

King of the Cannibal Islands.

A TALK WITH THE GOVERNOR OF THE ISLANDS OF FIJI.

The newly-appointed governor of the Fiji Islands, George W. Des Vaux, and staff arrived from England a few days since. He left this city yesterday en route for the Fiji island. A reporter for the *Graphic* called upon Gov. Vaux at the Fifth avenue hotel and obtained much interesting information concerning that almost unknown and greatly misrepresented group of islands. Of the present condition of the Fijis and their commercial relations with other countries the governor said he could speak from personal knowledge, having spent many months there.

"To begin with," he said, "I will say that the natives are no longer cannibals, but all of them are civilized and Christians. The islands since 1874 have been under British rule, the ex-King Cakoban having ceded his domains to Queen Victoria, only asking in return that England take future control of them. Since that time great prosperity has been the result. Our farmers received the gold medal at the Centennial exhibition, the Paris exhibition, and at the Sydney exhibition for Sea Island cotton. They also took the gold medal for coffee at the late Sydney exhibition. The growth of cotton has only been recently introduced on the islands, but is making great strides. In the production of sugar much progress has been made, and in the next few years large crops will be exported. A Sydney corporation has recently invested £150,000 in sugar plantations, and it is expected that other companies will follow, the climate being excellent for the growth of sugar cane. There are many thousands of acres of land on the larger islands set apart for the production of coconuts, and quite a trade has been established with the Sydney and Australian colonies. The copra, which is really the meat of the coconut, is valuable and turned into oil. The coffee yield in the third year after plantation is excellent and has, in many instances, flowered in the second year. The labour market is all that is needed. The government does not encourage the employment of native labour at a distance from their homes, as it tends to decrease the population of the islands. Abundant labour can be obtained through the government from the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides at a very cheap rate. The cost to the planter with food is less than 1s. per day. Emigration has lately been started with the Indian colonies, so as to provide for any demand that may be made by reason of the extra cultivation of land. These labourers are generally engaged for three years, and receive their pay at one time, at the end of the contract, which cannot exceed that period. Then they are sent home, and if they choose to return they can do so after a limited time. They are paid through the government, and the only cost to the planter in the three years is the price of the importation and return of the men.

"Trade, in various commercial productions, is growing rapidly, and in the next year or two it is expected to be still more enlarged. The revenue returns, before the islands were ceded to the English government, amounted to about £13,000. In 1878, after four years of the present administration, the returns footed up £70,000, and last year £90,000. The white population now numbers a little over 2,000, and the native 100,000. Last year the births exceeded the deaths to a large degree. The area of the islands is about 80,000 acres, and the inhabited part is greater than the whole of the West Indies. The largest and representative island is Viti Levu, about the size of Jamaica, and the second of importance, Suva, similar to that of Porto Rico. The climate is wonderfully good for that of a tropical country, and there is an utter absence of malarial fever, the only disease being dysentery, occasioned by poor living, and drinking to excess. The natives are by no means of an indolent disposition as one would imagine. A large number of them employ themselves in cultivating cotton or coconuts on their own account, and as a whole, are a peaceable race. There are no European soldiers on the islands except of those attached to the government department. The islands are divided into ten provinces, and each is governed by a sub-governor, or rika, as they are termed. These are assisted by the advice of a European magistrate. They make a return of about £20,000 to the government yearly on account of expenses. The colony is self-supporting, and pays for a mail between Sydney and Viti Levu.

"Cannibalism is a thing of the past. No more of it is seen or ever will be heard of again. The natives have become Christians through the agency of the Wesleyan churches and the Roman Catholic missionaries. In 1876 there were some ten thousand cannibals, who chiefly resided in the mountainous interior of the Viti Levu. They committed serious outrages upon the coast natives, and to-day all of them are as peaceable and as loyal as one could wish them to be.

Bathing.

It is important to recognize that the only virtues of water as used by the bather are two—namely, its value as a cleansing agent, and as a surface stimulant. In this last capacity it simply acts as a medium affecting the temperature of the part to which it is applied, or which is immersed in it. Right views of the fact in reference to this matter are important, as there can be no question that some persons overrate the uses of cold water, and run considerable risks in their pursuit of them. Every beneficial action that can be exerted by a bath is secured by simply dipping in the sea, or a very moderate affusion of cold water. Except in cases of high fever, when it is desired to reduce the heat of the body by prolonged contact with cold, a bath of any considerable duration is likely to be injurious. Then, again, it is necessary to recognize the risk of suddenly driving the blood from the surface in upon the organs. The "plunge," or "dip," or "shower," or "douche," is intended to produce a momentary depression of the temperature of the surface in the hope of occasioning a reaction which will bring the blood back to the surface with increased vigour, and almost instantly. If this return does not take place; if, in a word, redness of the skin is not a very rapid consequence of the immersion, it is impossible that the bath can have been useful, and in nine cases out of ten, when the surface is left white or cold, it does harm. The measure of value is the redness which ensues promptly after the bath, and this reaction should be produced without the need of much friction, or the bath is not worth taking.

