

## COOLIES IN TRINIDAD.

SOMETHING AKIN TO SLAVERY IN  
BRITISH DOMINIONS.Men and Women Imported From India  
Under Contract to Labor for Five Years—  
Wages Twenty-Five Cents a Day—The  
Injurious Effect on Free Labor.

There are some things about the treatment of the free labor problem in the British island colony of Trinidad that seem curiously medieval principles, says a correspondent of the N. Y. Sun.

Soon after the negroes of Trinidad were freed, now more than sixty years ago, the planters, upon the plea, doubtless just enough, that the freedmen would not work, obtained from the government special legislation providing for the importation of East Indian coolie laborers. When the importations of coolies began negroes were demanding from 60 cents to \$1.25 a day, according to the work they were employed to do. The law authorizing the importation of coolies provided that they should contract to remain with their employers for a term of years, working for 25 cents a day and that they should meanwhile have medical attendance and be returned free of charge to their homes. A special export tax on the products of the plantation of the coolies between India and Trinidad. The importation of the coolies has been going on ever since that time, until now from that source and from natural increase the 60,000 coolies in a population of 200,000. The white population is small, so that by far the larger part of the inhabitants are negroes and coolies. The former, is in competition with contract labor at 25 cents a day. Negro mechanics earn as high as \$1 a day. The negroes are as stronger race than the coolies, and the heavier work still falls upon them. They are the mechanics of the island, and there are many negro professional men. Low as is the standard of wages of the Trinidad mechanics, their labor is really not cheap to the employer according to standards in the United States. A bricklayer in Trinidad, for example working upon a plain 12-inch wall, will lay from 200 to 300 bricks a day, while a bricklayer in the United States doing similar work will lay from 1,000 to 1,500.

Trinidad is a Crown colony, and the planters are powerful in governmental affairs. At their demand coolie importations continue, though there is considerable opposition to the system, in view of the fact that wages are kept low and industrial depression has made necessary the raising of funds in aid of the unemployed. There was a strong protest from Trinidad when it was proposed to send thither from the densely populated island of Barbadoes, where there are 1,100 inhabitants to the square mile, the surplus negro labor, and to provide the negroes thus imported with land to be cultivated as their own. There had never been any such act of charity in aid of the Trinidad negroes squeezed by competition with contract coolie labor.

There were imported into Trinidad in the ten years from 1884 to 1893 more than 24,000 East Indian coolies, and it is believed that the importations of last year exceeded 2,000. It is charged that the coolies contribute very largely to the criminal population of the island, and statistics show that while the East Indians contribute 32 per cent, of the population, they contribute 46 per cent, of the convicts.

The coolies come under a contract to stay ten years on the island, five years in a species of slavery at 25 cents a day, the other five as their own masters, working for what they can get. During the first five years of his contract the coolie is liable to arrest and seven days imprisonment if found off his plantation without a permit from his master. It is charged that the coolies, though under contract at 25 cents a day, often receive considerably lower wages, and coolie children no light work at much smaller pay. Some of the coolies are old and decrepit, though the importations are mostly of men and women in the prime of life. With the laborers come their priests, Hindoo and Mohammedan. The Hindoos, by the way, greatly exceed in number the Mohammedans. When the first five years of the contract expire some of the coolies establish themselves as fruit growers or small shopkeepers, or in other lines of industry.

The coolie, like the negro, lives in a hut of bamboo, plastered on the outside. The huts built by the planters are often roofed with corrugated iron, while those built by the laborers themselves usually have palm-leaf roofs. A single plantation sometimes has several hundred coolies. They live with the utmost frugality. They are bred from infancy in their native country to a very light fare, and the climate of Trinidad is such that clothing and shelter are of the lightest kind. Probably no laborer of the United States, not even the Southern plantation negro, lives so cheaply. The men are clad at ordinary times mainly in the cummerbund, which varies in length from two to eight yards, and is wound about the middle for a breechcloth. The longer cummerbunds are sometimes wound down the legs well toward the knees so as to form a sort of trousers. When the men visit Port of Spain, the capital they usually wear a short white cotton jacket. The white turban is their head-gear. The women are very lightly clad. Their gala attire consists of graceful draperies of light stuff, including a sort of head-dress falling to the forehead, but not altogether concealing the smooth straight, glossy black hair. Some of the women have a smooth, brown beauty that is extremely attractive. The skin suggests carefully browned coffee, and one realizes that there are other beautiful complexions than those of the white races. Both men and women have fine regular features and well-made heads. The little, erect body of the coolie, with nothing but the whiteness of the turban and the cummerbund to

