

In Martinique And Guadeloupe

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The sea nowhere surrounds more interesting patches of land than Martinique, the scene of the recent uprising against existing conditions and the powers that be, and its sister French West Indian island, Guadeloupe. These islands possess indescribable scenic beauty, great natural advantages and unusual resources, but visitors to view their picturesque scenes being comparatively few, their advantages are not utilized and their resources are undeveloped. For Martinique and Guadeloupe have stood still for a century—yes, for two. The dominant whites "run" the government in an indolent but overbearing fashion, and the common people submit with hidden sullenness, just as they did long before the birth of the great republic to the north that some day may add both Martinique and Guadeloupe to its West Indian possessions. Possibly, though not probable, the late disturbance may be the sign of a genuine awakening of the people from their protracted slumbers.

The common people of Martinique and Guadeloupe are mostly negroes and part breeds and a singular race they are, as different from the colored elements in the population of Cuba and Porto Rico as they are different from the negroes of the United States. To any one who knows the negroes of the states, those of Spanish-America are a strange and interesting variation, but they are almost commonplace beside their near neighbors in the French West Indies. It seems incredible that two peoples, so much alike in tradition and growing out of the same stock, should have drifted so far apart. In the course of rather protracted visits to Guadeloupe and Martinique I have studied the natives closely, and have been fairly amazed at their intricate character. From their religion to their cooking all is mystery with them. Nominally Catholics, they are in reality mystics, idolaters. They hate the dominant white race with an intensity not the less pronounced because it is not often manifest.

The French West Indian hasn't much mind, but a great deal of imagination, which is stimulated by idleness, smoking and rum, and which must be fed. He demands a promise of something for nothing; a release from present troubles and protection against anticipated ones. This is the whole scheme of his "religious belief." It is for this he offers sacrifices, practices self-denial or participates in fantastic or vulgar ceremony as creed or cult demands. During and prior to the rainy season he engages the service of a priest to offer up prayers, say mass and burn candles at so much for each, in order that the rain may not create floods, that thunders may not be loud, that the lightning may be harmless. That is all he knows about the true faith.

In deference to some other belief, festivities and dancing are wholly abandoned during the rainy months, but the quantity of rum consumed is limited only to the number of sours each individual happens to possess. When, in spite of triumphal marches and masses an earthquake or a cyclone visits the island, the people repeat their ceremonies and thank the good Lord that they were not visited with both simultaneously. If the boats are wrecks on the shore or sunk completely out of sight and the majority of dwellings are unroofed, the people only pray and say: "It was the good Lord's will." When a stupid negro breaks the ice machine and a sweltering population is dying of thirst and a protest is lodged, the only response is: "It's the good Lord who broke it."

Death in the French West Indies.
The French West Indian superstitions are almost infinite in number. Every animal, insect or bird is of good or evil augur, and every peculiarity of character or action, every mark of individuality has its mystical significances. Death is a very serious thing and the candles and prayers for the dead are as costly and as numerous as purse can bear. A funeral in church, with a goodly display of light at the altar and the tolling of bells, means 500 francs. When the body and followers are allowed simply to enter the church and mass is said without candles, the cost is about 300 francs. For a few francs the poor may stop at the church door, but may not go beyond the entrance. There the friends and relatives of the dear departed may wait with their sad charge a few moments or an hour, or even two. When the good father gets ready he will come and say a few words over the corpse and they are satisfied.

Their mourning rites are as curious as their church rites. Not only the relatives of the dead, but all the friends of the family as well, old women and young children, literally don sackcloth and sprinkle their heads with ashes. If a mourning woman possesses a pair of earrings as large as plums she covers them over with a piece of black cloth or velvet, as an indication of her grief, and the sight of the great black, greasy appendages strikes the stranger most forcibly.

The only thing that remains normal about the women in periods following bereavement is their pride in their hair. It is the chief delight and its dressing the chief occupation of the dusky women of Martinique and Guadeloupe, alike in days of mourning and in days of joy. I have seen them sitting on the pavement for more than an hour at a time engaged in this pleasing duty. They never attempt to dress their own heads, but render the service for each other. The hair is first parted in the middle and from the crown across, back of the ears. The side sections, well oiled, are then drawn

together in front of the ears. Next the strands are plaited and pinned into a small knot—after which a sort of rosette, made of black coolie hair, is pinned over it, and then the triumph of her art, the Madras, is adjusted.

The women are not beauties, as a rule, but they are strong and sturdy, and their longevity is phenomenal. It is asserted that about one-half of the children born die within the year; but the survivors of both sexes live to ripe old age. The sight of people eighty years of age performing all sorts of work, curing cane, breaking stones or carrying heavy loads along the high road is common everywhere and the records bear witness that women of eighty sometimes become mothers.

