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The Creation of the Justly Celebrated Havana Cigar.

Something About America's Acquisition in the Vuelta Abajo—Observations on the Tobacco Culture of Cuba.

[Special Kingston (Jamaica) Letter.]

DID the late war with Spain have no other result than the opening of the great Havana cigar industry to American enterprise, this should alone prove ample compensation for the financial sacrifices involved. But it so happens that it is only one in a long procession of advantages to accrue from American control of Cuba, and for that reason its individual significance is apt to be obscured. A brief descriptive sketch of the industry may therefore be found of timely interest—the more so, if based, as is the following, on exact information derived from experts.

Tobacco grows all over Cuba, as also in Borneo, Jamaica, Java and other quarters of the globe. But in only one spot in all the world does the genuine leaf grow from which the famous "Havana" cigar can be made. This spot is the Vuelta Abajo, or the province of Pinar del Rio, west of Havana. Even the aboriginal inhabitants recognized this superiority, and long before the close of the sixteenth century the Conquistadores of Velasquez had established the tobacco industry which has latterly gained such magnitude. But it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that the government established a royal factory, and the systematic development of the Vuelta Abajo was commenced; and yet another half century elapsed before the removal of the government monopoly gave a real impetus to the industry. Development then became rapid despite

as quantity of leaves uniformly on the vega.

This is the basis of the arbitrary qualities of tobacco of which one hears so much and can ascertain so little about, although it is of course in the cigar factory that the distinction is developed to its ultimate conclusion. But the veguero encounters other and far more ordinarily appreciable cares in the maturing of his crop. His is no ideal existence, but one of incessant toil and warfare with inimical powers, the most notable of which are the insect pests that threaten his work at every stage.

All trials and chances of cultivation overcome—of which we have here but a suggestive outline—the raw product is divided into four great classes, each having its subdivisions. These classes of tobacco are the "desecho limpio," the choicest leaves from the top of the plant; the "desechito," or second stratum of leaves; the "libra," the small, inferior leaves from the top, and the "injuriado," or leaves from the ground layers. The manufacturers of the richest laces do not handle their delicate fabrics with more gentle care than does the veguero his "desecho" and "desechito" when making them up into "gravillas" for shipment to the Havana factories. There is an unvarying uniformity in the making up of the "tercios," or bales, for shipment, which is itself no unimportant branch of the business, and when finally neatly cased up in palm leaves the bales weigh from 100 to 125 pounds and are conveyed to the factories by mule caravans.

So much for the simon pure raw material. Let us now consider the process of converting it into our familiar friend, the incomparable "Havana." All told, the "fabricas" of Havana exceed 200 in number, many of which make an average annual output of from 15,000,000 to 30,000,000 cigars, while the less pretentious grade off to modest hundreds of thousands. As this applies only to the bona fide "Havanas" of commerce, the reader may form some



SCENE IN A HAVANA CIGAR FACTORY.

the handicap of characteristic Spanish restrictions, until in 1890 the Vuelta crop valued \$30,000,000.

The general character of tobacco soil is arenaceous and the temperature moist; the chemical secret of Vuelta Abajo is, however, one of the unsolved mysteries of nature. "It is so because it is so." The technique of cultivation requires the "vega" (or farm) to comprise but one "caballeria" of 33 acres; but of late years economical concentration has been adopted by combining two or more plantations. Bananas are grown for the double purpose of screening the young plants and feeding the workers, this fruit being their chief sustenance. Each vega must have its own establishment, no system of cooperative centralization being practicable, as in sugar cultivation. The hands are mostly poor whites and mulattoes, who can engage in this form of manual labor in that tropical land because most of the work is done in the cool hours or under shelter, and at night.

Apart from the secret of the soil, which is beyond human cognizance and



A TOBACCO CARAVAN.

control, the most important "mystery" in the cultivation of Havana tobacco is the veguero's art—or rather instinctive knack—how to regulate during the growth of each plant the exact quantity and quality of its ultimate product. It is claimed to be a hereditary gift that no acquired skill can rival; and the experience of foreigners has invariably corroborated the claim. A certain intelligent and moneyed American spent 20 years in endeavoring to acquire the art; and when the insurrection ruined and drove him out he was no nearer the goal, but still depended on native employes. It appears to be an extraordinary development of the faculties of feeling as though the fingers possessed some superphysical delicacy. Be it what it may, the practical result applies to the limitation of buds which regulates the height of the plant and the trimming necessary to produce just precisely such and such quality as well

idea of the magnitude of the Cuba tobacco industry as a whole.

