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COFFEE IN PORTO RICO

THE ISLAND NOW PRODUCES ABOUT 50,000,000 POUNDS ANNUALLY.

How the Bean Is Grown and the Profits of the Business—The Sorting and Preparing for Market.

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PONCE, July 20.—How would you like to own a Porto Rican plantation? There is big money in some of them, I can tell you. I have met several men who are making from 25 to 50 per cent. a year out of them. One coffee planter near Adjuntas cleaned up $100,000 in 1898, and there are sugar men who are doing equally as well. Some of the sugar estates about Ponce produce from six to eight thousand hogsheads a season, and on the east coast, not far from Humacao, there is a little cocoanut grove which will net its owner an annual income of $20,000. I heard the other day of a Boston man who has invested $50,000 in Porto Rican cattle, and some New England bankers, who are lending money at high rates here in Ponce, have lately bought a plantation of 1,000 acres of sugar lands a few miles up the coast from where I am now writing. There are Florida men here who are enthusiastic over the chances for fortunes in oranges, pineapples and vegetables for our city markets, and I hear every day of some American who has a new proposition with "millions in it." As to the industrial outlook and the possibilities of the sugar and fruit lands, I will deal in another letter.

There is no doubt but that there is money in coffee. Porto Rico already raises enough to give half a pound to every man, woman and child among her fellow-citizens of the United States. She produces annually more than 50,000,000 pounds and she could produce at least as much more. So far not one-tenth of the coffee lands have been developed and those in cultivation are not half cared for.

This is so, although coffee is king in Porto Rico. It is the chief industry of the island, and its sale profits the country more than anything else. The coffee exports are three times as large as the sugar exports. They amount to something like $9,000,000 a year and go almost altogether to continental Europe.

THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

I doubt whether there is a better coffee in the world than that raised in these new coffee fields of Uncle Sam's. If there is, I have not tasted it. Porto Rican coffee has the same flavor as the best Mocha and Java mixed. As prepared by the Porto Ricans it is a drink for the gods—strong, aromatic and delicious.

The best of the coffee is called cafe caracolilla. It has brought right along 25 cents and more at wholesale. It all goes to France, for it is too rich for our American blood, costing so much that our importers have not introduced it into the American markets. They can get Brazilian coffee cheaper, and the profit upon it is greater. The result is that the Porto Rican coffee has been going to Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Spain. France gets the best, Germany, Austria and Italy take the second and third grades and the poorest of all is sold to the Spaniards.

This should and will be changed. There are people in the United States who are now paying 40 cents a pound for so-called Mocha and Java coffee which costs in Santos and Rio de Janeiro less than 8 cents a pound. They could buy the Porto Rican coffee at a less rate and have a better article.

The Porto Rican coffee planters are just beginning to awaken to the possibilities of our market. They have recently formed an association or trust to advance their wares in the United States. They will open business houses in the cities here and in New York, and will try to show our people the varieties of coffee raised on Uncle Sam's new island. The men already included in this trust have plantations to the value of $2,000,000. Some of their estates are mortgaged, but the association expects to clear off the mortgages by money raised in the United States, and also to get such advances as will enable its members to cultivate after modern methods. Among other things they want our Agricultural Department to establish an experimental station here devoted to coffee raising. There is no doubt we should have such farms in all our tropical possessions, and I understand that Secretary Wilson is already planning them.

WHERE THE COFFEE LANDS ARE.

In Brazil the best coffee is raised at an elevation of from 1,500 to 3,000 feet above the sea. It grows on the highlands south of the center of the country and some distance back from the ocean. The coffee plantations of Porto Rico begin almost as soon as you leave the narrow strip of coastal plains which runs about the island. They grow all along the hills, clear to the tops of the mountains. In some districts you ride for miles through nothing but coffee, the bushes growing among other trees. This is especially so in the eastern end of the island, where, at blossoming time, the air is so full of the perfumery of the coffee flowers that it almost overcomes you.

There is a great deal of coffee along the military road and quite a large amount in the western portion of the island. I have been told that coffee will grow anywhere outside the low coast lands, and that there are large areas of coffee lands which are now in grass. There is no doubt that this is true. Porto Rico has in the neighborhood of 2,500,000 acres of land, and there are, it is said, only about 100,000 acres in coffee.

The most of the coffee lands are in comparatively small tracts. It takes money to operate a coffee plantation, and for this reason the ordinary man cannot manage a large crop. The average estate is not over fifty acres, although there are some which are much larger. There is a man named Shroeder, for instance, who has a thousand acres, and who is putting out more every year. He had not a large capital, but he bought cheap land and put in his first trees in 1894. He has already had a profit of $4,000 this year from his plantation, and he has thousands of young trees coming on, and within ten years his income will be $100,000 a year. There is a Dutchman from Java who has just gone into the coffee business here who will soon have a similarly large property, and there are other men who are quietly buying up coffee lands.

PRICES OF LANDS.

