

## A WASHTUB IN THE SEA.

A TRAVELLER'S EXPERIENCE  
AMONG THE LAVANDERAS OF  
CURACAO.

They Prey Upon the Helpless Traveller and  
With their Clubs "Knock Out" His  
Precious Linen in the Coral-Bedded Pools  
—An Adventure With the Camera.



ABOUT the first person the voyager to the West Indies meets as he descends the gang-plank of the steamer is the washerwoman. It might be more correctly stated by saying that she meets the voyager, because she is there for that very purpose, and lies in wait for him with malice prepense. She doesn't carry any extra weight of brain, but she devotes that little to carrying out her scheme of appropriating the traveller's linen, will he, nill he.

But, beware! It is impossible to wholly escape her; but, if you have any article of apparel you wish to cherish, hide it before she gets her eye on it.

The *modus operandi* is the same throughout all tropical countries. The first move in the game is to secure the stranger's linen; and have it she will, even if she imitate the Egyptian woman's mode of dealing with Joseph, and strip him of his raiment. Happy then the washerwoman "totes" her bundle of clothing to the nearest water. It may be fresh water, it may be salt water, it may be clear as crystal, or it may be shiny and foul. It matters not so it be water, for the liquid element plays a small part in the game. Running water seems to be preferred and in a rapid stream, with current playing about their lower limbs, the washerwomen are in their glory if not in their element.

I have seen the *lavanderas* of Spain busily at work from daylight till dark, and recall that the river Arlenzon that flows through the ancient city of Burgos, is lined with them. In Spain, however, the washerwomen kneel in a kind of washing-board, and scrub the ropa (linen) with their hands. It must have been from the coast of France or from the Basque provinces of Spain, that the fashion was introduced of washing fine linen with a club. From whatever quarter introduced it is now universal throughout the length and breadth of the West Indies, in Mexico and in South America.

As I lay in my bunk, one still night, in the Lake of Maracaibo, about a mile from this shore, I heard a noise as of the muffled clapping of many hands. It rose and fell, in rhythmic undulations, the entire night long, and at daylight it died away with the coming of the sun. It seemed to me as I listened to this strange pounding that all the babies of Venezuela had been brought to the lake shore and were being spanked, spanked, spanked, by muscular mothers though they uttered no sound in remonstrance and took their punishment without a murmur.

When I enquired as to the meaning of these mysterious sounds I was told that the nocturnal revelers were only the *lavanderas*, who preferred the coolness of night to the heat and glare of the day. But it is in Curacao, a little Dutch island off the coast of Venezuela, that the alleged cleanser of clothing may best be studied. There she



THE QUEEN OF THE "WASHEES."

disports herself, regardless of the social proprieties and surroundings. Every morning at daybreak you may see the washerwomen wending their way to the sea shore, each one with a tub of clothes on her head, and in the hollow of one arm an immense club.

Curacao is as picturesque an island as one may see in a month of travel, even in the Caribbean sea, where every isle is a gem; an emerald in a sea of silver. It lacks only water, fresh water, and running streams; else it would be an Eden. As there is no water here save that caught and stored in cisterns, it is too precious, of course, to be wasted in washing either clothes or person; hence the females who take the contract for the purification of linen make the best of it and dispense with fresh water entirely. Salt water is good enough for them, and there is plenty of it. So they go to the sea shore, a gallant array, every female with her dress girdled tight around her hips, a kerchief on her head and feet and bosom bare.

Arrived at the seaside you will find several pools formed inside the barrier reef of coral, where the water is smooth and glassy, and has a nice appearance, if it

isn't fresh. Outside the reef the waves roll up threateningly and break with great force against it, but only to tumble harmlessly into the quiet pool, in little rivulets and foaming streams. Here the woman halts and deposits her tub or tray of clothes on the coral beach, and carefully lays the club on top.

Then she gathers up her only skirt very dexterously between her thighs, knots it in front, seizes the club and an inoffensive skirt, and proceeds to business. Another woman soon arrives, another and another, until the pool is as full as it can hold—the choicest collection of black-legs in Curacao.