Taking any average good factory for our observations, we see the bale containing our specimen cigar opened in a room on the ground floor, the arrangement of which as to light, temperature, etc., is carefully adjusted on well-defined principles. And here the leaves are separated and sorted with a rapidity little calculated to indicate the consummate skill really employed. In the moistening-room, whither they are next taken, they are carefully layered in large wooden vats containing a solution of saltpeter, where they remain some hours. The next stage is the pressing process, which has been reduced to a fine art only equal to that of unfolding the leaf again and detaching the stem—which is the succeeding operation.

The unfolded and destemmed leaves are now finally separated according to classes into "capas" and "tripas" (the wrappers and fillings for cigars), which is done by workmen seated at large tables down the middle of an immense room, and under the eye of experts called "escojedores," one of whom presides at each table. Around the sides of this room are ranged numerous small tables, which are occupied by the cigar-makers proper, or the "torcedores." These take caps and fillings by the handfuls as needed from the large central tables, and with a celerity that is astonishing to the uninitiated spectator seem to conjure finished cigars out of the litter of coffee-colored strips and rags before them.

It is really quite difficult to follow this process. Our torcedor spreads a strip of "capa" before him and flashes a gleaming knife about it. The eye-ears, at least—cannot follow the movement, but almost instantly, with no other measurement than that of the eye, he has carved the leaf with mathematical exactness. Then with equal precision and swiftness he grabs the necessary amount of filling from the pile, places it on the capa and rolls the cigar into shape. The whole process is one of "Hey, presto!—Your cigar, señor." It is more than mere expert work—it is positive jugglery, because for all his infinite celerity his cigars never vary a fraction in size or weight, according to the class he may be making. Born instinct as well as experience is necessary for his work, which is second only to that of the escojedor. He is not, therefore, overpaid at five dollars a day any more than is the escojedor at seven, whilst the subordinates at the large tables earn from three to four dollars.

Our "havana" is now made—and we will enjoy it all the more for having witnessed its creation from the green leaf in the vega to the fingers of the courteous torcedor. But we must not smoke it yet. To get the full flavor we should allow it to mature through the sorting-room, where we next witness its classification, counting in and doing up into a bundle of 25, to be boxed under one of the numerous brands known to the trade. T. P. PORTER.

DON RAFAEL IGLESIAS.

President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Central America, is a Liberal Statesman.

Senor Don Rafael Iglesias, president of Costa Rica, recently on a visit to this country, is a true statesman, imbued with the modern spirit of the most enlightened nations. No South American state is more wisely or justly governed than that over which Senor Iglesias presides. Unlike other countries in Central and South America, Costa Rica is no breeding spot for revolution. Its politics is pure and its progress rapid and permanent. President



DON RAFAEL IGLESIAS. (President of the Central American Republic of Costa Rica.)

Iglesias comes of an ancient and distinguished Costa Rican family. He is only 36 years of age, but his face reveals his grave and earnest character and clearly shows that he is possessed of acute intelligence. He is most democratic in manner, and his perfect simplicity, cordiality and courtesy make him most popular among his countrymen. The republican form of government is not a mere mask in Costa Rica. That place is truly a free country, immeasurably in advance of its Latin neighbors. Iglesias wants a free press and has it. He is opposed to monopolies, and one of his greatest performances as president was the abolition of the tobacco and alcohol monopolies, which had been used by the government. These industries are now flourishing under the stimulation of free competition. Such is the work of the young ruler of Costa Rica, who came to this country to benefit his health and to study, incidentally, the institutions of the United States.

JOHN H. BANKHEAD.

Alabama Congressman want him to Succeed Mr. Bailey, of Texas, as Party Leader.

Congressman John H. Bankhead, whom the democrats of Alabama have proposed for party leadership in the next congress in place of Mr. Bailey, is an interesting character. The Fifty-sixth congress will be the seventh to which he has been elected. He is popular down in Alabama, but whether he will please the silver people remains to be seen. There are those who say that Mr. Bankhead likes gold, although in 1896 he ran against a gold democrat—A. S. Vandegraff—and defeated him by nearly 6,000 votes. The Alabama delegation say that Mr. Bankhead will get the support of the east and of a majority of the South Atlantic states.



HON. JOHN H. BANKHEAD. (Alabama's Choice for Democratic House Leadership.)

Bankhead is a self-made man, 56 years old, and all the education he has he gave himself. He is a scarred veteran of the confederate army. Since the close of the war he has never been out of politics, and he has many qualities which make him capable of being a wise leader. He has age, large experience and is master of his tongue and his temper. He is popular in Washington, and many of the old war horses of the democracy would be pleased to see him made the spokesman of their party in the house of representatives.

