QUAINT ST. PIERRE.

LIFE IN AN ANTIQUATED WEST INDIAN CITY.

The Isle of Martinique, Where Dwells the Finest Race in the Antilles —Stately Women in Fantastic Costumes.

St. Pierre, Martinique, writes a correspondent in the *Times-Democrat*, is the quaintest, quaintest and the prettiest withal among the West Indian cities, all stone built and stone flagged, with very narrow streets and wooden awnings, iron balconies and peaked roofs of red tile pierced by gable dormers. Most of the buildings are painted in a clear, pale yellow tone, which contrasts beautifully with the burning blue ribbon of tropical sky above, and no street is absolutely level. Nearly all of them climb hills, descend into hollows, curve, twist, describe sudden and amazing tangles.

There is everywhere a continuous chant of running water pouring through the deep gutters contrived between the paved thoroughfare and the absurd little sidewalks varying in width from one to three feet. The architecture is very old; it is seventeenth century, probably, and it reminds one a great deal of that characterizing the antiquated French quarter of New Orleans—but one must imagine New Orleans idealized by artistic conception, made intensely tropical and projected audaciously upon the side of a huge volcanic hill.

All the tints, the forms, the vistas would seem to have been especially selected or designed for aquarelle studies, just to please the whim of some extravagant artist. No ruin was ever more picturesque than these living streets in their perfect solidity and undilapidated quaintness. The windows are frameless openings without glass; some have iron bars; all have heavy wooden shutters with movable slats, through which light and air can enter as through Venetian blinds. These are usually painted green or bright bluish gray.

And everywhere rushes mountain water, cool and crystal clear, washing the streets. Every few squares you come to some fountain flinging its silver column to the sun, or showering diamond-bright spray over a group of brazen swans or black bronze Tritons. Those Tritons on the place Bertin you will not readily forget; their torsos might have been modeled from the forms of the same sinewy ebon men who toil there all day tirelessly in the heat, rolling hogsheads of sugar, puncheons of molasses, casks of rum. And very frequently you see little fountains contrived in the stone walls that border the mountain roads or that inclose the parks—glittering threads of water falling from lion lips of stone. Some mountain torrent, skilfully divided into a thousand streams, is thus perpetually purifying the city, feeding its fountains and cooling its courts.

A population, fantastic, astonishing—a population of the Arabian Nights. As the general tone of the town is yellow, so is the general tint of the people yellow, the interblending of all the hues characterizing griffone, mulatresse, metisse, tersive, chabine, capresse, quadroon—a general effect of rich brownish yellow. You are in a population of half breeds, the finest mixed race of the Antilles.

Tall, supple, straight as palms, these women and men impress you powerfully by their dignity of carriage and easy elegance of motion. They walk without swinging of the shoulders; the perfectly set torso seems to remain rigid; the step is a long, full stride, and the whole weight is poised sprightly on the tip of the bare foot. All, or are without shoes; the passing of hundreds of naked feet makes a whispering over the burning

What produces the most novel impression on the stranger is the singularity and brilliancy of the women's costumes. They were developed at least a hundred years ago by a curious sumptuary law, regulating the dress of slaves and colored people of free condition, a law which allowed considerable liberty as to material and tint, prescribing only form. But these fashions suggest the Orient; they offer beautiful audacities of color contrasts; and the coiffure, above all, is so strikingly Eastern that you cannot help wondering whether it was not first introduced into the colony by some Mohammedan slave.

It is simply an immense Madras handkerchief, which is folded about the head with admirable art, like a turban; one bright end, pushed through at the top in front, being left sticking up like a plume. Then this turban, always full of bright canary color, is fastened with great golden or silver brooches, one in front and one at either side. As for the remainder of the dress, it is simple enough: an embroidered, low cut garment with sleeves; a skirt or jupe, quite short in front and very long behind, but caught up and fastened in front below the breast so as to bring the hem everywhere to a level with the end of the long garment; and finally a foulard, or silken scarf, thrown over the shoulders.