Water Telescopes for Watching the Movements of Fish.

I have read somewhere a good account of water telescopes. I think it is in Galton's "Art of Travelling," which is full of information. I also when a student, read of there being used on some engineering work. I think it was during the improvement of the Thames over thirty years ago. The principle is that you can see plainly to a great depth in water, especially if the bottom of the sea or river is of a light colour, if the surface is perfectly smooth. On a perfectly calm day, when the surface of the sea was like a mirror, I have seen scallops netted at Port Mague, Valencia, in from three to four fathoms of water, and on other occasions, on the west coast I have plainly seen the bottom of the sea to a far greater depth, while fishermen have told me that on such calm days they have seen the bottom in over forty or fifty fathoms. Such calm days are of rare occurrence, and if there is the least ripple on the surface you cannot see into the water. The use of the telescope, therefore, is to get below the disturbed surface into solid water. I made a water-telescope that I found very effective. It was a tin macecase, about three inches in diameter, and about three and a half feet long. I took off the top and knocked out the bottom, and looked through the tube when the end was about a foot, or a foot and a half below the surface. I had no glass in it, but a glass might be an advantage, as it would keep a column of air in the tube, and thus prevent the water oscillating in it. I would like to know to what depth the Norwegian fishermen can see. The water in their fjords is very clear, like the water off the west coast of Ireland, into which you can see, for much greater depths than into the water off the east coast. In fact, when the tide is on "flow" in the Irish Sea it is rarely possible that you can see down into it anywhere within half a mile of the coast, as the "tidal current" and the usual "ground swell" keep it dirty. On this account I am afraid the telescope might not be as effective as it ought to be in the localities mentioned by Dr. Backland.

The French Government has cut off the usual allowance of 8,000 f. or 10,000 f. to the Reformed Church of France for the formation of new parishes. The Chambers will be asked to renew the grant.

The Sound of Thunder.

The next remarkable feature of the storm is the thunder, corresponding, of course, on the large scale, to the snap of an electric spark. Here we are on comparatively sure ground, for sound is much more thoroughly understood than is electricity. We speak habitually and without exaggeration of the crash of thunder, the rolling of thunder, and of a peal of thunder; and various other terms will suggest themselves to you as being aptly employed in different cases. All of these are easily explained by known properties of sound. The origin of the sound is, in all cases, to be looked for in the instantaneous and violent dilatation of the air along the track of the lightning-flash, partly, no doubt, due to the disruptive effects of electricity of which I have already spoken, but mainly due to the excessive rise of temperature which renders the air for a moment so brilliantly incandescent. There is thus an extremely sudden compression of the air all round the track of the spark, and a less sudden, but still rapid, rush of the air into the partial vacuum which it produces. Thus the sound-wave produced must at first be of the nature of a bore or breaker. But as such a state of motion is unstable, after proceeding a moderate distance the sound becomes analogous to other loud but less violent sounds, such as those of the discharge of guns. Were there few clouds, were the air of nearly universal density, and the flash a short one, this would completely describe the phenomenon, and we should have a thunder crash or thunder clap, according to the greater or less proximity of the seat of discharge. But, as has long been well known, not merely clouds but surfaces of separation of masses of air of different density, such as constantly occur in thunder storms, reflect vibrations in the air; and thus we may have many successive echoes, prolonging the original sound. But there is another cause, often more efficient than these. When the flash is a long one, all its parts being nearly equidistant from the observer, he hears the sound from all these parts simultaneously; but if its parts be at very different distances from him, he hears successively the sounds from portions further and further distant from him. If the flash be much zig-zagged, long portions of its course may run at one and the same distance from him, and the sounds from these arrive simultaneously at his ear. Thus we have no difficulty in accounting for the rolling and pealing of thunder. It is, in fact, a mere consequence, sometimes of the reflection of sound, sometimes of the finite velocity with which it is promulgated. The usual rough estimate of five seconds to a mile is near enough to the truth for all ordinary calculation of the distance of a flash from the observer. The extreme distance at which thunder is heard is not great, when we consider the frequent great intensity of the sound. No trustworthy observation gives in general more than about 9 or 10 miles, though there are cases in which it is possible that it may have been heard 14 miles off. But the discharge of a single cannon is often heard at 50 miles, and the noise of a siege or naval engagement has certainly been heard at a distance of much more than a hundred miles. There are two reasons for this: the first depends upon the extreme suddenness of the production of thunder; the second, and perhaps the most effective, on the excessive variations of density in the atmosphere, which are invariably associated with a thunder-storm. In certain cases thunder has been propagated, for moderate distances from its apparent source, with a velocity far exceeding that of ordinary sounds. This used to be attributed to the extreme suddenness of its production; but it is not easy, if we adopt this hypothesis, to see why it should not occur in all cases. Sir W. Thomson has supplied a very different explanation, which requires no unusual velocity of sound, because it asserts the production of the sound simultaneously at all parts of the air between the ground and the cloud from which the lightning is discharged.