Birth and Death Records.

There are a great number of curious superstitions as to the time of day when a dying person is most likely to draw his last breath, and the tide, the moon and the wind have all been supposed to have some share in the matter. According to the British Medical Journal, Rasari, who has analyzed 25,474 cases of death and 55,515 births, where the exact time of day was noted, finds that the maximum number of deaths occur in the early afternoon (two to seven p. m.), and the minimum in the last hours before midnight, while the maximum number of births occur in the early hours of the morning and the minimum in the early hours of the afternoon. As regards the cause of this, he points out that the hours of the maximum number of deaths are precisely those when the pulse rate and temperature are at their highest in health, and when there is a febrile exacerbation in illness.

AUSTRALIA AND ITS PEOPLE.

Australia contains an area of about 3,000,000 square miles, or nearly that of the United States exclusive of Alaska. Before Europeans went to Australia the natives never in any situation cultivated crops for food. They never raised any cattle or had any domestic animal except the dog.

One of the most notable characteristics of the Australian continent is its scarcity of rivers and fresh-water lakes. The entire central part of the continent is a plain, so destitute of water courses as to be almost a desert.

The aborigines of Australia form a distinct race from that inhabiting the most of the islands of the Indian archipelago. They are found only in Australia, New Guinea, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and the Solomon islands.

Many attempts have been made to civilize the Australian natives, but with little success. They readily adopt the European dress, but have a great aversion to any regular labor, and even the youth are but slightly susceptible to instruction.

Australia was first visited during the seventeenth century, and in the latter half of the eighteenth century was explored along the coast, while in 1788 colonization began by the transportation of a shipload of criminals from England to Port Jackson.

The color of the Australasian is brown-black rather than jet, his lips are not so protuberant as those of the African negro, nor is his nose so flat, and his hair is black and curly, but not woolly. He is less muscular than the African, but is capable of great endurance.

The Australasians never had bows and arrows, but were expert in the use of the spear, and one of their peculiar weapons was the boomerang, a curved blade of wood, which when thrown sweeps from the direct course, sometimes returning so as to hit an object behind the thrower.

GOLDEN FACTS.

The world coined 2 1/2 times as much gold in 1897 as in 1896. The world will produce in 1898 complete more gold than it produced gold and silver both in 1888.

The world produced 14 per cent. more gold in 1897, the latest full year reported, than in 1896.

The gold coinage of the world in 1897 was the largest recorded, amounting in value to \$437,719,342, against \$195,899,517 in 1896; excluding recoinage, this amount was approximately a net addition of \$291,819,825 to the stock of gold coin.

The deposits of gold bullion at the mints and assay offices of the United States during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1898, were the largest in the history of this country. Exclusive of redeposits, they were of the value of \$147,693,194.83, against \$87,003,337.71 in the previous year.

On July 1, 1898, the Russian treasury held over \$70,000,000 of United States gold coin, \$50,000,000 worth of English sovereigns, \$27,000,000 worth of German gold coins, and \$15,000,000 in francs, besides the coins she may have previously melted and a great stock of bars.

The world's production of gold in the last five years, according to the annual estimates of the bureau of the mint, has amounted to \$977,622,100. The industrial consumption has been about \$300,000,000. Stocks of gold in sight in European banks from December, 1893, to December, 1897, increased \$525,811,000, or about 43 per cent.

RAIL AND TIE.

The London & Northwestern Railway company issue yearly 50 tons of railway tickets.

Russia's railway system extends to the length of 41,699 versts—a verst being about two-thirds of a mile.

Mexico has more than 7,000 miles of railways. Thirty-eight of the railways are subsidized by the government.

Tramway companies in Buenos Ayres are not allowed to build any tracks except such as can be used by ordinary vehicles.

During the year ended September 1 one passenger was killed for every 2,250,000 carried on the railroads in the United States.

Most of the railroad stations in Russia are about two miles from the towns which they respectively serve. This is a precaution against fire, as many of the Russian dwellings are thatched with straw.

At three of the large London railway stations—Charing Cross, Cannon street, and London Bridge—more than 33,000 movements for signal and point levers have to be made every 24 hours, quite apart from the telegraphic operations.

The best locomotives on steam lines weigh 154 pounds per h. p., but on an electric traction line at Baltimore, which was opened in 1895, the electric traction locomotive weighed 126 pounds per h. p. These locomotives weigh 90 tons, and develop 1,600 h. p., distributed on six independent driving axles.

