

ARCADIA, THE BEAUTIFUL LAND. NICE OLD QUAKER LADY

Bayou Nez Pique, Acadia, La., correspondence: In Southern Louisiana you may sit under an "umbrella tree," look at green roses and eat white blackberries. You may watch the chameleon turn scarlet, blue, green, brown or gray, or hear the mocking bird pour forth its wild melody from the roof of a veranda, or see a flight of white cranes descend, like great snowflakes, on a distant ricefield.

This subtropical land, with its trees ghostly with Spanish moss, its bayous ablaze with scarlet leafage, out of

and walked away again. Not a steer would eat it. The colonists from the north inferred that to the horses and cattle of these parishes corn and oats were an acquired taste.

The bread fruit of Louisiana is the sweet potato. It will grow anywhere in any kind of soil. The varieties of sweet potatoes are almost innumerable. They yield from 200 to 500 bushels to the acre, and usually sell for fifty cents a barrel or twenty cents a bushel, though in seasons of scarcity they are thirty and even forty cents a

ish, but not as pretty to the eye as Calcasieu. The Calcasieu prairie is the largest in the state—about fifty miles long and from five to forty miles wide. The parish itself, which is also the largest in the commonwealth, comprises 4,000 square miles, and is about two-thirds the size of Connecticut.

Here the land is firm and solid. In digging wells the farmers have to go deeper to find water than they do in Wisconsin. The land, which is now fifty or sixty feet above the gulf of Mexico, was once its bed, and contains a great deal of sand. The roads are sometimes dry within twelve hours after a semi-tropical rain. There is so little mud, except in proximity to rice marshes, that one may ride a bicycle along a highway covered with water.

This is the upland, and yet it is the rice country. The explanation is simple. From a foot to two feet under the soil lies a bed of clay which is impervious to water. Wherever land lies in a shallow saucer shape, so that its edges are slightly higher than its interior, the falling rain will fill it to the rim and form a marsh, because the water cannot percolate through the underlying bed of clay and escape. In Louisiana you often will find the low grounds hard and dry and marches on

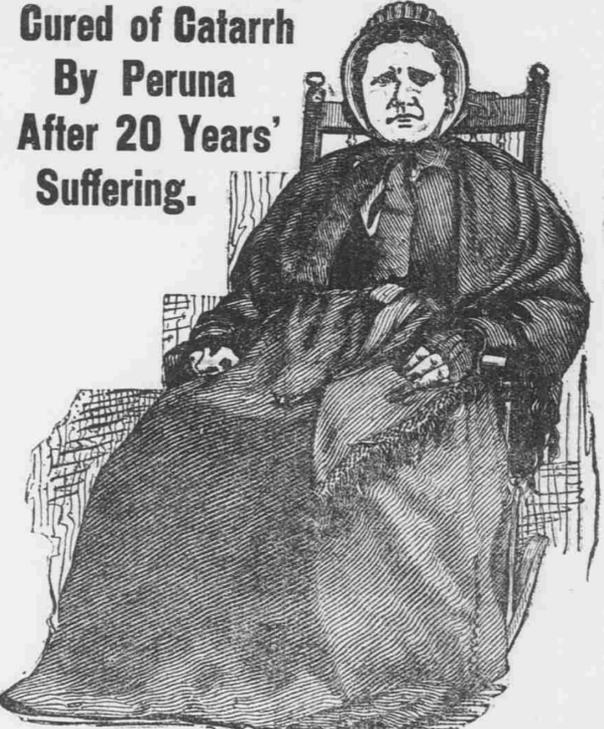
no hesitation nor clumsiness. Romeo is not permitted to decide whether to throw both arms around his sweet heart or only one, or which. Nor may Juliet be shy or forward, yielding or resisting, as she chooses. The director will place their arms for them if they do not themselves make a picturesque exhibit of tenderness. And the kiss? Shall it be delivered by the wooer on the lips of the won, or on brow or cheek? That question is considered and settled. Are kisses on the stage genuine? Well, not at rehearsals, except, maybe, once or twice, in order to show the effect fully. An actress would resent a real kiss at a rehearsal except when necessary. For the satisfaction of natural curiosity on that point it may be told right here that most of the kisses in the public performances of plays are actual kisses.

THE CHINESE NEW YEAR.

No Disgrace So Great as an Unpaid Debt on New Year's Day.

