WONDERFUL MEXICO.

HER SCENERY, PEOPLE AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

Interesting Description of the Country From the Rio Grande to Its Southernmost States—Some Inside Facts About Rubber and Chocolate.

Even at this time, when we pride ourselves upon our knowledge of all the countries of the world and are more or less familiar with its remotest corners, Mexico may truly be said to be to most people a "terra incognito." Why this is so seems almost inexplicable. Both the country and its people are intensely interesting and attractive to the point of fascination, and, with the excepton of certain unhealthy sections immediately on the eastern coast, our sister of the South has a climate indeed difficult to excel. Her people, from banker, mine owner or planter, to primitive Toltec or humble peon, are always the quintessence of all that is kindness, gentleness and polite consideration towards the stranger within their gates. Old and young, rich and poor, the highly cultured, and the untutored of the mountain, plain, and wilderness, seem to be alike filled with a gentle politeness and a dignified, genuine hospitality which, among the poorer classes, often approaches the pathetic.

The still primitive-mannered descendants of the people whom Cortez conquered are bearers of no uncertain testimony of the noble qualities of their forefathers, while the magnificent ruins of prehistoric cities, whose giant aqueducts and sculpured walls and temples cover many a square mile of that land of mystery, are silent, yet eloquent testimonials of a civilization from which we could even now perhaps learn some good lessons. Some day, perchance, the key may be found which will unfold to us the story of their rise and fall, and those who read the tale will learn, I have no doubt, their supergentle natures were their own undoing.

Scenery there is to inspire with awe the most stolid mind or call forth the loftiest thoughts of the poet's soul. The pastoral haunts of childhood days are brought back to memory's gaze by familiar scenes in richer and more gorgeous setting, and idyllic surroundings such as hope and fancy oft have pictured for our later years afford congenial resting places for leisure-endowed tourists or appeal with even deeper attractiveness to those whose pressing duties in a more artificial sphere vouchsafe an all too brief acquaintance.

Passing the grim "sierras" of the northern boundary, standing like the outposts of a forbidden country, the traveler soon enters upon the enjoyment of a panorama of fascinating grandeur, arranged by Nature in one of her supremest efforts. The first glimpse of the great Valley of the City of Mexico, just before the train begins its rapid descent from an altitude of ten thousand feet, seems a fitting climax, and one is lost in contemplation as the valley unfolds before his almost enraptured vision, and the newer City of Mexico comes into view.

Here, indeed, is a city from which we might profitably copy much. From the immaculate cleanliness of its streets—asphalted to a degree of perfection which our city fathers do not seem to be able to command—one might be excused for thinking they were constructed solely for the dainty tread of lovely "Senoritas;" while the vigilant military police, models of neatness and courtesy, ever alert and attentive, are truly public servants whom it is refreshing to behold.

Nothing that France, Germany, England or the United States can produce is too costly for Senor and Senora's comfort or pleasure, while the handiwork wrought at home by patient skill and artistic intelligence brings an added beauty to the palatial stores, whose display windows and reception rooms evidence a tasteful use of time and wealth which would do credit to our own New York. The wealthy always ride, and the American automobile and Kentucky thoroughbred vie with the finest products of English breeders in making a perfection of equipages, more numerous and uniform in their elegance than it has yet been my good fortune to see in any other city of similar size.

Regretfully leaving for a more propitious occasion a visit to lovely Cuernavaca, where Maximilian built his country home and Borda created the famous gardens which bear his name, where balmy spring is ever with you, where strawberries tempt your breakfast appetite three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, and blushing brides may seldom want for orange blossoms, we journeyed on past Orizaba's hoary, cloud-crowned summit and Popocatepetl's snow-filled crater, further and further southward, to the tropic zone, where widely varying softer moods of Nature's playtime provide an enchanting scene of wondrous growth and gorgeous color.

Along winding rivers and through primeval forests, as yet untouched by man's depleting hand, abound in wild confusion a wealth of palms and delicately patterned ferns, the wild vanilla and other graceful vines on giant trees, and orchards rare, of most exquisite shape and hue. Civilization's needs, however, are fast encroaching upon this great, riotous, untrimmed garden of the Republic, and far-reaching fields of sugar-cane, corn, chocolate and rubber, and many broad acres of richest pasturage, where sleek, contented cattle browse and fatten, are seen on every hand.