These jupes and foulards, however, are exquisite in pattern and color, bright crimson, bright yellow, bright blue, bright green, lilac, violet, rose, sometimes mingled together in plaidings, or checkerings, or stripings; black with orange, sky blue with purple. And whatever be the colors of the turban, which vary astonishingly, the brighter must be yellow—brilliant, flashing yellow squares. To the effect of costly and jewelry; immense earrings, each being formed of five gold cylinders joined together (cylinders scarcely two inches long and an inch in circumference); a necklace of triple, quadruple, or quintuple rows of large hollow beads (sometimes smooth, but generally graven), the wonderful collier choux. Now this glowing jewelry is not a mere imitation of pure metal; the earrings are worth $15 a pair, the necklace of a Martinique quadroon may cost $100 or even $200. It may be the gift of her lover, but such articles are usually purchased on time by small payments, which may continue regularly for several years.

Wasps are Scientific Ventilators.

A French gentleman lately took a paper nest about the size of an apple, and after destroying its inmates, placed it in a large case inside of his house, leaving an opening for egress through the wall. There the nest was enlarged to a foot in diameter, holding thousands of wasps, and he was able to watch their movements, and noted one new fact—namely, their systematic attention to ventilation. In hot weather, the wasps were continually at the hole of egress, and, once for entrance or exit, a current of fresh air by the rapid motion of their long course of this vigorous ventilators were relieved during cool weather time were quantities

Facts About Billiard Balls.

A New York *Telegram* reporter is informed by an associate in an ivory manufacturing establishment that a new method is favored by the clubs in the purchase of billiard balls. "They buy the balls," he says, "in an unfinished state in the spring and keep the material during the season in the building where the balls are to be used. In the fall these blocks are brought back and turned and finished.

"Half a dozen sets of billiard balls and two pool sets may be about the average supply required by a club.

"Ivory is very sensitive, and it is necessary to be careful about sending out balls in cold weather. No guarantee is placed on ivory at all. When cracked and unfit for use the balls furnish small articles like dice. The small tusks are always cut up for billiard balls. The centre of the tusk goes through the centre of the ball for the better preservation of the spherical form. The material is received here from the London market in the form of blocks. The parts trimmed off in the lathe are sold as ivory scrap for making lamp black.

"Any present substitute for ivory lacks the elasticity of this material, and is duller on the table. Ivory is used in all the best clubs and hotels. The Zanzibar variety is most valued for balls. When well seasoned these will retain their form for six or eight months; if not well seasoned it does not take any length of time for them to get untrue.

"In sending out balls we have them carefully wrapped in wadding in the boxes, after they are finished with sweet oil, and it is well to have them afterward kept so, when not in use. If used every night it is advisable to have them rubbed with sweet oil as often as three times a week. A window should never be opened on billiard balls when the room is warm. These balls you see, cracked entirely through from one end to the other, show the effect of temperature on ivory.

"As a result of caution the Union Club now loses no balls. One man cares for them thoroughly. The regulation size here used is 2⅜ for almost every billiard room in the city. Balls exported to the West Indies reach as high as 3¼ inches diameter. The orders are given for ounces. The tables and cues of Cubans and Spaniards are correspondingly large."

Peppermint Farms.

The name "peppermint," is said to have been first given to the plant by Ray, in 1704. Its commercial history dates from 1750, when it was first grown in Mitcham, Surrey, England. It is claimed that Mr. Barnet, of Wayne County, N. Y., was the first to engage in its culture in this country. This was in 1816. In 1835 it was started on White Prairie, Mich., and is still quite extensively grown there. The time for planting is in the spring. The underground stems are set in furrows two and a half feet apart. The second crop is taken off, as it gets too troublesome to keep weeds down. It should be harvested when the plant is in full bloom. The crop, after being mowed, is left to dry in the sun before being drawn to the distilleries. The annual production of oil of peppermint in this country is about 125,000 pounds, sixty per cent being raised in Michigan and forty per cent in Wayne County, N. Y.

