EASTON GAZETTE.

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From the Philadelphia Saturday Courier.

A FORTUNE.

FOUNDED ON A HURRICANE.

BY E. C. WAITMUGH.

The town of Trinidad, upon the south side of the island of Cuba, presents a very picturesque appearance from the sea. The dark blue mountains of St Juan, rising to the height of three thousand feet, form the back ground of the picture, throwing the town into fine relief—with its white walls and turrets—At a distance, it appears like a white blur upon the mountain side. In any other region than the tropics it might, at first glance, be mistaken for a drift of snow, or a cloud resting upon the dark mountain's side, but the one is as impossible as the other, for, during the dry season, from October till April, not even a mist floats on the pure ether by day, or dims the brilliancy of the spangled blue of night. Gradually from this white obscure are shadowed forth, in faint outlines, turrets and cupolas, at every step becoming more distinct till at last the miniature houses with little dots for windows, stand forth brightly in the glare of a mid-day sun.

The ground between the seashore and the town is barren and sandy, covered with brushwood, with here and there a clump of palms and the umbrageous mango, broken into lagoons, or pools of salt water, near the shore, which at a distance have a pleasing effect, but upon inspection, the delusion quickly vanishes. These pretty lakes are in reality nothing but salt bogs, tenanted by a land crab; the shores furrowed by the sand grub, and haunted by myriads of mosquitoes.

The harbour, with its little port of Casilda is formed by a thin strip of land, about two miles in length and densely covered with mongrove bushes. At the extremity of the point, or entrance to the harbour, is erected a small fort, which is apt to be submerged during a hurricane, and is never garrisoned by more than half a dozen soldiers. Between this fort and Pedro Blanco, a small island, is a narrow and intricate passage, through which can pass vessels only of a light draught.

With this bird's-eye view of the town and harbour, we will proceed with our narrative.

In the latter part of the month of September of the year 180–, some forty or fifty of the merchants and planters of Trinidad were collected together at the head of Calle de Gutierez discussing the various topics of the day, in which the probable rise and fall of the prices of sugar and molasses was decidedly the most interesting. Amongst the group, were the keen looking Catalonian, the blunt Biscayan, and vivacious Andalusian emigrants from the mother country, in pursuit of wealth;—the joke was bandied about in that boisterous vein so peculiar to the Spaniard, interrupted occasionally by the presence of a passing signorita with flowing mantilla, the only covering to her head, when compliments would fall freely from the lips of all.—Far from being offended, the lady appeared to consider it a just tribute to her personal charms—would reply with great gravity, *muchisimos gracias, Caballeros*—and pass on, with the grace and dignity of a queen. A Montero, upon a metal pacer, darted up to the door, and saluted the group with that natural air of polite respect from which a true Spaniard never departs.

'*Senores Caballeros: dois guard ustedes.*' 'Gentlemen, God be with you—what do you think of the weather?'

'It looks bad enough,' replied one; 'we we shall have it tough and strong—the mountain passes are dark as night, with heavy clouds.'

'Yes,' said another, 'and the sea moans and heaves upon Pedro Blanco in a way that forebodes a hurricane.'

The sea did present a strange and unnatural appearance, covered—almost obscured—by masses of vapor rolling over the surface. The atmosphere was so perfectly calm that the flames of a candle burnt as steady in the open air as if enclosed within a crystal vase. All were now busy speculating upon the indications of the heavens with the exception of one; to whom calms and storms apparently were alike indifferent.

Seated upon the counter, with abstracted air and folded arms, kicking his heels against the boards; there was an air of recklessness about the youth that plainly told his fortune to be desperate, and that he was at that very moment turning over in his mind the probable chances of success for a dinner, already having failed in procuring a breakfast. The light-blue eye, fair hair, and ruddy complexion disclosed at a glance his Anglo-Saxon blood; and as he gazed at the dark eyed, sun burnt features that surrounded him, there was an expression which seemed to say—'let it blow the whole island over to Africa for aught I care: I have neither kith nor kin here, and am as pennyless as a Spanish beggar.' Something out of the common order of events, appeared to animate the group; some were collected together apart, in earnest conversation; others were mounting horses and scampering off to the Casilda, whilst a party, upon the house top were gazing through spy-glasses at the sea. The youth before described, inquired of an individual who had just come down, and who closed his glass with a snap that shattered the instrument, exclaiming at the same time, 'Caramba, she's gone.'

