

THE NEWS

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From the Scientific American. WATER SPOUTS—WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS.

Messrs. Editors:—I have read with pleasure the interesting letters in your valuable journal, from "D. C." (David Christy, Esq., I suppose). An authority, too, upon the subject he treats, and those analogues to it, as good as any in the United States. I know that his observations, especially in the Southern Alleghenies, have been practical and thorough. The phenomenon exhibited at Clayton, Ga., I have witnessed at Hickory Nut Gap, on the road from Asheville to Rutherfordton, and at other points in the mountains of Western North Carolina. One of the most singular and useful effects of fog and air currents is exhibited yearly on Tryon Mountain, in Polk county, near the upper waters of the Saluda River. There frost is never known and the peach crop never fails. In my investigations in Western North Carolina, I found similar mountain sides in other counties, where, for instance, the leaves are untouched by frost for many days later in the year than those adjoining.

Water spouts I have frequently heard of and had the pleasure of being in a small one. On the French Broad River above the Warm Springs, can even now be seen the traces of one by which a boulder containing at least 1000 cubic feet was carried from the top of the mountain about 400 yards down into the bed of the river. The track of the spout was about thirty feet wide. It occurred many years ago, and one of the old settlers told me it was accompanied by a great wind and noise. In Haywood county there was a singular split in the top of a mountain, said to have occurred about the same time. I visited the track of one on an old road leading from the Warm Springs to Tennessee. Just where the spout crossed, the road had been treated with poles on the corduroy plan. In their place was an immense ditch, while some of the poles were to be found in trees far below. One of the neighbors describing it, said, "the spring branch was as big as Broad River." I learned also that they were frequent there, and the road, though the best and shortest to Tennessee, had to be abandoned for that reason. The formation of the gap above was similar to that described by "D. C." at Clayton and on the north-east side (in Tennessee, the State line, apparently straight on the map, runs with the Unaka Ridge, hence is zigzag) was a farm noted for its peaches and grapes. I tried both myself when none were to be had anywhere else for sixty miles around. I shall not occupy your valuable space with any theories as to the frost-line or fog and air currents. The latter has been well and no doubt will be fully treated by "D. C." and I know more ably than I should; but there are peculiarities of formation and location in the mountains of Western North Carolina, which especially fit them for the culture of the grape. I know by observation, and it has been demonstrated by others in practical experience. One of these peculiarities is in many points a total absence of frost, or, as some term it, the existence of a line of altitude above which frost has never been known. The seeming mystery is plainly solved in the action of fog and air currents similar to that so well described as existing at Clayton, Ga. In one point I think "D. C." is incorrect; the term is not Balk, but Bald; from the absence of any tree-growth. The Indians viewed these bald peaks with a religious reverence. My own opinion is that they had an origin in fire, and as the practice of burning the woods is yearly becoming less common, they are decreasing. Another theory is that they are caused by the fierce, cold winds which sweep the elevated and exposed points. Still, I have seen points equally high in the immediate neighborhood covered with trees. Some of the Indians call them "Devil's tracks."

The Warm Springs region is one of peculiar interest to scientific men. The water of the Springs has a temperature of 104 deg. Fahrenheit, contains sulphur, carbonic acid gas, and traces of some other minerals. They are located near the junction of the limestone and metamorphic slates. As a mineral region the country has never been well explored; lead, silver, and copper are plenty, iron of the best quality abundant; a large mass of corundum opens a few miles from the Springs, and I was shown a sample of cinabar which was said to have been obtained from a creek about fifteen miles from the Springs. The scenery is wildly grand and beautiful, and were the

river but navigable its fame would be world wide. A railroad from Greenville, S. C., via Asheville, N. C., to some point on the East Tenn. and Va. Road, has for years been chartered; also an extension of the Western N. C. R. R. to a similar point. One will be built; surveys have been made and some grading done. The Springs are located on the French Broad River, twenty four miles from Greenville, Tenn., on the East Tenn. and Virginia R. R.

H. E. COLTON. Brooklyn, L. I., Dec. 27, 1866.

From the Richmond Whig. THE DIGNITY OF LABOR.