About 2300 pounds of well-dried leaves yields eighteen pounds of oil. The yield per acre ranges from three up to twenty-eight pounds, or say an average of sixteen pounds. Something like 10,000 acres are under cultivation in this crop, and $1.50 per pound is calculated as the cost of production, and a margin for profit. The balance is distributed among the manufacturers and refiners. The range of price in the New York market since 1841 has been as low as $1.75 last December, and as high as $4 in March 1885. It is rarely below $2.50. In 1883 and 1884 it was over $3. It is much adulterated, and this seriously affects the genuine article.—*Prairie Farmer.*

They Eat Rice Like a Chinaman.

No one unfamiliar with the subject can have any idea of the immense amount of rice consumed by the rice birds in Louisiana. They begin their attacks when the grain is just formed and continue them through the subsequent stages of growth, and it is quite common to lose as much as ten per cent. of the crop from this cause alone.

The bird-minders who are employed to keep the birds away usually fail in their duty. The sun is now hot, and the water of the rice fields is hot, and the bird-minder, who is presumed to be on duty to avoid these disagreeable conditions, usually seeks the shade, while the confiding, but indolent, or shall we say tired, employer sitting at home simply trusts to luck and hopes the birds won't get the whole crop. A few years ago a gentleman planting rice on the lower coast, and realizing the destruction of the crop by birds, concluded to set apart a field of some thirty acres, about ten per cent. of the crop, for their exclusive use. His hope was that they would concentrate their attention upon this special field and would not attack the rest. And now comes the result. They consumed this entire thirty acres, and it required as much vigilance as ever to keep them off the rest. Tons upon tons of powder and shot are consumed yearly to keep off the rice-birds, and probably twice as much should be used, for this work should be well done, for it is "penny wise and pound foolish" to economize in bird minding and to then have them carry off the whole crop, as they are sure to do, if not prevented by a vigorous fight.—*Planter and Sugar Manufacturer.*

Chinese Landscape Gardening.

There are said to be something like fifty thousand characters in the written language of the Chinese. I am sure it would take them all to fully describe the queer sights and strange customs we witnessed in Pekin during the few days we rested there, at the cheerful United States Legation, before making our final start for the Great Wall.

I had never known before that the twisted trees, contorted objects and queer architecture painted on Chinese punch bowls and platters are not droll caricatures, but the Chinese representations of Chinese art-ideas in the actual everyday scenes of Chinese life. The grotesque figures which they paint on fans, or screens, are all well known historical characters; heroes of fiction, or deified saints and philosophers, and each one carries to the Chinese mind its peculiar tradition or romantic association.

There is very little picturesque scenery in China, and the few hills, streams and valleys which lovers of natural beauty have discovered, have done duty in decoration for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. But these outlines, made familiar by repetition, have a different meaning when the fact is explained that the skillful Chinese landscape gardeners have made innumerable miniature copies of these few bits of scenery in the court yards which are enclosed by the inner walls of the houses of the better sort. These courts, a few feet in extent, oblong or square, are laid out in little mountain ranges, [illegible] trails and [illegible] side.

EYEGLASSES.

SPECTACLES WERE FIRST A BADGE OF NOBILITY.

Their Use Was Born of Affectation and Continued Through Necessity—Origin and Development —The Effeminate Pincenez.

When Alessandro di Spina of Florence invented spectacles, he believed he was conferring a benefit on all those of the human race who suffered from defective vision. It cannot be surmised that he ever anticipated that they would be used as marks of social position and intellectual superiority by some of the most civilized nations of the earth. Yet, strange as it may appear, they have been put to this extravagant use, especially in vogue in former days, and latterly in England and America. In Germany the habit of wearing spectacles first began in affectation, consequent, it may reasonably be presumed, on the intercourse which existed between that country and Spain under Charles V. By degrees this affectation, following the theory of natural evolution, became a necessity, and now it is almost an obligatory badge of scholarship among all those who aspire to the distinction of being considered a savant in Germany. Mark Twain wittily observes that if he had the monopoly of the sale of spectacles in that country he would be monetarily rendered happy, inasmuch as the revenue he would derive from it would supply all his wants.

