

getting old, and his hair is beginning to thin out very perceptibly on the top of his head, as his waistcoat gradually develops an abnormal rotundity in front, he is apt to consider things a nuisance that young people enjoy keenly. Certainly there is no necessity for the annual boat-race any more than there is for Mr. Labouchere's Truth, but one is no more a nuisance than the other.

It is to these athletic contests in Eng'nd and that her sons owe a great deal of that physique and pluck which have made her arms so formidable in time of war. It requires no small amount of pluck and self-denial to undergo the course of physical training necessary to fit a man to compete either in the inter-University boat races, or athletic sports, and it is very certain that young fellows might be much worse engaged than in training for these events; of course they might be better employed, but young men are not all saints nowadays, and probably never will be.

I want to know by what earthly right a shopkeeper who sells a customer a York shilling's worth of goods invariably takes thirteen cents in payment therefor. Twelve cents and a half is all he is entitled to, and as there is no half cent coin, someone has to lose the half cent; but I say that in all my experience, when I had bought twelve and a-half cents of anything and tendered a quarter in payment, I never received more than twelve cents in change. Fair play is a jewel, and the customer ought, occasionally, to get the benefit of that half cent, but the storekeepers seem to think that it is their right to receive a present of half a cent every time they sell anything to the alleged value of twelve and a half cents. What am I going to do about it, anyway?

A very interesting paper in regard to the history of the Toronto Insane Asylum appears in another page of TRUTH. It is from the pen of Dr. Daniel Clark, who always has something of interest to say and always says it well. A number of the facts contained in this valuable article are quite new to the public, and they are of very general interest.

The report of Mr. Chapleau on Chinese immigration, and all matters connected with it, has been laid on the table of the House of Commons and forms a most exhaustive discussion of the subject. That we have heretofore entertained many wrong notions concerning the morality, &c., of the Chinese is made clear by perusing this report which is, on the whole, favorable to the employment of Chinese labor in British Columbia for the present, though not to the unrestricted influx of the race. Mr. Chapleau states that, as a railway "navy" the Chinaman has no superior; this, together with the low rate of wages he demands, is much in his favor, and just now he will be found most serviceable in British Columbia, though white "navies" of course will object to their presence for the very reason that he is satisfied with small pay.

It is universally admitted that Chinese merchants are honorable and capable men, of high credit and of great commercial advantage to the community. The most formidable objection, however, to Chinese immigration has not been extended to this class, but to the laborers; it seems evident that it would be advantageous to British Columbia to encourage Chinese immigration to a certain extent. There are many things to be said in favor of John Chinaman. He is a most successful market gardener; he is industrious; he improves with good treatment and, best of all, he evinces no desire to

understand or meddle with politics; this last alone ranks him far above many white men, who not only evince a strong desire to understand politics, but also display a most lamentable inability to do so.

It is objected to the Chinese immigrants that, whatever money they earn is sent out of the country, and consequently is of no benefit to it. Even if it be so, the Chinese immigrants are far ahead of those white ones who never make any money at all and in consequence never have any to send anywhere; and there are many such. A beggar Chinaman is a rare object on this continent. On the whole it looks as if it would be as well to change the oft-heard cry "The Chinese must go," to "The Chinese may come and stay," but certain restrictions must be placed on this immigration.

Mr. Justice Gray, one of the late commissioners, thus condenses his opinions on this question:

"In conclusion, it may briefly be stated that in British Columbia there are three phases of opinion on this subject:

1. Of a well meaning, but strongly prejudiced minority, when nothing but absolute exclusion will satisfy.

2. An intelligent minority, who conceive that no legislation whatever is necessary—that, as in all business transactions, the rule of supply and demand will apply, and the matter regulate itself in the ordinary course of events.

3. Of a large majority, who think there should be a moderate restriction, based upon police, financial, and sanitary principles, sustained and enforced by stringent local regulations for cleanliness and the preservation of health.

Concurring in this last named view, the undersigned commissioner has, in chapter 9, thrown out some suggestion to that end, should Parliament at the present time deem legislation necessary."

It has been agreed by the railways forming the all-rail line to Manitoba, to give intending settlers, the coming spring, exceedingly low rates, and at a meeting in Chicago, on February 21st, it was decided to make the second-class rate from all ports in Canada west of Montreal to Winnipeg, \$20; and to St. Vincent, Minn., and Neche, D. T., \$19.75, taking effect March 1st.

## Truth's Contributors.

### TROPICAL TRIPS.

#### No. 1—St. Helena.

BY "ALBATROSS," TORONTO.

In latitude 16° S. and longitude about 6° W., in the heart of the trade-winds, lies a little island about which not a great deal is generally known in Canada, though there was a time within the present century when, it may be said, the eyes of the whole civilized world were turned in its direction. Its importance soon after the battle of Waterloo in 1815 was due to the fact that it was the island-prison of the great Napoleon; its importance now is owing to its being a place of call for all sailing vessels en route from India to England, as it abounds in springs of excellent water and is, moreover, a sort of ocean storehouse, where vessels may replenish their stock of provisions. The island I refer to is St. Helena, as my intelligent readers will, doubtless, have surmised ere this. The island rises, in most places, sheer from the sea, and a vessel can coast around it so close to shore that a biscuit may be easily thrown against the cliffs that bound it; nay, at one spot one of our men who ran out to the extreme end of the main-yard, declared that he could have sprung on land if he had chosen to "go ashore without leave."

It is now some years since I first set foot on this little spot, and it is ever ten years

since I left it for the last time, but I don't think I should find it much changed if I revisited it now. It is one of those places that never will change unless through the agency of some convulsion of nature, when, being of volcanic origin, it might disappear in the bosom of the ocean for ever.