relieve its smooth brown, is in fine contrast with the slovenliness of the negro laborers. As to the thrift of the coolie that we owe the familiar though curious silver ornaments that the women wear and that travellers fetch home from Trinidad and other parts of the West Indies, where these people live. The coolie turns his savings into silver ornaments, beating the coins into bracelets, amulets, neck rings, nose rings, and the like. There is great variety in these things, though the general character of the Oriental decoration is preserved in all. Sometimes a neck ring is merely a large hoop with coins pendant from its whole periphery. Sometimes there is a double row of coins sitting upon a cord and hung about the neck so as to fall nearly to the waist. Often several of these rings of different sizes are put about the neck of a woman. A man's riches are known by the splendor of the adornments worn by his wife.

Some of the women have their arms covered with silver ornaments of various shapes and sizes. Those worn above the elbow are often broad plait bands of picked work held together at the ends with gay strings of many strands. The wrist are adorned with half a dozen bracelets of different weights, put on bending them so that they will slip over the hand. Some of these are wrought with much labor, though the decoration is usually coarse when examined at close hand. There is said to be a peculiar and proper order in which a set of bracelets should be worn. Many women wear a sort of silver at the side of the nose and others a huge nose ring. The neck rings are heavy and valuable. Doubtless the coolie has suffered by the fall in silver, but he still pins his faith to it with a blind zeal that would put to shame the modest advocate of free silver coinage at the rate of 16 to 1.

American visitors to the West Indies have long been familiar with the manner in which the coolie wife sells her ornaments to the buyer willing to pay the price fixed by the husband. The women stick to that price in a way that speaks volumes for marital authority. Every visitor with a little loose coin to spare brings home some trophies from the arms of the coolie women, and the more common forms of coolie ornaments have become familiar to many persons in the United States.

As the coolie wealth is placed in silver ornaments such things are usually objects of theft among these people, and many coolies are arraigned on the charge of stealing neck rings, amulets, and bracelets. Theft is a common crime among the coolies, and the temptation to commit it is strong because of the open character of the houses occupied by these people.

SUPPLIES OF OCEAN STEAMERS.  
Quantities of Eatables and Drinkables  
Needed in Every Voyage.

All the great liners which leave London, Liverpool, or Southampton carry a full complement of table linen, silverware and china. Bed furnishings for cabin berths and the officer's rooms are of first-class quality, and, whatever may be said by way of complaint regarding the food given to the crew and steerage passengers—and that is now very much improved—the saloon fare is above criticism.

Every steamship company allows a liberal margin for the wear and tear of supplies used on ship-board, and ample allowance is made for the spoiling of provisions, much of which cannot be avoided in spite of cold storage and other processes for the preservation of food.

A certain loss from waste of food seems inevitable, especially when the tremendous quantity of articles required is considered. On the beautiful Cunarder, the Campania, where no fewer than 600 people may dine in the saloon at the same time, the cuisine is necessarily on a large scale. Here are one week's figures: 20,000 lb. of fresh beef, 1,000 lb. of canned beef, 100,000 lb. of mutton, 1,400 lb. of lamb, 500 lb. of veal, 500 lb. of pork, 3,500 lb. of fresh fish, 10,000 fowls, and 400 chickens. Eggs are used at the rate of 2 per minute during the voyage, and are consumed at the rate of 3 per head and apples 2½ per head per day. The Etruria, and its 547 cabin passengers and crew of 297, uses on summer voyages 12,700 lb. of fresh beef, 760 lb. of corned beef, 5,320 lb. of mutton, 850 lb. of lamb, 350 lb. of veal, 350 lb. of pork, 2,000 lb. of fresh fish, 600 fowls, 300 chickens, 100 ducks, 50 geese, 80 turkeys, 200 brace of grouse, 15 tons of potatoes, 30 hampers of vegetables, 210 quarts of ice-cream, 1,000 quarts of milk, and 11,500 eggs. The alarming number of 1,100 bottles of champagne, 2,500 bottles of porter, 6,500 bottles of mineral water, and 650 bottles of various spirits is put on board to assuage the thirst of passengers.

## SURE SIGNS OF RAIN.

The Simple Methods by Which a Change of Weather can be Foretold.

Dogs grow sleepy and dull before rain, the cat constantly licks herself, geese gaggle in the pond, fowls and pigeons go early to roost, and the farm-horses grow restless.

Before rain the ants are all hurry and scurry, spiders crawl on the wall, toads emerge from their holes, and the garden paths are marked by slugs, who have come out on the prospect of a drink. When the chaffinch says "weet, weet" it is a sure sign of coming rain, and, as it draws near, peacocks cry and frogs croak clamorously from the ditches. All these are weather-signs to the countryman.

