



How plain to my mind are the scenes of my childhood, As my recollection recalls them to view, The soap-kettle hung on the poles of green basewood; The smoke and the smell that my infancy knew! But those days of soft and consequent anguish, Have long since departed, we pray and we hope; The use of the stuff 'gan to ware and to languish As soon as they offered US

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SPONGING IN BAHAMA.

THE METHOD OF GATHERING AND PREPARING FOR MARKET.

The Profits of the Work—The Laborers Are Chiefly Blacks and Most of Them Earn Pretty Small Pay—The Sponges Sell at a Good Price However.

Consul Thomas J. McLain of the United States consulate at Nassau, in the Bahama islands, in response to the direction of the state department, has furnished an interesting paper on the sponge trade of the Bahamas, in which the value of the industry and the methods of catching the sponges are given.

The vessels employed in the trade are small, varying from five to twenty-five tons, sloop or schooner rigged, and are built in the local shipyards. The construction and repair of these vessels constitute an important industry in itself. They have small cabins for sleeping purposes. The cooking is done on deck. About 500 of these vessels are engaged in gathering sponges.

The number of persons gathering sponges in the Bahamas, handling them and preparing them in various stages for market, is from 5,000 to 6,000, all of whom, except the shipowners, brokers and shippers, are black people. Hands employed in clipping, washing, packing and preparing finally for shipment abroad get from fifty to seventy-five cents per day of ten hours. The amount earned by the men who go fishing depends entirely on the number of sponges obtained.

The owner of the vessel fits her out at his own expense, and the profits of the voyage are divided up in shares among the owner, the master and the men. They are never hired by the month, nor do they ever get specified wages. The most that can be said is that the men make a tolerable living, and the sponge fisherman who earns over \$300 a year is the exception.

HOW SPONGES ARE GATHERED. The method of gathering sponges is by means of iron hooks attached to long poles. By using a waterglass the fisherman can readily discover the sponges at the bottom, and then by the pole and hook can bring up those he may select, leaving the smaller ones untouched. Some sponges adhere firmly to the bed of the sea, while others are not attached at all, these latter being known as "rollers."

About ten years ago an attempt was made to introduce dredges, but it was found that their use was likely to ruin the beds, because in passing over the bottom they dislodged and brought up not only the good sponges, but the young and unsalable ones as well, killing the spawn and working great mischief. Such an outcry was raised against dredging that an act was passed forbidding it.

When brought to the vessel the sponges are at once spread upon the deck and left exposed to the sun for several days, during which time the animal matter that covers the sponge gradually dies. This is a black, gelatinous substance of a very low order of marine life, which, during the process of decay, emits a most objectionable odor.

The vessels visit what is called the kral once a week to land the load from the deck. The kral is an inclosed pen, fenced in by sticks of wood so as to allow a free circulation of water through it, usually built in a sheltered and shallow bay or cove, on one of the cays near by.

THE CROP OF 1890. The sponges are placed in the kral and left to be soaked and washed by the action of the water from four to six days, when they are taken out and beaten with sticks until the decayed covering is entirely removed. Having been subjected to this course of exposure, soaking, beating and washing, the sponges are quite clean and are taken on board the vessel, packed in the hold, conveyed to Nassau, and in this condition are sold in the local market.

Of the larger sponges a catch of 5,000 or of the smaller ones 7,500, would be considered a fair lot. Occasionally a cargo of from 12,500 to 15,000 large sponges has been brought in, but this success is exceptional.

The principal varieties gathered in the Bahamas are as follows: Boat, grass, glove, hardhead, reef (white and dark), velvet (abaco and cay), sheep wool, and yellow, of which the most valuable is sheep wool. The total export in 1890 reached over 900,000 pounds, valued at \$205,500. The crop of that year was above the average, being really the most valuable one in many years.

Of that crop there were shipped to the United States 708,000, valued at \$236,000. Bahama sponges are not considered very good, but a ready market is found for all that can be obtained, and at constantly improving prices. There are no indications of any failure of the supply. —Philadelphia Ledger.

An Aerobic Kitten. A pet kitten follows its mistress all over the house when she is at work. Recently she was in an attic chamber, the blind of the window being shut but unfastened. The playful kitten ran across the room and leaped against the blind, which opened, and the kitten disappeared, but came crawling back, having turned in the air and caught the edge of the gutter with its forepaws. It was a feat of remarkable quickness and presence of mind, as the little animal had a very short time to recover from its surprise at being launched suddenly into space. —Portland (Me.) Transcript.

There is much in knowing how to see sights. The discreet and skillful person, when confronted with a variety of attractions, will carefully select those that are for him the best, and then will devote himself to see them with the least wear and tear. But there are excitable people who get out to see everything, tire themselves out, see only half of anything, and are dissatisfied in the end. —Detroit Free Press.

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Physicians make no more fatal mistake than when they inform patients that nervous heart troubles come from the stomach and are of little consequence. Dr. Franklin Miles, the noted Indiana specialist, has proven the contrary in his new book on "Heart Disease," which may be had free of F. G. Fricke & Co., who guarantee and recommend Dr. Miles' unequalled new Heart Cure, which has the largest sale of any heart remedy in the world. It cures nervous and organic heart disease, short breath, fluttering, pain or tenderness in the side, arm or shoulder, irregular pulse, fainting, smothering, dropsy, etc. His Restorative Nervine cures headache, fits, etc.

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This is the great problem of life which few satisfactorily solve. Some fail because of ill health, others want of luck, but the majority from insufficient grit—want of nerve. They are nervous, irresolute, changeable, easily get the blues and "take the spirits down to keep the spirits up," thus wasting money, time, opportunity and nerve force. There is nothing like the Restorative Nervine, discovered by the great specialist, Dr. Miles, to cure all nervous diseases, as headache, the blues, nervous prostration, sleeplessness, neuralgia, St. Vitus dance, fits and hysteria. Trial bottles and fine book of testimonials free at F. G. Fricke & Co's.

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From a letter written by Mrs. Ada E. Hurd of Groton, S. D., we quote: "Was taken with a bad cold, which settled on my lungs, cough set in and finally terminated in consumption. Four doctors gave me up saying I could live but a short time. I gave myself up to my Saviour, determined if I could not stay with my friends on earth, I would meet my absent ones above. My husband was advised to get Dr. King's New Discovery for consumption, coughs and colds. I gave it a trial, took in all eight bottles; it has cured me and thank God I am now a well and hearty woman." Trial bottles free at F. G. Fricke & Co's drug store, regular size, 50c, and \$1.00.

For many years Mr. B. F. Thompson, of Des Moines, Iowa, was severely afflicted with chronic diarrhoea. He says: "At times it was very severe; so much so, that I feared it would end my life. About seven years ago I chanced to procure a bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. It gave me prompt relief and I believe cured me permanently. I now eat or drink without harming anything I please. I have also used it in my family with the best results. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

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