And this brings me to the subject of land values. The conditions have been so unsettled that it is hard to say just what they are. I have asked many questions and have been answered that coffee lands are worth all the way from $25 to $200 per acre. I have heard of some coffee men who want $300 per acre, but this is for rich plantations in bearing.

Some of the cheaper lands are back from the roads and so situated that it is costly to get the coffee to market. The value of such lands will be greatly increased by the new roads which the government is contemplating.

Many of the large plantations, both sugar and coffee, are owned by nonresidents. Some are the property of Barcelona Jews and other rich Spaniards. They have been paying well, and it is doubtful whether they can be bought cheap. I am told that the Spaniards consider their land of more value since the Americans have taken possession. Among these is a Spanish officer who commanded in the recent war. He was asked the other day if he was going to sell out his Porto Rican property and go back to Spain. He replied:

"No, I prefer to stay here and give up my pension. The change of government will increase the value of my property, and I can't afford to let it go."

On the other hand there are many coffee properties which are heavily mortgaged. Interest rates here run from 10 per cent. upward, and 1 and 2 per cent. a month are common. The war has materially retarded all kinds of business, and at present some of the planters are so cramped that they want to sell. There is a good chance to buy the mortgage notes, and the man who brings his money here and loans it to these Porto Rican coffee men will get high rates of interest, and in time have a chance at the land itself.

No one should come to raise coffee without he has enough money to buy his land and to keep himself and his workmen for the first four years. He should have as much as $10,000 to establish almost any kind of a plantation, and above that the more the better. He could not take a hundred acres of land and bring it into coffee bearing within five years for much less than $25,000. At the end of that time his profits would come in rapidly, and he would probably be able to make from 15 to 25 per cent. on his investment for many years.

HOW COFFEE IS GROWN.

So far I have seen no well-cultivated coffee plantations in Porto Rico. In Brazil the coffee estates are like gardens. The trees are trimmed. They grow in great bushes in regular rows, which are plowed and hoed and kept free from weeds. The plants are first grown in nurseries and carefully set out. Here the most of the plants are from the seeds which fall to the ground. They are set out without order, being shaded for the first year by banana plants and after that by larger trees. The result is they grow tall and spindling with trunks like pine trees.

The coffee trees begin to flower in April. Soon green berries take the place of the blossoms, and by October there is a wealth of rich, red coffee cherries shining out of the green leaves. The coffee berry is of just the size of a cherry. It grows close to the branch rather than on a stem like a cherry. In each cherry are two of the half-round coffee beans of commerce. They are the seeds of the cherry.

The coffee berries do not all ripen at the same time. The trees must be picked over again and again during the season and coffee picking forms one of the chief industries of the island. It is in the picking season that the peons make the most of their money. They have work at this time for from three to four months, and men, women and children are seen among the bushes picking the berries into baskets and carrying them off to the factory on their heads. The little ones pick the berries on the lower stems, while the men and women bend down the taller trees and gather the ones higher up. The picking upon many of the plantations is done by the pound, the usual price being about a cent and a half per pound. It takes a good picker to average fifty pounds a day, but as the whole family can work at it the peon does fairly well in the coffee regions at picking time.

IN THE COFFEE FACTORIES.

I find the Porto Rican coffee factories quite different from those of Brazil. The most of them are rude in the extreme. They have not the fine machinery nor the economical methods of the Brazilians.

In Brazil the berries are first mashed to a pulp, which takes off their flesh. The seeds or beans are taken out and dried in the sun, and within a short time are on their way to the market. There the machinery is run by steam. Here oxen and men take the place of machinery, and the methods of preparation for the market are slow and expensive.

The berries are first stored away in the great plantation house or factory of the planter. The buildings are rude in the extreme. They are usually high up on piles, and so arranged that flat boxes, some of which are as large as a city lot, can be rolled at will in and out from under the floor. These great trays are used for drying the coffee beans after the flesh has been taken off of them. It is necessary that the coffee should not be rained upon while drying, and the shoving it under the building protects it from the heavy dews of the night.

In some places the coffee is dried on cement floors, but it requires from two weeks to a month to properly cure it, and such floors have to be covered up at time of rain, and the coffee is often taken in at night.

The getting the seeds out of the berry is interesting. This is done by a wheel or roller which moves over the berries so adjusted that it will mash the berries, but not crush the seeds. As soon as the seeds have been freed from the pulp they are dried. They are still covered with two thin shells which must be removed before they are ready for shipment. This is done in hulling mills, and the beans are then polished by running over and through them great wheels faced with tin. The wheels are so adjusted that they do not injure the coffee beans, but by rubbing them over and over burnish them so that they shine as if varnished. In some mills coloring matter is added to give the coffee a blue tint.

Much of the hulling of the coffee is done in great mortars made of wood, men standing before them and letting great pestles drop on the coffee, thus breaking the shells. These wooden mortars are of about the height of your waist. I see them everywhere and have done not a little coffee hulling myself by experimenting with them.