The London Times alludes to the general rise of prices as one of the characteristics of the present generation, and adds that nothing has risen in value so much as man. It declares that at this epoch there are no glutted labor markets and overstocked professions. There is a dearth of applicants for admission to the old liberal professions—inclined in all interior callings down to that of domestic service. This result is attributed to an extraordinary multiplication of demand, and an equally remarkable modification of social opinions. The Times says: "The time was when there were only three recognized liberal professions. We might now reckon thirty, and what is of still more importance, any one of these is thought just as liberal—that is just as becoming to a gentleman as any other. Now-a-days young gentlemen go into counting houses as readily as they would go into the Guards, and are thought none the worse of. There is an immense field of employment, and no prejudices to interfere with anybody's choice. The necessary consequence is that all old callings suffer a little, and these most in which there was least natural attraction."

Such are the results of the multiplication of industries and of a high industrial development. The world over, there is a demand for intelligent labor, and when it can employ itself to most advantage and without incurring social ostracism in the physical callings, as distinguished from those purely mental, we must expect these latter to be shunned. It is gratifying to witness the triumph of educated labor over hoary prejudices, and to see that intellect and energy, untrammelled by social restraints, are allowed free scope and a field for selection, limited only by the almost innumerable present avocations of life. It is to education, to science, that we are indebted for those almost countless inventions that have made labor both easy and profitable; that have made machinery supply the place of human muscle, and have left man to supervise and direct it. The reproductive power thus created is wonderful to contemplate. Machinery makes machinery, and the more there is created, and the greater its capacity, the more extended will be the sphere for human labor, the greater the demand for it, the richer its rewards, and the more respectable and influential it becomes.

Physical science is making the world, as it were, a new one, and is breaking down class distinctions and social prejudices, and elevating man above mere callings and professions. The time is at hand when man makes the occupation honorable, and not the occupation, the man. In this grand march of improvement, we of the South are laggards. Enjoying until recently an opulence that left us scarcely anything to wish, with few large cities, devoted to agriculture, the bulk of our male population landed proprietors, the negroes slaves and laborers—we were not thrown into competition with other people, and were without those incentives to commercial and mechanical pursuits that others had. We lived generously, comfortably, indolently. Labor was not a necessity, since we had slaves to do that labor for us. In choosing occupations for our young men we confined ourselves to the learned professions—occasionally embracing commerce—never the mechanical pursuits unless compelled to it by poverty, or in those instances in which mechanics brought up their sons in their own business. It is useless to deny that class distinctions and social prejudices existed. They are not yet extirpated. Poor as our people are, there are many who would rather suffer than see their sons engage in trades. It is only by hard labor in agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the mechanic arts, that we can ever recover our lost wealth and influence, and restore the South to its former high estate. There is not on earth a State in which well-directed labor can accomplish greater results than in Virginia—nor where the physical sciences and the mechanic arts could have a finer field. We have as rich lands as there are on the globe, and mines, minerals and water-power vast and inexhaustible. We cannot look to professional men to make those resources available. We must have educated labor and muscle for that purpose; and all that have sons should teach, or cause them to be taught, the physical sciences, and encourage them to engage in some one or another of the industrial pursuits, instead of in law and physic. Productive industry is what is wanted. If it is respectable in England it should be respectable in Virginia. Contempt for work and those who have to engage in it is despicable enough in those who are rich but it becomes absurd and criminal when displayed by those who are dependent upon it as ourselves, and who must be beggars without it.

CONFLICT IN A STATE PRISON.

