

The Family Circle.

A SONG OF SPRING.

I lay in, my terrible hands
Invisible, silent and still,
A ribbon of white through the lands,
A slave to omnipotent will;
No tremor of motion to tell
Of the heart that was pulsing beneath,
As a captive in fetters doth tenant a cell
And prays for the Angel of Death:

But a warm wind blew out of the South
And hid its soft cheek to my face,
Caressed me as though glowing youth
Took age in its loving embrace;
Ah! sweetly it whispered to me,
"I have blown from the garden of God,
Blown far o'er the waves of an odorous sea,
Where the spirit of Summer has trod."

It breathed on my prison of ice,
And sighed on my desolate shore,
That held in the jaws of a vice
The manacles grim that I bore;
As vapor in morning is lost
When the sun in his glory doth shine,
My chains, all exultant, in fragments I tossed,
The triumph of springtime was mine.

So now on my course to the deep,
The perfection of peace I may glide,
Till, crossing the bar, I shall steep
My veins in its luscious tide;
With the hush of the woods in my breast,
The strength of the hills in my voice,
I may dally and loiter along to my rest,
In ripples and eddies rejoice.

Alan Sullivan, in *The Week*.

A VISIT TO THE WEST INDIES.

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA (BRITISH
GUIANA).—(Continued.)

Almost the only relics of antiquity are the pictured rocks, called by the Indians "Timehri." They are found in several of the larger rivers—for what purpose they were carved, and by what race, is a problem which even the Indians can do nothing to solve. They are probably the work of some tribe now extinct and perhaps commemorative. None of the aborigines of the historic period seem to have liked picture writing, while it is difficult to conceive how the carving could have been done by a people who (when the country was discovered) possessed no other tools than those of stone. The figures appear to be conventional representatives of men and animals, the sun and some other objects which cannot be identified. The Indians of the present day look upon them with awe and dread, going through the ceremony of squirting pepper-juice in their eyes when passing as if they deprecate some evil result from the sight of them.

Remains of former Indian villages exist in several places near the coast, in the shape of mounds, that of "Waramuri" being twenty-five feet in height, composed of shells and bones, among which are portions of human skeletons—apparently relics of cannibal feasts. These are found on sand reefs, which in former times were probably islands, and which confirm to some extent the stories of the early voyagers so well described by DeFoe in his immortal *Robinson Crusoe*.

Guiana may be said to have been discovered by Columbus in 1498. Then arose the myth of El Dorado the gilded king, who was anointed every morning with balm in which gold dust was blown so that he appeared as if made of gold. Throughout the West Indies and along the coast of Venezuela, the Spaniards found the Indians in possession of gold plates, rumored to have come from the "Land of the Cannibals," the first name given to Guiana.

At present the gold fever is very high, and the excitement in Georgetown is great. Every one who can goes to the diggings. On account of the distance of the diggings from the coast expeditions must be provided with what is necessary for the time occupied in prospecting or digging, including food, medicine, tools, hammocks, etc. In going up the rivers, the boats have to be unloaded and hauled up several rapids, while the journey (which usually occupies six weeks) is further delayed by rapid currents. An expedition generally comprises ten men and one boat, and the cost over \$300 a month.

Laborers are paid sixty cents a day and rations, and are under engagements generally

for three months. As in other countries the yield varies very much, sometimes as much as six pounds have been obtained in a day while other days the amount has dwindled down to a few ounces. Everybody is talking of gold, syndicates and companies, and not a few have lost their all in a venture, while others more fortunate have made handsome sums. According to the Government regulations, every gold digger must get a license before he begins to prospect. It may be taken out for any number of months, or any place throughout the colony. Laborers may be had at the office of the Institute of Mines and Forests in Georgetown. Here the names of laborers are registered, and those who do not fulfil engagements are prosecuted according to law.

The hotel accommodation in Georgetown is very poor, so that the writer preferred to occupy his berth on board ship during the five days' stay in port.