AMONG THE COFFEE SORTERS.

After the coffee has been dried and cleaned it must be graded. In some of the factories this is done by machinery, the coffee being run over wire screens with meshes of different sizes. The little round beans which form the very best of the product, and which look just like Mocha coffee, drop into one bag. The largest of the flat-sided beans go into another, and other grades into other bags.

Machines, however, do not take out the bad grains. This must be done by the coffee sorters. In every large Porto Rican factory you find women picking over the coffee grains and separating the good from the bad. In the smaller factories the picking is done sitting on the floor before a low box covered with cloth. In the larger ones there are long tables cut up into little boxes by many partitions, and before each box a Porto Rican girl sits with a pile of green coffee beans before her. She picks these over and over, handling coffee from sunrise until sunset.

During my stay in Porto Rico I visited factories where hundreds of these girls were sorting coffee. I made some photographs of them at work, much to the amusement of all. They are black-eyed, brown-skinned maidens with eyes as laughing as the Italian coffee pickers of Brazil. Not a few show signs of negro blood, and some are quite black. They sing as they work and are evidently not dissatisfied with their condition. Their wages are on the average less than 25 cents a day.

AT THE COFFEE PORTS.

The transportation of the coffee to the seaports is one of the most important factors in the industry. Much of the coffee land is far in the interior, with mountain ranges between it and the places of shipment. Some of it is along the military road. This is shipped upon bullock carts—great two-wheeled affairs drawn by four or five yokes of oxen and carrying enormous loads.

The coffee in the other mountain regions is taken to the coast upon ponies, about 200 pounds being packed on the back of each animal. Often you will see a long file of these little ponies thus loaded crawling up and down the mountain road. Sometimes an owner sits on the top of his pony and flogs him along the way.

The packs are often roughly put on so that they rub the skin from the backs of the ponies, and when the loads are removed great raw sore patches are to be seen. One of our army officers, who is in charge at the coffee port of Yauco, endeavored to prevent this cruelty. He took the packs off the beasts and fined each driver of a sore horse $5, putting his horse in the pound until cured. This created a great sensation among the farmers, and after a few days the coffee ceased to come in. The business of Yauco fell off and the merchants complained that the officer was hurting the town. Upon investigation it was discovered that the planters were shipping their coffee to the port of Arecibo, on the north coast. The officer at Yauco wrote to Arecibo and tried to stop this. He also made a complaint to General Henry, who was then in charge, but his complaint was not noticed and he was forced to allow the cruelty to go on.

At present coffee is brought in this way to all the ports. It is there consigned to the large coffee dealers, who ship it to the markets of Europe.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

THE FUNERAL OF JOHN DRYDEN

A Strange Event Recalled by a Reader of English History.

In the rush and stir of this generation, amidst the exciting and startling events accumulating faster than the daily historians can record them, why not turn back a moment to witness one of the most remarkable episodes in the annals of literary greatness—an event that seems almost incredible, and yet the authenticity of which is vouched for by writers of the time in which it occurred. Reference is made to the funeral of John Dryden, one of the most distinguished names in the history of English literature, a poet whose works gained for him a sepulture in Westminster Abbey. It is the circumstances connected with the burial of this illustrious author which it is thought worth while to recount, as showing the social laxity of the time. The story has been discredited by some writers, and yet the narrative as given by a certain contemporary scribe can hardly be questioned, so full is it of painstaking details. It seems that Lord Halifax had secured permission from the poet's wife and son Charles to give the body a private funeral in Westminster Abbey. Dryden died on May day, 1701. On the following Saturday a small company arrived, making a procession of only eighteen coaches, Lady Dryden herself not being able to attend by reason of her prostration. It is said that the corpse was put in a "velvet hearse" and the cortege was just in the act of moving, when Lord Jeffries, son of the infamous Judge Jeffries, with a mob of rakish and maudlin companions, came clattering by and, being attracted by the mourning coaches, rode up and asked whose funeral. Being informed he exclaimed, "What, shall Dryden, the greatest ornament and honor of the nation, be buried after this manner? No, gentlemen, let all that honor and love his memory alight and join with me in gaining my lady's consent to let me have the honor of his interment, which shall be after a different manner than this, for I will bestow one thousand pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him." The gentlemen in the coaches, not knowing of Lord Halifax's generous designs, or that he had secured the consent of Lady Dryden and the bishop's favor, sprang from their coaches and accompanied Jeffries to the bedside of the widow, to whom he repeated his proffers. Being met by a refusal, he fell on his knees begging that she accede to his appeals and declaring that he would never arise till she gave her consent. She at length waved her hand and faintly exclaimed, "No! no!" Jeffries arose, saying, "Enough, enough, she says 'Go! Go!'" and before the lady could further express her disapproval he ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to an undertaker in Cheapside, and leave it there for further orders from him. He was obeyed and the next morning Charles Dryden waited on Lord Halifax and the bishop and tried to excuse his mother in the matter by relating the incident. His explanations, however, were not accepted, especially by the bishop, who had had the Abbey lighted and the ground opened for the reception of the body. After three or four days Mr. Russell, the undertaker, called on Lord Jeffries, who pretended ignorance of the entire matter, and turned it off with an ill-natured jest, saying that "Those who observed the orders of a drunken frolic deserved nothing better." The weather was very warm and the corpse began to grow offensive. Russell threatened to take it home and set it before the door. Well can we imagine the confusion and horror of the family! Charles Dryden, it is said, wrote a kindly letter to Jeffries, who paid no attention to it. At this unhappy juncture Dr. Garth, a great friend and admirer of the poet, ordered the corpse to be brought to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and proposed that it be buried by subscription. Many distinguished men contributed, and at last, three weeks after death, a day was fixed for the interment in the Abbey. Dr. Garth pronounced a Latin oration over the corpse at the college. The audience was large, as well as the room, and it was necessary for the speaker to be elevated that he might be seen and heard. Nothing was at hand for this purpose but an old beer barrel, which the doctor mounted with great good nature. Just, however, as he was reaching a climax in his eloquent discourse, the head of the barrel gave way and he sank to the bottom amidst the roar and tumult of the crowd. But he finished at length with superior grace and genius. At last the corpse reached the Abbey, which was unlighted. No organ was played and no anthem was sung. At this point a mob broke in and only ten gentlemen gained admission and they were obliged to do so by the use of their swords. The coffin was lowered in the grave of Chaucer and thus ended the strangest obsequies that perhaps ever attended a similar occasion. When the funeral was over Charles Dryden sent repeated challenges to Lord Jeffries, who refused to answer them, and who carefully avoided the poet's son ever afterward.