The New Year's festival of the Chinese, said to be the most complete holiday season kept by any nation on earth, is celebrated wherever a single Chinaman is found, whether in Pekin or New York. It is a movable festival, falling upon any date between Jan 21 and Feb. 19. Preparations for the great holiday season begin weeks beforehand. The accumulated dirt of many months disappears as if by magic. Even the Chinaman himself passes through the cleaning process, washing his clothes and bathing his person—the latter being a great event in the lives of a few, since it occurs but once a year. Buildings of every description are elaborately decorated. Flowers are in great demand, the favorite being the Chinese narcissus. The prospect of happiness for the year is believed to be in proportion to the number of flower-stalks produced from a single bulb. During the closing days of the old year Chinese streets present a busy and animated scene. Shops are

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Silence of Philosophy.

The story goes that Mrs. Carlyle ventured up to Carlyle's "sublime garret" with her needlework one day, but before long her husband drew attention to the noise which she made with her needle. Folding her hands idly upon her lap, she sat motionless, but presently the silence was broken by the voice of the philosopher. "Jane," said he, "I can hear you breathing." As Mrs. Carlyle found it inconvenient to abandon this natural process, she was forced to give up all attempts at bearing her husband company in his study.

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whose fire of color leaps the Louisiana red bird; its pale green prairies, its intense sunlight, orange sunsets, swift twilight and brilliant moonlight, is weird and enchanting.

It looks as if it had been borrowed from a fairy book and did not belong to geography at all.

It is midwinter, yet the door yards of Acadia, St. Landry and Calcasieu parishes, are ablaze with roses. Christmas trees of live oak or holly or mistletoe, still bright in the little farm houses, were dressed on Christmas day with the fresh flowers gathered out of doors.

The umbrella tree is common. Every farmer has half a dozen to lend. It is easy to borrow the use of one on a rainy day, and as it is chained to the ground by its roots no one ever forgets to return it. Its branches radiate from the trunk like umbrella stays. Its foliage forms a waterproof covering like an umbrella top. Its trunk is the handle. It will keep on entirely dry in a subtropical storm. In summer it affords a perfect shade from the sun. A tramp once explained his wanderings through Louisiana by saying that he was a traveling tinker, mending umbrella trees.

The green rose, the only one I have ever seen, is not as large as the red rose, nor does it display its petals as fully, but it is distinctly a rose. If some northern floriculturist would develop this green rose further it might become a prized and unique bloom in the beautiful sisterhood of flowers. Boutonniers and bouquets of green roses might become a feature of St. Patrick's day in New York.

White blackberries are much esteemed in Acadia and Calcasieu, because they are superior in flavor to the black kind. Some regard them as a concession of nature to the color prejudice. They differ from the black blackberries mainly in complexion.

In Louisiana is what popularly is known as the "dishcloth plant." It produces a green pod, which yields, when opened, a large piece of cellular vegetable tissue, often used in kitchens as a "dishcloth."

The native horses and cattle in this part of the state formerly lived on sweet potatoes, grass and hay. When northern farmers came here to settle they found that the Creole ponies would not eat corn or oats. Both remained untouched in their feed boxes. In some cases the native horses had to be starved for days before they would touch either.

A northern farmer threw an ear of corn among a herd of wild cattle. They came up to it, looked at it, sniffed it,

bushel. They are the daily food of the farmers, and are fed to horses, cattle, swine and poultry. The Louisiana sweet potatoes are wholesome, but lack the fine flavor of those raised in Virginia. Irish potatoes are regarded here as a luxury, and the people have them on Sundays and holidays.

It is supposed generally in the north that Louisiana is a swamp country, a network of morass and bayou, and that there is little ground in its limits that is firm beneath one's feet. This is a mistake.

North of the Red river, in the northwestern part of the state, lies the famous hill country of Louisiana. Here the land is upheaved in innumerable little mountains, which rise sixty or seventy feet above the surrounding landscape. The highest peak in the state is in this wild district, and it towers 150 feet above the gulf of Mexico.

The hill country might make the mountaineers of the Alps or the Andes smile, but it is as serious a fact in this state as are the Highlands in Scotland or the Catskill mountains in New York. This mountainous country is the lumber belt. It is full of sawmills, and turns out vast quantities of handsome yellow pine lumber for the northern market.

