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THE MARTINIQUE DISASTER.

IT IS DIFFICULT, almost impossible, for the human mind to grasp the full horror of the Martinique disaster. Within three minutes 40,000 lives were snuffed out and a sun-kissed island in a summer sea transformed into a charnel house such as the world has never seen. There was no time to escape from the rain of fire, the fast-flowing rivers of molten lava. The full story of the fearful horror will perhaps never be known. Of the homes destroyed, the frantic, useless struggles to save the lives of loved ones from the hell that encompassed the fated city of St. Pierre and the surrounding country, no pen can give a faithful account.

To the French republic, bowed with the weight of this overwhelming calamity, will go the sympathy of all nations and all peoples. In the face of such desolation no words can convey a tithe of comfort. The God who visited the agony upon the island of Martinique and the French nation can alone repair the wound. No human care or forethought could have prevented this tragedy of tragedies, no mortal agency could have stayed the downpour of the fire or dammed the white-hot tide that flowed through the streets of St. Pierre.

Men are wont to talk somewhat boastfully about their victories over the forces of nature. They open wildernesses to civilization, they clear away poisonous jungles, they brave equatorial heat and eternal ice, they transform deserts into gardens, they harness great water courses and drive them like well-trained steeds. But there are convulsions of nature which make all the efforts of man seem weak and puny and futile. Perhaps this is the lesson of the Martinique disaster, a lesson which teaches every one of us that there is a power no man can compass, a force which only the Creator can control.

The island of Martinique was peculiarly fitted by nature for what has come about. With only forty-three miles of length and an average width of nineteen miles, it has two clusters of volcanic mountains, one in the north, the other in the south. A line of lower heights between them forms the backbone of the island, culminating in the northwest in Mont Pelee. It was Mont Pelee that did the damage, but of that, later. Those who have seen Martinique pronounce it one of the most beautiful islands in the world. It contains 380 square miles, or a little more than 244,000 acres.

A considerable proportion of this has long been under cultivation. Sugar, coffee, cotton and cocoa are the principal exports. There has never been a lack of water in the island, for numerous streams traverse it, and, in the rainy seasons, have been known to overflow and cause considerable damage. The east coast, exposed to the sweep of the Atlantic, is dotted with coves, inlets and rocks. The south coast is rocky but much more regular, and the west presents a great stretch of mangrove swamps. The interior of the island contains the richest kind of soil, and the growth of all vegetation is luxuriant.

The cause of the eruption is said by a London scientist to have been the effort of steam to escape from Mont Pelee. As has long been known, the interior of Mont Pelee is molten lava. It is thought that a stream of water came in contact with it and the pressure of steam that resulted blew off the top of the mountain and turned loose a hell on earth.

TWAIN DEFENDS FUNSTON.

IN THE CURRENT North American Review Mark Twain has a "defense" of General Funston that deserves a high place in the world's finest sarcasm. A more biting arraignment of a public man has never been written. It bores and stings and burrows until even the little Kansan himself must feel it. Twain starts with the assertion that Funston's disposition, not the man himself, is to blame for his treachery displayed in the capture of Aguinaldo.

"He did not make his own disposition," says the writer. "It was born with him. It chose his ideals for him; he did not choose them. It chose the kind of society it liked, the kind of comrades it preferred, and imposed them upon him, rejecting all other kinds. * * * It took as naturally to moral slang as Washington's took to moral gold, but only it was to blame, and not Funston. It was able to say to an enemy, 'Have pity on me; I am starving; I am too weak to move; give me food; I am your friend; I am your fellow-patriot, your fellow-Filipino, and am fighting for our dear country's liberty, like you—have pity; save my life; there is no other help.'

"And it was able to refresh and restore its marionette with the food and then shoot down the giver of it while his hand was stretched out in welcome—like the president's. Yet if blame there was, and treachery, and guilt, and baseness, they are not Funston's, but only its. It has the noble gift of humor, and can make a banquet almost die with laughter when it has a funny incident to tell about." Here Twain inserts a deliciously humorous story Funston told about the Maccabebes kicking a wounded member of Aguinaldo's staff up a river bank.