J. N. MATTHEWS.

The Ideal Street Car.

Cassier's Magazine.

The ideal car, from the railway standpoint, is one of the convertible type, which can be used at all season's of the year and for every service. It must be arranged in such a manner as to be agreeable alike to women and to men who smoke. For long-distance runs transverse seats are desirable, but these are at the expense of standing room. For short runs, longitudinal seats are best, in which case the standing room is at the maximum. As it is the "standing load" that pays, this is a most desirable feature. The problem is still further complicated by other demands or needs of the public, which, in addition to the points noted, wants a car suited to the weather. In winter it must be closed and warm, and in summer entirely open. But, when open, it must admit of being easily and quickly closed, and when closed, as quickly and easily opened. The car will not be satisfactory unless it can readily conform to the requirements of a climate fickle at all seasons of the year. An incredible number of convertible cars have been built in the effort to obtain a design which will combine all these features. They are to be found in the car barns of nearly every large railway company. Until recently none had reached, or even approached, the ideal. Some fatal defect had made itself manifest in every case, and with each new type the reluctant verdict was pronounced that the car of the future was yet to be built.

What He Needed.

Washington Star.

"Ah," said the man who is sometimes morose and visionary, "if I only had the wings of an eagle and the heart of a lion!"

"Another touch of dyspepsia!" murmured the family physician, in tones of sympathy. "My dear fellow, what you ought to wish for is the stomach of a goat."

A CUBAN CIGAR FACTORY

THE LARGEST ONE IN THE WORLD IS TO BE FOUND IN HAVANA.

The Tobacco Industry the Most Important in Cuba—How the Several Grades of Cigars Are Made.

Special Correspondence Indianapolis Journal.

TRINIDAD DE CUBA, July 9.—You cannot be said to have "done" this isle of "tobacco puro" until you have visited a typical fabrica and inspected the whole process of converting the weed into the fragrant rolls, big and little, beloved of most men and many women. Perhaps the best place in which to pursue your investigations is the great Fabrica de Houradez, in Havana—the word houradez being Spanish for "honesty." The factory occupies an entire city square, from Cuba street to San Ygnacio, and in prosperous times turned out something over 2,500,000 cigars and cigarettes per diem. On entering the building you are met by a courteous gentleman of Chesterfield deportment, who speaks pigeon English after the Cuban fashion, and whose sole vocation in life is to exhibit this establishment. First he shows you through the counting rooms and offices, and then introduces you to the register, an enormous tome containing thousands of names, and begs you to append your own. What a treasure-trove to the autograph hunter that volume would be! On leaving the building each visitor is again conducted to the register and asked to write opposite his name his opinion of the factory, with remarks of the peculiarities that have impressed him and any criticisms or suggestions he may feel disposed to offer. Among a multitude of signatures, illustrious and to fame unknown, you may read the names of W. H. Prescott, Henry Irving, Anthony Trollope, Charles A. Dana, Richard Dana, M. Charney, Kingsley, Darwin, Agassiz and a host of other shining lights of past generations, followed by those of later date, together with their hastily-formulated opinions. Some of the latter are amusing, others frivolous, concerning the pretty girls employed, or their appreciation of a liberal donation of the products of the place; while a few are in the ponderous style of William H. Seward, who wrote: "I am deeply impressed with the successful manner in which the proprietor of La Honradez has combined West Indian productions with American inventions, European talent and Asiatic industry."