Every woman has a rock in front of her and upon this she lays the object of her solicitude. She lifts her club, gazes a moment with all the fond yearning of a parent about to beat an erring child, and then brings it down with a crash. The garment wilts at once; in two minutes it is completely knocked out, and in three is so dilapidated its own mother wouldn't know it. After she has mauled it awhile in one position she lifts it tenderly into the water, soaks it thoroughly and then puts it back on the rock. She has caught her second wind by this time, and wields the club with fresh vigor. If there are any buttons left she "goes for them" scientifically. It is the proud boast of the most accomplished wash-lady here that she can fetch a button at every clip. When the buttons are gone she bestows particular attention upon the button-holes, punching them out and enlarging them to the capacity of watch-pockets. Then, with a critical poke of the club and a contemptuous frown, the limp and lifeless skirt is tossed ashore, where it is taken in hand by an assistant in waiting, who jabs sharp-pointed coral into it, in order to pin it down to the sand, or hang it conspicuously over a cactus bush.

It is hardly to be wondered at that, seeing their best shirts treated in this manner, divers, seafaring men have been heard to use strong language, and divers others have been known to seek to drown their grief in strong drink.

On every side there is the sound of descending clubs, some of them flying so swiftly through the air as to leave a black streak only, and cause a halo of mist about the heads of the negroesses. Witnessing this proof of women's inhumanity to man's most precious article of wearing apparel,



CURACAO WASHERWOMEN.

one is led to wonder if Tom Hood had ever looked upon a similar scene, ere he wrote his "Song of the Shirt." And we watch these worried workers with their "fingers weary and worn," grasping clubs instead of needles, which fall with their monotonous

"Whack! whack! whack!" upon the heap of clothes before them. All their thoughts center about their work, and all their energies go into it. When they wring out a garment, they seize one end of it between their teeth and twist at the other with both hands until all the salt water is forced out of it. They have no use for soap, the kind they sometimes use is like their character, it will float, but it won't wash, that is, they sometimes use the fruit of the soap tree, a vegetable soap that grows in the tropics.

In order to secure photographs of these negroesses engaged at their work, I thought I should have to use great caution and some strategy. So I crept up quietly with my camera concealed, and had taken several distant shots before they observed what I was doing. At the discovery several made a dash in my direction, brandishing their clubs. I thought it was "all up" with me and my photographs, and prepared to flee. But I was mistaken. Instead of being offended, they felt flattered at my attentions and wanted me to take a nearer view of their scantily-draped, though muscular forms. As they spoke the barbarous patois of the island, known as Papiamentu, I could not understand what they said, but their gestures were not to be mistaken.

There happened to be among them an old negress from Jamaica, who, of course, spoke English, or what passed for it, with the Africans of the West Indies. She planted herself in front of me and slapped her brawny breast.

"Look me heah, sah. Heah I is. Want you take um fortygraph ob de ole lady to gib de gubnor."

"Well, aunty, keep your mouth shut, and I'll do it."

"No, Massa Buckra (White Man), me doan want de pickchew still likeness, me want um speakin' fortygraph, 'cause dat's way I is."

And so, making a virtue of necessity, I took a snap-shot at her with her mouth open, after which she went back to her work contented.

FREDERICK A. OBER.

His Wife Was Present.

Leonard Courtney, M. P., was asked at a political meeting whether he was in favor of the bill to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

"May I inquire," said Mr. Courtney, all smiles, "whether the gentleman who puts that question is married?"

"I am."

"Has your wife a sister living?"

"She has."

"Is your wife present?"

"No."

"Well, my wife is present; she, too, has a sister living," said Mr. Courtney, resuming his seat.—*London News*.

Balmoral Hotel. See advt.

## MORE STRANGE STORIES.

JULIAN HAWTHORNE TELLS OF HIS  
EXPERIENCE WITH SPIRITS.

The Jugglers of India and the Vanishing Boy—Mr. Hawthorne Himself Manages to be in Two Places at the Same Time, but Cannot Explain It.

The proverb, "Yield an inch and lose an ell" has no better illustration than this supernatural business. Once admit the possibility of seeing anything outside of the physical plane, and there is no logical halting-place for you thenceforth. For the physical senses are all one: they are modifications or refinements of the sense of touch. If, then, you can see a spirit, what is to prevent you from also touching it, hearing it, tasting and smelling it? Nor



WHAT THE SKETCHES SHOWED.

does it help much to say that it is your spiritual eye that is opened. The impression of sight on the mind is the same: and if of sight, then of the other senses also. The point is, you perceive something; whether with the physical or the metaphysical class of perceptive faculties may be interesting to philosophers, but the results to you are practically the same.