The native planters are most thoroughly posted as to the various combinations of soil, altitude and climate to be had in different localities, and their effect upon the quantity and quality of whatever crops or products it may be desired to cultivate. With unfailing patience, courtesy and and friendliness, they will go to any amount of trouble to demonstrate distinctions and differences and to enable one to make intelligent comparisons and arrive at correct conclusions. Once let them see that you like their country, that you appreciate the difficulties under which they have labored as a nation and as individuals, that they have your confidence and sympathy, and that you rely upon, and are grateful for their friendly assistance, whatever they have of food, shelter or information is absolutely at your disposal, and the national phrase of welcome: "Aqui tiene Usted su casa" ("here have you your house"), is at once translated into a meaning but little understood by those who have not sought to approach this relationship with them. On the other hand, go about your business among them with an arrogant assumption of superiority and, with Anglo-Saxon bluntness or "Gringo" brusqueness, fail to accord to them at least that meed of kindly sentiment and friendly consideration they have a right to expect—with wounded pride and a reasonable sensitiveness which foreigners often fail to properly understand, they withdraw within themselves, and you go your way without the helpful counsel and pointed information which might have been yours for the asking, without stint or reserve.

Our investigations, at times, led us through regions remote from railroads or steamboat routes or anything which could even be properly termed a road; and while the torrential rainy season is of comparatively short duration, it happened that these side trips were made during the months that Jupiter Pluvius puts forth his best efforts. It was sometimes a thrilling sight to see our horses battling for their lives, at rope's length, in swimming the rushing currents of swollen rivers, and a still more thrilling sensation to feel ourselves and canoe tossed like a cork or shot like an arrow through boiling rapids. The Indian canoemen are powerful and expert, however, and it rarely, if ever, happens that a boat in their hands is overturned or a life lost. It was not so thrilling when we were forced to cross bridges so insecure and slippery that the most expert horseman could do no more than loosen rein and trust his animal to feel its way over (relying largely at the same time upon the help of Providence and the provisions of his accident policies) or, when with legs drawn up and resting on our horses' necks, we would carefully feel our way through flood-formed lagoons, to later camp on higher ground where billed and cooed, in festive gladness at the approach of tender-skinned foreigners, countless mosquitoes of splendid size and tireless energy. During that time of year, there are also in many of the sections through which we passed, multitudes of "gegen" (pronounced "he-hen"), a diminutive, pestiferous kind of gnat which, without making the least sound, quickly nips out a piece of your cuticle and leaves a raw, bleeding spot about the diameter of a small pin. A good many of these cause one's face to wear a very strange and unfamiliar expression.

There are not lacking inferior soils and undesirable locations in many parts of the State, or unhealthy spots and mosquito-ridden sections, just as may be found in many parts of the United States, and the inexperienced or the incautious, the over-optimistic and the credulous who rely too confidently upon the opinions or experiences of one or two individuals are, in such a country, very likely to materially assist in causing their own disappointment. I have in mind at this moment one sugar planter who has erected expensive machinery and gone into the business on a large scale in a locality where, on account of the lower proportion of saccharine matter necessarily yielded by such lands, it is estimated that a large percentage of what should have been profit will always be lost to him. Some wishing to engage in planting rubber may acquire lands much more suitable for coffee, while some who select their lands during the drier months, when "every prospect pleases and man alone is vile," are likely to wake up on a watery morning during the rainy season to find a large portion of their possessions in a temporary lake.

On the other hand, while I have had occasion and opportunities for travel which enabled me to traverse the splendidly productive lands of our own country from the shores of the Mexican Gulf to the Lakes of the North and the Canadian border, and from the great Empire State of the East across the intervening fertile valleys and plains, to the Pacific shores of that golden principality of our far-famed West, the praises of whose climate and soil and products have so often been justly sung in rythmic verse, and more precisely stated by prosaic statisticians, I am compelled to confess that in all our wonderful country I know of no spot where Nature, with rich soil, never failing moisture, and continuous warmth, does so much for, and so little against, the agriculturist, as in that portion of the State of Tabasco from which we have just returned.