The great humorist is entirely too severe on Funston. The means employed in the capture of Aguinaldo were bitterly distasteful to a very large number of American citizens, but in war it is often necessary to use questionable means in order to attain a great end. The capture of Aguinaldo was very much to be desired. It was brought about, and while approval of the methods may be withheld, one cannot fail to give approbation to the result.

REAL SOLITUDE.

VOLUMES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN about the solitude of the arctic circle. For miles and miles and miles the eye sees nothing but hummocks of snow and ice. There is no sign of human or animal or vegetable life, and the man alone in that great emptiness feels that he has drunk to the last dregs the cup of loneliness. Other writers tell of the isolation of the desert, with its fathomless stretches of glistening sands, its utter lack of companionship. But the desert traveler, the arctic explorer, the jungle breaker, the trail blazer, know naught of solitude.

No loneliness is to be compared with the loneliness of a house from which the family has departed. Ask the man whose family has gone away for the summer. Hear him tell of the baby's shoe he found in the middle of the parlor floor and the rush of desolation that flooded his spirit at the sight. Let him talk of the rooms from which the sunshine has departed, or the echo of his steps as he walks through his tenantless abode. Is the isolation of the desert or of the pole to be compared with it?

Over in a corner is a crumpled little cloth hat, where the small boy threw it when he came in to dinner. In a closet is a tattered pinafore that has outlived its usefulness so far as summer outings are concerned. A torn picture book, all filled with impossible lions and tigers and "effelunts," has escaped the packing and is lying half open by the dresser. Idle stands the hobby horse, wondering, in his wooden way, where the merry little man who so cheerily kicked his painted ribs and pulled his sparse tail has flown to.

Desolation? Let the hundreds of heads of families who have experienced it bear expert testimony. Was it only yesterday that the trunks were packed and the good-byes said? Was it only yesterday that the little wife and her flock smiled from the car window as the train pulled out? Impossible. It must have been a week, a month, a year ago.

No man is so homeless as the man who has a home in circumstances such as these. No human being is more forlorn, none finds time so heavy. Surely hell has no terrors for the home-lover who spends a summer in an empty house alone.

OUR COMMERCIAL SUPREMACY

HENRY GANNETT, chief geographer of the United States geological survey, has some very interesting statistics in the Forum for May under the title, "Our Industrial Position in the World." He shows conclusively that the United States stands at the head, commercially and industrially, of the nations of the earth. Many of Mr. Gannett's figures have never before been published and those who read them will have their eyes opened to the greatness of their country.

For instance, the United States produces 23 per cent of the agricultural products of the world, while Russia, our nearest competitor, produces but 15 per cent. In the field of manufacture the showing is fully as creditable. More than one-fifth of the cotton cloth of the globe comes from American looms in American mills, Great Britain being the only country to surpass us. We make almost a fourth of the woolen cloth and in that we excel England.

Twenty-seven per cent of all the linen comes from the United States, with Germany second at about 12 per cent.

Nearly half the paper is made in the United States, three times as much as Great Britain produces and four times as much as that of France. One-third of all the glass is made in American factories while France is in second place with less than one-fourth. And now Mr. Gannett takes up the steel and iron industry, which he considers the most important branch of manufactures and in which, only a few years ago, the United States was behind other nations.

Just 34 per cent of the globe's iron ore is produced by American mines; 34 per cent of the pig iron comes from our furnaces and 37 per cent of the steel is made in American crucibles and furnaces. No other nation on earth even approximates this output. Great Britain's production is a third less. So it runs all along the line and Mr. Gannett attributes the showing to the superiority of the American farmer and artisan over his foreign competitors. Notwithstanding the fact that his wages are higher, he does his work so much faster and so much better that the difference is more than overcome.

"In other words," says Mr. Gannett, "the product, per hand, of the United States artisan is nearly three times as great as that of his nearest competitor. * * * This enormous difference in efficiency between the artisans of the United States, on the one hand, and those of Europe on the other, which is due mainly to the universal use in this country of the most modern machinery and methods, enables us not only to hold our own markets, but to invade successfully the home markets of other countries, to send coal to Newcastle, steel to Sheffield, and cotton to Lancashire."

