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THE WEEKLY INTER OCEAN

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LETTER FROM FLORIDA.

A Former Red Cloudite Tells of His Southern Home Where Farming is a Difficult and Laborious Task

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Jan. 19.

EDITOR CHIEF:—I owe you many a letter for the weekly visits of THE CHIEF are much prized. I am writing at my school house, twenty miles from the city, and as tomorrow is Friday will have to make the trip home. Now those twenty miles are long or short, according to the standpoint you look from. If measured by the time necessary to travel over them they are much longer than Nebraska miles. At this end they are over woods roads, with plenty of water and no bridges. One mile is a solid sheet of water from four to eight inches deep. At the other end the road is graded for about five miles and is very good now, but in dry times it is deep with sand and is simply awful. Judging by the mile posts however, the miles are very short. The road is posted and the man who took the contract set the posts at so much per post, and he could easily see that the more miles the more posts and the more dollars. He measured with a cart wheel and never placed a post in a low place, but selected the nearest dry place. His miles are on the average about four-fifths of a mile long. It is said that the man who posted the balance of the road in Clay county (the road runs from Jacksonville in Duval county to Middleburgh in Clay county) was more patriotic. Desiring to bring his Middleburgh home as near as possible to the metropolis of Florida he measured with a coon skin and threw in the length of the tail for good measure. Now the situation is this, both the Duval county mile and the Clay county mile have the stamp of the (state) government and are legal tender for miles therefor. Four-fifths of a mile is a mile or six-fifths of a mile, or more, is a mile. How far is it from Jacksonville to Middleburgh? I have now lived among the country people of Florida for three winters and must say I like them. They are a simple, quiet, kindly and friendly people, but they are quick to "get down on" a stranger if his ways do not suit them. If, however, you get along with them until you get used to them and they to you, you are all right. I wanted a horse and wagon once and several neighbors came, out of their way, to tell me of a good bargain where any one of them could have made five or ten dollars by purchasing themselves and selling to me. A great majority of these people do not see a newspaper of any kind once a year, and I think a majority of them cannot read or write more than their own name. They are however, singularly intelligent considering the circumstances. News travels in a remarkable manner, although sometimes it becomes strangely distorted. During the year 1897 there were war vessels of Uncle Sam's navy here most of the time. The dynamite cruiser Vesuvius and the cutter Dauntless being our most constant visitors. One evening when proceedings were being had in the United States court considering the filibuster Three Friends the captain of one of the vessels was wanted early the next morning as a witness. He was aboard his vessel off the bar at the mouth of the St. John's river. The search lights of another war vessel lying here were turned upward after dark that night and the vessel twenty miles away was signaled. A message to the captain was flashed upon the clouds and the next morning the wished for captain was upon hand. Those lights, however had been seen over a remarkably large territory and the darkies of northern Florida were terrified and thought the last day was about to dawn. A fleet of torpedo boats visited us shortly before the declaration of war and we received calls from larger vessels. The torpedo boat is a queer looking craft, cigar shaped, with hulls not much thicker than boiler iron, with no railing or bulwark to prevent a man from being washed overboard, they look like a very ticklish thing to go to sea in and a still more ticklish thing to go into battle on. They carry torpedo tubes and Hotchkiss guns on deck, both of which can be operated by a man who stands with only his head and shoulders above the deck. It is said that some of them are capable of being submerged to the level of the deck when going into action.

The soil hereabouts is mostly sand or sandy and is so frequently washed by heavy rains that all vegetable refuse is washed out of it so that it requires the constant application of fertilizers to render it productive. One writer on the subject writes, "the soil of Florida will produce well with the aid of a small amount of fertilizer," but he added, orally, it requires the fertilizer to be applied every thirty days. The country people seldom own the land they live on. They "squat" on a piece or as best buy a tax title and raise a few sweet potatoes, a little corn, some sugar cane and a patch of greens, perhaps. In the spring when the mosquitoes get so bad as to drive the cows out of the woods the farmer prepares a pen in which he confines them during the night. In order to induce them to come home regularly he builds fires around the pen that the smoke may protect them. The calves have in the mean time remained without the pen and during this season of the year he has milk in the morning. After the herd has remained long enough on one spot to fertilize it sufficiently, the pen is moved and the process is repeated. This operation is known as cow-penning and about the only way the farmer has of "taking in" new land. The old land is fertilized from the stable where his one pony horse is kept and if he keeps a string of "oxens" with which to haul logs or railroad ties to the nearest station or river landing, they are kept in a yard over night and fed on bran shipped from the north. This adds to the fertilizer pile which helps keep up the old land. Some cotton seed meal is purchased occasionally to assist in making the corn crop. It is fed to the stock and is also applied directly to the ground. I said the oxen were kept in the yard, this is because they go too far away from home in search of grass if left at large in the spring. During the remainder of the year they are fed bran once a day and turned out to forage "long feed" from the wire grass of the woods. The cow-penned land is most relied upon to make a crop and sooner or later the old ground is given up and allowed to go back to broom sedge and old-field pine. Scarcely any cotton is raised here. Sweet potatoes and Florida syrup are the products most relied upon to fetch what money is needed. When the "taters" are dug a few hogs are usually hunted in the swamps and put in to eat up such yams as remain in the ground. They are perhaps helped on a little by being fed the small potatoes or such of them as are not needed for seed. Some farmers in this way have pork during the greater portion of the year, but most of them buy bacon over half the time. Bacon and grit form the basis of their table fare. What is grit you will ask. Well when I saw barrelful after barrelful with the Nebraska City label on them I thought it must take an elaborate and expensive plant to manufacture it, but when I saw my landlord last winter grind corn in a mill not much larger than a coffee mill then take the ground product and sift it through a common flour sieve which lets the outer part of the kernel, being more flinty than the center part of the grain grinds up finely, through while the starchy middle part remains in the sieve, and after the chaff had been blown off was known as grit, or hominy. The fine which passed through the sieve was corn meal. This meal being fresh, made excellent corn cakes. The officers of the county are largely appointive and the people of the south have little to say. Appointments are mostly made by the governor on the recommendation of the county central committee. It follows that the democratic central committee is a very powerful body and of much more importance than are similar committees in the north. County officers hold office, most of them, for four years. After election the governor usually appoints those who have received a plurality of