The yield obtainable from sugar cane seems almost incredible. There is not a day in the year unfavorable to its growth and development. With absolute certainty, it gets the moisture and warmth it requires, and cane that cuts fifteen feet or more for the mill is to be counted upon one year as well as another. It is no uncommon thing to see splendid stands in fields that have not been replanted in twenty years. I cannot but believe, however, that changing the rows to the intervening earth at least once in six to eight years would be an improvement. Such a growth as can be produced under these conditions yields between forty and fifty tons per acre, and the juice runs from eight to eleven degrees (Beaume).

While outsiders have been examining lands in different parts of Southern Mexico and Central America, theorizing and debating upon the subject, and setting out young rubber orchards in localities of varying merit, experienced Mexican agriculturists have, during the past fifteen to twenty years, been quietly establishing groves of cultivated rubber trees. With them it is not a matter of theory or expectation. They have long ago settled the question as to how the cultivated rubber tree compares with its wild progenitor, and the thousands of trees being planted by them year after year are evidence as to the profitableness of those which have already come into bearing.

The rubber tree should have only partial shade during its first year; during its second year it requires less, and, after reaching the age of two years, it needs none whatever. It can be readily understood, therefore, why trees which have been planted so as to allow for full development and growth, and for which the shade has been intelligently regulated and gradually diminished until the proper time for removing all shade, are so much more vigorous and productive than wild trees of the same age, which have grown up in a dense tropical forest.

The cacao (chocolate) plant, or tree, which is of very much smaller and less rapid growth, requires a great deal of shade always, and thrives splendidly on the very best rubber lands.

The experienced planter, therefore, sets out from a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five rubber trees per acre, and places between them from two hundred to two hundred and fifty cacao plants. These commence to bear at the end of the fifth year and are in full bearing at the end of the seventh year, at which age they yield about one hundred and twenty-five pounds of dry cacao or chocolate beans per acre, per annum. No cultivation whatever is required beyond keeping them reasonably free from such weeds and grasses as thrive there, even in that much shade. The gathering of the bean pods, which are about the size of a very large cucumber, and the opening thereof and drying and sacking of the beans for shipment, are extremely simple and cheap operations. Two valuable products are thus secured from the same acreage, and the two groves being combined in one, the expense of caring for each is reduced to a minimum. One variety of the Castilloa Elastica (and possibly more) sheds a great number of its smaller branches each year. These frequently fall with sufficient force to knock off the blossoms of chocolate trees, and, therefore, wherever the two crops are grown together, care should be taken to secure seed or seedlings of the proper variety.

The native planters of Tabasco are practically a unit in expressing the opinion that much better results invariably ensue if their trees are not tapped until after they have reached the age of eight years. The growth of the young rubber tree is extremely rapid, and it would seem to be a short-sighted policy which would draw upon its immature vitality during a period when the tree is still tender and its powers of recuperation not fully developed. Trees should also be tapped only once a year, and not drawn upon at any one tapping to an extent which will cause a disappointing yield when the harvest season again comes 'round.

The yield of the rubber tree, per annum, at any given age, having in view always the idea that it should be so tapped as to quickly recover and give still more latex each succeeding year, depends so much upon the age at which tapping was first begun, the time of year, the extent to which the tree has been drawn upon at each tapping, and the care or negligence with which the incisions have been made, etc., that it is practically impossible at this time to make an entirely satisfactory estimate on this point. I think it would be perfectly safe, however, to take a half pound of rubber, each, from trees eight years old, and calculate upon securing a gradually increasing yield each year thereafter, which would probably reach a pound per tree when they are twelve years old. It is also stated that trees not previously tapped yield a pound of rubber, each, at ten years of age. The still-used primitive method of tapping with the machete is wasteful and expensive. The wages of the expert "sangrador" amount to about ten cents per pound, and the latex, or milk, lost by spurting from the incision made by the sharp blow of the machete is sufficient to make a material difference in the season's profits. It is only reasonable to suppose that Yankee ingenuity will vastly improve upon this crude means of reaping the harvest, as well as the slow and imperfect method still employed for evaporating the water contained in the latex and coagulating it into crude rubber ready for delivery to the manufacturer. A number of experienced minds are now at work on the problem, and I have understood that one or two machines have already been evolved which promise a substantial saving of time, labor and product.