The Louisville Courier gives the following particulars of the insurrection at the Jeffersonville (Indiana) Penitentiary, briefly reported by telegraph:

"A desperate convict by the name of George Henderson, who had been sentenced to four year's imprisonment for grand larceny in the Southern Indiana Penitentiary, an old offender, and the leader of an outbreak at the Joliet (Illinois) Penitentiary, in which he acknowledged having killed the warden several years since, was regarded with suspicion by the officers of the prison as being in league with some of the rest of the prisoners for the purpose of inciting them to mutiny. In the afternoon while the convicts were at work in the wheel shops, where Henderson also usually worked, he was detected by Mr. Sage, the guard in charge of that department, in putting an unusual keen edge upon his knife at the grindstone, the convicts using these knives about their persons for nothing else but to eat with, ordered him to give up the knife and go on with his work; whereupon he jumped upon Mr. Sage, making an attack with his knife, and would have succeeded in killing the officer but for the timely arrival of Mr. Baugh, the guard under the wheel shops, who threw off the prisoner, at the same time firing four ineffectual shots at him, the prisoner escaping the shots by taking refuge behind a pile of wagon wheels, but returning fight by throwing heavy bars of iron at the officers. Mr. Baugh, finding the pistol shooting of no effect, made an attack with a wheel spoke, and with one effectual blow succeeded in felling the convict to the floor. During the scene the guards were promptly at their separate posts, expecting at any moment an outbreak, which, through the vigilance of those efficient men, was kept under entire subjection. Henderson, who was still resisting the officers, was finally taken to the whipping-post, and about to have the cat-o-nine-tails applied, when he was discovered to swoon. He was placed in his cell, suspected to be under the influence of tobacco, which parrotic had been successfully applied on previous occasions by this prisoner in swallowing large quantities of the juice about the time a whipping was to come off. In an hour and a half, upon a visit to his cell, he was found a corpse. A post mortem examination was made by Dr. McArde, of this city. The blow from which he is supposed to have died was inflicted on the left side of the head, producing a fracture of the skull bone. An inquest was held upon the body, and a verdict rendered of "justifiable homicide."

From the New York World, Jan. 17. THE STATE OF EUROPE.

The two great questions which are at present engaging the attention of the European statesmen are slowly but steadily approaching their final solution. In Turkey, the resistance of the Christian population to the British despotism of the Turks, has since the beginning of the New Year, largely gained in dimension and strength. It is no longer Crete alone which is in arms. The smaller islands in the Mediterranean have followed the example set by their larger sister, and united to chase the Turks from the sea. The province of Thessaly, which borders upon Greece, is likewise in full insurrection, and furnishes a convenient rendezvous for the great number of Greek youth who can no longer restrain their warlike patriotism. In Greece the people, with an astonishing unanimity, are bringing an irresistible pressure to bear upon the Government in behalf of an open support of their kindred and co-religionists in the Turkish provinces. The schemes of the Servians in Northern Turkey, who are the most warlike of all the Christian tribes, and who constitute the bulk of the population in the Provinces of Servia, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro, are still more ominous than the movement of the Greeks in the South, and the impending outbreak in Bosnia may, therefore, give to the Turks, in a few weeks, more trouble than the Cretan insurrection has done during the past eight months. Russia is quietly but firmly maturing her policy for the rapidly approaching crisis, while England and France irresolutely confine themselves to a declaration that they will not interfere as long as Russia remains neutral. A European Conference, which is now much talked of, has no more chance of success than the late London Conference for the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty. According to present appearances, the establishment of one or two Christian empires upon the ruins of the Mohammedan power in European Turkey is an event not far remote.

From the Scientific American. TEA CULTURE IN THE SOUTH.

Messrs. Editors:—An article in your issue of December 23d, induces me to send you my experience, etc., in the tea culture. During the war I was living in Fayetteville N. C., and there tried the tea plant with success. The general soil of that section is sandy, with an understratum, more or less deep, of clay. The seeds I planted were old, but they sprouted well, and in March, 1865, I had over a hundred fine plants, averaging eight inches in height. At that time my fence was destroyed by the accidents of war, and I paid but little attention to the plants until June, when I found many still flourishing. Dr. Saml. J. Hinsdale, of that place, transplanted them to his garden. He has now many fine and large shrubs of the tea tree, and has prepared tea therefrom. The soil of that section is well adapted to the growth of the plant, and land can be bought there very cheap. I presume Dr. Hinsdale could give more full information of his own experience. I know the seed were distributed by him, and that dozens of persons planted them with success.

