

Dwight Star and Herald.

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LIVINGSTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS, MAY 3, 1913

NUMBER 13

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LETTER FROM JAPAN.

Col. Smith Writes Another Interesting Letter, from Yokohama.

My dear Dustin:—

'Tis said a camel can go seventeen days without a drink, but who in wants to be a camel? After spending seventeen days on the ocean I don't know but what the camel has the best of it.

After a nine day's voyage from Honolulu that takes ten days by the calendar (you lose one whole day when you cross the 180th meridian) we sailed into Mississippi Bay, named by Commodore Parry of the United States, who established trade relations with Japan. We were favored by a glorious day such as one seldom has in Yokohama Bay and old Fujiyama fulfilled all that has been written of her with her majestic, snow capped, symmetrical peak which alone is visible through the haze of golden clouds that hover around her. Fujiyama is the great sacred mountain of Japan for which the Japanese have an earnest reverence and is annually visited by thousands of pilgrims. It is the shrine of their dearest Gods and a panacea for their evils. The reverence for is universal with the Japanese or more properly speaking the Nipponese.

After going through a rigid quarantine we were landed upon Yokohama dock and were there introduced to the Japanese mode of travel—the jirikisha. The jirikisha is an Irish jaunting car propelled by a bare-legged man. The sensation one feels getting into this enlarged two-wheeled baby carriage, pulled by a fellow human, is somewhat uncanny and at first one feels very much embarrassed, but after you have ridden in one a few days one loses all sense of proportions of life and would almost be willing to prod the Ricky man into going faster. One of the things that strikes you first in an oriental city is the almost complete absence of the horse, in fact any kind of an animal. Practically all the transportation (both heavy and light) is by man power and it is no uncommon sight to see a little brown man pulling a load of a ton or more on his home-made two-wheeled dray.

The streets are narrow and fairly swarm with people, many with backs laden with almost superhuman burdens, all with faces more or less stoical.

Before you can get a proper conception of Japan one should take a map and see how small an area comprises the Empire of Japan, then take into consideration that the country is very mountainous and peopled by over sixty millions, you will then get some idea of what conditions must be.

The awakening of Japan, if such it may be properly termed, dates back comparatively few years and when one realizes the position she has taken among the nations of the earth, it is truly wonderful.

Right here I may as well make a confession. I have been one of a goodly number of our people who have been insisting that in the near future the United States was going to have to fight Japan. After a visit to the Empire one cannot help but be convinced that it cannot be. Japan could never bear the burden of a war with a great resourceful nation like the United States. She is now tax ridden and groaning under the load of her war with Russia which will keep her nose to the financial grindstone for years to come. The same unanimity of loyalty to country prevails however as in all one nationality countries. The people are as one to their Emperor.

Typical of this condition is the following incident as told to me by the representative of the associated press in Tokio, the capitol of the Empire. The Imperial Palace is centuries old and the most imposing I have ever seen. The castle's grounds are surrounded by three moats and three huge stone walls one within the other. Adjoining them is Hibaya Park and my friend told me that upon the night of the Emperor's death there were at least five hundred thousand people surrounding the Palace grounds and that the silence was so marked you could hear the slightest sound as the people with bared heads and upturned faces prayed for the life of their Emperor.

An Oriental city is so unlike an American city that I am at a loss how to describe it. The houses are low (usually one story). The windows, paper, and there is an apparent absence of furniture of any kind. As you know they sit on the floor when eating and working and that is one reason I believe they are a race of

ISLE OF PINES.

Letter from Major Curtis J. Judd Descriptive of this Interesting Island.

On Board Steamer Excelsior, Havana to New Orleans, April 25, 1913.

A tourist sometimes makes the mistake of a belief that other people are as interested as he is in the places he visits. I have no faith in any such general rule. I do believe however that the Isle of Pines is destined to be the subject of diplomatic negotiation, and will figure in history. Under these circumstances it is well to know something of the place. I do not wish it to be understood that the Isle of Pines depends solely on its political prominence, but has inherent attractions as I hope to show in the account of my own visit.

