really is. I am willing to work, but I want the straight tip from you.'

"The Czar then began to talk and he went over the whole situation with me and without reserve gave me his ideas. I found him a broad man, and I left him believing that he would do right in every case as his own judgment dictated."

Not a Very Pleasant Talk.

"Tell me something about your interview with the King of Belgium, Mr. Stead," said I.

"That was rather a curious experience," was the reply. "I went to Belgium especially to see the King and he came in to his capital to meet me. He is, you know, a very tall man and a very pompous one. When I was presented to him he stood up very stiff and straight and said in labored English; 'I do not speak the English, so we will have our conversation in French.'

"'But, Your Majesty,' said I, 'I do not speak French.'

"'Then I do not see how we can talk together,' said he.

"'Well, Your Majesty,' said I, 'I am sure if you cannot speak English you know enough for me to make you understand what I want to say, and I will speak it in English.'

"He could not object to this, and though he was very angry at me he listened. He did not ask me to sit down, and we both remained standing throughout the talk. After a while he began to speak English in reply to me, and I saw that he could speak English as well as I could. I have since understood that he was not at all pleased with my actions, but they served my purpose. I said what I wanted to say and he gave me in reply just what I wanted to get. He came, as I say, into the city to give me the interview, and I have often wondered why he was not more gracious during it."

What Made Mr. Stead World-Famous.

In referring to the English newspapers Mr. Stead deprecated their lack of enterprise and push and said that they badly needed independence and spice. I asked him to tell me the story of the "Maiden's Tribute to Modern Babylon," and he replied that the sensation was not sprung as a newspaper sensation and that every word of the story of vice told in it was true. It was written to influence Parliament to correct one of the most horrible evils of London, which Parliament would not touch because its participants were largely among the members of Parliament. Its publication secured this result, and though the social evil still prevails in London to a greater extent, perhaps, than in any other city in the world, this sensation took the the young girls off of the streets.

"As a newspaper enterprise the publication injured rather than helped the circulation of the *Pall Mall Gazette*," said Mr. Stead concerning it. "The day it was published Henry Labouchere told me it would ruin the paper. During the sensation our circulation ran up to more than 100,000. We could have sold 1,000,000 if we could have printed them, and as it was the papers sold for half a crown upon the streets. When the thing died down the reaction came. Our circulation dropped off and our advertisers rushed in to take their ads out of what they called 'the unclean sheet.' Henry Irving was one of the first to withdraw his advertisement and the other amusement managers followed. As a financial enterprise it was not a success, but as accomplishing just what it set out to do it succeeded admirably, for Parliament passed the bill in a jiffy."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

MOTOR AND FACTORY.

The Distribution of Power by Electricity a Blow to the Latter.

AN EXPERIMENT ON THE RHONE.

Utility of the Storage Battery in the Plants for Lighting.

NEW APPLICATIONS OF CURRENT

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

It has long been prophesied that the electric motor is destined to revolutionize the factory system, and the recent accounts of the vast electrical scheme of the shrewd men of Lyons would indicate that a distinct phase in such a change is about to be entered upon. The rapid current of the River Rhone is to be utilized for the generation of electricity, which will be distributed in the city of Lyons and its suburbs. The waters of the river will be tapped about 17 miles above the city, where 20 turbines, representing a thousand horse-power each, will be established. These turbines, operated by the water precipitated upon them from a convenient height, will work the dynamos, and the electric current will be conveyed by six cables to distributing stations situated at various centers in the city.

The special object in this undertaking is to benefit the smaller industrial enterprises, and with that view the supply of power to any single subscriber will be limited to 50 horse. Of these smaller industrial enterprises that of the silk weaver is by far the most important. The other uses to which the project contemplates the application of electrical power are too numerous to be indicated separately; but they include the mixing of bread, the working of saws and other tools, of sewing machines, printing machines, lathes and ventilators, the working of fans, elevators and coffee mills, hair-cutting, boot blacking, the purification of sewage and the charging of baths for the cure of nervous and other affections. Electricity will also be largely used for traction and lighting, and a system of irrigation is already being planned. In fact, every industry in the city will be carried on by electricity. The flow of water to the turbines is to be regulated by means of a system of sluices, locks and compensating reservoirs, and when the stream has done the work required of it it will return to the Rhone by a special canal.

The Storage Battery.

An English electrical paper lays great emphasis on the increasing use of storage batteries for central station work and it expresses the opinion that the accumulator is likely to prove of greater importance in lighting than is anticipated by even many of the present low tension supply companies. It seems, indeed, by no means improbable that the future practice for city and town lighting will be a direct current supply with a three-w