Disease from Carelessness.

On the Isle of Des Jades, a short sail from the town of Point a Pitre, there is a "Leper's Home," where medical attention, comfort and seclusion can be had for the asking. The general physical deformity of the people from leprosy and other diseases is shocking. Of almost every other pair of feet you see, one is in a bandage; swollen ankles, potted legs are encountered at every turn, and a good pair of eyes in either old or young is so rare as to excite comment. The general affliction of the eyes is due to filth and carelessness on the part of the people. When at work their hands come in contact with many unclean things, poisonous plants, etc. It never occurs to them to wash their hands, and, as handkerchiefs are an unknown luxury, they rub the dirt and poison into the eyes when they wipe off the perspiration that flows freely from their foreheads under the broiling sun. Their other physical ailments come largely from similar causes. A cut or scratch from a thorn is poisoned and kept inflamed and develops into a permanent running sore or vicious swelling.

Their food, also, has much to do with their physical condition. They never eat



STREET SCENE IN MARTINIQUE.

in the day a man and woman, the latter carrying on her head a great heavy mattress, and on top of it a gourd, that her lord might drink at wayside springs. Returning later I have met the same couple, the woman still with the burden on her head, the man smoking a cigarette.

But even the women, with all their drudgery and hard work, have contempt for the value of time, and love for the social amenities that are at times appalling. For handshaking and kissing they have a perfect mania. It is a fortunate thing for the buyers that the market women carry their loads on their heads, since it would delay their appearance at the market place by some hours if they had to stop to put down their loads each time they shake hands. But they manage, somehow, even with this handicap, and the meeting of a particularly friendly pair gives the stranger a dizzy feeling as they approach each other for a tender greeting. They stand very close together, each putting a hand on the load for its security, sway a moment, stretch their necks and the blissful salute is effected. But the danger is not over, for it requires steady nerve and a well-balanced head to regain the equilibrium after such combined contortion and emotion.

Opportunities for Education.

Whether from a passionate love of books and letters, or a cunning desire to cope in all matters with the whites, the negro here at first displays an intense avidity for learning, and the facilities for acquiring knowledge are very good. For instance, the Carnot Lycee, opened in 1883, is an establishment of which any country might be proud. It consists of a main building and two immense wings and is located on the highest spot in the city. It is set deep in an ideal spot surrounded by beautiful gardens commanding a view of the sea.

The amount allowed by the government for its support is 6,000,000 francs, for, notwithstanding that it averages 80 to 100 pensioners, and 200 to 300 day pupils and demipensioners, its revenues are not equal to its expenses. The professors are all from the University of Paris and are of the highest possible standing, receiving large salaries. The superintendent of public instruction receives \$6,000 a year. The principal gets \$2,500, the steward and general treasurer \$4,000. Besides these there are twenty-eight professors receiving from \$125 to \$200 a month and as the tuition for the school year of nine months for the senior class is only \$180, it will readily be seen that a large grant is necessary to sustain the institution.

The suggestion that a similar school for young women be established in connection with the Lycee met with so little public favor at first that the school board declined to assume the responsibility. The Lycee faculty thereupon started it on their own account and it has succeeded beyond the expectation of the most sanguine. Slowly but surely the people are arriving at the conclusion that young women can receive instruction from men and yet not necessarily be demoralized. Of course, it is thus far only a day school, the young women being conducted thither by a member of the family or an old and trusted domestic and called for after school hours.

FRANCES DRAKE.

Misunderstanding

Prof. Alfred B. Adams of New York was a soldier in the civil war and took part in the Red River campaign under Major General Nathaniel T. Banks.

"At one place," he said recently to one of his classes, "we surprised a southern garrison and took many prisoners. They were guarding a mountain of cotton bales which were intended for shipment to Europe on account of the southern government. General Banks promptly confiscated the cotton and transferred it to his flotilla. Each bale was stenciled C. S. A., and over this the northern soldiers with marking brushes wrote in huge characters U. S. A. I was on guard at the time, and one of my prisoners, a handsome,

bright-eyed young southern officer, said: 'Yank, what's that writing there?'

"I looked proudly at him as I replied: 'The United States of America over the Confederate States of America. Can't you read U. S. A. over C. S. A.?'"

"He looked at me quizzically. 'Thank you,' he said. 'Do you know I thought it was United States of America Cotton Stealing association.'"

"The next question he put to me I didn't answer."