The principal, nay, I believe the only town on the island, is James Town, on the east coast, and situated on James Bay,—an excellent harbor, and, at the time of the visit I speak of, crowded with condemned slaves,—James Town being a little bunch of houses lying in a valley above which tower hills whose sides are terribly precipitous and in places almost inaccessible. At the summit of one of these hills, which may be mounted either by means of a ladder or staircase of over 600 steps, or by a zig-zag road which takes the climber to the top by a more gradual mode of ascent, is the barracks where a portion of some British regiment is usually stationed. To a person who has been on board ship without setting foot on land for three months, as was my case, the climbing of Ladder Hill, per staircase route, is no joke, and as I and a brother middy took it into our heads to race up the steps, you may rest assured that we did not get over the effects for some days, the unwonted exercise having played terrible havoc with the muscles of our legs, which had become soft through inactivity. The descent was made with comparative ease, and at one spot, I remember, I came down 24 steps at a time, quite unintentionally I admit, and, as it proved, without sustaining any damage.

My chum and I proceeded to "do" James Town, after having paid our respects to our military brothers in arms at the top of Ladder Hill, and a very poor place indeed we found it to "do." I can give no guess at the population, but fancy it cannot be more than 3,000, and made up of English, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, negroes, mulattoes, creoles, etc., etc., and an indiscriminate and ever-changing population of sailors of every race under the sun, and in every degree of intoxication.

A landing is effected by the lander being swung ashore in a kind of chair attached to a crane; he seats himself in the chair, which is thrust out to the boat, and in a twinkling, presto! he is whipped ashore and there he is. This mode of landing is made necessary by the high swell that is constantly running, though at times it is possible to go ashore and push off again in the usual manner. The town is distant about a quarter of a mile from the landing place and is entered through a gate—James Town being surrounded by a fortified wall, by the way—where a guard is constantly on duty. This gate is closed at sundown and opened at morning gun-fire, and if you chance to delay your exit past the hour of sunset, you will probably be compelled to remain in James Town all night, and if you happen to be a poor little middy in the Queen's Navy on leave till 10 p.m., you may look out for a sojourn of a few hours with that "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" at the mast-head, next day.

James Town boasts of one hotel wherein is one solitary billiard table, and this article seems to be the sole means of killing time by the St. Helenites who are not busy. The town is soon seen, and one is surprised at the number of laundries there are, and is puzzled to make out where they can all find employment. The solution of this puzzle is given in the fact that homeward-bound ships are calling at the island daily, and the crew and passengers take this opportunity of getting their accumulation of soiled linen purified. To judge by the ap-

pearance of the "natives," one would fancy that a laundry and soap and water were unknown to them; but though they eschew the use of these things for themselves, they willingly practice the art of washing for the stranger that is without their gates, and who has to pay most consumedly for his washing.

Passing through the principal street of James Town, and bearing away to the left, constantly ascending as we go, we finally arrive at Longwood, the scene of Napoleon's captivity and death. His tomb is still there, as is also, in a most dilapidated condition, the cottage he inhabited during the years of his exile, and in which, on a night when the most fearful storm that ever visited St. Helena was raging over the island, he expired with the words "Tete d'armes" on his lips. I placed myself on the rock pointed out to us as that whereon, hour after hour, the great conqueror was wont to stand, deeply engrossed in thought and gazing away over the blue waters of the ocean; I tried to imagine what his thoughts must have been; he, a mighty warrior, cooped up in this little tropical island, a lone and vanquished prisoner. I failed, however, to conjure up the past thoughts of the dead Bonaparte. Probably his brain and mine were not cast in the same mould; mine was possibly the superior article, but I won't boast.

Having, like true British snobs, carved our initials in the bark of a willow tree—much to the disgust of an old Frenchman who was in charge of Napoleon's cottage, and who would have resorted to personal violence had not our fierce British countenances awed him—(gentle reader, I was 15 years of age, my companion a few months older)—we left Longwood and once more descended to James Town.

Though St. Helena is, undoubtedly, of volcanic origin, there are, here and there, fertile spots of land on which cabbages and potatoes and a few other vegetables are grown, and which produce some exceedingly hard and tasteless pears. With these exceptions and a little grass and a few trees, I saw no further traces of vegetation. The climate seems to be all that could be desired, the tropical heat being tempered by the over-blowing "trade-wind."

In concluding this brief description of St. Helena, I will relate how I was pretty badly scared in that same spot on another occasion. I had gone ashore in the afternoon and in the evening dined with the officers of the few companies of the 9th Regiment then stationed in the island. Time slipped on and it was eleven p.m. before I was aware that it was eight o'clock. My ship was to have sailed at sunset! I rushed down that staircase of about 650 steps at break-neck speed, and of course found the gate shut, but the sergeant on guard proving complaisant, I was let through. The shore was silent and deserted, and no sound could I hear but the swell breaking on the beach. I gazed out to sea to where the "Octavia" had been at anchor when last I saw her, but no "Octavia" could I see! Here was a pretty pickle. She had gone and left me in this horrible island, I thought. Back I went to the town, passed through the gate and, walking up to the hotel, thundered at the door for some minutes. A waiter finally opened it and asked what I wanted at that time of night; it was then about 1.30 a.m. I told him I wanted a bed, and informed him of my predicament. "Oh, yes," he said, "the 'Octavia' sailed this evening." So I resolved to make the best of a bad job and take up my quarters here till relief arrived in the shape of a homeward-bound British vessel. I went to bed