'What is the matter, *Senor*! there seems to be a screw out of the place somewhere, what is it?'

'Why, Senor Americano mio. There is a barque outside there, in which we are all interested—a good half million of freight, that is likely to be swamped by this infernal hurricane, or nabbed by John Bull, that's all.'

The youth spoken to, mounted the steps and was quickly upon the parapet. Almost all the houses of Trinidad are constructed with flat roofs, with a parapet about three feet high, for the purpose of catching rain water during the wet season.

Upon reaching the parapet, he was astonished at the sudden change from a breathless calm to a ferocious gale, with every premonition of one of those terrible hurricanes that sometimes, in a single hour, lay waste whole districts. The inhabitants were hurrying to shelter in the greatest trepidation, closing their shops and barricading their doors and windows—the streets were already strewed with fragments of roofs and broken tiles torn from their fastenings by the first fury of the blast. The vultures, those licensed scavengers of every West India town, at all hours of the day skimming over the tops of houses or soaring to a great height in gigantic circles, were now crouching beneath the parapets, and the atmosphere was filled with flocks of screaming sea gulls, driven from their habitations upon the coasts and numerous islands, by the irresistable fury of the wind.

A drift like smoke rolled over the ocean and spread across the land to the mountain's base. At intervals, the surface of the sea, to the utmost limits of the wide extended horizon, was distinctly visible, lashed into a foam, and whirled aloft in wreaths of spray from the tops of the curling waves.

Two vessels were distinctly seen, scudding before the wind under close reefed topsail. Onward they both came with the speed of race horses, the one further seaward, from the cut of her canvass and squareness of yards, evidently a man of-war, in full chase; as she rose upon a swell, her long dark hull and line of ports were visible; from the bow at the same moment issued a volume of smoke, which as suddenly was swept away by the wind and mingled with the floating spray and haze, and ere the sound of the cannon had reached the shores (in low suppressed murmurs,) the Spanish barque had rounded Pedro Blanco, dropt her anchors, and swung round to the wind. The man of war came dashing in after under bare poles, her close reefed foresail but a few moments before having been blown clean out of the bolt ropes; and whirled off to leeward, twisting & twirling about until it was lost in the haze that now covered every thing with an impenetrable veil; but ere the two vessels were closed from view, it was evident that the man of war had passed close under the stern of the slaver, and was riding upon the swell with four anchors ahead.

The gale now had increased almost to a hurricane, it was with difficulty the youth could maintain his position upon the parapet; he therefore descended to the store below, and mingled with the anxious group collected there.

It was conceeded by all that the Esperanza, for such was the name of the slaver, was a gone case. If she rode out the gale, which was very improbable, the Stag, a well known British cruiser would certainly capture her, and if the hurricane increased, as there was every likelihood, both vessels must be wrecked with the chance of all hands perishing.

One said he would sell his interest for fifty ounces, another for five hundred, all appearing to think the chances so perfectly desperate, as scarcely worth an hours purchase. The hero of our story listened to every thing with the deepest interest; at last he stept boldly up to one of the gentlemen and said.

'Come, sir, what did you say you would take for your interest in that ship?'

'I'll take five hundred ounces, and that's selling what if all had gone right, would fetch at the barracoon this day fifty thousand dollars.'

'Yes replied the stranger, 'but she will never come ashore except in pieces—Look at that—there goes the roof off of Don Vincente's house, as clean as a whistle. The hurricane is up—it will tear that ship to pieces in less than an hour. I'll give you one hundred ounces for your share; and take my chance.'

'Pags! its a bargain;' cried the Spaniard; 'John Bull has got her, I believe, already, La Esperanza must have drifted down upon her ere this.'

Seven or eight shares were purchased upon the spot, and a bargain made with the others, who appeared to view our friend in no other light than a madman, that if he saved the ship and cargo, he was to receive 25 per cent upon the gross amount.