One of the surest ways of predicting weather changes is by observing the habits of snails. Snails never drink, but imbibe moisture during rain and exude it afterwards. They are seldom seen about except before rain, when they commence climbing trees and getting upon the leaves. If the down pour is to be heavy and prolonged, the snail seeks the under part of the leaf; but if a short or light rain is coming it will stay on the top side.

The spider's web is the simplest of nature's barometers. When there is a prospect of rain, the spider shortens the filaments by which the web is suspended, and leaves it in this state as long as the weather is variable. It "shortens sail." If a spider elongates its threads, it is a sign of calm,

fine weather, and if a spider remains inactive it is a sign of rain. The spider will not waste its work. A spider makes changes in its web every twenty-four hours, and if such changes are made just before sunset the night will be clear and fine.

## DANGEROUS CONSOLATION.

All Right in a Day or Two, But the Day Never Came.

"All right in a day or two" is the thought that consoles everyone who is suffering from any indisposition that does not prostrate him. In the case of a person bedridden for months with disease of the kidneys being asked, "Did you not have any warning of this condition you are now in?" "Yes, I was bothered first with back ache, with occasional headache, but did not consider myself sick or the necessity of medicine further than a plaster on my back or rubbing with my favourite liniment. It was a month before I began to realize that it was useless to further force myself to ignore my condition. The backache had become a pain in the back and sides, weak and tired feelings, high-colored urine with obstructions and stoppage, pain in the bladder, palpitation of the heart, poor appetite, indigestion, and a dull, languid feeling, with entire

lack of energy." Had the first signal of distress from the kidneys—backache—received the assistance of Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, the after state of misery and suffering would have been avoided. A few doses dispel first symptoms; delay results in liver, heart and stomach becoming affected. It is useless to expect to overcome this complication without a persistent and regular use of Chase's K. and L. Pills. Price 25c., sold by all dealers, Edmondson, Bae & Co., Toronto.

## Times Have Changed.

When the proposition was first made to substitute the locomotive engine for horses on the old Columbia Railroad in Pennsylvania, it was strenuously opposed upon the ground that it would bring down the price of horses and endanger neighboring structures because of the sparks. Even the chief engineer of the line opposed the change of motive power. There were only three locomotives in use on the road in 1835, but two years later there were forty, and practically no other motive power was used.

## Buried in a Strange Coffin.

One of the strangest coffins ever told of is that for which the British War Department is said to be responsible. The story that a workman engaged in casting metal for the manufacture of ordnance at

the Woolwich Arsenal lost his balance and fell into a cauldron containing twelve tons of molten steel. The metal was at white heat, and the man was utterly consumed in less time than it takes to tell it. The War department authorities held a conference, and decided not to profane the dead by using the metal in the manufacture of ordnance, and that mass of metal was actually buried and a church of England clergyman read the service for the dead over it.

## Help to Old Age.

As life wears on toward its limit, men and women feel the need of such a remedy as Hawker's nerve and stomach tonic to renew the vital forces and overcome the ills that come with advancing years. It may be that youthful carelessness or real hardship has seriously affected the physical system, leaving a legacy of disease. In any case the blood gradually loses its vitality, the nerves become perhaps a source of frequent torture, the digestion may be impaired, and life at times seems a real burden instead of a pleasure and delight.

The great restorative power of Hawker's nerve and stomach tonic aiding digestion, forming new and rich blood, invigorating the nerves and restoring the system generally to a state of healthful vigor, makes it a special favorite with those advanced in

years. Whoever has given it a fair trial has found it to be in very truth a health restorer. It is sold by all druggists and dealers and is manufactured only by the Hawker Medicine Co. (Ltd) St. John. N. B. and New York City.

## Purely From Force of Habit.

The auction room was crowded, and the collection of turniture, art, and bric-a-brac being unusually choice, the bidding had been very spirited. During an interval of the sale a man with a pale and agitated countenance pushed his way to the auctioneer's side, and engaged him in a whispered conversation. Presently he stood aside, and the auctioneer rapped attention with his hammer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, in a loud voice, "I have to inform you that a gentleman present has lost his pocket-book containing \$300. He offers \$40 for its return."

Instantly a small man in the background sprang upon a chair and cried, excitedly:—"I'll give \$50 for it."

## The Spirit of Accuracy.

"What time does the last train leave?" asked the traveller.

And the gatekeeper at the Boston depot gave him a haughty look, and replied:—"When the road quits business."

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