In the southwestern part of the state lies the Acadian country. It is a land of beautiful prairies and of magnificent yellow pine forests, that in the distance look blue. This is the upland of Louisiana, the foothills of the little Switzerland to the north. It is the rice belt and cattle country of the state.

In Acadia the prairies are small, being ten or twelve miles long and five or six miles wide. They are girded round by yellow pine forests, through which run bayous. It is a fertile par-

the ridges. This paradox puzzled the northern soldiers who were on Banks' Red river expedition. They were in a country in which they were likely to get lost.

The alluvial land which lies in the Mississippi bottom seems to be plantations part of the time and part of the time Mississippi river. Swamps are not unknown there.

"We are having a Louisiana blizzard," said a northern settler in Calcasieu parish. "The thermometer has fallen to 70 degrees above zero."

The children in the country go to school barefoot all winter. In a country school house, on a sharp midwinter day, there was only one child who wore shoes. All the children had shoes at home, but they did not care to wear them.

The well-to-do French farmer, with land by the league and cattle by the hundreds, with money buried in the ground or hidden in hollow trees or deposited in the bank, goes barefoot the year round, except when he visits the parish town. His winter dress is a straw hat, a calico shirt and a pair of blue cotton trousers. He goes without collar, cravat and shoes. His feet are as insensible to cold as are the hands of a northern man who never wears gloves. It is a common sight in Acadia, on a winter's day, to see a man from the north, in a heavy ulster, talking to a barefooted French farmer in his shirtsleeves.

Probably the school children here never saw a sled or a pair of skates, but it does get colder than 70 degrees above zero, for sometimes there is snow on the ground and ice strong enough to hold up the small children who slide on it.

Though the January sun is sometimes so uncomfortably warm as to make one move out of its rays, yet the air, owing to its high humidity, is often chill, and men accustomed to the sharp winters of the north find it uncomfortable to wear heavy overcoats in Louisiana all winter. To leave your winter clothes behind when you come south is a mistake. You will need them.

STAGE KISSES ARE GENUINE. And They Have to Be Sufficiently Fervid, Too.

They must have an impulsive manner. They must look sufficiently fervid, says the Ladies' Home Journal. It is a curious sight—that of two players who are to express the ardent love which Shakespeare has written for his "Romeo and Juliet," but who at rehearsals, in modern clothes and no accessories of glamour, practice a kiss as mechanically and unfeelingly as though it were—as it is then—utterly devoid of sentiment. There must be

thronged with customers eagerly laying in large quantities of food, clothing and New Year's gifts. Debtors and creditors are seen hurrying to and fro, endeavoring to settle their accounts, for according to a most commendable custom all debts must be paid or settled in some satisfactory manner before the New Year dawns. To meet these liabilities shopkeepers offer their goods at unheard-of prices, and families frequently part with odd bits of bric-a-brac, curious relics and valuable ornaments for a sum pitifully small. No disgrace is equal to being found on New Year's morning with an unpaid debt. On the other hand, the creditor who fails to collect his debts at this time may not press them again for many months. He therefore pursues his creditor far into the night, continuing his search into the New Year's day, if necessary. This he may do if he carries a lighted lantern to indicate that he is still engaged in last night's business and has not discovered that the day has dawned!—Women's Home Companion.

WIFE OF GEN. BULLER.

The accompanying picture is from the latest photograph of Lady Audrey Buller, the talented and gracious wife of the English general who has been fighting the Boers in South Africa



Lady Buller is no longer a young woman, for she has a daughter who has just made her debut into the London social world. She has, nevertheless, shown herself one of the most energetic of the many English noblewomen who have been interesting themselves in alleviating the sufferings of the English sick and wounded at the Cape. Owing to the recent severity of the fighting there seems plenty of opportunity ahead for all such relief work.

Good meat has a reddish brown color and contains no clots of blood.

AN AFRICAN QUEEN AT HOME.



The accompanying illustration is from a photograph of the queen of Swaziland, and shows her majesty sitting in front of the samboti, or royal kraal, with a royal princess of the Swazis on either hand. This royal kraal is near Bremersdorp, and it is interesting to know that this is the first photograph ever taken of the queen, who is known to her people under

der the name of Uhmhagovas. Swaziland, by the way, is one of the most prosperous of the British dependencies in Africa, for, unlike their cousins, the Zulus, the Swazis prefer following agricultural and pastoral pursuits. They are a hospitable and democratic people, the women working in the fields along with the men, and both living on the fruits of their industry when they have passed middle life.