

A LOAFERS' PARADISE

Life of the Happy-go-lucky West Indian Negroes.

LAZY JOY FOR LITTLE WORK.

Six Months' Labor Enables Them to Loll in Indolence For a Year and a Half—Combing the Islands For Men For the Sugar Plantations.

A happy-go-lucky, stand up and fall down, genial, inconsequential spirit animates the West Indian negroes in their labors and in their begging. From the sweating toilers on the dock at Macoris loading sugar into the steamers, with their wailing cry, "Bee-low!" to the men in the hold, to the grinning boys hauling their fishing boats up on the beach at Dominica, they live from day to day and take no thought of the morrow. A West Indian negro with \$50 will live for a year and never do a stroke of work.

And why not? His living costs him only 9 cents a day. He has his little cabin for the occupancy. A mango tree grows in his yard, and he can pick plantains by the road at will. If he is too lazy to bake 5 cents will buy bread for the family for the day, and a few cents more will buy a dozen small fish and one large one. A single garment does for the women, and \$5 will clothe the man for a year, while the pickaninnies run as God made them.

The West Indies are the paradise of the happy loafer. Every year the islands are combed from end to end for hands to work the great sugar plantations in Santo Domingo, and at that the negroes must often be practically kidnapped to get them on the boats.

In November of each year the sugar boats, little sloops and schooners that spend the remainder of the year trading among the islands get into the Santo Domingo negro trade. Their captains and supercargoes, when they have them, and the owners go up and down the islands telling the negroes that on a certain day the vessel will sail for Santo Domingo and take all who want to go to work on the sugar plantations.

Take the little island of St. Martin's for illustration. For a week the island is combed, and on the appointed day a dozen sloops and schooners are crowded into Marigot bay. The night before the negroes have begun to stream into the little town that sleeps through the year, waiting for this one day to bring it to life. Boards are laid across boxes, and rum and whisky are set out to arouse the negroes to the pitch that will carry them out to the vessels bound for the plantations.

All day the men stream into the town, traveling barefooted along the sandy roads, swept in by the sailors, singing their song of riches to be had for the asking. Ahead of the men walk their women, toting heavy boxes on their heads, while the men are dressed in their best, with a cocky straw hat perched on one ear, swinging a dandy cane and carrying their shoes in their hands. At the outskirts of the town they put on their shoes and swing gayly up to the open air bars on the beach.

The women lug the big boxes down to the beach and wall at being left alone until they, too, become filled with the excitement of the scene and urge their men folks on. The men hang back and laugh and drink and deny that they are going.

"Is you goin', Big Tawn?"

"Naw, Ah ain' goin'. Ah jus' come tuh see."

"Yas, yo' is goin', Big Tawn. Git in dat boat."

"Come on beach, boy. Ya, ha!"

And all the time the rowboats, loaded to the gunwales, are plying back and forth between the shore and the sloops. By sundown the beach is swept clean and six little sloops and a schooner make sail and drift out of the harbor on a dying breeze, loaded down with a thousand black men and women, who will wake in the morning with a raging thirst. Then woe be to the captain who has not filled his water casks, for there is sure to be at least one body to be given to the sharks after the fight around the butts!

When the vessels drop anchor off Macoris the plantation foremen come off and look over the cargoes and pay the shipmasters \$2.50 each for passage money for the negroes. Then the blacks are herded ashore and are credited with 30 cents a day for a month for working from sunrise to sunset in the cane fields. By that time the \$2.50 passage money is paid back. Then they receive their 30 cents a day in cash for the next six months until the cutting and grinding season is over, when the sloops show up again and take them to their homes for \$2.50 each, paid in advance.

The foremen collect from the plantation owners 63 cents a day each for pay for the black hands, but with their share of the money the negroes can live for a year and a half before they have to think of doing another day's work. And they do it. Year after



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year the trade is plied, and the islands are combed for men for the plantations, and year after year the negroes return home to eighteen months of lazy joy.—New York Tribune.

Her Vocal Selection.

A wedding was recently held which was of the fashionable kind, and there were all sorts of preparations and frills. Among the "features" was a song by a baritone singer of considerable local renown, and just what he was to warble was a matter of considerable discussion.

A little sister six years old of the bride took much interest in the program. "Sis," she said, "I want to sing at your wedding."

"No, dear; you can't sing," was the rejoinder.

"But I can, and I want to," she pleaded.

"What would you sing?" her father asked her.

"Heaven, Look With Pity!" was her rejoinder, and her father hasn't got over it yet.—Kansas City Journal.

Ladies First!

"Scratch a southerner and you find a knightly soul" might be said to be one of the morals of the Chicago Record-Herald story below. The second moral is reasonably obvious:

"What is the reason," began the irritated traveler from the north, "that the trains in this part of the country are always behind time? I have never seen one yet that ran according to its schedule."

"That, sub," replied the dignified Georgian, "is a mattah that is easily explained. It is due to southern chivalry, sub."

"Southern chivalry! Where does that come in?"

"You see, sub, the trains are always late in this country because they wait for the ladies. God bless them!"

NORWAY WATCH BOYS.

They Sit in Tall Sentry Boxes on the Lookout For Fish.

It is common enough to see a boy watching cattle to keep them from straying, and in days not so very long gone by it was no unusual thing for a boy to be set to keep the birds off the crops. But a watch boy whose duty it is to keep a lookout for a school of fish and who sits in a sentry box set upon stilts is not such an everyday sight.

This particular kind of watch boy is Norwegian, the scene of his labors being the shores of some lord of his native land.

His little sentry box is made of wood and perched high upon posts. Here the lad sits, gazing out across the arm of the sea, using his keen eyes for the benefit of the farmers who are depending upon him to give the alarm when a school of fish shall appear. They work contentedly enough in their fields, secure in the belief that their watch boy will let them know when it is time to reap a harvest from the sea instead of from the land.

When the signal is given they leave their work, throw their big nets over their shoulders and hurry off to their boats.

Sentry boxes similar to those employed in Norway were in use among the fishermen on the shores of the Mediterranean, and it is supposed that the vikings brought back with them from some of their piratical raids the idea that has been put in practice ever since.—Youth's Companion.

Analysis.

There was once a young man who was paying court to three different beautiful damsels. Each was fair, each was sweet, each was charming. So much of a triplicate similarity did they have that he did not know how to choose between them. So he went to a wise old man and laid his troubles before him.

"Is there a clock at each house?" asked the wise old man.

"There is."

"And what does Esmeralda say when the clock strikes 11?"

"She says the clock is slow."

"What does Eufalie say?"

"She says the clock is just right."

"And what does Evangeline say?"

"She always says the clock is fast."

"My son, there is no need for further evidence. Evangeline is the one that really loves you."—Judge.

Groundhog.

Teacher was telling her class little stories in natural history, and she asked if any one could tell her what a groundhog was. Up went a little hand, waving frantically.

"Well, Carl, you may tell us what a groundhog is."

"Please, ma'am. It's sausage."—Everybody's Magazine.

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