In the seventeenth century, in Spain, the wearing of spectacles by both the sexes was a mark of social eminence. For this reason they were worn by many who by right of birth were not entitled to them. It was then the custom that no one carried on a conversation until these brain-illuminators were first fixed on the nose, and adjusted carefully by the dainty pink-nailed fingers of their fair wearers. Although they were not necessary, many kept them on while eating or attending public functions, such as theatres, concerts, and bull fights, so that they might command by this badge of nobility respect from those of the lower orders with whom they might be compelled to come in contact. There is a story told of a young monk, who, having accomplished for his order a very difficult task, was asked by the prior to request him any favor which it was in his power to grant, and it should be conceded to him. With grave and anxious looks he replied that he had long yearned to be permitted to wear spectacles. This request evidently gratified his superior, who, with an air of satisfied pride, said to the young monk, "*Hermano, ponga las ocales*" ("Brother, put on spectacles"), which concession filled the recipient with such joy that he forthwith fell on his knees, and kissing the hand of the prior, earnestly expressed his gratitude for so great an honor having been thus readily bestowed upon him. There is another story told which shows how highly the right to wear these ornaments was esteemed. It is said that when the Viceroy of Naples, the Marquis d'Astorgas, was having his bust sculptured in marble, he was most careful to have his best and large tortoise spectacles put in, as he thought it could not be a good likeness of him if these necessary appendages of nobility were omitted.

In this century the size of spectacles was also a matter of important consideration, just as carriages and men servants are nowadays. As a man's fortune increased so did the size of his spectacles. And the Countess d'Aunoy assures us that as men rose in political and social rank the higher the spectacles were placed on their noses. She also states from personal observation that some of those worn by the grandees were as large as her head, and that for this reason these great personages obtained the sobriquet of ocales. These glasses were for the most part made in Venice, until the Venetians, out of revenge, played a trick on the Spaniards. It is recorded that the Marquis de Cuevas, with two other nobles, undertook to set the arsenal of Venice on fire by means of burning-glasses, and thus render up the city to the King of Spain. To be revenged for this attempt on their city, the Venetians caused a large number of these huge spectacles, or *ocales*, to be made of burning-glass, and had them set in frames of an explosive material, so that when the sun's rays beat upon them they would heat it so that it would explode, and thus blind their wearers. It is said that this desired end actually was arrived at, but with no more disastrous consequence than the burning of the eyebrows, eyelashes, and hair of the wearers, a circumstance which made the Spaniards very irate with the Venetians, causing them to withdraw their custom for *ocales* from them forever.

It would seem that the English caught this quaint and ridiculous custom from Spain, but, not to appear slavishly imitative, they adopted the eyeglass, that vain decoration of man's face which Coleridge described as "a piece of glass stuck in a fop's eye to show that he was a coxcomb." How many men wear this curious ornament for affectation, it were useless to speculate. For a time this single piece of glass was much in vogue, but it has by degrees given place to the more refined and less dangerous to the eye-sight ornament—the pince-nez. This is the eye gear which is most affected by actors, or men who wish to attract attention to their puny individuality—for surely that individuality is puny indeed which is marked by the aid of the optician and tailor rather than by their own intellectual merit.

In former days the rims of spectacles were made of bone and tortoise shell, but this clumsy framework has given place to gold, nickel, and steel, so that a pair of spectacles can now be had which weighs less than half-an-ounce. Still, the tortoise-shell frame, with long handles of the same substance, is most in fashion for "ladies' glasses." It is a strange fact that those who have real need of spectacles are slowest to wear them, though by their timely use a waning eyesight may be preserved or restored, and a pleasant old age secured to him who otherwise would have a sad and gloomy one.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

A Lapland Forest Giant.