Dr. Smith, near Greenville, S. C., spent much time and money experimenting with the tea plant, but I do not think the soil he had to deal with so good as that further south and east. He, however, said that good tea could be produced there at a comparatively small price. There is no doubt that thus growing the plants is the only way it can be had pure.

On the eastern shores of North Carolina grows wild a shrub tree called Yopon—a name no doubt derived from the Yeopim Indians—to which botany has given the name *Ilex Euponia*. It is very similar to the *Matte* (*Ilex Paraguensis*) of South America. It is crudely cured and used as a tea by the poorer classes and boatmen. Its chemical properties are similar to black tea, while its medicinal are superior. As a sedative in fevers, it has no equal. In excess, it acts on the liver and also produces vomiting. The leaf is of the same size and shape as Chinese tea, and from appearance no one can tell any difference in the two plants at eight or ten inches high. When full grown and large I think the yopon has a slightly thicker leaf; but of this I am not a fair judge, as I have seen yopon shrubs fifteen feet high, while I have never seen a Chinese tea plant more than two feet in height. I have no doubt but with equal care the wild shrub of North Carolina would make a tea as good as ever came from China, while, too, I have no doubt much of the "pine barrens" of eastern North Carolina might be made to yield an immense profit, cultivated in tea plants. Thousands of acres of such land, from which the turpentine has been worked, can be bought for 25 or 50 cents an acre, while much equally fit for corn, etc., with turpentine and timber trees, can be bought at from \$1 to \$3 per acre.

Brooklyn, L. I. H. E. C.

lamas, which have a faint resemblance to some of the Northern animals. In examining the structure of these, the naturalist could discover so much beauty of form and wisdom in the adaptation of parts that it was natural to believe they were made by an intelligent cause—by Him who made man in the image of Himself, in order that He might inquire into and understand the wonders of the material world.

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Brooklyn, L. I. H. E. C.

From the King's Tree Star, of the 9th Instant. TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.

We recalled upon to record one of the most horrifying and melancholy accidents which has ever occurred within the limits of this State. Though an accident which no caution or foresight could avoid, it will send a thrill of horror throughout the whole country. On the evening of the 7th instant between the hours of 8 and 9 P. M., the occupant of the jail heard, very suddenly, a rumbling noise in the upper stories of the jail, as if the iron were being shaken, and immediately followed by the cry of fire. He rushed from his room to ascertain whether the jail was on fire or not, and after walking round the jail he observed a little smoke issuing from one of the windows on the third floor. His next object was to open the prison door and extinguish it, but remembering that Mr. Barineau, who was the jailor, and who was living several hundred yards from the jail, had the keys in his possession, he (the occupant of the jail) immediately dispatched a messenger for him. Mr. Barineau, accompanied by the sheriff, was soon at the jail. In the mean time, however, numbers of persons had collected. The fire, apparently, at this time had not made as rapid progress as was shown in a few minutes, although a dense smoke was issuing from every window.

The sheriff, with the assistance of nearly all the citizens in the village and the garrison at this place, immediately took the most active measures to save, if possible, the unfortunate inmates. The door on the basement was opened, but the dense and suffocating smoke prevented any one from rescuing those who occupied the third story. As a last resort, strenuous efforts were then made, with the assistance of ladders, to remove the grating from one of the windows, which proved ineffectual.

At this time the cries and screams of the suffering inmates were heart-rending. The jail was in flames, and twenty-two human beings were being burnt to death without any possible relief. Human agency could effect nothing; every effort was made to rescue them which could be suggested, but all to no purpose. The devouring flames soon consumed them, and in the charred ruins is only to be seen the ghastly spectacle of bones. Horrible as the accident may be, and as much to be regretted, a consolation follows of having done our duty to the best of our abilities, and that accident is confined to no place or order of circumstances.

From the Fall Mail Gazette. SUICIDE OF A HUMAN MONSTER.

