

IT IS THE ISLAND OF DEATH

CONVICTS IN FERNANDO PO BURIED WITHOUT COFFINS.

A Most Deadly Climate - White Persons Quickly Carried Off by Malaria, Fever and Dysentery - A Disgrace to Humanity - Once It Was Under British Rule, but Now It Is a Spanish Penal Settlement.

If there is a diabolical place on earth it is Fernando Po. There are some horrible places on this globe, but not one of them can compete with this infamous island. Spain uses it as a penal station, and death is almost invariably the doom of those convicts who are sent there. Rapidly they die—so rapidly that at times the authorities find it difficult to bury them. But now a new device has been adopted, and all obstacles to speedy burials have been removed.

The officers of the British steamer Niger which arrived at Liverpool a few days ago, bear testimony to the efficacy of this device. The steamer left Fernando Po on July 19, and at that time the Cuban and Philippine exiles were dying so rapidly that coffins could not be obtained in which to bury them. Thereupon the authorities put their heads together and promptly decided to construct some coffins on an entirely new plan. The bottoms of the coffins were fitted with hinges, and when the bodies were placed in them and lowered into the earth certain ropes were deftly manipulated, whereupon the bottoms opened and the bodies dropped into the graves. One set of corpses being thus disposed of, another set was placed in the same coffins and dropped into graves in the same inhuman manner. Truly an economical method of burying the dead!

UNDER BRITISH RULE.

This deadly island is on the west coast of Africa, in the Bight of Bisfra, which is at the extreme end of the Gulf of Guinea. It is about forty-five miles distant from the mainland, and its highest point is a little over eleven thousand feet. It is of volcanic origin, as are the neighboring Prince's and St. Thomas islands. The Portuguese discovered it in 1471, and ceded it to Spain in 1778. The first European settlement, however, was not made until 1827. In that year the English, unaware of the fact that the Spanish government had right of possession, established a coaling station there for the benefit of the war steamers engaged in preventing the slave trade in the Bight of Bisfra. The settlement was called Clarence, and the inhabitants were liberated slaves, who had been captured from slavers, as well as those who were brought from Sierra Leone. A few traders also made their headquarters there. Clarence being an excellent port for shipping palm oil, as the water was deep and sheltered from tornadoes. One of these traders was named Governor by the English.

The freed slaves, in number about one thousand, suffered much from illness, but still managed to plant orange, lemon, and other fruit trees, which were imported from the West Indies, and they made a living by selling the fruit to the men-of-war. Bananas, pineapples, sweet potatoes, ground nuts, and yams were also grown, and found a ready sale. In a word, the negroes were fairly prosperous until 1859, when the Spanish authorities took possession of the island. They imported to Fernando Po a Spanish Governor, a troop of soldiers, as well as many monks and sisters of various orders. Of the latter many died within a short time, and the Governor doubtless would have died if he had remained there more than a few months. The soldiers suffered like the rest, and many perished during the first year. As for the liberated Africans, who had been Christianized by Protestant missionaries, they were forbidden to meet in their church, but were allowed to retain their Bibles and to hold religious services in their huts.

CONVICTS CRUELLY TREATED.

Spain's object in taking possession of Fernando Po was to make it a penal station, and she soon had gangs of convicts there, making roads, cutting trees, and otherwise employed in improving the godforsaken place. Mercilessly she treated these unfortunate beings, forcing them to work all day under the hot sun, and caring nothing for them when illness struck them down. To-day her policy is the same. She does not work the convicts as heretofore—work, it seems, being at present one of the penalties for misconduct—but she lets them die by scores. More than one European Power has protested against her using Fernando Po as a convict station, but with her characteristic obstinacy Spain has turned a deaf ear to her protests. There are within her jurisdiction many offenders, political prisoners and others, upon whom she cannot legally pronounce death sentences, and so she deports them to Fernando Po, knowing well that they will die there almost as surely, if not as swiftly, as by the garrote. She does not kill them herself, but she knows that the climate of Fernando Po will kill them.