In Lapland there has just been felled a pine tree which is described as one of the largest ever grown in Sweden. It was 120 feet high and at two feet from the ground had a diameter of 12½ feet. These are large dimensions for Scotch fir, and yet there are pines beside which it would be but a dwarf. There are specimens of the giant pine or sugar pine of California, for example, that rise to the height of 300 feet. The spar of the Douglas pine at Kew, England, is 150 feet; there are many spars of the Cowdi pine 200 feet long, while a specimen of the Wellingtonia gigantea has been described as 450 feet high and 110 feet in circumference.

There are nine cities [illegible] more than 500,000 inhabitants [illegible] 600

Anacondas Make Themselves at Home.

Two immense anacondas were recently discovered on the barkentine Emma F. Smith, while discharging a cargo of phosphate rock at South Camden, N. J. Each measures over thirteen feet, and they are said to be not only the largest but the finest specimens ever seen. It is not known how the snakes came on board, but they are supposed to have reached the vessel's rigging from dense overhanging tropical foliage while she was lying in the harbor of Para, Brazil, which is conceded to be the home of the anaconda and the boa constrictor. The serpents have thus far shown no attempt to interfere with the crew or those working on the vessel, and often remain in a comatose state for a week at a time. When they become hungry plenty of food has to be quickly procured, a live chicken or a stray cat being esteemed the greatest luxury by them.

The most remarkable occurrence has been the sudden disappearance of the army of rats which had multiplied in the vessel's hold for several years past. Several times during the passage the snakes were given the liberty to investigate the between decks and lower hold in search of the rodents, and on each occasion they were so liberally rewarded that they were unable to move. Their stomachs had been stretched to the fullest tension. Many visitors, among them persons interested in science, have visited the vessel to see the curiosities.—*Philadelphia Record.*

The Young Son of a Revolutionary Veteran.

It is a remarkable fact that we have in town a man only 41 years old whose father was at the battle of Bunker Hill. Winfield Scott Hasham is the man we have reference to. His father, Reuben Hasham, was about fourteen years of age at the time of the battle, witnessing the engagement from the steeple of the church at the North End and carrying water to the soldiers of the 17th battery. He learned the trade of a clockmaker and located in Charlestown, N. H., says the Claremont *Advocate*, becoming in the course of time keeper of the Eagle Hotel, making with his own hands the eagle still used for a sign. We understand that he also made the eagle which surmounts the town in Claremont. He made several town clocks, some of which are still in use. Mr. Hasham in 1837 married Susannah Hastings, daughter of Captain Johnson. Five children were born to them, and in 1841 Mrs. Hasham died. The same year Mr. Hasham, then some eighty years of age, married Lucy A. Miller, of Spring field, Vt., a woman many years younger than himself, and five more children were born to him during the next ten years. He died Feb. 4, 1881, aged about 100. Of his children only two survive, W. S. Hasham, above mentioned, and his sister, Mrs. Eugene A. Randall, of Charlestown, who was born two years to a day after his birth.

An Emperor's Wealth of Name.

Kaiser Francis Joseph is fifty-eight years old, observes the New York *Tribune*, and may be have as many happy returns of the day as he has handles to his name. For this genial monarch is fully styled Francis Joseph I. Charles, Emperor of Austria; Apostolic King of Hungary; King of Bohemia, of Dalmatia, of Croatia, of Slavonia, of Galicia, Lodomeria and Illyria; King of Jerusalem; Arch Duke of Austria; Grand Duke of Tuscany, and of Cracow; Duke of Lorraine, of Salzburg, of Styria, of Corinthia, of Carniola, of Bukovina; Grand Prince of Transylvania; Margrave of Moravia; Duke of Upper Silesia, of Lower Silesia, of Modena, of Parma, of Piacenza and Guastalla, of Auschwitz and Zator, of Teschen, Friuli, Ragusa and Zara; Princely Count of Habsburg, of Tyrol, of Kyburg, Goritz and Gradisch; Prince of Trent and Brixen; Margrave of Upper Lusatia, of Lower Lusatia, of Istria; Count of Hohenembs, Feldkirche, Braganza, Sonnenburg, etc; Seigneur of Trieste, of Cattaro, etc.