SMOKE THE BEST CIGARS.

Had our ex-secretary of state been writing the same to-day, he would have substituted native and African for Asiatic, because where formerly a thousand Chinese coolies were employed there are now not fifty. In La Houradez, about half the workmen are of African descent, and the color line has never been drawn. At least one-third of the saddle-hued, called-by-courtesy "white" employes are Spaniards, and to this day it is so difficult to keep the Cubans from quarreling with them that they are grouped by themselves, in separate rooms whenever practicable. All work by the piece, from eight to ten hours a day, and the average earning is $2.50—a few experts making as much as $5 per diem. Besides their wages, most of them are lodged free of cost, and all are allowed to smoke as many cigars or cigarettes as they like, of the master's tobacco and their own making—an item of no small consequence to the proprietor, when a thousand men are smoking every minute, and only the best tobacco that grows, cigars from which retail at not less than 25 cents apiece.

In the great room where cigarettes are made, each of the several hundred workmen is seated before a tiny table, on which he folds, fills, counts and does up in packages the fragrant little rolls. It is astonishing what accuracy and dexterity they acquire from long practice in handling and counting these small bits of paper. Watch those whose business it is to inclose twenty-five cigarettes in a package, just as they are bought in the United States; you will see that they seem to do it by instinct, without counting, but determining by a single touch of the fingers if there is one cigarette more or less than the required number. Just such marvelous dexterity old employes in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, at Washington, acquire, counting coupons in the United States treasury and other important work for Uncle Sam.

One small room, full of silent, busy Asiatics, looked like a nightmare. All the grotesque figures, clad in blue dunguree, with eyes set in on the bias and heads clean shaven, or with pigtails carefully twisted up in psyche knots, or coarse black hair cut short and standing up like the bristles in a blacking brush, are scrupulously neat in their persons and attire, being required to keep so by the rules of the establishment. The dormitory, where the contract laborers sleep, is a model of cleanliness and good order, its cots with snow-white "spreads" and pillows, and its curious personal belongings of these exiles from the Flowery Kingdom. Scattered about the room are little Chinese gods, exquisite carvings, instruments of alleged music, gambling boards, funny shoes of wood and straw, and fans galore.

RULES FOR WORKMEN.

All the workmen are required to wear a certain hat with "La Houradez" stamped on the band. There is a rigorous system, in the shape of fines, for any infringement of rules or dereliction of duty, and everything goes on with military precision. One odd feature, common to all Cuban cigar factories, is the reader—a man employed on purpose to entertain the others. He occupies a kind of pulpit, erected near the center of the main room, and reads forenoon and afternoon, two hours at a time, from newspapers and current litrature. Exciting political questions are tabooed, for manifest reasons, and it is the general testimony that much better work is done during the reading hours than at other times. Strikes are lamentably frequent, especially among the Cuban employes, who work themselves up into a high state of excitement on the slightest provocation. As a rule, however, the strikes are not serious or of long duration, the tempest-in-a-teapot rage, which soon blows over, being a Latin characteristic. The cigar makers have their unions, called gremios, which are almost as prolific of mischief as those of the United States.

The women and girls employed in stripping the leaf have a large, airy apartment to themselves, and how their tongues do run! Gossip, jest and snatches of song keep time with their nimble fingers. Each has a powder box concealed somewhere about her, and when the days' work is ended she dabs it in ghastly drifts over her face, neck and ears. They are paid from 50 to 80 cents a day and their work is confined to the cigarette department. Notwithstanding the need of flexible fingers and the fact that women are supposed to possess a more delicate touch than men, it is claimed that they can never become successful cigar makers.

To tell of all the interesting things seen in La Hounadez would be to fill every page of this paper. A telegraph wire gives direct communication between the offices and the chiefs of the several departments, the shipping wharf, storehouses and wholesale stores in various parts of the city, as well as to the carpenter's shop where the boxes are made in which the goods are packed, the residences of the proprietor and his head assistants.

A COMPLETE ESTABLISHMENT.