Her Fortune in Horns

The business enterprise many years ago of an eastern man now a resident of Minnesota, and the kindness and affection for his sister in Hartford, Conn., have resulted in placing her in a position of probable future affluence. She has become the proprietor of probably the most singular collection of wealth in the United States, nearly 10,000 pairs of buffalo horns, which once adorned the heads of herds of bison which occupied the plains of the west. Her fortune is made, reports the Hartford Courant, for she is a trust, not a combination of capitalists, but a complete trust in herself without fear of any competition, for she has a monopoly of the product and there is no fear of competition from any source.

Nearly twenty years ago, when the plains of the west were covered with the remaining herds of buffalo, the woman's brother was engaged in purchasing the rights of way for



SHIPPING FROM MARTINIQUE.

the Great Northern railroad, and during his travels saw immense quantities of bones, skulls and horns of buffalo being collected for shipment east to be ground into fertilizers for New England farms. Two hundred carloads had been collected and were being packed, when this sagacious man reflected that the slaughter of buffalo would extinguish the species and, buffalo gone, there would be no more buffalo horns, which he had seen converted into various articles of usefulness and decoration. With him to reflect was to act, and he soon decided to purchase all he could buy. Setting Indians at work he soon made arrangements for them to separate the horns from the skulls, which had lain bleaching on the plains of Montana for many years. Horns were a drug on the market then and were worth about a cent a pound off the hoof. When he had got his horny collection together there were about 10,000 pairs of buffalo horns stored 'way up in a corner of the state, and he had cornered the market.

Other enterprises commanded his attention, one little diversion being the purchase of townsites along the line of the road,

which alone was sufficient to make him immensely rich, and in course of time he almost forgot his collection of horns. Meantime his sister in Hartford, a woman who has displayed considerable inventive genius in a small way, had heard of her brother's collection and wondered if she could make a market for the horns. Samples of horns were sent on to her and she has now found that there is a demand for the goods. Her brother has made her a gift of the entire bunch, nearly 10,000 pairs, and she has made an arrangement to place them on the market in several forms.

The buffalo horn is susceptible of the highest polish. After an outside covering has been removed, the horn in the rough is as black as ebony all through. This takes a brilliant polish, the method of obtaining which was at one time a secret possessed by the Indians. The Hartford woman, in arranging to market her strange collection, spent some time in Leominster, Mass., where there are twenty-three bone factories, and studied the subject of bones and bone manipulation and soon learned the way to polish buffalo horns to her complete satisfaction and gratification. A proposition has been made to her to design many effects in which the horns may be used, and she has now under contemplation an offer to sell the entire lot of horns, which on storage occupies 1,000 cubic feet of space, but she will probably make other arrangements.

Cowboy Blacksmithing

"Up at my camp near the Four Peaks," told Jim Bark, the well known cattleman, "the boys are all handy with a rifle. We've a lot of guns up there. The old-fashioned black-powder Winchester has been discarded and nothing but the best goes. Most of the new guns were bought during the Spanish war, when we would experiment all day with tree trunks and rough trenches, learning the art of war at home. We found that a bullet from one of the new Winchesters, driven by smokeless powder, was good for four foot and more of pine timber and for more than an inch of iron."

"I thought the boys had done about everything in the shooting line that could be done long ago, but I was mistaken. I sent them up a wagon. In hauling down some firewood they broke the bolsters all to flinders. The bolsters hold up the wagon bed, you know. Well, the boys figured out all right the rebuilding of the wood parts, but came near being stumped on the iron fixings. They got some old iron wagon tires and cut them in proper lengths, but hadn't a way that they could see to punch the necessary bolt holes. Finally the question was solved. One of the boys carefully marked the places for the bolts, stood the piece of tire against a tree and put a bullet, 30-caliber, through the tire at each place marked. It was a novel sort of blacksmithing, but it worked."

Lessons in Railroading

Officials of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad have decided to follow the lead of other roads in the matter of providing technical instruction for their employees on the road. This announcement, reports the Chicago News, was a topic of discussion in railroad circles. The "school on wheels" for engineers, firemen, conductors and brakemen is going to be a part of the Rock Island system. This step is taken on the ground that the road cannot afford to

have in its employ any but the most intelligent workmen, and the officials believe that the departure is one that will appeal to the public.

Arrangements have been made with an eastern correspondence school to send one of its school cars over the road and bring the instruction to the men at the points where they can be most easily reached. The men will pay for their own instruction. Cost of tuition varies according to the subjects taught. The men are interested in the work personally and are given home studies, which are supplemented with public lectures and practical illustrations in the car. This car in exterior appearance is like an ordinary railway coach. The interior is fitted up with pumps, air-brakes and all the machinery in use in the operation of freight and passenger trains. Stereopticon lectures also aid in making clear the instruction that is given. In this way the men on the road are trained to solve the difficult problems they have to meet daily in their work.

It is said that this system of instruction has met a favorable reception at the hands of railway managers wherever it has been tried.