No sooner was the negociation concluded and the writings which were hastily drawn, safely deposited in his pocket, than he bounded forth into the storm, with a cry of "*a dios senores*," and was lost in the gloom which shrouded every thing without.

Onward he dashed, reckless of the thousand dangers that threatened to annihilate him at every step, from showers of tiles and broken parapets hurled at his feet by the wind, which, though not yet at its height was howling above his head with great fury occasionally licking up the dust and pebbles in whirling eddies, and then spattering it into his face with such force, as not only to blind, but for a time to cause him to reel and stagger.

A brave man might well have cowered beneath that blast—but our youth had felt, deeply felt, the pangs of a crushing poverty; with a spirit of the highest order, and a consciousness of his own merits, he had too often felt the deep degradation his abject poverty had made him subject to. Here was a chance—a terrible one to be sure, if he failed, it would be death in the excitement of battle; if he succeeded, a double reward awaited him, a magnificent fortune and the preservation of the lives of a thousand helpless beings. Upon emerging from the town, the road lay before him in almost a straight line, for three miles, to the little village of the Casilda. From this point, on a clear day the eye can embrace a view of two hundred miles of sea, from North to South, but now, the road upon which he was ploughing his way, was scarcely discernable twenty yards ahead. Onward he labored, occasionally, when the blast with uncommon fury swept across his path, seeking a temporary shelter beneath the hedges formed by the prickly pear and wild pine apple—beneath whose interwoven branches clustered thousands of land crabs, on their way to the sea from the [illegible]. An army of these creatures crossing his path, regardless of the countless uplifted hands from this strange multitude, he crashed through the array, kicking from his feet some half dozen, that had fastened upon his legs with their long pincering claws.

The sea was swolen fat beyond its natural boundaries. The streets of the village were over flowed, and where, but a few hours before, the gay volante had whirled up the dust upon a sandy road, now were covered with boats adrift, floating logs, casks and merchandize of every description. Every minute marked a sensible increase of the power of the wind; occasionally, vast bodies of water were scooped up by the mighty hand of the tempest and crushed into vapor, or fell far from where they had been torn, in showers of brine. The foam of the sea floated overhead like flakes of snow. The incessant roll of tropical thunder, Heaven's heaviest artillery, reverberated from the mountain's base, and was [illegible] with the roar of the wind and surf which pealed upon the shores of the neighboring islands occasionally dashing up through the thick haze, pyramids of foam and spray.

After wading and floundering through ponds of water under the lea of a large store, he encountered a fisherman by the name of Antonio, a hardy fellow, one of the best pilots of the port. To him he immediately made known his intentions, and offered a thousand dollars if he would accompany him with his boat on board the slaver.

'Why Senor,' said Antonio, 'you must be mad. We should be swamped for a dead certainty; and what good could we do, suppose we reached her!'

'I'll make your fortune!' was the prompt reply. 'Does she still hold on?'

'Si, Senor.;

'And how's the cruiser?'

'Oh, tight enough—with four anchors out—two chain cables. She'll founder at her anchors if this gale increases.'

'We can paddle under the lea of the mangrove bushes of the strip of land over the other side of the harbor, till we come to the Fort, then before the wind, you pulling, I bailing; in three minutes we can fetch the slaver, once on board I'll show you we can save her.'

Sull Antonio doubted, wavered; all the eloquence of argument, and stout assurances with scorn of danger, appeared not in the least to stagger his determination to decline the perilous adventure.

'Lend me your boat, then. By Heaven! I'll go alone; and when I meet you to-morrow, with five thousand Spanish doubloons in my chest, you'll curse yourself for not having had the courage to follow.'

'Stop one moment. How much say you?'

At that instant a crash of thunder made the earth tremble beneath their feet, accompanied by a flash that pierced thro' the gloom, illuminating every object with a lurid glare, the foam flakes sailing through the air like myraids of floating brands of fire; at the same instant a transient glance was caught of the two vessels, reeling and plunging at their anchors.