In the lower saloon are machines adapted to a variety of stronge purposes. Among the most novel is that for cutting picadura, the fine tobacco used in filling cigarettes; the hydraulic press, used in compressing tobacco for exportation into solid blocks as hard as wood; and the press for stamping brands upon the boxes, which, instead of being burned in, as they appear, are printed by a very rapid and ingenious process. The barrel department is also worth inspection—barrels turned out by steam with great velocity, all hooped and headed; and though in such numbers, every one is perfectly air and water-tight. On the second floor is a complete printing outfit, every branch of typography and lithography being constantly employed in printing circulars, labels, wrappers, views of the factory, letter heads and millions of the beautifully colored and tastefully designed papers that inclose the cigarettes in packages of twenty-five. In the engraving room is a fine magneto-electrique machine, invented by a Frenchman, for drawing on stone by chemical action, and machinery run by electricity. The receiving and examining rooms are most interesting. After the cigarettes are made and put up into packages of the allotted number the packages are examined, wrapped in large, round bundles and packed in barrels. The storerooms are as sacredly guarded as a bank vault—and indeed some of the tobacco leaves in it might each pass current as a greenback of large denomination. The products of this factory find their way to all parts of the world, being made to suit the taste of every class of smokers. Some of the cigarette papers are combined with rice, coffee, pretoral perfumery, corn, etc., and the cigars are strong, mild and medium. The manager will tell you that the value of the Vuelta Abaja leaf lies in its flavor rather than in its strength, and that the Houradez cigars, best known from their delicate aroma, come from the Pinar del Rio plantations. The Remedios leaf is very strong, so strong that Cubans do not like it, and it is used only to mix with American tobacco for the American trade; and he will also add, with a shrug of his shoulders, that Los Americanos do not know what good tobacco is—they demand strength rather than aroma and as a rule would rather pay 10 cents for a crude thing a quarter of a vara long than a dollar for a three-inch cigar fit for San Marcial himself.

FACTORIES LARGE AND SMALL.

What its church are to Rome, "fabricas" are to Havana. Before the war there were more than two hundred of them in the one city, from the obscure tiendas, open to the street and employing two or three assistants, to the great factories of a thousand skilled employes. The poor little shops turn out inferior grades, such as wives and sisters have a pernicious habit of presenting to the husbands and brothers on Christmas and birthdays, for some of the vilest cigars on earth may be bought by the unsophisticated in Cuba. Among the largest and best factories is La Cabanas, which has given its name to a certain brand known to all smokers. It is a great stone building opposite the Campo de Marte and was founded by Senor Don Francisco de Cabanas a hundred years ago. For a time its annual output was limited by the government to 500,000 cigars a year, but when the war began it was disposing of an average of sixteen million cigars per annum. It used only Vuelto Abajo tobacco, and the best of that, by contract with certain plantations. Besides permitting its six hundred operatives to smoke all the cigars they desired during the hours of labor the too-liberal managers allowed each man to carry off five, to last him over night. At first glance this seems a trifling detail, but come to figure it up you find it means something like two million cigars a year, the cheapest of which sell for $20 the thousand. When tobacco bales, carefully packed and wrapped in palm leaves, arrive at the factory they are kept in a cool, dark place on the first floor, where they are divided into classes according to quality—varying in value from $20 to $400 per bale of two hundred pounds. When the bales are opened for use the manojas and gabillas are separated and the latter carried in their dry state to the moistening room. The leaves are softened by putting them in hogsheads containing a solution of salt petre and water, then the water is poured off and the leaves spread upon the edges of the barrels to partially dry. After being thoroughly wet, the leaves unfold easily, without tearing if care is exercised. The stems are then taken out and with the refuse of other tobacco is laid aside for filling the cheapest cigars. This filling is known as tripa, and few of the best cigars are altogether guiltless of it.

MAKING THE CIGARS.

The manufacture of a cigar looks simple enough. The workman, supplying himself with a handful of leaf, called capa (the Spanish word for "cloak"), and a lot of tripa for the body of the cigars, seats himself at his little table, which has raised edges on every side but that nearest to him. He spreads out the capa and cuts it into strips with a sharp knife. This is the most delicate part of the operation, requiring skill, knowledge and experience. By it the different qualities are separated, which determine in great measure the strength, aroma and value of the cigars, the outside of the leaf being generally the best and that nearest the stem the worst. Then he lays a few fragments of tripa in the center of each strip, rolls the whole into the required shape and then, taking a wrapper, rolls it spirally around the now completed cigar. If an expert, he has made it precisely the right length, shape and size, without any trimming. Try your own bungling hand at it, and you will come to the conclusion that the manipulator must be a juggler as well as an artist. Besides educated hands, he must have fingers with the sensitiveness of antennae, an unerring eye, sound nerve and a judicial nose.

The sorting of tobacco is done by workmen of great judgment and experience, who command the highest pay. At La Cabanas the official escojedo, or sorter of wrappers, gets $7 a day, while the torcedores, or twisters, receive an average of $2. After being assorted, counted and done up in packages of twenty-five, the cigars are packed in boxes already branded as "Regalias," "Londres," etc., and are ready for market. The names on the boxes mean a good deal more than the uninitiated may imagine. The "Regalia Imperial," for example, is seven inches long and worth almost its weight in gold. The "Trabues" is a medium grade, short and thick, the favorite of the Catalan shop keepers in Cuba. The "Dana" is very small and delicate, smoked by Cuban ladies and by men between acts of the opera. It is generally highly flavored with vanilla or some other extract. The "Vegueros," a plantation cigar, is made on the vegas, of the very best leaves, roughly twisted for the planters' own use, and, if sold at all, at the most exorbitant price.

FANNIE BRIGHAM WARD.

Peanuts for Hard Drinkers.