The Paris papers chronicle the death of one who was for some years notorious in a particular section of Parisian society. At break of day following the last opera ball masque a strange looking figure was seen to lean for a moment or two over the parapet of the Pont des Arts and then to jump into the river. A fisherman who witnessed the incident, after long searching brought the body to the surface of the water. Enveloped as it was from head to foot in a long hairy covering it seemed at first sight to be an ape, but was soon recognized as a human being. Attempts were made to restore animation, but in vain. In one of the pockets of the unknown the following letter was found, which helped to clear up the mystery:

It is useless to attempt to identify me. I am the descendant of a noble family whom my follies have dishonored. All my patrimony is dissipated, and I prefer suicide to misery. To those who affirm that it is necessary to be brave to kill oneself, I reply that abstinence gives courage. I am drunk; it is thus that I ought to die. I have been surnamed "Caoutchouc;" let me be buried under this name. May my death serve as an example to youth.—CAOUTCHOUC.

CAOUTCHOUC, says the Paris papers, was the old Count Chicard of modern public balls. His reputation extended from the Chateau Rouge to Mabile, and from the casino to the opera. There was always a crowd to see him dance and it was certainly an extraordinary performance. In appearance he was far from prepossessing; he had a coarse, brutal-looking face, puffed and pimply with debauchery; his dull, lustreless eyes had an odious leer, and his swollen, rickety figure also told the tale of excesses. But dull and listless as he seemed in the intervals of the dance, the music no sooner struck up than a sort of fury seemed to seize him. He writhed and bounded like a madman, in a quadrille his steps were so many convulsions; none of the clowns of the "Cirque" could dislocate their limbs after the fashion of Caoutchouc in the figure of "cavallier sieul." He had a method of shortening himself, of flattening himself, of balancing himself on his hips, of bounding about a la Quasmodo, which thrilled the wild Bohemians among whom he danced with enthusiasm and envy. The *canevas* is prohibited by the austere morality of the Empire, but Chicard managed to introduce snatches of it in defiance of the police. Altogether this old buffoon—old, at least, in looks, with his bald head and pimply face, his frenzied contortions, his horrid drunken leer and lewd gestures—was one of the saddest and most disgusting spectacles that Paris had to offer.

This year Caoutchouc was at the head of the orgies of the masked balls of the opera, where he excelled himself, so his admirers said, in the wild eccentricities of the quadrille. On Saturday, the 22d, disguised as an orang-outang, he exhibited before the crowds in the theatre of the Rue Lepelletier the marvellous elasticity of his body. He leaped on the shoulders of his companions, springing from one to the other with all the ease and more than the mischievousness of a Brazilian ape. At 5 o'clock in the morning he was dead.

On leaving the opera Caoutchouc declined to sup with a band of maskers. After drinking five glasses of absinthe in a cafe on the Boulevards, he betook himself to the Pont des Arts, which he scaled to perform his last pirouette.

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DRYING UP OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

Old steamboat men declare that the signs of the past four or five seasons point to the permanent drying up of the Mississippi River, reducing it from a stream navigable for the largest boats the whole season, to one of uncertain navigation, like the Missouri, passable at certain seasons, and the rest of the year shrunk to a mere creek, winding along among sand bars and shoals. There is certainly some change taking place in our climate that is affecting our lakes and rivers. They are greatly different in their habits to what they were eighty year ago. The average of water is gradual decreasing. Our June rise, once as certain as the coming of the month, has totally ceased. The heaviest rains, which once would have swelled the river several feet, now do not seem to affect it in the least.

There are many theories advanced to explain this. One is, that the climate is undergoing some change, which seems plausible, as those who have studied the meteorology of our State are convinced that this change is taking place. Another theory is that the cultivation of the country, destruction of the forests, and other physical causes have tended to decrease the rainfall, and retard the flowing of the extra moisture into the streams.

Whatever may be the cause, the effect certainly exists, and the same thing has been on all the Western rivers, which are gradually shrinking up. In our case, however, the evil is less to be feared, because our railroad system is so nearly developed, that our river navigation is not now the necessity it once was, to our commercial public. The river can never again, whether it continues navigable or not, assume the importance it has hitherto played in the development of our State.

St. Paul Pioneer.