I am particularly indebted for detailed information and minute explanations to such experienced men as Senors Conde Hermanos (whose "finca" on Tacotalpa river, near Tacotalpa, is a model one); Senor Eraclio Perez Moreno, Hacienda Gran Poder, Puscatan river, Tacotalpa District; Senor Antonino Saury and Doctor Maldonado, Hacienda Santa Ana, near Teapa, and Senor Pedro Bustamente Hacienda La Sultana, Pichucalco, Chiapas. Hacienda Santa Ana and Hacienda La Morelia (the latter just across the river from Teapa) are probably not excelled by any other cacao and rubber plantations of like extent in that part of the country. The country tributary to Pichucalco is of older development, in a general way, and has a larger number of fine plantations.

All these people have their plantations in what experience has proven to be the heart of Tropical Mexico's natural rubber zone, and their figures are with reference to what rubber trees will do under the most favorable conditions of soil, temperature, and well distributed and abundant rainfall. Of course, it is very easy to take more latex from the trees at a given age, if one is careless of the future and willing to have them stunted and "played out" long before the time when they should be yielding their greatest revenue.

It is a well-known fact that rubber trees grow beautifully in many locations where the various conditions above mentioned are not to be had in such perfection, but it is necessary for them to attain greater age to yield the results obtained from trees grown under ideal conditions. It is also a mistake to suppose that the Castilloa Elastica likes a soggy, or watersoaked soil, for, although it thrives best with abundant rainfall and an absence of drought at any period of the year, gently undulating slopes or land otherwise well drained is best suited to its requirements.

I take it for granted that when well managed American companies become thoroughly versed in the business and have to handle the product of many hundreds of thousands of trees, a rapid and economical method of evaporating the watery constituents of the latex, so as to cause its coagulation, will be used; and I believe that large vats with steam coils or other artificial heat properly applied, might be employed to that end with great advantage.

Of the cruder methods still in use in the Tacotalpa—Teapa—Pichucalco country, that employed on the Hacienda La Sultana impressed me as being highly satisfactory for converting into rubber the milk of a limited number of trees. As the pans and buckets are filled in the groves, they are brought in and the milk, or latex, is thoroughly skimmed and cleansed of all leaves, pieces of bark, twigs, etc., and emptied into a large shallow cement tank, about fifteen feet wide and twenty feet long, built on the surface of the ground, at the side of the owner's house. The latex being thus spread out over a very large surface, with a depth of an inch or two, three days exposure to the hot sun completes the process. This large thin sheet of rubber is then cut and rolled up, ready for market. The prospective buyer cuts into these rolls and finds no moisture-filled bubbles or watery streaks in it. Neither does he find it scorched or burned or containing a liberal admixture of dirt or other foreign substances. The result is that this old gentleman has always received the top-market price for his rubber.

Tobacco, as fine as anyone might wish to smell or smoke, is grown in Tabasco, and many a fragrant so-called "Havana" enjoyed by European royalty is the product of her soil.

Cattle are also a source of great profit to many planters. Very few are bred and raised in Tabasco, but large numbers are driven down from mountain ranches in the adjoining State of Chiapas, where, surprising as the statement may seem, apples and wheat of very fair quality are grown. These fine, large animals, very lean on their arrival, are bought cheap, and after feeding five to six months on the rich, succulent pasturage awaiting them, are fat and heavy and sell at an advance of about twenty dollars, Mexican currency, per head. One acre per animal is required, and the same land easily fattens two herds per annum.

Corn yields two heavy crops, aggregating about seventy-five bushels per acre, per annum. Rice and beans likewise grow luxuriantly and yield enormously.