Leslie's Weekly.

A medical authority advises hard drinkers, especially of champagne, to eat freely of peanuts after indulging, and he declares that a pint of peanuts will overcome the inebriating qualities of a quart of champagne without entirely curtailing the latter's exhilarating effects. The oil in the peanuts is responsible for this result, and we are told that a wine glass of olive oil will have the same effect. The peanut stand appears, therefore, to be the rational competitor with the Keeley cure.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

Some Facts Relating to the Beginning of His Literary Career.

It will be sad news to many people in the central States of the West to learn that Paul Laurence Dunbar is seriously ill in New York, for he has attracted friends among the thinking people of many cities, towns and country localities. An extract from a New York letter to the Boston Transcript, which appeared in a recent Sunday Journal, giving an account of the poet's rise in literature, is in error in some things, though probably correct as to the more recent events in his career. Mr. Dunbar is a much younger man than the correspondent seems to suppose, and, in fact, never enjoyed the rare opportunities for studying the peculiarities of the Southern plantation negroes that he attributes to him.

Mr. Dunbar's first introduction to a larger public than the local one which surrounded and encouraged him in Dayton came about through his appearance before the Western Association of Writers, at its annual meeting, in 1892. The association met that year in Dayton. The bulk of its membership lay, at that time, in Indiana and the States further West, and the place of meeting was, therefore, distant from and inconvenient to many. From that and other causes, for which no one was to blame, the meeting was far smaller than usual and the programme sadly marred and broken by the absence of many who had accepted places upon it. The meeting was, in numbers and programme, so sadly out of proportion to the warm and hearty welcome extended by the hospitable people of Dayton, that the members who were in attendance, felt rather disconcerted and blue. But, notwithstanding all this, there were some very bright spots in that week on the Big Miami that will never be forgotten, and one was the introduction of Paul Laurence Dunbar at one of the sessions, and his two or three recitations that followed.

It came about in this way: The late Mrs. Helen Truesdel was then living and teaching in the Dayton High School, and Dunbar had been one of her students. Mrs. Truesdel was a lady of thought and culture, who had traveled much and possessed quick powers of discernment and appreciation, and was, withal, something of a critic. She thought that she had discovered in the ambitious colored lad evidences of more than ordinary ability, and it was at her instance that he came to the meeting and was given a hearing. Of course, but little was expected from an unheard-of colored boy just emerging into manhood. But the smoothness and accuracy of his verses, through which they saw flashes of wholesome wit and tender pathos, delivered in a full, well-rounded voice well controlled and modulated, won his audience for him before he had finished his third stanza. At the conclusion he was recalled, recalled twice, and would have been many more times, but that the employment by which he earned his livelihood would not permit him to be longer absent from it.

That afternoon and evening there was much talk among the members of the association and others, at the hotels and elsewhere, about the young colored poet. Many felt that a real star had risen in the firmament of the American negro; yet by most he was welcomed as a coming poet, without much thought or care as to his race and color. There were, as there always will be on such occasions, no doubters, but in this instance they were remarkably few in number, and if the struggling association had possessed either the necessary wealth or prestige to have done so the young man would have been put upon the high road to success at once. There were a few, however, who argued that our enthusiasm was due to the fact that Mr. Dunbar belonged to a race that had long been trodden and oppressed, and that an equally meritorious performance by a young white man would have given rise to nothing more encouraging than a passing ripple of applause. We could not deny that there was much truth in the latter assertion, but the musical quality of his verse, the singular correctness and raciness of his dialect and the evidences of careful thought and study which his readings gave were promises of future attainment, or, at the least, indexes of genius and capability that warranted a belief in him as a poet, independent of the question of race. It is but natural, however, that the hopes and anxieties for the future of the colored race in America on the part of its friends has played a not inconsiderable part in the rapid advances that Mr. Dunbar has been able to make in popular favor.