WOMEN AS TEACHERS.

NEW YORK has a school commissioner who has gotten himself very properly disliked by the women who occupy places in the public schools of that state. His name is Williams, not an uncommon one, by the way, although this particular bearer of it seems to be a most uncommon ignoramus. Some weeks ago Mr. Williams made a talk to a teachers' institute at Fishkill, N. Y. On that occasion he delivered himself of this statement, according to published reports:

"Teaching will never amount to much or be ranked as a profession until women are debarred, because the majority of women teach only for a brief period, and then get married. They do not enter on the work as a life vocation, and are not sincere in prosecuting it." Williams followed this up with the assertion that boards of education and parents should not visit the schools. It hardly seems worth while to waste ammunition on such a small-bore person as this Williams. If he did not occupy an official position it certainly would not be worth while to pay any attention to him. The fact that he is a school commissioner, however, may lead some people to attach importance to what he says.

There are few greater powers for good in the formative period of child life than the woman teacher. Women, it may be stated as an almost invariable rule, have higher ideals, loftier ambitions, purer thoughts and nobler motives than men. The child who is brought into contact with the average woman teacher cannot fail to be benefited by that contact. Women have more patience with the faults of children than men. They are far less likely to explode angrily on slight, or even on grave, provocation, and their ability to impart instruction is every whit as good.

The greatest criticism that reasonable people have to offer against women teachers is on the subject of discipline. And even there they are superior to a very large proportion of male teachers. The ordinary bad boy who delights to make trouble in a school room, is particularly pleased when he can make trouble for a man. There is more of the element of danger about the latter, and that always appeals strongly to boys. More men have been driven out of positions by unruly pupils than women.

One doesn't have to search far to find the reason. A woman can persuade where a man can neither persuade nor drive. A big hulk of a boy who will be saucy to a man will be as meek as a lamb in the presence of a demure little ninety-five-pound woman who could no more chastise him than she could push a ten-story building over. The theory of Mr. Williams that women are not useful in the public schools is unjust, unfair and a reflection on the sex which every man should resent.

He is equally wrong on the subject of the relations between boards of education and parents to the schools. Manifestly it is the duty of school trustees and parents to maintain close relations with the schools in which they are interested. In order to do this they must visit them at frequent intervals and keep in touch with all departments. Otherwise they cannot know whether the children are being properly or improperly taught and disciplined.

All of President Roosevelt's time is not given over to kicking army officers and "busting" bronchos for the delectation of Washingtonians. Recently he has been turning his attention to household affairs with special reference to liveries. The result is that his coachman and footman are clad in trousers of "a very faint cream doeskin, worn with patent leather Wellington boots. The coat and waistcoat are slashed with yellow and green, and the beaver hat is adorned with a tricolor cockade. The coat is cut away almost to the extent of a swallow-tail and the skirts are very long."

On behalf of all the people of Salt Lake, The Herald desires to extend the right hand of fellowship to Colonel Bubb of the Twelfth infantry, and all the officers and men who serve under him. They all look like good fighters and good citizens. The Herald is sure they will be a credit to the city, as they have already proven themselves to be an honor to their country.

There is some comfort for the Democrats in the municipal elections recently held in Indiana. Out of nineteen towns reporting, twelve elected Democratic mayors and seven elected Republican executives. Nearly all of the Republicans got in by decreased pluralities. Three of the cities carried by the Democrats had never gone Democratic before.

A New York priest has declined to file marriage returns because he doesn't like the color of the paper on which the blanks are printed. Possibly he may not be so fastidious about the color of the warrant which, it is said, will shortly be served on him.

The danger of allowing children to play around bonfires has received another illustration in the fatal burning of a little girl. May this deplorable case prove a warning to all who have been permitting their little ones to engage in the practice.

Former Pension Commissioner Evans says his resignation was entirely voluntary. Naturally he couldn't say anything else in view of the plump federal persimmon that has just been hurled his way.

Senator Hanna is still working hard to secure a pardon for the Cuban postoffice thief, Rathbone. Not long since Rathbone said he would not accept a pardon. Perhaps he has changed his mind.