These staple products are all sold at excellent prices in home markets, easy to reach. The State of Yucatan, with its peculiar soil so largely devoted to "henequen" plantations, which are immensely profitable, cultivates very little else, and with its large and prosperous population, is one great hungry maw, always seeking and clamoring for food.

No sugar trust controls the output of the cane-fields. No beef combine compels the sale of fine, sleek, fat cattle at figures fixed by them, and then, with fine humor demonstrates that the simple operation of running them through their slaughter-pens has made a beefsteak so costly, membership in a vegetarian society seems a pleasant alternative. No clique of market manipulators can depress prices until after the crops are shipped, and then take profits which should go to the producer.

In certain portions of Tabasco and Chiapas, there are still large quantities of marketable mahogany, and rafts worth many thousands of dollars may be seen in the Usumacinta river at almost any time. It is a disappointing tree to look at, standing beside its handsomer cousins of the forest, and it seems difficult to associate it with the beautiful finish of the Pullman sleeper or the handsome polish of the rich man's table.

HARRY C. WILDESEN.

Guess Again.

An old lawyer tells this story of one of his experiences, years ago, in cross-examination. The witness seemed to be disposed to dodge his questions.

"Sir," said the lawyer sternly, "you need not state your impressions. We want the facts. We are competent to form our own impressions. Now, sir, answer me categorically."

From that time on he could get little more than "yes" and "no" out of the witness. Presently the lawyer said:

"You say you live next door to the defendant?"

"Yes."

"To the north of him?"

"No."

"To the south?"

"No."

"Well, to the west, then?"

"No."

"Ah," said the lawyer, sarcastically, "we are likely at least to get down to the one real fact. You live to the east of him, do you?"

"No."

"How is that, sir?" the astonished attorney asked. "You say you live next door to him; yet he lives neither to the north, south, east nor west of you. What do you mean by that, sir?"

"I thought perhaps you were competent to form the impression that we live in a flat," said the witness, calmly; "but I see I must inform you that he lives next door above me."

Spent Part Foolishly.

At a reception given recently to Gen. Chaffee by the militiamen at Poughkeepsie, the general told this story:

"Not long ago a soldier in the regular army stopped me on the street and asked me to lend him a quarter.

"'Why, yesterday you received your month's pay, did you not?' I asked him.

"'Yes,' replied the veteran.

"'Where is your money now?'

"'It is like this,' he went on. 'I left the post and crossed to New York with that $15.50. I met a friend and we had dinner. I was mightily surprised when the bill was $8. Then I bought $1 worth of cigars, and we went to the theater for $4. After the theater we went down the Bowery, and I spent $2 there.'

"'That is $15,' I replied. 'What happened to that other 50 cents?'

"The old fellow seemed puzzled. Finally he answered:

"'I must have spent that foolishly.'"—Washington Times.

The Unknown Great.

"Wasn't a famous man born around here somewhere?" asked a sight-seeing visitor in Caldwell, N. J.

"Huh?" queried his driver.

"Wasn't a former president of the United States born in this neighborhood?"

"H-m. Not as I ever heerd of. What was his name?"

"Cleveland—Grover Cleveland."

"Was he president?"

"Yes, indeed—twice?"

"Sho! An' was he born up here?"

"Yes."

"There goes Jim Duggs. I'll ask him. Hi, Jim!"

Mr. Duggs sauntered up.

"Did you ever hear about a man bein' president up here—feller named Cleveland?"

"Naw. He lived in Brooklyn or somewhere, didn't he?"

"He lived in Buffalo," explained the visitor. "He was born in Caldwell."

"I never knowed anybody by that name," replied Jim Duggs, "an' I've lived here thirty years."

"Guess you must be mistook, Mister," said the driver. "If there'd ever been a president in these parts Jim'd ha' knowed about it long ago."—Exchange.

WASHINGTON LETTER

SUMMER DAY GOSSIP OF NATIONAL CAPITAL.

KEEPING BACHELOR'S HALL

How the President Lives When His Family Is Away—Secretary of the Democratic Congressional Committee—Other Items.