'Two thousand doubloons!' cried the indomitable stranger, in a voice clear as a trumpet, every word distinctly heard by Antonio, above the roar of the elements.

'Agreed—come on!' and they jumped into the boat, Antonio exclaiming at the same time 'Another such a clap of thunder as that, and good bye hurricane.'*

After great difficulty, and the escape from many dreadful blasts, they succeeded in reaching the opposite shore; but the sea made a clear breach across the strip of land, and though broken by the mangrove bushes, yet the surge rolled over into the harbor with terrible force. The boat was light, and pulled by vigorous & skilful hands; in a short time the reached the deserted Fort, under the lee of which they rested for a few moments, and braced their nerves for the great struggle; when they should be exposed to the full fury of the wind and waves, the frail bark being as yet protected by the land under which they had for an hour labored their perilous passage. Antonio ejaculated a short prayer, and crossed himself very devoutly some half dozen times, then seizing the oars, cried out—

'Here goes. We can't miss her. She lies dead to leeward of that reef.'

The boat shot forth from her cover and was immediately whirled round by the wind, one of the oars escaping from his hand, it was caught in a minute by his companion, ere the rower had time to utter the cry of terror the accident occasioned. The sea was like a turbulent field of snow; the spray flew past them with terrible velocity—a single wave, ere it could lift its head on high, was cut off into foam, & mist & smoke; with the speed of an arrow shot from a bow, did they skim and gurr through the water.—When the American cried out, 'Starboard oar—hard a starboard!' it was promptly obeyed, and the bark wheeled round the stern of the slaver, and as she touched her dark hull, the adventures seized the mizen chains and in less time than we have taken to describe it, were safely upon the deck: the boat being swamped beneath the gunwales of the ship as she rolled to leeward. The storm was now at its height—the Captain was upon his knees [illegible], and crying out to that God for mercy whose divine precepts he had forgotten, when he entered into the dreadful traffic of his fellow men.

At every plunge of the vessel, the water poured over her bows and deloged the decks. From the bosom of the laboring craft issued a yell of mingled agony & terror, from eight hundred souls confined below, which mingled with the blast, & must have been heard far inland by the distant Vega,† who might fancy that a thousand fiends were shrieking in the elemental strife above.

'Where's your axe—give it me. Antonio take another. Where is the cruiser? I see her—we can clear her. Hard a port your helm. All hands run up the fore-top-mast stay sail—cut!' rapidly uttered the dauntless youth.

The cables were severed at a blow; the sail burst from the bolt ropes, the ship rose upon a roller crested with foam; careened round before the blast and under the impulse of the hurricane, dashed madly towards the shore, passing the cruiser like a phantom, and disappearing amidst the haze and drift and surf: in a moment after, she struck. A tremendous roller lifted her again from the ground, and after several successive shocks, she plunged into comparatively smooth water.

The next morning the Esperanza, lay high and dry a half mile from the shore and landed her cargo in safety. And before night the bold and pennyless adventurer was in possession of one hundred thousand dollars—his well earned share of a cargo, valued at that time, at nearly four hundred thousand dollars, whilst the British cruiser was content to to weigh anchor and renew his honorable efforts against a trade now almost universally denounced the worst of piracy.

The hero of our sketch has since acquired great wealth, and possesses an income of some two hundred thousand dollars per annum, and is a Grandee of Spain, with several titles of distinction.

It is nearly forty years since this incident occurred; he still enjoys excellent health, and in the conduct of his affairs is distinguished for that energy which marked his first career—as well as for every other quality that can adorn the character of a gentleman.

So much for making the best of a chance: the first instance, we suppose, of doubloons being coined out of a hurricane.

* The invariable indication of a clearing off
†Cottager.

'*Lay on, Mick Duff*'—Michael Duff and Tom Crowley were yesterday brought before the Recorder, for practically illustrating their bellicose propensities on the Levee, contrary to the statute in that case made and provided, and the peace and dignity of the State.

Tom Tanner, a witness who was present, put the court in possession of the terms and conditions of the fight—The weapons were fists; they stood at striking distance, and as much nearer as they could clutch one another. The battle was to be fought on the knock down and drag-out principle, agreeably to the 'sports of the ring,' as laid down in the Kentucky code.