Three young American artists found themselves together in India the other day, and went to see the performance of an Indian juggler. There is no limit to what these men seem able to do. This juggler's tools were simple. He was all but naked, and he had a strip of carpet. He stood in an open, level place out of doors, surrounded by a crowd of some two hundred people. He spread out his carpet on the ground, made incantations over it, it began to move and act as if something were underneath, and presently out crawled a boy. The juggler now appeared to have a piece of rope in his hand, he coiled and swung it upwards, it caught in empty space and hung dangling down to within a couple of feet of the ground. The boy climbed up the rope, and, at a certain height, disappeared. The juggler called up to him, and a dialogue ensued between him and the invisible boy. The invincible boy became saucy, the juggler angry. At length the juggler climbed the rope with a knife between his teeth and vanished like the boy, leaving nothing behind but the rope dangling down from the infinite. But, in a moment, down out of the air fell one of the boy's legs, cut off close to the body, then the other leg, the arms, the body, and finally the head. Next appeared the murderous juggler, descending hand under hand. He laid the body and the several limbs in position, made more incantations, covered the body with the carpet, the carpet gradually flattened out, and at the same moment the boy, alive and well, appeared pushing his way through the crowd from the outside.



THE RESULT OF PHOTOGRAPHING.

Many have seen, more have heard of this marvel; it is impossible, of course, and yet all the audiences see it. The then American artists went a step further. Two of them made rapid sketches of the performance, at successive stages; the other kept his Kodak camera diligently at work, and took a dozen or more instantaneous negatives. They retired to compare results. The two sketches had substantially the same results. Then the photographer developed his negatives. They showed the audience, craning their heads forward in attitudes of curiosity, awe and horror; staring upwards, staring downwards, according to the locality of the action. They showed the juggler gesticulating, haranguing, pointing here and there; but they showed no boy, no rope, no knife, no

humping up of the carpet, no climbing, no vanishing, no butchered limbs,—nothing, in a word, but the naked juggler and the bit of carpet. That was the account the camera gave of the transaction. What, then, are we to say of all the things the audience saw and the two artists sketched? The obvious explanation would be, everybody was hypnotized. But is that explanation final and satisfactory?

My wife and I were staying at the country-house of some friends of ours. At four o'clock on a certain Sunday afternoon in July I was sitting in the drawing-room, by an open window. I had been sitting there ever since we finished luncheon, at two o'clock, absorbed in a volume of Emerson's "Conduct of Life." The only other persons in the house were my wife and the two grown-up daughters of our hosts. The latter had gone out driving, and the servants had a holiday.

The drawing-room where I sat was on the western side of the house, and on the ground floor. Beneath my window was a broad flower-bed. On the opposite side of the room was a door, leading into the entrance hall; the staircase to the upper floor descended close to the outside of this door, on the left as you went out. The door was wide open, and I was obviously conscious of the voices of the young ladies upstairs, talking together in one of the upper rooms.

The upstairs arrangement was as follows: The bedroom occupied by my wife and myself was directly over the drawing room. On the other side of the passage was the bedroom of the young ladies of the house. The doors of the two rooms were opposite each other. My wife and the two girls were sitting in the latter's room, and the doors of both rooms were open.

Such is the simple summary of the tale. If you have got it clear in your mind, you are ready to hear what happened.

As I sat reading, I heard a light step, and the rustle of a dress, descending the stairs. "It is not my wife's step," thought I, "it is one of the girls." Half way down the stairs she paused an instant and spoke. What she said I could not distinguish, but I recognized the voice as Lilly's (we will say), and sure enough, the next moment Lilly came into the room.

She came in, humming to herself, and



SHE GAVE A SLIGHT, STARTLED EXCLAMATION.

evidently supposing the room to be empty. She had got to the middle of the floor before she caught sight of me, in the window-seat. She gave a slight, startled exclamation, and stopped, staring at me.