Much has been said about the horrors of Ceuta, another Spanish convict station, but Ceuta is an earthly paradise compared to Fernando Po. True, the latter place is very picturesque, with its magnificently wooded hills, and many silvery streams; but then its climate is unbearable, breeding, as it does, malaria and fever, from which few who are attacked, ever recover. Dysentery and liver complaints are also common. Moreover, the rainfall is heavy and continuous, and the

heat is excessive. No white woman, it is said, has ever been able to live on the island, and no Governor has remained there more than a few months. The Spanish officials who are obliged to spend any time there contrive in a measure to ward off disease by dosing themselves continually with quinine and whiskey, but even these antidotes do not always prove successful. Any one, however, in Fernando Po, who wants to save his life must keep himself constantly in a state of drunkenness. The unfortunate convicts clearly cannot fortify themselves with liquor, and hence they daily drop off and are thrust into nameless graves.

Evidently the island has sadly deteriorated within the past quarter of a century. One who ought to know says that no fruits are grown there now, and that there are nowhere any indications of prosperity. Some negroes manage to exist there, and they are the only persons who can stand the terrible climate. To send white prisoners there is equivalent to dooming them to death, and to send political prisoners there is an outrage against humanity and a disgrace to civilization. Fernando Po to-day is simply the worst place on earth for any human beings who are not negroes. No one who has ever had the misfortune to visit the infernal spot, and who has noted the countless graves with which its hills are studded, will question the truth of this statement.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S TONGUE.

Considered a Hard Language to Learn by the People of the Continent.

The English language is not regarded with affection by the people of the European continent who are under necessity of learning it. Its diverse origin has laden it with an immense number of inconsistencies, contradictions and duplications, and above all, with an irregular and inexplicable system of spelling. The Germans are accustomed to speak of the English language as "a monster having two mouths, with one of which it speaks German and the other Latin."

The Slavonic people of Central Europe, who have always had occasion to master many languages, have a story to account for the inconsistencies of English which is still more uncomplimentary to our mother tongue.

This story which we find in "The Outgoing Turk," by H. C. Thomson, tells when the Lord made the different nations He gave men no tongues at all, and when they came and dumbly begged for them, He compassionately took a piece of meat and cut it into slices, giving each one a slice to serve as a tongue.

This served well enough; but when the meat was all given away, the Englishman, who had either lazily or contemptuously failed to come sooner, arrived and demanded his piece. There was none left for him, and so the Lord called back the men of the other nations, and slicing from each one of their tongues a little bit, he put them all together to make a tongue for the Englishman. And this is why the English continue to speak in such a jumble to the present day.

This story, which the author of the book named heard in Croatia, is so close a representation in allegory of the actual fact of the origin of the English language that it has a made-up air. It is, nevertheless, picturesque and interesting.

FOR WHEEL WOMEN.

Don't wear a skirt that shows more than eight inches of your boots.

Don't wear black boots.

Don't allow your escort to ride inside, nearest the sidewalk. That is your place.

Don't keep on ringing your bell when you see that the driver of a horse is turning out to make room for you. The jangle of the bell may frighten the horse, and is sure to annoy the driver.

Don't stand in the middle of the road to fix your lantern or pump your tire, so that every other rider will have to make a wide detour to pass you.

Don't borrow a pump of a man you do not know, and forget to return it.

Don't hesitate to accept assistance from a man in case you are in trouble with your wheel. That is an occasion when a woman may take well-meant help from a stranger of the opposite sex.

Don't wear club pins outside your coat, and never wear two large crossed flags on your lapel.

Don't ride down elderly or inexperienced cyclists just because you have more control of your machine than they.

Don't boast of the superiority of your wheel. In the slang of the day, "there are others."

Don't ride without gloves.

Don't start until you are certain that not only your wheel, but your costume is in perfect condition, so that nothing will break loose under the strain of riding.

Don't wear flaming colors in your hat.

Don't rest with one foot on the ground and the other on the outside pedal. It will make you look ungraceful, if not worse.

Don't try to keep up a steady conversation while riding. You need your breath for pedaling.

Don't wear white underskirts on a wheel. They will not be white for long.

Don't trim any part of your visible wheeling costume with lace or frills of any kind. Remember that the best dressed wheelwoman is she who is most severely plain in every detail.

Don't walk your bicycle more than absolutely necessary. It attracts unpleasant attention.

Don't mount by the aid of a telegraph pole. That is not the way your instructor taught you.

Don't wear more than one color in your whole costume, including hat and boots.

Don't make short turns at corners. A bicycle will slip easily, particularly if the ground is not dry.

Don't hesitate to offer assistance in case of a spill, whether the unfortunate is of your own sex or not.

HEALTH.

NOSEBLEED.