Among those who, upon this first dawning of the young colored poet upon the world of letters, were most attracted to and deeply interested in him were Dr. James Newton Matthews, of Mason, Ill., and W. W. Pfrimmer, of Kentland, Ind., two whole-souled and liberal-minded gentlemen, who were at once eager to find some way by which to lend the young writer a helping hand. On the day following Dunbar's appearance they hunted him up and found him running an elevator in a business block at the princely salary of $4 per week, upon which sum he supported himself and his mother. They found him also equipped to make use of every spare moment to further his literary capabilities. On that day his outfit consisted of a pencil, a scratch book and a copy of the Century Magazine. Dr. Matthews took notes of all he heard from him or from others who knew of his career—how he had managed to acquire an education, how he economized his time and toiled and hoped and toiled again, and added to this information copies of a number of his shorter poems. Soon after returning to his Illinois home Dr. Matthews wrote an exceedingly interesting and appreciative account of Dunbar's appearance before the association, his interview with him and the story of his life, interspersed with short excerpts from his poetry. It was printed in the Journal, and, if I mistake not, also in one of the Chicago papers. It was copied in all parts of the country, and usually with kindly comments. It crossed the ocean and appeared in the English newspapers with favorable mention. It seemed then that the African star had risen, and Paul Dunbar ventured out from home and gave readings at Toledo, Detroit, Richmond, Ind., and Indianapolis. He was well received and his readings were well liked, but he was too new yet, people did not flock to hear him and he made no great amount of money. A friend who believed in him assisted him with the necessary funds to publish a small volume of poems. He sold it wherever he went and that helped him a little. He met the late Frederick Douglass and won his friendship and esteem. Again in 1893, he attended and took part in the annual meeting of the Western association. At the close of the meeting he went to the world's fair, at Chicago. Mr. Douglass had, at the request of the authorities of Haiti, taken charge of the Haitien building and exhibition. The care and confinement wore upon him and he was anxious to be relieved from it, and soon after Mr. Dunbar's arrival placed it under his control and direction. There, again, he won many friends by his genial manners and careful attention to duty. Meeting Frederick Douglass one day thereafter upon the grounds, and he, with his usual kindness, stopping for a few moments' conversation, the writer of this took occasion to mention Paul Dunbar. Immediately the old man's eyes lighted up and he spoke with great enthusiasm of his faith in the young poet and his hopes for his future, saying, among other things, that he regarded him as the brightest and most promising young man of the colored race within the circle of his knowledge. That was, indeed, "praise from Sir Hubert," and thousands will hope that the young poet may live to realize all that it meant for him.

After this came the visit to England, and those things in his career that are so familiar to that portion of the public that cares for literary matters, including his discovery by W. D. Howells and that gentleman's graceful tribute to his worth that put all the literary Jenkinzes "who sneeze whenever Howells takes snuff" to shedding ink in his praise most profusely. The friends of Mr. Dunbar will never cease to be grateful to Mr. Howells for his indorsement of the poet whose struggle with poverty, race prejudice and the many obstacles that rise up to bar the way of the tyro in literature has rendered him so worthy of it.

But if first friends are, after all, most potent in determining the results of a man's struggles and hopes, none have been of more importance in this case than the teacher and other Dayton friends of Mr. Dunbar, Messrs. Matthews and Pfrimmer and the friend—whose name is not recalled—who enabled him to issue his first book of poems, and especially was the splendid introduction given to him by Dr. Matthews's timely article in the newspapers most helpful of all. But Paul Laurence Dunbar deserved it all, and should not be held to be under obligations for it. God and his own toil have made him what he is. May he live long to enjoy his winnings and to honor his race!

New Castle, Ind. BEN S. PARKER.

METHODS OF IRRIGATION

HAND WORK STILL PREVAILS IN EGYPT, INDIA AND THE FAR EAST.

The Long Search for Practical Methods of Utilizing the Underground Supplies of Water.

While irrigation has become a great success in many sections of the West, the question is so broad and comprehensive and there is so much to learn about it in its different aspects under various conditions that when men embark in large irrigation enterprises without a full knowledge of the subject they frequently do not attain entire success. Primitive man did not at first commence to irrigate great valleys and plains. He began with a small patch of ground and a little stream of water, or a well from which the water was laboriously drawn. Then he learned later to broaden his operations and to work in communities until he was finally able to handle great projects. There are thousands of cases of individual irrigation in this country and some of them are extremely satisfactory, where men, by employing the forces of nature through the medium of windmills, irrigate small farms. Taken separately these are insignificant as compared with the great irrigation systems, yet they are complete and effective in themselves and a comparison of them with the primitive methods which have been employed for centuries and are still in use by people in other lands, may not be uninteresting.

The early history of irrigation in Egypt and India is replete with lessons, showing as it does the gradual development of the art from the most primitive, simple and laborious methods. Without artificial watering both of these countries would to-day be largely desert. Cultivation in the tropics or semi-tropics can rarely be conducted over any large extent of country except by artificial watering of at least some portion of the crops. The rainfall in some sections may be utterly insufficient in any season to mature the crops. In parts of the Punjab in India the rainfall averages from 2 to 4 inches only, while in the entire basin of the Nile the rainfall is practically nothing. Even in parts of the Himalayas, where the rainfall averages 50 and even 100 inches annually, it is so unevenly distributed that crops in the dry season must be matured by artificial irrigation.

CRUDE, PICTURESQUE METHODS.

Various methods have been employed in centuries past to utilize water for crop growing, and some of the crudest are still in use. The Persian water wheel is now found in various forms in Egypt and India, consisting of a series of earthen pots strung on an endless rope and revolving on a wheel with a horizontal axis. The lower end of the rope descends into the well or tank, filling the pots as the wheel revolves, and as they rise and reach the top of the wheel they tip over and empty themselves into a trough, then descending to the water to be refilled again. These wheels are generally actuated by bullocks or sometimes by horses and camels, and in Egypt both a camel and a donkey are often harnessed together in the truck. In some places where there are many small canals with com