A definite date, May 20, has been set for the proclamation of peace in South Africa. The prophecy comes from English sources and the wish is undoubtedly father to the thought.

Senator McLaurin has been engaging in some more fisticuffs. Evidently the gentleman from South Carolina needs a guardian.

W. G., Ogden. No, the headline in yesterday's Herald, "West's Favorite Bill," had no reference to the mayor of Ogden.

Ah Luck will change his name to Rotten Luck if Mayor Chin Q. Chin of Chinatown has his say.

The best part about the Perrault investigation is that it has been concluded.

Talk With Beads.

(Constantinople Cor. Chicago Record-Herald.)

The Turks use beads for conversational purposes as well as to count their prayers. The ordinary ritual of the Mohammedan faith requires thirty-six prayers and sixteen quotations from the Koran, and the full ritual embraces ninety-nine prayers. If a mistake is made it is necessary for the worshiper to begin at the beginning and go over the whole thing again. Hence he is very careful to check each prayer that he utters and each quotation that he repeats.

Most of the prayers are very short, however, and consist of the same meaning expressed in different phrases, "Allah is great. I testify that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

Those who use beads for conversational purposes, as is done in Greece and other Oriental countries, finger them unconsciously, just as a woman fondles a fan or a man whirls a cane in his hand.

THE LITERARY OUTLOOK

(BY HERBERT BREWSTER.)

ONE of the May magazines has braved danger of infringement of copyright by publishing a revised set of rules for the game of ping pong. Several weeks ago two books on the subject were published and the sponsors of one began suit against the other for infringement of copyright. It seems that the name "ping pong" was copyrighted, but whether the protection of the law will extend itself to one publisher to the exclusion of all others remains to be seen.

Stewart Edward White, author of "The Westerners" and "The Blazed Trail," has recently left New York for his home in Michigan. Mr. White has been spending the entire winter in New York, where he has mingled ping pong with story writing, but when the signs of spring began to come, he heard the woods "a-calling." Every summer Mr. White goes north, either to an unfrequented section of upper Michigan or to the Hudson bay country. Naturally enough, he writes well of the woods and its people. His "Blazed Trail," recently published, has called forth the most enthusiastic praise from many well known writers and critics.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward has completed a new novel, and by the time this has gone through the process of serialization another will have been prepared. "Lady Rose's Daughter" is the title of the present story, enough of which has not yet appeared to judge of its character, save that it is English.

John Morley will have his "Life of Gladstone" ready for fall publication, and at the same time another firm will bring out Bismarck's letters to the first German emperor. Maurice Hewlett hopes to complete a new novel, "The Tuscan Crown," before the close of the year.

"Omar Khayyam, Jr.," is a very clever travesty on the verses of the Persian poet, by Wallace Irwin, a young journalist of San Francisco, who may be remembered as the author of "The Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum." The book has just been published. It is illustrated by Gellett Burgess. Here are sample verses from the collection:

II.

What though Gorgona at the Portal knocks
And charms the squamiest Serpent in her Locks?—
I wear tobbachanalian Wreaths of Smoke,
And there are mere Perfectos in the Box.

IX.

Ah, Love, th' Invisible Buskin at the Gate
Illumines your Eyes that languered gaze and wait.
And in their Incandescence seems to ask
The World-old Question: "Is My Hat on Straight?"

XIV.

A Grand Piano underneath the Bough,
A Gramophone, a Chinese Gong, and Thou,
Trying to sing an anthem off the Key—
O, Paradise were Wilderness enow.

Cecil Rhodes probably appeared as a character in more novels than any one man of his time. Morley Roberts took him for "The Colossus," Anthony Hope for "The God in the Car," Kipling as the personification of much of his imperialistic doctrines, and many other well known writers described the great Rhodes under thinly veiled disguises in their books.

Apropos of the Shakespeare-Baconian controversy, a citizen of an interior town in Ohio suggests a solution. He says that an amateur company gave a performance of "Hamlet" in the local theatre recently and he thinks that if the graves of both Shakespeare and Bacon were opened to see which one turned over the great problem would be solved at once.