Who was the aggressor?' said the Recorder to the witness, Tanner.

'Why, Crowley was, of coorse,' said Tanner: 'he challenged Mick, & wouldn't give him pace nor aze till he fought him.'

'Well, what did you say?' inquired the Recorder. 'Did you endeavor to make peace?'

'I did no such thing, yer anor,' said Tanner, 'for I seed Tom was itchin' for a batin', and I was detarmined to let him have it: so as soon as iver I seed Mick square at him, I said, as our countryman Moore, the beautiful dramatic poet of nature, ilegantly expresses it:—

'Whoo! lay on Mick Duff!

Pitch into Crowley till he cries ENOUGH!'

And so he did, yer anor—as beautiful as if he tuck lessons from O'Rourke or Deaf Burke himself!'

They were all fined for disturbing the peace, and discharged.—[Pic.

FEMALE DRESS.

The following remarks are from one who ought to be good authority on such subjects—the Countess of Blessington:—

What a multiplicity of pretty things we women require to render us what we consider presentable! and how few of us, however good looking we may chance to be, would agree with the poet, that 'loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is when unadorned, adorned the most.' Even the fairest of the sex like to enhance the charms of nature by the aid of dress, and the plainest hope to become less so by its assistance.

Men are never sufficiently sensible of our humility, in considering so necessary to increase our attractions in order to please them, nor grateful enough for the pains we bestow in the attempts. Husbands and fathers are particularly insensible to this amiable desire on the parts of their wives and daughters, and when asked to pay the heavy bills incurred in consequence of this praiseworthy humility and desire to please, evince any feeling rather than that of satisfaction. It is only admirers, not called upon to pay these said bills, who duly appreciate the cause and effect, and who can hear of women passing whole hours in tempting shops, without that elongation of countenance peculiar to husbands and fathers.

I could not help thinking with the philosopher, how many things I saw to day that could be done without. If women could be made to understand that costliness of attire seldom adds beauty, and often deteriorates it, a great amelioration in expence could be accomplished.

Transparent muslin, the cheapest of all materials, is one of the prettiest, too, for summer's wear, and, with the addition of some bows of delicate colored riband, or a bouquet of fresh flowers forms a most becoming dress. The lowness of the price of such a robe enables the purchaser to have so frequent a change of it, that even those who are far from rich may have half a dozen, while one single robe of a more expensive material will cost more; and having done so, the owner will think it right to wear it more frequently than is consistent with the freshness and purity that should ever be the distinguishing characteristics in female dress, in order to indemnify herself for the expense.

I was never more struck with this fact than a short time ago, when I saw two ladies seated next each other, both young and handsome, but one owing to the freshness of her robe, which was of simple organdie, looked infinitely better than the other, who was quite as pretty, but who, wearing a robe of expensive lace, whose whiteness had fallen into the 'sere and yellow leaf,' appeared faded & *passe*.

Be wise, then, ye young and fair; and if, as I suspect, your object be to please the lords of the creation, let your dress in summer be snowy white muslin, never worn after its pristine purity becomes problematical; and in winter let some half dozen plain and simple silk gowns be purchased, instead of the two or three expensive ones that generally form the wardrobe, and which consequently, soon not only lose their lustre, but give the wearer the appearance of having suffered the same fate.

And you, O husbands and fathers, present and future, be ye duly impressed with a sense of your manifold obligations to me, for thus opening the eyes of your wives and daughters how to please without draining your purses; and when the maledictions of lace, velvet and satin sellers fall on my hapless head for counsel so injurious to their interests, remember they are incurred for your's!

THE PEYTON STAKE.

