

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1894.

FAIR LAND OF FLORIDA.

SOME OF THE BEAUTIES IN THAT HISTORIC COUNTRY.

The Ancient City of St. Augustine, the Oldest of Settlements—Queer Relics of the Spanish Occupation—Modern Palatial Hotels and Other Attractions.

IN FLORIDA, April 27.—No more beautiful rendezvous can be found on the Atlantic coast for the tourist, the invalid, the yachtsman or the pleasure seeker than the quaint old city of St. Augustine, situated on a narrow slip of land formed by the St. John's river on one side and the Atlantic ocean on the other. The quaint and curious remains of the city's bloody history of three centuries ago, combined with its palatial structures of today make this place one of the most interesting spots in America. It is the oldest European settlement on this continent, having been taken possession of by the Spaniards, under Menendez, in 1565, more than half a century before the Pilgrims landed upon the "stern and rock-bound coast" of Massachusetts; and surely when we look upon the hoary ramparts of ancient Fort Marion, with its under-ground dungeons, its inner chapel, with its altar and niches, its dark passages and gloomy vaults, we must say that the builders were people with whom we have never shaken hands. Few places in America have been more frequently the scene of desperate conflict, first attacked by fierce Indian tribes, then by French soldiers, Spain, England, Spain again and finally the United States have one by one possessed it, and during the war of the north and south it changed masters three times.

The fine old fortification of Fort Marion—an interesting relic of the past—covers four and a half acres of land and is said to have been built in 1665 by Indians and Mexican convicts and is the result of one hundred years of labor. The moat is now dried up and over-grown with rank weeds and grass—but there are the draw-bridges—the massive arched entrance bearing the Spanish coat of arms, the barbican, and the frowning bastions, and a shiver creeps over one as he looks away through the thick stone wall, down into those dark and mysterious chambers with their terror striking traditions of torture. One very curious and interesting freak of nature is here noticeable—namely—here and there—high up on the outer walls of the old fortress and springing apparently right out of the solid rock—may be seen flourishing and bearing—a number of hardy looking fig trees—and from what source they obtain subsistence it is impossible to discover. The Spaniards who established themselves in St. Augustine left many traces of their conquest. Among other works they built a massive wall across the entire peninsula, from shore to shore, to protect the city on the north. This wall, which is of coquina, is about a mile long, and while it once served to protect the city from hostile incursions it now forms a delightful promenade. The "old city gates" is quite an imposing ruin with its lofty towers and looped sentry boxes. This also is of the coquina, which was used for all the Spanish buildings, but age has blackened the crumbling surface till the gates look old and weird and like grim monuments erected to their builders, giving a foothold to a few vines that climb to their tops. Among other places of interest to the visitor are the U. S. Barracks—the Plaza de la Constitution where has been erected a graceful monument to the confederate dead by the ladies of St. Augustine. The old slave market, the Spanish cathedral which has been restored as nearly as possible to its original condition by Mr. Flagler—and a monument erected in 1812 to commemorate the Spanish constitution.

Here also—fronting on the Plaza—we see a long low line of buildings, which speak for themselves as belonging to an age long past. These are the offices, warehouses, etc., of Mr. Sanchez, one of the worthy old land marks of St. Augustine who has been behind these desks for eighty years—and who still keeps his own books in perfect order. The Spanish quarter of the city is intersected by queer little narrow streets, so narrow indeed that standing upon the overhanging balconies one could easily greet a friend upon the opposite side with a hand shake, while below there is just room for a donkey and dray to pass along. This gives to the town a pleasant flavor of the orient for in every land of the sun, narrow shaded streets are a luxury always to be appreciated. The coquina spoken of comes from Anastasia Island, which lies just across the harbor. This island is composed of layers of white shells, packed and connected together by the washing of the waves and from this are quarried large blocks like granite.

The architecture of St. Augustine is a charming mixture of old Spanish residences with hanging balconies along their second stories, and beautiful American villas, and from the ancient relics of this grand old city we will turn our attention to the palatial hotels that have been built here during the past two years. One of these—the Ponce de Leon—represents four millions of dollars in its structure. It is built in the style of the early Spanish Renaissance and to describe its grandeur is utterly impossible. One is awed before its vast size and its picturesque outlines and with its wings and turrets, its grand dome and majestic corner towers rising 150 feet into the clear blue sky it is indeed a grand sight which one must see to appreciate. The coloring is rich and varied, the material used being coquina which is of a light mother of pearl color, turning to a dark bluish shade in the shadows. The ornamentations are of the bright terra cotta which is very rich on the towers and in the court. The balconies are of solid terra cotta and weigh five tons each. Entering from the broad plaza in front, through an arched gateway in the centre of the one story portico we find ourselves in a court 150 ft. square, a blaze of tropical splendor, palms, vines, roses, and plants of many kinds strange to the eye of a northerner filling the great court. The garden is a perfect wilderness of beauty with its rich trees, its dainty and brilliant flowers, its vines here and mosses there.