In the country it is hard to get help for the household work. Wives, mothers and daughters who do their own work should have the very best of everything to do it with. Ivory Soap is the best; it cleans quickest and is easiest on the hands. It floats.

A WORD OF WARNING.—There are many white soaps, each represented to be "just as good as the Ivory"; they ARE NOT, but like all counterfeits, lack the peculiar and remarkable qualities of the genuine. Ask for "Ivory" Soap and insist upon getting it.

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votes; but as he has the power of removal and usually uses it at the request of the central committee, it will be seen that the committeemen are bosses. On one occasion some years ago a full set of officers were ousted by a simple "neglect" to approve their bonds. A new set were then appointed whose bonds were promptly approved.

As for me things have moved very smoothly since I have been here, and I like my Florida home very well. Well if I don't stop and mail this I fear it will never be finished and will share the fate of one I commenced some months ago. If I knew just what points your readers desire information about I would cheerfully enlighten them through THE CHIEF.

Yours respectfully,
JNO. R. WILLCOX.

How's This.

We offer one hundred dollars reward for any case of catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

F. J. CHENEY & Co., Props., Toledo, Ohio.

We the undersigned have known F. J. Cheney for the past fifteen years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by the firm.

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Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Price 75c per bottle. Sold by all druggists. Testimonials free.

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The greatest danger from the grippe is of its resulting in pneumonia. If reasonable care is used, however, and Chamberlain's Cough Remedy taken all dangers will be avoided. Among the tens of thousands who have used this remedy we have yet to learn of a single case having resulted in pneumonia which shows conclusively that this remedy is a certain preventative of that dangerous disease. It will cure the grippe in less time than any other treatment. It is pleasant and safe to take. For Sale by H. E. Grice.

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CHURCH SERVICES.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Services each Lord's Day as follows: Morning service at 10:30. Subject, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts, and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." (Find it.)

Bible school, 12m.
Junior Christian Endeavor 3 p.m.
Senior Christian Endeavor 6:45 p.m.
Evening service at 7:30 o'clock. Subject, "The Greater Works."
Prayer meeting and bible study on Wednesday evenings.
Ladies' Aid Society Friday afternoons.

Our pleasant church home and all services are ever open to the public.

L. A. HUSONG, Pastor.

METHODIST

Services next Sunday as follows: Morning service at 10:30. Sunday School at 11:30 a.m. Preaching at Amboy at 3 p.m. Junior League at 4 p.m. Senior League at 7 p.m. Evening service at 7:30. Prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at 7:30. Ladies Aid Society Friday afternoon. All are most cordially invited to attend.

JAMES MARK DAREY, Pastor.

BAPTIST CHURCH.

Services next Sunday as follows: Morning services at 10:30. Memorial Service for Mrs. I. W. Edson.

Sunday School at 11:45. Juniors meeting at 3 p.m. Young People's Union meets at 7 p.m. Evening service at 7:30. Subject, "Constraining Love." General prayer and conference meeting Wednesday evening at 7:30. All cordially invited. Seats free.

ISAAC W. EDSON, Pastor.

CONGREGATIONAL.

Regular services next Sunday as follows: Morning service at 10:30. Sunday School at 11:45. Sermon at Indian creek at 3:30 p.m. Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor at 6:30 p.m. Evening service at 7:30. Mid-week prayer meeting and conference Wednesday evening at 7:30. All cordially invited to attend these services.

FRANK W. DEAN, Pastor.