Here is a comment of a New York editor which should be read by all interested, not only in the publishing of books, but also in the writing of them:

"For many months past," he says, "a publishing house (which shall be unnamed here) has been sending us week after week piles of bound volumes of the most varied kinds, professing to contain fiction, or poetry, or theology, or what-not. We have looked into them all, at first with the expectation of finding something worth reading; in the end with the hope of finding out why in the world they were published. They are all absolutely hopeless and impossible from any literary standpoint. The authors may have been misguided into the belief that any one can write by the rate at which books are produced nowadays; but they furnish proof in black and white that some people cannot write. It would have been a mercy to them if some firm, but kind critic had taken them in hand and persuaded them not to publish, even if they must write. It would have saved their readers pain, and the reviewers, too, for it is not pleasant to crush down ambition for fame, or even the yearnings for wealth. The publishers' readers must be a more than charitable lot; it is hard to say what stuff they would reject if they accept this. Perhaps the circle of each author's friends is large enough to absorb an edition. Some of the books have apparently passed through more than one. It may be that these authors have discriminating friends, like the wealthy Boston merchant with a literary daughter. She wrote novels and had them published, and then her father bought up the edition and stored it in the cellar in one of his warehouses. Her collected works were all found there when he died. But what has a reviewer to do with this stuff? It is not literature, and it would be barbarous to make fun of poor incompetents. They are all alike in disregard of art and in happy ignorance of the ordinary requirements of style. That might be passed over if they had anything worth saying to say."

Mr. Will M. Payne has recently written a number of essays which have been collected and published in book form. As a proper person to guide the uninitiated into the right paths of reading, Mr. Payne is vouched for by numerous literary friends and by a long training in critical and imaginative writing on his own part. Mr. Payne objects particularly to the "cult" in literature, which he explains as having two forms. One is the unintelligent worship of a great writer, the other is praise of a writer of mere secondary importance. It is the two extremes which meets with Mr. Payne's disfavor, and very sensibly, we think, too. It has become a habit with the publishers and the makers of publicity for books and authors to praise to the skies the work of one Hiram Smythe, a newly discovered author, as the greatest force in letters of the day. It used to be that the reading public took what the leading critics said about books and authors as gospel. There are still a great many readers who take their opinions ready made, and it is because of these that great care should be exercised. "Suppose," says Mr. Payne, "that Mr. Howells should proclaim a new genius in Kamschatka." No one dares to dispute him. On the contrary, every one supports his opinion, and the editions of the Kamschatka genius go into tens of thousands, no matter whether we know what he writes about or not. It is not always true that the new writer is not worthy of praise, but it would be better for him and the reading public as well if the promise of immortality came after he had published a few books instead of before his arrival in the literary field. The most objectionable feature of the new cult is that it stops and destroys original thinking and it breeds intellectual insincerity."

Mary MacLane of Butte, Mont., has written a book about herself in that remarkably frank manner which made Marie Bashkirtseff famous, and straightaway the young girl of 19 is hailed as a wonder. From the extracts which have appeared thus far, doubtless every one will agree on that point; she is a wonder, but of wonders there are many kinds. It is said that the manuscript of this remarkable book came into the office of the publishers one Saturday afternoon. The reader took it home with him and spent most of the night over the diary of a young girl's emotions. On Monday the firm wired an offer to the author; an acceptance was received on Wednesday, and by the following night the entire manuscript had been set up, proof read and cast into page form ready for printing.

Miss MacLane has, it seems, merely recorded her odd thoughts, and because these have been original and sensational at times, the publishers feel that the book will prove to be a wonderful seller. At any rate, those who read the story will wonder whether the young girl who wrote it is crazy or a genius, or whether she simply needs to be punished severely.

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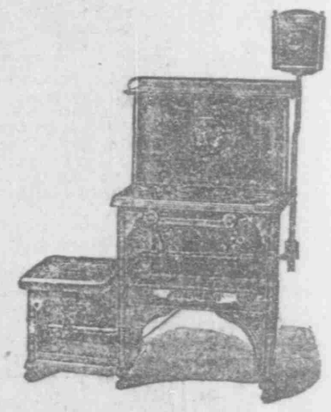

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