The interior of this magnificent pile is in accord with its exterior and is replete with all that wealth and taste could devise for the luxury and enjoyment of those who dwell therein, including billiard rooms for the ladies, an enormous playroom for children, and even studios for artists. The floors of the immense rotunda and corridors are inlaid, mosaic work. The ceilings (six in number) of the drawing rooms were painted on canvas in France, at a cost of \$3,000 each, and stretched upon the ceilings of the Ponce de Leon. The mantels are of Mexican onyx and are indeed exquisite in design as in material. The dining-room is a poem, and the beauty and grace of its adornments make in themselves a feast for the gods. One of the chief attractions is the fine collection of paintings which adorn the walls of the drawing-rooms, and in the selection of these the most refined and exquisite taste has been displayed.

On one side of the broad plaza in front of the Ponce de Leon, is situated the beautiful Alcazar, on the other side the Cordova—all three owned by Mr. H. M. Flagler. Though very different in detail from "the Ponce," the Alcazar follows the same general architecture. The great facade presents a pleasing variety of towers, pavilions, minarets, arcades and roots of old Spanish tiles. Here we find the Casino, with its great sulphur swimming bath, Turkish, Russian and salt water baths, its theatre and dance hall.

The Cordova, formerly called the Casa Monica, is built and furnished after the style of a Moorish palace, and has a "sun parlor" 108 feet long, which is paved with tiles. The memorial Presbyterian church, erected by Mr. Flagler, is one of the finest architectural works in America. Though quiet enough in summer—St. Augustine has many attractions in winter and is indeed the winter home of thousands. She boasts of her own yacht club—presenting the anomaly of having its "season" during the winter months—and with a constant succession of regattas, balls, illuminations etc., it adds much to the enjoyment of the place. Riding, driving, and tennis are in vogue during the winter and excellent music in an item of daily enjoyment. In spite of her repelling and ponderous battlements or walls, St. Augustine's gates are open wide to all who wish to revel in her lovely scenery and balmy climate—and with her immense and elegant hotels she can receive and entertain a whole army of invading tourists.

J. M. D. A Duel that Didn't Come On. Down in my neighborhood, once upon a time, said Congressman John Allen, of Mississippi, recently, there was a bad feeling between two lawyers. A challenge was sent and duly acknowledged. The hour was appointed, and the two men met in a secluded spot. One of them was a great sufferer from St. Vitus's dance, the other was cool and collected. As they faced each other, the afflicted man began to tremble from head to foot, while his pistol described an arc with varying up and down strokes. His opponent stood firm as a rock, waiting for the signal to fire. Before it came, however, he laid his pistol on the ground, walked into the woods, and cut a limb off a tree, with a fork in the end of it. This he brought back and stuck in the ground in front of his antagonist. Then, turning to the second, he said: "I must request you to ask your principal to rest his pistol in that fork."

"What for?" asked his opponent's second. "Well," replied the other, "I have no objection to running the risk of one shot, but I certainly do decline having one bullet make a honeycomb of me. If that man was to shoot while his hand is shaking the way it is now, he would fill me full of holes at his first shot." This was too much for the seconds, and, by mutual agreement, a truce was patched up, and no shots were exchanged.

CURIOUS CAPE BRETON.

FURTHER ACCOUNTS OF RAMBLES AMONG THE PEOPLE.

Sydney Town and the Social Side of Life—The Club and Its Ways—What Befell a Stranger Who Knocked at the Door—No English Clubman Need Apply.

It may be sufficient to say that the residents of that cottage declined to let me proceed another step in the direction of Glace Bay Brook; they led me in and set me down to a right royal feast. The occupants were an aged pair and a son and daughter. The sire was at one time sheriff of (I think) Victoria county, but he had then reached the age when the grasshopper is a burden and they that look out of the window are darkened. They cautioned me to remain there all night, and my aged host, with that quaint hospitality which we identify with the Homeric period, would have me stay an extra week. In quaint Cape Breton one naturally encounters all sorts and conditions of men. I have this, however, to remark, that invariably when I found the least pretension to religion, that I discovered the most magnificent qualities, the finest manliness, and the largest quantity of pure, unadulterated christianity. I have never since passed that isolated residence on the road to Glace Bay Brook without reverentially remembering its inmates, and I trust that they may live long to enjoy the respect their conduct has won them from all classes.