MUSICIANS AND THEIR HAIR.

Wind instruments, especially the cornet and trombone, are fatal to heavy heads of hair.

Certain music prevents the hair from falling, according to one scientist, while other kinds have a disastrous effect.

Composers lose their hair like ordinary artists, but composers who perform their own works on the piano always have luxuriant locks.

The violoncello and harp keep the hair in pretty well, but the flute cannot be depended upon. A number of pianists, including Paderewski, are cited by a scientist in confirmation of this theory.

THEIR PICTURES SELL.

William H. Crane is a favorite, his picture going off rapidly.

There is a heavy demand for photos of Viola Allen as Glory in "The Christian."

Julia Arthur's pictures have been selling well for a year and the demand is still strong.

Of the men, John Drew and William Faversham are most popular among picture buyers.

E. H. Sothern's pictures sell well, but the demand for those of his wife, Virginia Harned, has fallen off.

Richard Mansfield has never been very popular with picture buyers, but as Cyrano many of his photos are asked for.

Madge Lessing and Edna Wallace Hopper find their photos in demand. Della Fox's photos, however, are at present a drug on the market.

Many people buy pictures simply because they are pretty and for that reason the princess of Wales and the English beauties are in constant demand on this side of the water.

Ever since she went on the stage Ellen Barrymore has been a favorite with picture buyers. Maxine Elliott sells well, whether she is playing in the town or not. She takes a very striking picture, no matter what the pose.

For years it has been Lillian Russell's photograph which was the best "seller" the shops had. Nowadays it is Maud Adams' which everybody wants to buy. The requests are almost all for costume pictures rather than the mere photograph.

CARE OF THE HORSE.

It usually will pay to raise good colts.

You cannot get a horse in good condition unless he has proper food and exercise, and it costs no more to keep a horse in good condition than otherwise.

If your horse does not masticate his oats, put a handful of dent corn in and mix it through. He will not swallow the corn whole and will then chew it all.

Horse buyers everywhere report that good drivers are getting scarce. There are whole sections of country where a good driving horse cannot be found.

Do not neglect the hour or two in the paddock for every horse that is not used regularly. Pull the shoes off the unused horses and groom them every day.

If a horse fall on an icy road where no ashes or sand are at hand to roughen the surface and enable him to rise, spread the horse blanket where he can get his feet on it.

Give the idle horses wheat bran. It will keep them in much better condition than to winter them upon hay alone. It will cost no more. Never stuff a horse or colt with hay.

A sole leather hoof pad has been invented to keep horses from slipping on icy roads or smooth pavements, and which also keeps the snow from "balling" in the hollow of the foot, or stones from jamming there. It is easily removed for cleaning or when not needed.—Farm Journal.

SHOWN BY LOCAL RETAILERS.

Solid silver cigar sets.

Empire fans, five inches in length.

Light grenadines for ball gowns.

Ebony brushes with silver trimming.

Taffeta with a striped or floral border.

Gobelins tapestry portieres in old colors.

Upholstery remnants for cushion covers.

Military capes, in sizes from ten to fifteen years.

Men's lounging coats of English plaid cloth.

White astrakhan capes trimmed with blue fox.

Handsome cases containing one bottle of perfume.

Gaufréd silk, imitating puffs, for fronts and yokes.

Many greenish-gray and grayish-green leather articles.

Children's house slippers of red felt, edged with fur.

Tailor-made gowns of boxcloth, with flare collar of fur.

Fancy willow baskets of various sizes, lined with quilted satin.

Colored canvas pillow, worked in cross-stitch, with heavy silk, and edged with ruffles of ribbon.

Photo frames, with the pennant and cry of different colleges printed or embroidered upon the sides, and the affair framed in gilt.—Dry Goods Economist.

ITEMS FOR THE CHURCH-GOER.

Arizona has 16 Methodist Episcopal churches.

Chicago, with 1,950,000 people, has 648 churches.

The centenary of Welsh Methodism will be celebrated in 1900.

The queen of Holland is a Presbyterian and worships in the new church of Amsterdam.

The 29,000 German Baptists of the United States gave last year \$62,000 to missions.

Baltimore Booth says that on Manhattan island there are 500,000 young men who do not enter a church.

It is stated that in the last eight years the number of Protestant converts in China has more than doubled.

The roll of the Students' Missionary union comprises 6,000 names, 1,000 of whom have gone to foreign fields.

There are 1,430 Young Men's Christian associations in the German empire, with a total membership of 85,000.

A Home Missionary society has been organized among the Japanese Methodists, under the auspices of the Canadian Japan conference.