Washington—President Roosevelt is back in Washington hard at work. His stay at Oyster Bay has been regarded in the light of a vacation. It has been as much of a vacation as a president of the United States can take. The truth is that the highest officer in the land gets no real vacation. Wherever he may be he has to attend to a certain amount of routine official business. The only way he can entirely separate himself from work is to get out of reach of railroads, telegraphs and telephones. This Mr. Roosevelt did last year on his big western tour when he escaped into the Yellowstone park for a week and got out of communication with his secretary and the rest of the world.

Escaping for a Vacation.

At Oyster Bay the president enjoys many personal privileges that are denied him in Washington. He is permitted to spend more time with his family and can indulge in sports and pastimes of which he is fond to a greater extent than when in the white house. At the same time he devotes a good portion of each day to the transaction of official business. He signs papers and listens to official business just as faithfully as he does in Washington, so that his vacation at his summer home is largely in name only. Now that he is back in Washington he will feel the full pressure of official life. Scores and hundreds of politicians have been waiting for his return to discuss with him the situation and to press requests for appointments and if possible to secure promises to be used in the campaign.

At Oyster Bay any one desiring to see the president has to make an engagement and in this way Mr. Roosevelt's time is tolerably well guarded. In Washington he is at the beck and call of any citizen who has legitimate business with him.

Keeping Bachelor's Quarters.

When the president is in Washington and his family at his Oyster Bay home the white house is turned into a sort of bachelors' hall. A free and easy life is led, no formality being exacted, but everything conspiring to comfort and good fellowship. The corps of servants is limited, some being on their vacation and others at Oyster Bay, but enough are on duty to attend to the president's wants and to the comfort of the guests whom he always has with him. It is during periods of this kind that the president delights in entertaining little "stag" parties. He surrounds himself with his bachelor friends or those who are in temporary widowerhood on account of the absence of their wives and families and a jolly party sits down to the table morning, noon and evening.

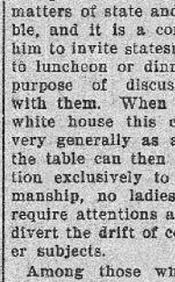
Having a Friend for Luncheon.

Any of the president's friends who happen to be in the city are captured and brought into the bachelor circle. The president is famous for discussing matters of state and politics at his table, and it is a common practice for him to invite statesmen and politicians to luncheon or dinner for the express purpose of discussing public issues with them. When he is alone in the white house this custom is followed very generally as a stag party about the table can then devote their attention exclusively to politics or statesmanship, no ladies being present to require attentions and courtesies or to divert the drift of conversation to other subjects.

Among those whom the president delights in having at the white house are Attorney General Moody, a bachelor of the cabinet; Commissioner of Corporations Garfield, familiarly known as "Jimmy;" special council in the post office investigations, Holmes Conrad; Secretary of War Taft and half a dozen other men in official life noted for good fellowship and for their sympathy with the president's policies and purposes. All the time is not devoted to the discussion of great topics and high politics, but the president and his official family unbend, joke each other, tell stories, repair to the tennis court and have a swift game or mount saddle horses and have a gallop through the suburbs. The president manages to put in several hours each day in this sort of relaxation.

Quaint Charley Edwards.

The democratic congressional campaign committee has as its secretary a newspaper man of most unique and original character. He is Charlie Edwards, who came to Washington from Texas several years ago, and was at once placed in the same class with that inimitable Texas philosopher Col. William Greene Sterrett, whose fame has spread all over the country between Washington and the Lone Star state. Both these newspaper men are renowned for their originality, quaintness of expression, blunt honesty and the habit of speaking their own minds.



Like the Expense Account.

Edwards has been a rampant, shouting Hearst man and on account of his distinct partisanship in that direction an effort was made by the Parker democrats to prevent his selection as secretary of the congressional committee, a place which he filled two years ago. The advantage of having a man of Edward's experience, acquaintance and originality overcame the Parker opposition and Charlie is now assisting Chairman Cowherd in trying to persuade the voters of the country to elect a democratic majority to the next house.