I will temporarily conclude these reminiscences of Cape Breton with some reference to Sydney town. Whatever the social life of Sydney may be in the concert form, the place is about the most unique I have ever been in. Sydney is a most precarious place, and of her young men it has been said that they "love to be hailed by their fellows in the market place." I have noticed that they are especially partial to the flattery of the barber, or when that fails, an ostler. There, vanity and egotism is positively splendid in its exquisite, sweeping, and omnipotent condensation. The young men meet on Rotten Row, or under the Marble Arch are only modest reflections of our young friends of Sydney town. Well, they at least do not lament as they stroll along the unpaved streets from the lively stables to the bridge and the bridge to the stall of a summer evening.

There is in Sydney town a club. You find it opposite to the aforesaid stables up some dark and dangerous stairs. The clubble of Sydney is expectant. The first indication you get that you are getting there is the murmur of many voices and the odor of tobacco smoke. Then you get up to the door, you can't speak, but that doesn't matter; although every door in London clubland is swiftly swung open by a liveried servant immediately you get up to it, the portals of Sydney clubland sourly stare you in the face. So does an immense piece of pasteboard which contains a grand announcement which makes a visitor feel guilty of trespass. You stand there then at the gates of Sydney clubland and the noise within waxes louder. Then you know they are all in there. You knock. That door is so accustomed to being knocked upon that it has grown tired of transmitting sound. By and by you get tired too, so you crawl down the dark stairs, to the railings of the stables opposite, against which you plant your back, as your eyes wander to the "steaming" window of the clubland beyond. I was in Sydney one evening some months ago, and obeying the instincts of that section of humanity that devotes its narrow span to litigation, I navigated the staircase and, stood outside the portals of Clubland. As I reached the threshold the door swung open and out dashed a local railway conductor. "Can I go in?" I whispered. "Yes," he cried, and with a bound into the darkness he disappeared in the direction of the station opposite. I entered,—my feet treaded the carpets of the "Great Beyond." It was early in the evening, and the Sydneysites were still in the salons. But one of them was on guard, and the clouds of bluish smoke that issued from his lips betrayed that he was not alone. He removed his pipe as I stood bashfully before him, and looked,—a dreamy, coy, speculative, "what ye want here?" kind of look, and my courage began to ooze out of my toes. I felt as I stood there, confronted by this watch dog, I felt a trespasser, one of those mean trespassers who turn white in the face when they hear the brush crack under the tread of the approaching gamekeeper. This is what I said. "I am [stranded for the night in Sydney and as a London Clubman abroad in Cape Breton I venture to ask the indulgence of the news, table for half an hour."

The oracle spoke. It cost him an effort, and this is what he said. "The rules of this club forbid any strangers this club without an introduction." Now all this is a fact, I have seen Canadians come to a London club,—say the Junior Conservatives,—and go in there to the secretary, who, without introduction, for the honor of the land whence the visitors came, would welcome them and throw open the rooms. But Sydney Clubland will not do this. It may be interesting to note that the watch dog in the Sydney rooms is a Conservative, who gets red in the face and husky in the throat if you say that the party will be turned out of power ere long. He thus belongs to a political party which delights on placarding its loyalty to the crown and patriotism at the street corners. And yet he refused the indulgence of the newspaper table of a club, which overlooked a stable yard, to a humble citizen of the much famed country across the sea. I have told the story in many parts of Canada, and in some parts of the United States, and my audience invariably said "Just like Sydney." C. OCHILTREE-MACDONALD.

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SAID OF HOUSE CLEANING.

Astra Thinks There Should be Some Regulation as to the Time for It.

I have often wished that the legislature could pass an act making house cleaning before, and after certain dates illegal; and appointing a special season for the spring cleaning, which shall be observed by everyone. There are special seasons appointed for everything else, and why not for house cleaning? I am fully aware that a time has already been set apart for the keeping of that special fast, and that it usually falls in the spring but still the part of the spring which shall be devoted to sacrificing income to the household gods, is optional, and extends from the middle of March, until the beginning of June. This would not matter so much were it not for the custom of exchanging social calls which prevails largely in all civilized countries, and which makes the housecleaning solstice a time of more tribulation and sorrow to the weary housewife that it need be.

For example, the people who begin the work of cleaning in March generally get through by the first week in April, and then, having got everything swept and garnished, at home and a wonderful weight off their mind, they feel in such a happy frame of mind, and so full of kindness and sociality that they start out on a round of calls, determined to get all their indebtedness in that line paid off. By this time the majority of people have just taken up their last carpet, piled the greater part of their downstairs furniture in the hall, and started on the rocky path of house cleaning in good earnest.