MR. MAC KAY, the Bonanza millionaire, is said to have become morose and suspicious, so many adventurers and impostors having practiced on him that he has lost faith in human nature.

It makes a mother's heart revert to her younger days when she comes into the parlour next morning after her daughter's beau has been round, and finds only one chair in front of the fireplace and the others sitting along the wall as if they hadn't been touched for three years.

Big Farms on the Pacific Coast.

The "Mammoth Farm," of the Blacklock Wheat Growing Company of Washington Territory, comprises 60,000 acres of wheat land, of which 25,000 acres are fenced. Ground has been broken for a crop which is expected to foot up between 300,000 and 400,000 bushels.

Another large farm is that of Dr. Hup J. Glenn, of California. It is in the Sacramento Valley, and comprises 65,000 acres of which 45,000 acres were in wheat this year. The owner had provided 350,000 sacks, each holding 140 pounds, but at last reports they promised to be unequal to the task of holding the crop. Dr. Glenn has his own machine shops, blacksmith shop, saw and planing mills, etc. He manufactures his own waggons, separators, headers, harrows, and nearly all the machinery and implements used. He has employed 60 men in sowing and 150 in harvest, 200 head of horses and mules, 55 grain headers and other waggons, 150 sets of harness, 12 twelve-foot headers, 5 sulky hay rakes, 12 eight-mule cultivators, 4 Gem seed sowers, 8 Buckeye drills, 8 mowers, 1 forty-eight inch separator, 36 feet long and 13½ feet high, with a capacity of 10 bushels per minute; 1 forty-inch separator, 36 feet long; 2 forty-foot elevators for self-feeder, 1 steam barley or feed mill, and 2 twenty horse power engines. The forty-eight inch separator thrashed, on the 8th of August, 1879, 5,779 bushels of wheat.

Hysteria.

Hysteria is by no means confined to women, for one of the worst attacks which I have witnessed occurred in a man. This gentleman one day found he had lost his all, and on returning home, he became the victim of laughing and crying, until sheer exhaustion brought an end to the attack. This was quite involuntary. But it might be remarked that even in hysteria such a thing as fashion prevails, showing that a certain power of restraint may be used. When I was a boy, hysteria was the fashion; and if during conversation any remark was made to touch a lady's sensibilities, she would clench her hands, make a wry face, her eyelids would undergo a rapid vibration, she would give a sob or two, and sink from her chair. The cure was accomplished by throwing cold water over her face; and if this encroached on her neck or wetted her dress, the cure was very sudden and complete. During church service, it was the usual practice to have a young lady carried out; but I think as a rule she belonged to an inferior class, whose kind of work during the week did not allow them to play dress-making tricks with themselves on a Sunday; for if I remember rightly the cure was effected in their case by the call for a pen-knife. This was used to loosen the body-armor, when a loud explosion took place, followed by a deep sigh and a speedy recovery of the patient. So fashionable was fainting or hysterics in church, that I have a lively remembrance of a young lady who had a weekly attack, and was often carried out by a gentleman in the next pew. As these two were afterward married, I apprehend that this was one mode of courtship. I am only too thankful to think, for the peace of other people, that this method of forcing matrimony has gone out.

Disappearance of a Railway Train.

For a railway train to be lost, to entirely disappear, would seem to be almost impossible, yet this curious casualty has actually happened in the United States to the Kansas Pacific Railway, which has spent \$2500 in searching for the runaway, and has at last given it up in despair. About 100 miles west of Kansas city, the line runs through a place called Monatony, which was visited some time ago by a terrible storm and water-spout, over 600 feet of track having been washed away. The adjacent neighbourhood, which consisted of huge rolling prairie, was eight feet under water, and it is conjectured that the locomotive waggons (it luckily not being a passenger train) were carried away and buried under a landslip. This is the second time of such an occurrence, an engine having been lost in a quicksand at Kiown Creek in 1818.

"How musically his hoof-beats sound!" exclaimed an enthusiastic lover of the turf, as St. Julien speeded around the course at Brighton last week. "Yes," replied his matter-of-fact companion; "he is beating time."