Pliny regarded nosebleed as one of the distinctive characteristics of the human race, for he said that "man is the only creature from whom blood flows at the nostrils," and, properly understood, he was right. Of course blood will flow from any part of any animal when the arteries or veins of that part are opened, but it is a fact that nosebleed, occurring without any apparent cause, is seldom, if ever, seen in animals. The reason for this human peculiarity is that the membrane lining the nostrils in man is especially full of blood-vessels, the walls of which are weak and easily ruptured by slight causes.

It is usually very easy to recognize nosebleed, but sometimes the blood flows backward into the throat, and is coughed up, or vomited, and may be thought to come from a hemorrhage of the lungs or stomach, and so cause much needless alarm.

As a rule nosebleed is a thing of slight importance, and stops of itself after a little while, but the blood may escape in such quantity, or the bleeding may continue so long, that the patient is greatly weakened. When occurring in children it has ordinarily no significance—though this is not always to be taken for granted—but in older persons it may be a symptom of some other illness, such as the beginning of typhoid fever, or a trouble of the liver or heart.

Nosebleed is one of the common manifestations of that curious condition in which there is a tendency to severe hemorrhage after any slight injury or even without any cause that can be discovered. Children with this predisposition—often called "bleeders"—suffer from frequent and uncontrollable attacks of nosebleed, and sometimes die in one of them in spite of all efforts to control the hemorrhage.

Ordinarily there is little to be done, for the bleeding usually stops of itself. The child should be made to sit quietly in a chair with the head only slightly inclined forward, just enough to let drops fall clear of the lips into a basin. All clothing should be loosened about the neck. Ice may be applied to the back of the neck, or ice-water should be dashed into the face or made to trickle down the back.

It is useful, also, to insert a little piece of ice into the bleeding nostril—sometimes the effect is better if the ice is put into the other nostril—and retain it there for a moment or two; a mixture of alcohol and water as hot as it can be borne. The introduction of cottons into the bleeding nostrils often induces coagulation, or the same purpose may be served by a little wad of loose worsted which has been picked apart.

If simple measures fail, the physician should be summoned before exhaustion ensues.

THE AVOIDANCE OF COLDS.

In a recent issue of the Companion a few words were said concerning the usual modes of catching cold, and mention was made of the various especially sensitive areas of the body, or "cold spots," but nothing was said as to the best means of protecting these spots and preserving the body in general from colds.

It is not always sufficient, however, to point out a danger; it is often of even greater importance to show how the danger may be averted. Most people properly recognize a cold as avoidable, and think they are greatly to be commended for the prudence they exercise in protecting themselves; but if they did but know it, they are really doing all they can to make themselves susceptible to colds by weakening their resisting powers.

A German professor once wrote a long treatise, with a learned title, on how to avoid catching cold. After tracing the history of colds from the earliest ages, studying their causes and symptoms, and cataloguing the remedies which have been used by the most eminent physicians of all times, he concluded with a short chapter on prevention.

His plan was to inure the back of the neck to drafts by having some one direct a current of air upon it from a bellows three times a day.

The writer had the correct idea, although its practical application was clumsy, and he was a long time in reaching it. The best and only way to escape colds is to meet the causes that produce them and not to run from them.

Let the body be hardened by a cold sponge bath or even a cold plunge, followed by brisk rubbing with a "scratchy" towel every morning. Let the clothing be adapted to the season, though always as light as possible, but keep the neck uncovered—no turned-up coat collar, no muffler, no bonnet. Never let the temperature in the house rise above seventy degrees in the winter. Air every room systematically every day, no matter what the outdoor temperature may be. Always have fresh air in the bedroom; there is nothing poisonous in "night-air," popular belief to the contrary notwithstanding.

In a word, don't be always afraid of catching cold; don't coddle, but meet cold and wet and changes of temperature like a man—or rather like a horse, and you will then run a better chance of being as strong as a horse.

Of course you must strengthen your armor where it is weak, but if you recognize in yourself a weak place, a "cold spot," don't cover it up with more clothes, but toughen it, and toughen your entire body until it is one homogeneous resistant whole.

BE GOOD TO YOURSELF.