I think everybody who has had any experience in entertaining a couple of smartly dressed visitors in a parlor which is carpeted only with sheathing paper and dust, which contains but one chair, and the chief embellishment of which consists of a pailful of steaming hot soap-suds, all ready for washing paint, will agree with me that the situation is not a pleasant one, especially when the costume of the unlucky entertainer is taken into consideration, because if there is one thing above another which aggravates a woman beyond endurance it is the sight of a trimly dressed member of her own sex who has nothing particular to do; while she herself is clothed in her oldest gown, and flushed and grimy with exertion. She knows it is not the other woman's fault, but still she cannot forgive her for it, because there are few things harder to endure, than being placed at a disadvantage. But she forgets all about it presently when, after a fortnight of hard work she draws a breath of relief over a task accomplished, sees her house in perfect order, and begins to think of enjoying herself a little.

Then she puts on the pretty new dress she had made early in the season and starts off to see some of the friends she has almost lost sight of during the cleaning siege. But alas a large number of them never begin their cleaning before the first week in May, and she finds herself a far from welcome guest, and goes home resolved not to pay another call until June is well begun. Unfortunately the rule seems to work in both directions, because the people who habitually put off their spring cleaning until the very last moment never seem to remember that others like to get through

the hardest work of the year before the warm weather sets in, so they take April for their spring sewing, and then resolve to get all their calls made before house cleaning, and proceed to worry the lives out of their friends by ill-timed visits.

Some zealous reformer started out a few years ago, with a scheme for regulating marriage by legislation. He thought love should not enter into the matter at all, that it merely disarranged things and prevented people from choosing really desirable husbands and wives, that a calm, cool weighing of the merits of the prospective partner was essential to the best interests of the couple themselves, and also to the welfare of mankind in general. In short he thought the government could choose for people better and more wisely than they could choose for themselves, so he formulated his singular project. I don't know how he proposed to work it out I am sure, and I fancy the magnitude of the task he had undertaken either turned what brain he had left, or else killed him, because I never heard anything more of him. But if some other philanthropist would only interest himself in invoking the aid of the government to prevent house cleaning from being a moving celebration like Lent, he would be conferring a benefit on humanity, especially the feminine portion of it, and be sure of sending his name down the echoing corridors of time as the originator of a great social reform. There is a close season for everything, from deer stalking down to oyster fishing, and why should there not be one for house cleaning. ASTRA.

LUCK IN ODD NUMBERS.

Superstitions of Modern Gamblers which Prevailed in Ancient Days.

If there is one active principle that enters into gambling it is superstition, and, according to the New York Herald, almost every man that hunts the elusive dollar over the desolate waste of the green baize cloth or in any of the other multitudinous ways or places that one may lay siege to alluring fortune there, has a separate lancy. "Jack" McDonald, one of the best known bookmakers in America, believes that he is most successful in those years which are indicated by odd numbers, and if you are doubtful of the truth of it he will offer you figures to prove it. "Carley B." as bookmaker Wolf is best known, has a steadfast belief in "3," and after he has selected a horse to bet upon he will place an extra heavy wager on him if he discovers that he is numbered "3" on program. Several superstitious betting men at the Morris Park races a few years ago noticed the coincidence that thirteenth day of the meeting fell upon June 13 and they straightway sought out a horse numbered "13" on the card. They found one and bet upon him, and, to make the coincidence most strange, he won. That this belief in luck as applied to certain numbers is as old as our philosophy is shown by the fact that centuries before the Christian era the Pythagoreans and Platonists, who represented all movements and phenomena of nature by numbers, invented the science of arithmancy, consisting of the use of magical squares and applying occult powers to numbers. On one of the combinations of certain numbers depended systems of divination, and particular virtues were ascribed to numbers accordingly as they were odd or even.

"There's luck in odd numbers," is a saying as old as the hills. As ancient a writer as Virgil says the gods themselves esteemed the numbers odd, for in the eighth Epilogue he wrote: Three woollen fillets of three colors joined; Thrice round his thrice devoted head, Unequal numbers please the gods.

The Chinese have similar ideas. With them heaven is odd and earth even, and the numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 belong to heaven, while the even digits are of the earth earthy. Got Ahead of the House. They have societies in Iowa where the lady is weighed before entering the dining-room and also directly when she leaves it, and her escort pays fifty cents a pound for the increase in her weight. This calls to mind the story of the western railroad eating-house which adopted the same plan. One summer day a shrewd commercial prepared himself for the meal by filling his coat-pockets with stones. He was weighed, and seated himself at a table near the open window, where he managed to throw the stones away without being observed. When he was weighed on going to settle up, it was discovered that the house owed him \$3.75.

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