

phenomenon must have been caused by the most violent action of fire or electric fluid: and thus were Babylon's high gates burned with fire, and her costly temple preserved as a beacon of divine vengeance, and an irrefragable proof of the divine source of prophetic revelation. From the top of this smitten tower the eye, in the words of the poet of Israel, wanders over a land of darkness and the shadow of death, without any object to relieve the sight, except the incessant tumult (the traces of former inhabitants,) which extend to the very horizon. To the westward are lakes and swamps, the tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, and a few other straggling buildings, which only enhance the desolate aspect of this forlorn region."

THE INDIA-RUBBER TREE.—From a volume lately published in New York, by G. P. Putnam, entitled *Scenes and Adventures on the banks of the Amazon*, we take the following account of that strange tropical production, the India-rubber tree:

"A number of blacks bearing long poles on their shoulders, thickly strung with India-rubber shoes, also attracted our attention. These are for the most part manufactured in the interior, and are brought down the river for sale by the natives. It has been estimated that at least two hundred and fifty thousand pairs of shoes are annually exported from the province, and the number is constantly on the increase.

"A few words here respecting the tree itself and the manufacture of the shoes, may not be out of place.

"The tree (*Siphilla Elastica*) is quite peculiar in its appearance, and sometimes reaches the height of eighty and even a hundred feet. The trunk is perfectly round, rather smooth, and protected by a bark of a light colour. The leaves grow in clusters of three together, are thin, and of an ovate form, and are from ten to fourteen inches in length. The centre leaf of the cluster is always the longest.

"This remarkable tree bears a curious fruit, of the size of a peach, which, although not very palatable, is eagerly sought after by different animals—it is separated into three lobes, which contain each a small black nut. The trees are tapped in the same manner that New Englanders tap maple trees. The trunk having been perforated, a yellowish liquid, resembling cream, flows out, which is caught in small clay cups, fastened to the tree. When these become full, their contents are emptied into large earthen jars, in which the liquid is kept until desired for use.

"The operation of making the shoes is as simple as it is interesting.—Imagine yourself, dear reader, in one of the serings groves of Brazil.—Around you are a number of good-looking natives, of low stature and olive complexions. All are variously engaged. One is stirring with a long wooden stick the contents of a cauldron, placed over a pile of blazing embers. This is the liquid as it was taken from the rubber-tree.—Into this a wooden "last," covered with clay, and having a handle, is plunged. A coating of the liquid remains. You will perceive that another native then takes the "last" and holds it in the smoke arising from the ignition of a species of palm fruit, for the purpose of causing the glutinous substance to assume a dark colour. The "last" is then plunged again into the cauldron, and this process is repeated, as in dipping candles, until the coating is of the required thickness. You will, moreover, notice a number of Indian girls engaged in making various impressions, such as flowers, &c., upon the soft surface of the rubber, by means of their thumb nail, which are especially pared and cultivated for this purpose. After this final operation, the shoes are placed in the sun to harden, and large numbers of them may be seen laid out on mats in exposed situations. The aboriginal name of the rubber is *cahuchu* from which the formidable word of *caoutchouc* is derived."

MILK TREE.—Mr. Wallace also describes an extraordinary tree, called the milk tree, which was one of the first wonders, he saw near Para. The fruit is eatable, and full of a rich and very juicy pulp; but strangest of all is the vegetable milk, which exudes in abundance when the bark is cut. It is of about the consistency of thick cream, and but for a very slight peculiar taste, could scarcely be distinguished from the genuine product of the cow. Mr. Leavens ordered a man to tap some logs that had lain nearly a month in the yard; he cut several notches in the bark with an axe, and in a minute the rich sap was running out in great quantities. It was collected in a basin, diluted with water, strained, and brought up at tea time, and at breakfast next morning. The peculiar flavor of the milk seemed rather to improve the quality of the tea, and gave it as good a colour as rich cream; in coffee it is equally good. The milk is also used for glue, and it is said to be as durable as that made use of by carpenters.

PRAYER MEETINGS.—It is very important that a prayer meeting should not be wearisome. Such prayer meetings will not merely be uninviting but repulsive; and what is worse, in those who attend it may destroy the spirit of prayer and induce a habit of contended mockery.

A prayer meeting should be conducted with spirit. A dull and heavy mode of conducting a meeting will make it dull and heavy. The person conducting the meeting should be prepared. No time should be lost in turning over leaves. A passage of Scripture, short, and selected for point and impressiveness, should be read; and a few verses, selected in like manner, should be sung. Any remarks should be pertinent and brief. On this point every one should examine himself carefully and unsparingly; for we do not tell each other our faults, and we shall not without painstaking and impartially, suspect our own faults. A prayer meeting should be confined carefully within its limited time. It is far better that people leave a meeting remarking that it has broken up too soon, than that it

has held too long. In case different members of a meeting conduct it in turns, the member should be named at the preceding meeting, that he may be present and prepared. Variety may thus be given. These are small matters, but small things do not always produce small consequences.

NEWSPAPERS IN TURKEY.—In Constantinople thirteen papers are published, in Smyrna six, and in Alexandria one; Servia has eight; Wallachia and Moldavia four; the whole Turkish Empire thirty-four.

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