The Medical and Surgical Reporter gives the following practical advice:—"Think deliberately of the house you

live in—your body. Make up your mind firmly not to abuse it. Eat nothing that will hurt it. Wear nothing that distorts or pains it. Do not overload it with victuals or drink or work. Give yourself regular and abundant sleep. Keep your body warmly clad. Do not take cold; guard yourself against it. If you feel the first symptoms, give yourself heroic treatment. Get into a fine glow of heat by exercise. This is the only body you will have in this world. Study deeply and diligently the structure of it, the laws that govern it, the pains and penalties that will surely follow a violation of every law of life and health."

REMARKS ON DRINKING-WATER.

Professor Ray Lankester recently said that if they wanted to dodge cholera and typhoid, and such-like unpleasant things, they had better imbibe "good rich river water, neither boiled nor filtered." River water of that kind, he said, is safer to drink, for the very reason that it is teeming with microbes of various species which prey upon each other, and so give the human organism a chance; whereas, in pure spring or lake water the typhoid germs, for example, flourish unopposed by the harmless bacteria, whose duty is that of killing the disease germs, so that typhoid has a clear field.

CLEANLINESS AND HEALTH.

Sir B. W. Richardson says: Cleanliness covers the whole field of sanitary labor. Cleanliness means purity of both air and water; cleanliness in and around the house; cleanliness of person; cleanliness of dress; cleanliness of food and feeding; cleanliness in work; cleanliness in the habit of the individual man and woman; cleanliness of life and conversation; purity of life, temperance—all these are in man's power.

A ATUITOUS TRIBUTE.

An American Contemporary Brushes Away Prejudice and Talks on Canadian Mines.

An American contemporary of Brooklyn, New York, gives the following gratifying tribute speaking of the Klondike gold region, to the superior administration of law throughout the Dominion of Canada, as compared with the United States:—"One great gain, though we own it to our sorrow arises from the fact that the mines are in Canadian territory. This means that men will not be shot every day or two, that they will not be permitted to jump each other's claims, that there will be a check on liquor saloons and dance houses, and gambling hells. For it must be admitted that in the conduct of their mines the Canadians have exercised a coolness and justice and temperance that in our own land has been the exception. In the mining towns of British Columbia, for instance, though they were discovered and developed under nearly the same conditions as our own, there is no more ruffianism than there is on Fulton street, and usually not as much. Courts are established early, and the police are fellows of good sense and courage. Lynchings are unknown, and it is said that not a single case of extra-legal punishment has occurred in British Columbia. This is remarkable when we read the record of blood and theft and extravagance in Colorado, where even to this day the gambling house, the dance house and the poisonous grogery are the principal features of new camps. The disarming of the newcomers is a wise measure, and all quarrels have to be settled in court, which is the only fair way, or with fists, which is perhaps the only convincing one."

UTOPIA FOR THE UGLY.

The Argentine Republic has just introduced a series of laws which spare neither youth nor age. Clause 1 runs as follows:

"On and after January 1, 1897, every male from the age of 20 to 80, shall pay a tax till he marries, and shall pay once in every month."

And in Argentina no woman—no, nor man either—may be fickle, coy, or hard to please. Let us hear Clause II: "Young celibates of either sex who shall without legitimate motive reject the addresses of him or her who may aspire to her or his hand, and who continue contumaciously unmarried, shall pay the sum of 500 piastres, about five hundred dollars, for the benefit of the young person who has been so refused."

Argentina will become a veritable Utopia of the ugly. However hard the road may be to others, the plain man shall not err therein.

"Madame, I desire the honor of your hand. What! you refuse me because of my facial defects? Then 500 piastres, if you please."

COULDN'T STAND THE STRAIN.

A woman who was traveling alone not long ago wandered one evening into a hotel parlor. A pretty young girl at once rushed toward her and breathlessly asked what time it was. Somewhat astonished, the woman glanced at the big mantel clock and repeated the hour. "Oh, thank you," said the stranger, but without any signs of going away. "I suppose you think it queer my asking that," she burst out a moment later, "but to tell the truth, I didn't want to know the time at all; I just had to speak to somebody. You see, I'm on my wedding trip, and for a whole week I haven't spoken to a soul but my husband. Why, I've hardly heard the sound of any one's voice but his. It was really a question of my speaking to some one or going wild."

SUFFICIENT.

Hobb—I don't know why you should consider wheel riding so unsafe.
Nobb—Probably because I don't ride one; I walk.

ON A RUSSIAN CONVICT SHIP.

Horrors of the Voyage from Odessa to the Island of Saghalin.