It is natural to be startled, when you suddenly find you are not alone. But why this fixedness of gaze, and dilatation of the eyes? Surely, Lilly was familiar enough with my outward aspect, not to be amazed at detecting me in a place where there was reason to suppose I might be. What's the matter?" said I.

"How did you get here?" returned Lilly, short of breath and seeming much disturbed.

"I've been here ever since lunch," I replied; "right in this window."

She paused a moment and then said, "I just met you as I was coming down the stairs. You were going up. You brushed right by me. Why, I spoke to you! You didn't answer, though; you just went right on up."

When I saw that she was in earnest, and was becoming momentarily more agitated, I came to the only rational conclusion possible, namely: That some unauthorized person had got into the house. This person had met her on the stairs; she had supposed it must be myself, and he had profited by her mistake. It was true that the staircase was quite light, there being a window on the landing above, as well as the house door below; and that four o'clock of a Sunday afternoon was an odd time for a burglar to enter a house visibly occupied by wide-awake people. Nevertheless, Lilly had seen somebody and it was high time to find out who he was and what he was after.

Accordingly, I laid down my book, and went up stairs, with Lilly bobbing behind me. But when I reached the upper passage or hall, a new surprise awaited me. My wife, and the other daughter of the house, were still sitting in the bedroom; they, too, uttered simultaneously an exclamation of astonishment. They, too, demanded to know how I came there. In reply to my questions they said that they had just heard someone go into the bedroom opposite—my wife's and mine. Were they sure it was I? They had not the slightest doubt on the subject. They had seen my face, my dress, and my gait. It was I, and no one else. How then could I be in two places at once?

It was my conviction that no such self-duplication was possible. But since the mysterious person, whoever he was, had entered our room, and had not come out again; and since there was no means of exit from that room except by that door I was satisfied that the person in question was there; and I followed him in the full expectation of finding myself immediately engaged in a hand to hand conflict with either a burglar, a tramp or a lunatic. With a heroism which I still admire, I crossed the threshold. The room was not large, and I took in every part of it with a glance. There was no living thing in it. There was nobody under the bed, nor in the closet. The windows were shut, but I opened one of them and looked out. If

anybody had jumped down, he must (after shutting the window behind him) have jumped into the middle of the flower bed just outside the drawing-room window at which I had been seated. But no traces of such a leap were to be seen.

Here, then, was a well authenticated case of doppel gänger. Had the apparition been seen by Lilly only, it would have passed as a simple but unusually successful instance of hallucination. But it had been seen, a moment after, and quite indisputably, by two other persons, who never entertained so much as a passing doubt as to its identity, until I appeared in flesh and blood. They saw the apparition at the instant that Lilly, having passed it and addressed it on the stairs, had come into the drawing room and beheld me, in propria persona, seated reading Emerson in the window.

How to account for this? Was Lilly's spiritual sight opened? If so it is not singular that the spiritual sight of the other two ladies should have been opened at the same time? And how came the spirit of a living and healthy man to be stalking about in this manner? I was not in a trance; I was not even asleep, or sleepy. I was absorbed in my book, and whatever mental or spiritual faculties I possessed were thereto directed. By what right did I become thus divorced from myself?

I have never found out about this, and no one I have asked has been able to enlighten me. Since then, my double has been seen twice: once in New York and

once in England; and there have been rumors not fully confirmed of its appearance at other times and places.

Changed Her Plans.

A woman entered a grocery on Michigan avenue one day last week in something of a hurry and said to the proprietor:

"I want a glass fruit jar holding a quart and you may put half a pound of gunpowder in it."

"Yes'm. New way to do up late peaches?"

"No sir. It's a new way to do up a dog."

"How?"

"My boy Willie has got a dog under our barn and he won't come out. Willie is going to blow him up."

"Great Scotts, ma'am, but if you explode this powder under the barn, you'll set the barn on fire!"

"Would it really?"