The Isle of Pines, of the West Indies group, lies sixty miles south of Cuba, across the Caribbean Sea, a gentle rolling country thirty by thirty-five miles across. Elevation fifty to one hundred feet above tide, with a broken mountain range from north to south two hundred to one thousand feet high, dividing the Isle into fertile valleys.

The first tourist visitor was Columbus, who crossed from Isabella, Hayti, in 1492, and found the only occupants were remnants of the Los Indios tribe of Indians. For over one hundred years Spain permitted Indians and Pirates to make it a temporary home. In 1630 the Spanish sovereign considering further ownership a burden, presented it to Captain Pedroso, a friend of the royal family, later passing by inheritance to Nicholas Dewarte, who dividing into seven estates, gave equally to his seven sons. Present name given by white settlers from Cuba in 1700. Organized as a political part of Cuba in 1765. In 1780 the population increased to two hundred. Stock raising their occupation and farming was limited to vegetables and tobacco.

About 1839 Spain made this Isle a political "Siberia." In 1906 it drifted into the American Provisional Government over Cuba. Formerly the lines of title boundaries were defined by "Parrot Rights," for trapping, usually stream terminals. American purchasers have cleared many of the ancient titles and unravelled the tangle of several conflicting interests.

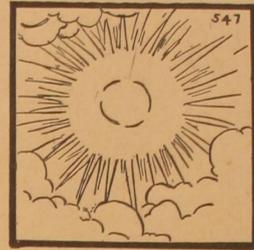
There are sixty miles of calzada, (macadam roads), radiating from Santa Fe and Neuva Gerona, chief cost appropriated by Cuba. The only tax collected is from "Income on cultivated lands," a small portion of customs and a wheel tax. There are over one hundred autos, four only owned by Cubans.

The general soil is entirely different from Cuba. Instead of the deep red color and quantity this is a light sandy loam on clay sub-soil, surface of natural grass, often forming strong sod with scattering cabbage and Royal Palms, neither forming distinct groves, but indicating soil most valuable for citrus fruit groves. The natural and almost exclusive timber found in every part is the two to ten inch yellow pine, having a smooth perfect body twenty to sixty feet. While there are no dense groves, in several localities portable saw mills find a few months profitable. Not an old decayed trunk or stump to indicate the former existence of this or any other variety. How these pines were self-planted or where they came from is a mystery. In the United States, Wisconsin and Maine Pines, neither re-seed their kind; Jack Pines and Balsam, both worthless for timber use, are future successors. Here is a problem for the wise scientist of the Forestry Department to solve.

At Santa Fe there are three flowing magnesia springs. One, two miles out, is a financial proposition—shipping in metal tanks large quantities for table use. Another, one mile distant on the shore of a pretty stream, the generous owner of the Schultz Ranch has built an enclosure, leaving the top open protecting a pool four feet deep and thirty feet long with a constant overflow, the inlet pouring out of a cask in the center, while several others ooze up through the gravel bottom. A raised platform with benches forms the dressing room. An attendant in a little clearing of shade trees keeps a register of bathing visitors and designates regularity of occupants. Use of the bath is free and it is a delightful sensation with the genial sky covering this invigorating water. This bears the name of the "Weyler" spring since the Spanish War.

The "Saint Celia" spring is located on the bank of the Santa Fe river which divides the old from the new

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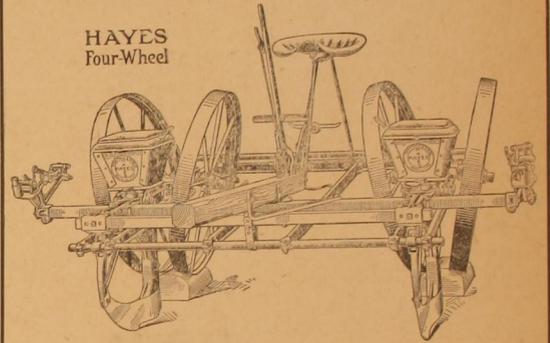
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Everett B. Lewis
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