Baltimore clergymen interviewed by the Sun of that city generally agreed that the length of a sermon should be from 20 to 30 minutes.

PET DOGS OF ACTRESSES.

Julia Marlowe has a Boston terrier. Olga Nethersole calls her brindle pug Camille.

Julia Arthur owns a spaniel of the ruby species.

Maude Adams has a collie aptly named the Little Minister.

Maria Dressler has a terrier which she calls Paddy Gleason.

Melba has with her this year a beautiful Pomeranian dog, which carries the awful name of Niebelungen Lied.

Fanny Davenport had two beauties, Scout and Frisco, deerhounds, given her by the earl of Dunraven.

Mrs. Langtry's French poodles are world-famous. She sometimes brings one on the stage with her.

Lillian Russell possesses several expensive Japanese dogs, but her special pet is a big St. Bernard.

Jessie Bartlett Davis has some fine fox terriers at her Willowdale kennels. Two of them, Boots and Saddles, have won many prizes.

Edna Wallace Hopper owns a tiny French bulldog which cost \$1,200. It was given her and was a prize winner at the last New York dog show.

Vernona Jarbeau's black and tan, Trix, weighs but 15 ounces when tugged out in collar, blanket and boots. He is the smallest of his kind. He is a brave dog, however, and is decorated with a medal given by the Humane society because he once saved his owner's life when a hotel was on fire by waking her with his sharp barks.

May Irwin loves dogs and owns many, among them Dick, a fox terrier, with a pedigree a yard long; Car, a St. Bernard, worth \$1,500, with plummy tail like a feather boa; Jones, a terrier which has been stolen more times than any other dog in the country. Up to date his owner has paid out over \$100 in rewards for his return.

FOREIGN ITEMS OF INTEREST.

In Berlin sheet music is sold by weight.

London has 1,350 miles of streets; Paris 600.

The very finest brand of Havana cigar fetches \$1,500 a thousand in Paris.

Ghent, in Belgium, is built on 26 islands, which are connected by 86 bridges.

The number of Belgian breweries increased from 2,977 in 1896 to 3,057 in 1897.

A large orphan asylum in St. Petersburg is supported by the tax on playing cards.

In certain Parisian restaurants a shilling is charged for the use of the tablecloth.

There are in the German empire about 490,000 persons belonging to other countries.

As many as 111,000,000 bottles of champagne are stored in the vaults of French producers. They represent a cost price of \$50,000,000.

In Spain Hebrews are not permitted to erect and maintain houses of worship. They have no civil rights, and exist in the kingdom only as aliens.

AN UNASORTED LOT.

Paris contains 10,000 individuals who live by begging.

It costs a little more than \$100,000 a year to care for the capitol building at Washington.

Of the 17,000,000,000 letters forwarded annually in civilized countries, the United States contributes 5,000,000,000.

What is called tortoise shell is not the bony covering or shield of the turtle, but only the scales which cover it.

More men have died and are buried in the Isthmus of Panama along the line of the proposed canal than on any equal amount of territory in the world.

It is asserted that David's tomb on Mount Zion, which is a Mohammedan shrine of the most sacred character, and to which Emperor William was recently admitted by the sultan's express order, had never been seen by a Christian since 1187.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

It is stated that there are more than 40,000 mud cabins in Ireland which contain only a single room.

More than 80 per cent. of the ships of the world are built in the British isles.

Tame snakes are used in Morocco to clear houses of rats and mice.

The tensile strength of a wet rope is only one-third the strength of the rope when dry, while a rope saturated with grease or soap is weaker still.

The hair and beard of a man rarely grow gray together, the one being almost invariably darker than the other for several years. There is no rule as to which changes first.

Boiled cabbage is claimed to be a cure for drunkenness. It is recorded that the ancient Egyptians ate boiled cabbage before their other food if they intended to drink wine after dinner.

ARE USEFUL AND PRETTY.

Gun metal chain purses have appeared and are very attractive.

A sword hilt within a horseshoe set with diamonds is a very pretty scarf-pin.

Among the many useful articles for presents is a tape measure of silver or gold set with amethysts.

A miniature sword is used as a paper cutter. It has a steel blade and the handle is ornamented with gems.

A hand mirror with a silver handle has a prettily painted lake scene under the glass, giving the effect of nature's mirror.

Some very pretty articles of jewelry for admirers of horses are shown. Pins formed to represent articles employed in riding and driving are numerous. The greatest demand is for match safes enameled with the heads of thoroughbreds.—Jewelers' Weekly.