Secretary Edwards accepted the result at St. Louis with his usual complacency, although he has sacrificed none of his opinions regarding the issues the party stood for in 1900 and 1896. He was asked the other day whether the proceedings of the St. Louis convention really committed the party to the gold standard. "Well now," said Edwards, "I think I can best illustrate the situation by relating a little story of the experience of a traveling man, a friend of mine.

"This drummer on his return from his first trip on the road turned in an expense account in which was such items as 'a pair of shoes, $3.50; one shirt, 99 cents; hat, $2.00,' and a few other things of the same nature.

"'Here, what does this mean?' said the head of the house, 'we don't mind being liberal in expense allowances, but we are not buying wearing apparel for our agents. You've got to fix up a different expense account.'

"The next trip my friend turned in his expenses, which footed up a larger amount than on his first trip, but it was paid without a murmur. 'That's something like an expense account,' said the head of the firm. 'You don't see any overcoats mentioned among the items?' asked my friend. 'No, I do not,' was the answer. 'Well, the overcoat is in there all the same,' responded my friend with a grin.

"That is the way with the St. Louis platform and convention," laughed Edwards, "you may not find the gold standard among the items, but it is in there all the same."

Old White House Servant.

Old Jerry Smith is dying. For a third of a century he has been the man of all work and general factotum about the white house. A few months ago failing health compelled him to leave the old mansion, where he had served so faithfully since President Grant's first administration. One of his duties was the running up of the American flag on the white house every morning. Just before he had to give up work he made a blunder that betrayed his failing faculties. He ran up the flag Union Jack down, the signal of distress. The mistake was quickly discovered and rectified, but Uncle Jerry never got over this blunder. He took it as a sign that he was failing and the time had come to give up work. He was relieved from duty and soon took to his bed, where he now lies slowly passing away with cancer of the stomach. In his modest little home he has not been forgotten, as President Roosevelt, National Chairman Cortelyou and many high officials have called to inquire after the old man and to let him know that he is well remembered.

Was the Official Duster.

Uncle Jerry is a Virginia negro and was first engaged at the white house by Gen. Grant. Up until the last few months he was a man of striking appearance. Fully six feet tall, broad-shouldered, with erect carriage and wearing a snow-white mustach and imperial, Jerry Smith was a regular colored field marshal. He was universally esteemed for his good nature, cheerfulness and willingness. No one ever heard him grumble about work that might be required of him. During his 30 odd years service he was employed in all sorts of positions, from cook to head usher at an official function. Of late years he seemed to be the official duster in the executive mansion, for he was never separated from a large feather duster, with which he was continually brushing furniture and windows. In manner he was a colored Chesterfield. His death will remove a very conspicuous landmark from official Washington and will leave Arthur Simmons, a North Carolina negro who came to the white house as a refugee during Lincoln's administration as the remaining link between the old and new white house regimes.

Expensive Dove Cot.

A flock of Washington pigeons have preempted the gold dome of the library of congress for a mating and nesting place. This is probably the most ornate and expensive dove coat or pigeon roost in the world. A few weeks ago a pair of birds entered one of the ventilators of the rotunda and flying around surveyed the gorgeous fresco work, beautiful statuary and profusion of gold paint, with evident satisfaction for they concluded to locate there permanently. They selected a cornice, in which they placed a nest made of excelsior, which has for its background the gilded dome on which $40,000 worth of gold leaf was used.

Pigeons in the Library Dome.

The example of this pair of pigeons has been followed until now quite a little flock gathers daily on the gold dome and their crooning can be distinctly heard in the reading room below. The birds fly through the ventilators every day in search of food and are very much at home in the beautiful building. The library authorities do not know how to get rid of them without closing the ventilators, which would not be comfortable in the present summer temperature.

The pigeons are of the "tumbler" variety and in flying about the rotunda they sometimes startle the readers at the public desks.

About the Size of It.

Teacher—Now, Jommy, how did Adam fall?

Johnny—Buttered side down.—Brooklyn Life.

VALUE OF HUMAN LIVES.

Some Pertinent Suggestions Anent the Duty of American Railroads.