An Intrepid Young Shark Fisher.

A youngster named George Vreeland, son of a wealthy Jersey City (N. J.) man, captured a man-eating shark, six feet long, in New York Bay, one afternoon recently. He was in a row-boat fishing for eels when he saw the shark's fin above the water 20 feet away. He rowed ashore and secured an old-fashioned harpoon. He only towed a few feet from the shore when the shark came up close to the boat. He threw the harpoon at it, and the iron stuck firmly in its back. The shark dashed to the boat and nearly succeeded in overturning it. Then the shark dived and started off for the Narrows, pulling the boat after it. Vreeland tied the harpoon rope to the bow of the boat and sat back for a ride. Three miles from the Greenville shore the rope slackened, and in a few minutes the shark rose to the surface, stomach up. He was dead. Vreeland towed it ashore. This is the second shark that he has captured. He is fifteen years old.—*Times Democrat.*

The Art of Taxidermy.

A taxidermist's is a queer place, says the Chicago *Herald*. Few people know how the delicate work of preserving the relics of a defunct animal is done. The skinning alone is difficult enough, but after the "shell," so to speak, has been obtained, the real niceties of the job are brought into play. And the greater or lesser excellence with which the "stuffing" of the beast is done, so as to make its new outline correspond exactly with the original, gives a taxidermist claim to more or less fame. The whole inside of the animal is, of course, rejected, except some of the bones which are needed to support the frame properly. The preserving against moths and decay is done by rubbing the inside of the skin with arsenic soap, and arsenic powder is strewn through the inside besides. This arsenic, though inside, gradually works through the seams and pores, and a stuffed animal is, therefore, never a safe plaything for a child, nor for a grown-up person either.

Artificial Silk.

Artificial silk has been prepared by Dr. Chardonne, a French experimenter, by dissolving three grammes of nitrocellulose in 100 to 150 cubic centimetres of a mixture of equal parts of alcohol and ether, and adding 2.5 cubic centimetres of a filtered 10 per cent. solution of ferrous chloride in alcohol, and 1.5 cubic centimetres of a solution of tannic acid in alcohol. The filtered liquid is placed in a vertical receiver, having a blowpipe nozzle of glass in its bottom. This pipe forms an acute cone with an orifice from one-tenth to one-twentieth millimetre wide, the thickness of the margin not exceeding one-tenth millimetre, and opening into a vessel of water acidulated with one-half per cent. of mono-hydrated nitric acid. The fluid in flowing out by pressure hardens in the acidulated water, and the resulting thread is dried rapidly in hot air. The thread can be dyed all colors by soluble

The Population of Mexico.

Possibly there are 1,500,000 white men, properly so called, in Mexico, and, as I have shown, they are differentiated among themselves by climate. Then there are mixed bloods to the number of about 2,500,000 approximately, and these, scattered over the republic, differ in many ways through climate causes. Then come about 6,000,000 Indians, some very much civilized, some semi-civilized and others barbarous. Of the barbarous Indians, some are peaceful enough, and others, like the Chan Santa Cruz Indians of the Yucatan peninsula, are fierce and warlike. The Yaquis of Sonora may be taken as examples of semi-civilized Indians. These Indian races speak different languages, though many tribes use Spanish to a greater or less extent according to the measure of their contact with the white man.—*Cor. Boston Herald.*

Fires from Meteors.

The remarkable possibility that mysterious fires may have been set by sparks from other worlds than our own has been suggested to the Paris Academy of Sciences by Mons. Ch. V. Zenger. From a study of statistics for several years, he learns that fires of unknown origin in woods, farmsteads, barns, mills, and even in villages and large towns, are extremely often coincident with the periodical showers of shooting stars. He points out that during the first eighteen days of last August violent storms, rich meteoric displays and conflagrations were of frequent occurrence.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

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