We note that this great stake begins to attract the general attention of the press. As it is now very soon to come off, our readers may be pleased to know something about it, and happily we have lately received a letter from the scene of the strife that is to be, with some information in regard to the number likely to start. 'To begin at the beginning,' the stake is named after our distinguished fellow citizen, Mr. Peyton, the U. S. Attorney for this District, who, we think, suggested it. It was projected in those seemingly palmy days, when bank notes were to be had for the asking, and the value of property was measured thereby. Accordingly, the conditions of the stake are higher than those of any other ever got up in this country or in Europe.—The subscription is $5000 and the forfeit $1000. Efforts have been made to have the subscription reduced by mutual consent of parties, but some one or two of them are so sanguine of success, that they prefer to go for the full five thousand, and each man who starts a colt in the race must put up this 'pile,' besides his forfeit, if he have more than one nomination. But more of the conditions: The stake is for four year olds, to carry 100 lbs. with the usual allowance of 3 lbs. to fillies & geldings; four mile heats; the race to be run at Nashville, Tennessee, on Tuesday next, the 10th inst. In this stake there are thirty nominations, several gentlemen having two. Some of these nominations are void by the death of subscribers; others by the death of the produce named, or the failure of mares; of the precise number we are not accurately informed.

Now as to the number which are likely to start. We have been induced to believe that but four will come to the post, namely, Mr. Hugh Kirkman's Leviathan colt out of an imported marg; Mr. Thos Kirkman's Glencoe colt out of Giantess; Col. Hampton's half brother of Monarch and The Queen; and Mr. Peyton's filly Great Western, the produce of the famous Northern mare, Black Maria, and imported Luzborough. Of these, the first named is understood to be the favorite. He has 'been out,' we think, and won a fine race. Mr. T. Kirkman's nomination may also have started in public, but we are not certain; we may possibly have confounded his with his brother's nomination, and we have not at this moment leisure to run back over our files to refresh our memory. Herald, as Col. Hampton's nomination is called, won a very excellent two mile race at Columbia, S. C. last autumn. He is accompanied by a nomination of Mr. Rogers, but now owned by Col. Hampton, a half sister of the renowned Wagner, who may possibly start in case of accident to Herald. The Great Western has never to our knowledge started, but she comes of an excellent stock, her dam being famed both for speed and stoutness, and her sire was the sire of Picton and Portsmouth, both brilliant performers on the turf. The *purely* native stock of the country will not show in this race at all, almost all the nominations being the produce of imported horses.

A word now for the value of the stake. We hazard the conjecture that at least ten nominations are void, for the causes before stated, or will be 'as good as' void by the operation of the Bankrupt Law. This leaves us twenty paying nominations, of which sixteen, we suppose, will forfeit, making $16 000. The four which start put up $5000 each, $20 000—making $36;000 in all which will be run for; so that the fortunate winner will net thirty thousand dollars by the race—for it is to be presumed that he will throw in the odd thousand for treeting.

We have taken pains to have the race promptly reported for us by an 'old hand.' The whole meeting promises to be very interesting, for there are several rich stakes to come off which would have excited general attention, were they not overshadowed by the overwhelming magnitude of the 'Great Peyton' Nashville will be crowded, we presume, as it has never yet been, and we are exceedingly sorry that we cannot help to swell the number of visiters by an editorial unit. —*Pic.*

New Theory as to who Homer was.—A writer in the Boston Daily Advertiser gives an account of a treatise recently published by the Rev. John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan, Wales in which the learned author attempts to prove that the Iliad and Odyssey, which have always been attributed to Homer, or have at least borne his name, are really translations of Jewish works, probably written by Moses; that they embody in symbolical or metaphorical language all the truths and doctrines of the Old Testament, with many of those contained in the New.

The editor of the New York Evening Post, whence we gather this article, says the work is perfectly serious—its author is evidently sincere. On this hypothesis, Agamemnon is only a representation of Joshua; Heilen represents Rahab; Nestor, Abraham, and Penelope, Sarah. The illusions made to Alcinous, the royal gardener, are to be understood of Adam. Priam is an impenitent king, abandoned by God and never sanctified by grace. The goddess Ate is Satan who visits Agamemnon and compels him to submit to a solemn expiation. Achilles, on the other hand, is one of the elect. Although he has sinned, grace descends upon him, he will be regenerated, will begin a new life, and eventually be saved.

These are but specimens of the results of the reasoning of the work. It is not the production of a skeptic, nor intended for a joke in any way. The author is a sincere member of the established church. *Pic.*

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