The startling information is conveyed in the report of the interstate commerce commission, relating to railroad accidents, that during 1903 there were 9,840 fatalities in America from this cause. It is shown that deaths from railroad accidents in this country average one person to every 2,000,000 that travel, while in Great Britain the rate is one death to every 48,000,000 passengers. The railroads of Great Britain and Ireland in 1903 carried 1,194,833,000 passengers, and of these but 123 were killed and 1,912 injured. During the same year American railroads carried only 694,891,535 passengers, and out of these there were 355 killed and 8,231 injured. These figures also include employes.

The commission reports that since the adoption of the airbrake the fatalities from accidents have been reduced 32 per cent. There are thousands of freight trains running every day throughout the country without this seemingly necessary appliance. Laws enforcing the use of airbrakes exist in many States, and the recommendation is made that it become a national law.

From the appalling record as shown by the interstate commerce commission, it would appear that some great railroad corporations hold the value of human lives too lightly. Hundreds of innocent children, affectionate wives and mothers, intelligent and invaluable men are hurled into eternity in an instant; any why? It is because of negligence on the part of the railroad companies? If so, then there must be a remedy, and that remedy must be reached through the laws of our land. Modern appliances would prevent many accidents These appliances are in the shape of airbrakes, electric safety switches, block systems, crossing signals and many other contrivances that go toward reducing danger

For years efforts have been made in various States to have enforced laws that would compel the companies to adopt systems tending to reduce the number of accidents, but in some instances these efforts have been met with strong opposition.—Denver News

The Care That Prevented a Horror.

A train was running away down a steep grade on Saluda Mountain in North Carolina. The speed increased with every foot traveled. The airbrakes would not work. Trainmen were helpless, passengers in a state of hopeless fear.

Just at the moment when the worst was expected the train ran up a short incline and stopped. The next morning in the New York papers, in place of the lists of the dead and injured that might have been, there was the story of how a safety-switch had worked and had saved many lives.

This was a story of preparation. The railroad company in North Carolina knew of certain dread possibilities on its route. It provided against them and has reaped in the happy conclusion of a terribly threatening incident the reward for its forethought.

When the Slocum took fire in the East river the first fact revealed about the boat was lack of preparation against the horror then impending. Yet the possibility of what was happening had been demonstrated many times—with what should have been everlasting force in the case of the Seawanhaka.

What is the difference in the education of passenger-carrying corporation which brings it about that in North Carolina they take care while in New York they take chances?—New York World, July 9, 1904.

As It Was Intended.

A certain clergyman reports the following incident as occurring just inside the entrance to one of the largest and most popular New York churches during a crowded service.

It was during the reading of a prayer, and the entire congregation were kneeling. A man of rough appearance, evidently unused to ecclesiastical surroundings, strolled through the open doors and stared in apparent wonderment at the silent and kneeling congregation. He looked a moment, then, turning to the sexton, who stood nearby, remarked, briefly:

"Well, this beats the devil!"

The sexton turned a serene eye on him.

"That is the intention," he replied.—Harper's Weekly.

No Wonder.

"Well, old boy, is this hot enough for you?"

"I should say not."

"What! Goodness, gracious, man, what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing. I just bought out an ice company."

The Summer Resort Appetite

Waiter Girl (with rising inflection)—Chicken pot pie, roast leg of lamb or—

Summer Boarder—All three!

In Prolific Colorado.

Last Sunday three pairs of twins were visiting together at Thos. Blackwell's. They were May and Fern Wooley, 9 years old, Raphealita and Juanita Cavalier, 4 years old, and Thomas and Vinton Blackwell, 3 years old, Chester and Raymond Stoneburner, 2 1-2 years old, who were expected to be at the twin reunion were not there. The group were lined up to have their pictures taken, and a nicer lot of children would be hard to find.—North Fork (Col.) Times.

A School in the Forest.

A new kind of school is about to be started by the authorities of Charlottenburg for the benefit of children, who, though not exactly ill, are so weakly that they are very liable to be attacked by disease, more especially tuberculosis.

The school, which is to accommodate from 120 to 124 children, is to be built in the depth of the Junfernheide woods, near Berlin, and the children will remain there the whole day, special meals being supplied them.