We suffered intensely from the heat by day and night with no variation. As night falls a continuous hum is heard, which continues until morning. The sound is only comparable to ringing in the ears. This is made up of the trumpeting and buzzing of myriads of insects, principally mosquitoes, gnats and sand-flies. These are vicious in the extreme, and succeed remarkably well in keeping us awake the whole night defending ourselves from their attacks. Among the insects nature has run riot in this colony. The conditions of life are so favorable, that they mature to a degree almost appalling, as compared with the dwarfed and insignificant insects of our northern climate. The houses in Georgetown are built on brick walls or wooden pillars: the enclosures thus made are tenanted by thousands of little animals called bats, which hang themselves up to the rafters and boards like a miniature assemblage of game at a poulterer's. At sunset they fly about so plentifully that they are more common than birds in the day. In some parts of the country, the horrible vampire is found, always ready to suck the foot, or even the cheek of the unwary traveller.

Another great pest is the sugar ants which find their way into the houses, and even into the sugar bowls on the table. Then there is the repulsive cockroach crawling all over the walls and in the beds, while the gardens are infested with carnivorous and leaf-eating species, some of which bite and instil such virulent poisons as to bring tears to the eyes of the strongest man. The scorpions and centipedes are very common house companions, while the mason wasp makes its mud nest in the rafters of the verandahs, and even sometimes on picture frames in the sitting rooms. At nights great dragon flies commit suicide in the gas lights, and great big beetles fly direct to the shades, drop on the floor and furniture, and are seen by hundreds crawling about the rooms.

During all these days the *Duart Castle* was being loaded with sugar in bags, of which over 1,000 tons were stowed on board, consigned to the sugar refinery, Halifax.

On Friday evening our good friend and fellow passenger from Halifax, and the writer, were walking along High Street, Georgetown, when we heard old tooth Psalm rung out from the Scotch church. We entered and enjoyed a splendid discourse by the Rev. Mr. Ritchie, pastor, it being their preparatory service for the communion the following Sabbath. There were about 100 present, very few blacks, principally old, staid gray-haired Presbyterians. Here, as in the West Indies, the Presbyterians do not seem to get a hold of the people. Neither did anyone take notice of us, although strangers, until we introduced ourselves. When will the Presbyterian Church begin to acknowledge strangers; some churches do it, but very few.

We were not sorry when Captain Seeley announced that the mails would be on board on Saturday afternoon at 5 o'clock, and that he would leave at high water, 6 p.m., and to be on board in good time. At the hour stated the captain, with his dark pilot, were on the bridge giving orders preparatory to sailing. At last, as the sun settled beneath the horizon, the engines began to work, and we bade farewell to Georgetown, and glad we were to anticipate the sea breeze once again.

The *Duart*, as she left her wharf, drew over 19 feet, and the captain expressed on several occasions his fear that he could not get over the "bar," and in this he was correct. All

were on deck as we approached the "bar," and as the vessel was forged ahead under full pressure of steam, throwing the water from her bow in white spray, she suddenly, but quietly, came to a standstill. A look at the captain's face told the tale: we were on the "bar." The engines were reversed full speed and after considerable effort the big steamer slowly but surely hauled off and went astern a long way. Then the order rang out, "Full speed ahead," and she literally sprang forward as if determined to cut the way through the mud bank which lay between her and the deep waters of the Atlantic. All held their breath as she began to slow up. Would she ram through the obstruction? was the question asked by every one. A few minutes more and she was at a standstill, her bow run up two feet on the bank. To haul her off again was useless, as the tide began to recede, so she lay perfectly easy on a soft mud bank. At high tide next morning another effort was made to get her over, but without success, and for six successive days we lay on the bar, making desperate efforts each succeeding tide to forge ahead.

The following morning after we stuck, the captain went ashore in one of the lifeboats for assistance, or "lighters," but returned unsuccessful. The lightermen would not risk their boats to come out where we lay on account of the roughness of the water, and there was not a powerful tug to be had, so there was nothing but to wait for higher tides. The captain on coming on board made an offer to the cabin passengers bound for Trinidad and Barbados, that if they preferred he would run them ashore, and they could go by the Dutch steamer leaving that evening, but none accepted the offer, so we had the pleasure of seeing the *Dutchman* pass us at 10 p.m. The ship lay in 4½ to 5 feet of mud, and to force her through for a distance of six hundred yards occupied six days. Finally, on the afternoon of the sixth day, at high water, the engines were started, and off she went into deep water without much coaxing.

While we lay stranded, we had a good opportunity of studying the characteristics of the several passengers on board. In the fore-castle are a number of Chinese (bound for China in bond), two men, two women, mother and daughter, and seven children, and we spent many pleasant half hours in conversation with them. They were happy and contented.