The sailing of a Russian convict ship from Odessa for the Island of Saghalin, in the Japan Sea, is always an impressive sight. The motley crowd, indigenous to all countries, is of course present, but there are in addition many Government officials, full of importance in their emblazoned uniforms, and more numerous members of the clergy attending to perform the ceremony of sprinkling the ship with holy water and to give the inmates a parting blessing and a godspeed. Nothing is done in Russia without the help of priests, and a Russian is bathed in holy water from the cradle to the grave.

The religious ceremony over it is with a cargo of heavy hearts that the convict ship—usually built at Glasgow, by the way—weighs anchor and departs for even a hardened convict would prefer serving his sentence on his native soil to dragging out his existence in a foreign land. But, however, that may be, the accommodation for the thousand or more convicts on board is ample and the arrangements for their well-being complete. The food provided is good and wholesome, and it is not an infrequent thing for people in the saloon—the convict ship carries ordinary passengers as well as state prisoners—to ask for convict soup and rye bread.

All the convicts are in fetters, wrist and ankle bracelets, with a connecting chain. These and their half-shaved heads present a most hideous appearance. The daily routine on board is unvarying; therefore, to change the monotony, the prisoners have resort to all kinds of devices to make the time pass away as pleasantly as the circumstances will allow.

Most lower class Russians are born card players, so the convicts collect all the old scraps of paper they can lay their hands on. Cards and spades are roughly scribbled on these slips with the ink supplied for letter-writing purposes, white to provide hearts and diamonds of the requisite color one or more of the company consent to have a vein opened. This delicate operation is performed with the aid of the tin spout of a tea can, ground to a sharp edge on the iron deck. This improvised lancet also does duty as a razor, serving to remove the remaining hair from the head of some devout follower of Islam. The stakes of the card players are knobs of sugar saved by rigorous economy at the tea table. When these fail, bones and odds and ends are substituted.

On the fifteenth day at sea the fetters are removed. This is, indeed, a day of rejoicing, and the most hardened criminal gives vent to a sigh of relief at being released from these hateful emblems of bondage. The coveted freedom is not, however, of long duration. A poor, inoffensive Crimean Tartar accidentally treads on the foot of a regular cutthroat villain, to be seized immediately by the throat. The cry is instantly raised that the Mohammedans are killing the Christians. A general melee ensues, in which racial hatred is given full play. The guard is called out, and, turning on the hot water hose pipes, which are kept ready for any emergency, soon crows the combatants. The ringleader is placed in irons, and put on dry bread and water for fourteen days. The Tartar is carried more dead than alive to the hospital, and the rest, guilty and innocent alike, are kept in chains and shackles for the rest of the voyage.

LIVE FOR PLEASURE.

"How lucky you are to come now! I am just come home from the K's reception. Come into my boudoir and we will have a nice little chat. Why, what makes you look so sober? No trouble, I hope, for you?"

"I want you to tell me just how you pass your time. Give me a sample day as it were," answered the caller, abruptly.

"Oh, you are after the drones, as usual," laughed the younger woman. "Well, there have to be drones, you know, in every hive, so I can't see why you need quarrel with nature's plans. However, here is the way I spend my days usually. I am out late about every night, so of course I cannot get up to Fred's early breakfast. He has his about 8 o'clock, for he must be down town by 9, so I don't see him until dinner. I cannot be disturbed, so I generally eat my breakfast in bed, and by noon I manage to get dressed and answer my notes and see to my invitations and such things. Then, I go out, go down town shopping or to see my dressmaker, I usually lunch down town. Then I make a few formal visits, and come home in time to dress for dinner and the evening. Fred is always so dead tired that I can't get him to go out in the evening very often, and, truth to tell he is apt to be stupid at dinner unless we have guests, which I contrive to have pretty often. It brightens him up, and it's much more cheerful for me. Whenever I ask Fred what makes him so silent he says he is thinking of business. Now I think that a man ought to leave his business down town. I am sure he is there long enough to attend to it."

"So it is for this sort of women that some men toil and struggle," meditated the older woman. "They spend years in this dull, monotonous grind, and have no home life, no companionship, no influence to keep their feet in the narrow path of business rectitude, no spiritual uplifting to steady them in the discipline of life! Nothing but shelter, food and the privilege of paying ceaseless bills."

Truly the honored name of wife is disgraced by the career of these selfish child-women, and even more truly wonderful is it that more men do not go down in moral and financial wrecks having no help at home.