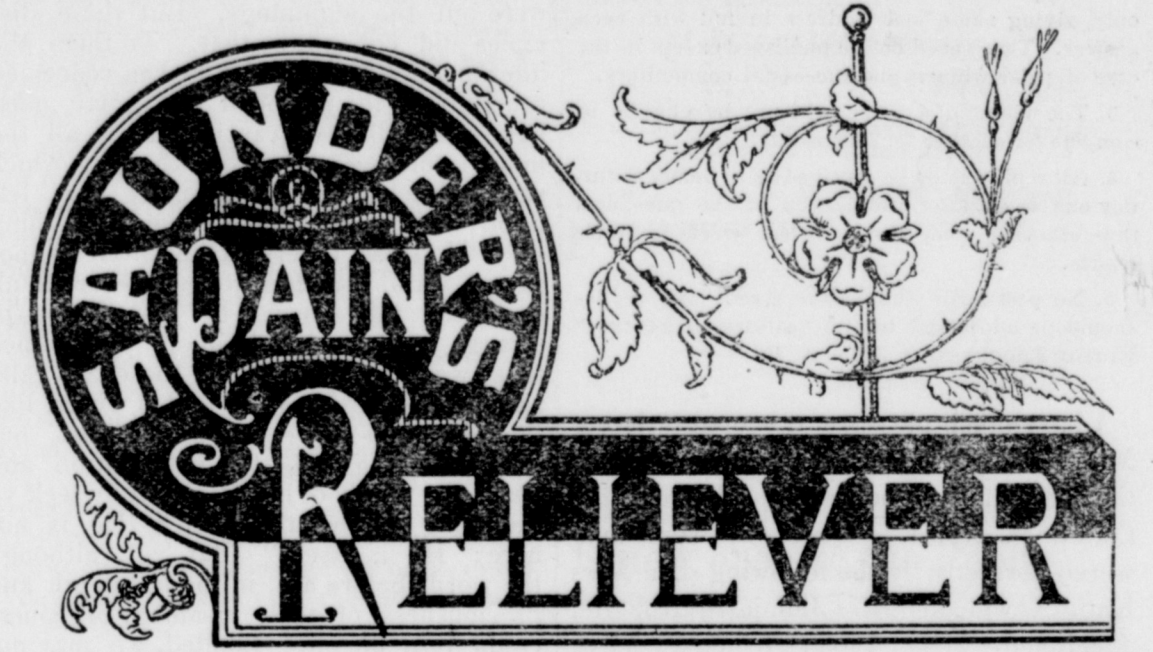
"Of course it would."

"Willie will be terribly disappointed."

"But you'll save the barn."

"Well," she said as she picked up her money, "I'll have to change my plans. I'll buy him an augur and let him bore holes in the floor and pour hot water down on the dog."—*Detroit Free Press*.

Probably there are more cases of cold in head and catarrh during March than any other month in the year. As a precautionary measure keep Nasal Balm in the home. It never fails.



IN PAIN? Well, don't be any longer. SAUNDER'S PAIN RELIEVER cures Colic, Cramps, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Inflammation, Coughs, Colds, Lane Back, Sore Throat, Pains in Chest or Side, Sprains and Bruises, quickly. Sold by leading druggists.

## THE "HANDY" KEY CHAIN.

THIS little novelty is indispensable to every man who has once used one. The advantage is that you can never lose your keys, never misplace them, never leave them at home or in the post office box; can never lose them through a hole in your pocket, or



lose them in any way. It is neat, looks well, being nickel-plated.

## DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

Put the small ring over the front button of the pants and the keys on the ring of the other end, drop the key into the back pocket.

Agents wanted in every town and city; write for sample, send 25cts. in stamps. Retail for 25cts.

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## MOTHERLY WOMEN

are good housekeepers. These are slack times with the house painters and inside decorators, slacker than they will be later on. Now's the time to get a little inside work done, it's cheaper now than later. All women want their house to look neat, as well as they

## LOVE THEIR CHILDREN

to look nice. Post yourself in regard to the painting, and see A. G. STAPLES.

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with a method; attend to it as you would to your banking, if you want it to pay. Be careful as to the medium, then get the right style; be persistent and you are sure to succeed. Do this

## IN A BUSINESS LIKE WAY,

and success is sure. Have you used Cuts to illustrate your Advertisement? Perhaps it's just what is needed in your business. Our Engraving Bureau originates designs for newspaper ads., and very attractive ones, too. It is a certainty that

## YOUR SUCCESS IS SURE

if you spend an ordinary amount of time on your ads., if you haven't the time let us do it for you. We make suggestions, and carry them out.

## "PROGRESS" ENGRAVING BUREAU.