On the deck were a number of niggers—men and women. All the covering they have is a canvas spread like a tent in which they eat and sleep. They, too, appear happy and cheerful, always ready to answer any questions.

(To be continued.)

BRITISH VERACITY.

English valour and English intelligence have done less to extend and to preserve our Oriental empire than English veracity. All that we could have gained by imitating the doublings, the evasions the fictions, the perjuries which have been employed against us, is as nothing when compared with what we have gained by being the one power in India on whose word reliance can be placed. No oath which superstition can devise, no hostage, however precious, inspires a hundredth part of the confidence which is produced by the "yea, yea," and "nay, nay," of a British envoy. No fastness, however strong by art or nature, gives to its inmates a security like that enjoyed by the chief who, passing through the territories of powerful and deadly enemies, is armed with the British guarantee. The mightiest princes of the East can scarcely, by the offer of enormous usury, draw forth any portion of the wealth which is concealed under the hearths of their subjects. The British Government offers little more than four per cent., and avarice hastens to bring forth ten millions of rupees from its most secret repositories. A hostile monarch may promise mountains of gold to our sepoys on condition that they will desert the standard of the Company. The Company promises only a moderate pension after a long service. But every sepoy knows that the promise of the Company will be kept; he knows that if he lives a hundred years his rice and salt are as secure as the salary of the Governor-General; and he knows that there is not another State in India which would not, in spite of the most solemn vows, leave

him to die of hunger in a ditch as soon as he had ceased to be useful. The greatest advantage which a government can possess is to be the one trustworthy government in the midst of governments which nobody can trust.
—*Edinburgh Review*.

THE POETS.

There's never a robin that pipes of spring,
Nor a stream that runs and leaps,
Nor a bee that dreams on drowsy wing
O'er a perfum'd petal's deeps,
But has its rhymes and runes,
Its subtle tunes,
Whose rhythm in silence sleeps.

There's never a star that spins in space,
Nor a leaf that falls to earth,
Nor a billow that wrinkles the ocean's face,
Nor a raindrop brought to birth,
But has its rhymes and runes,
Its mystic tunes,
Of sweet unfathomed worth.

There's many a soul that throbs in time
With the robin, the leaf, or star,
That may not voice the silent rhyme;
But some can hear afar;
And they, yes, they have rhymes and runes
And they can sing the mystic tunes,
For they the poets are.

—*Harper's Weekly*.

ANIMAL WONDERS OF MADAGASCAR.

An extraordinary natural history has Madagascar, declares Canon Tristram. One would suppose that this would be that of Africa, but it is so unlike as to prove that the island has been separated from Africa for an immense period of time. Its animals and plants, as well as its people, have a far greater resemblance to those of India than to those of the near mainland. The monkeys and lemurs of Madagascar are not to be found in Africa, while all the great African animals of prey are absent. Among the lemurs is one known as the ayeaye, the formation of whose digits is unique. The egg of an extinct bird of Madagascar is fifteen times the bulk of that of an ostrich, and yet the bird itself does not appear to have been larger than the New Zealand moa, an extinct bird to which it had an affinity. This same peculiarity runs through all the birds of Madagascar. The waterbirds and sea-fowl are of course those of Africa, but there are one or two extraordinary exceptions. The beautiful snakebird, allied to the cormorant, is an Indian species. There is also a water hen which is peculiar to Madagascar, and which has the remarkable features of a long tail and a long foot. It is a great puzzle to naturalists. A group of cuckoos is peculiar to the island, with no relations in Africa or India; while a bird allied to the thrushes is not African, but is allied to a species in the Mauritius and all the Mascarene islands.

IT CURED THEM.

This is the story of the way in which a Boston man cured his children of a senseless habit of speech:

One evening this gentleman came home with a budget of news. An acquaintance had failed in business. He spoke of the incident as "deliciously sad." He had ridden up town with a noted wit, whom he described as "horribly entertaining," and, to cap the climax, he spoke of the butter which had been set before him at a country hotel as "divinely rancid."

The young people stared, and the oldest daughter said: "Why, papa, I should think you were out of your head."

"Not in the least, my dear," he said, pleasantly. "I'm merely trying to follow the fashion. I have worked out 'divinely rancid' with a good deal of labor. It seems to me rather more effective than 'awfully sweet.' I mean to keep up with the rest of you hereafter. And now," he continued, "let me help you to a piece of this exquisitely tough beef."

Adverbs, he says, are not so fashionable as they were in his family.

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