

IN SPANISH AFRICA

FRANK G. CARPENTER DESCRIBES AN ODD CONVICT SETTLEMENT ON THE COAST OF MOROCCO.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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MELILLA, Spanish North Africa. —I am in what is about the last of Spain's colonial possessions. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she owned the best part of the new world. She had the cream of North America. If we include the Louisiana purchase, which we got by way of France, and she had almost the whole of South America excepting Brazil. The best of the West Indies were hers. Cortez poured the treasures of Montezuma into her royal coffers and Pizarro, shoeing his horses with solid silver, robbed the Incas of Peru of their gold by the shipload. The Philippines added to these sources of wealth, and for a long time two great golden streams rolled across the Atlantic and Pacific to benefit the Spaniards. Spain was then the richest of all the powers in her colonial possessions. Today by mismanagement and oppression she has become the poorest and since her war with us, when she lost Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines, there have been none so poor to do her reverence.

SPANISH AFRICA.

Indeed, all one land which Spain has left outside her own boundaries is in Africa, and even here her possessions are the rag-tag and bob-tail of the continent. They may cover perhaps two or three hundred thousand square miles, but they are all desert, sand or fever swamps, and the fertile lands suitable for white men which they contain are not as big as an Ohio county, and their total population hardly equal that of Washington city. In contrast with this the other great powers of Europe have been quietly gobbling up the fat things of this mighty continent. France has the biggest share. If we include the Island of Madagascar, she has almost 4,000 square miles, or more than one-third of all Africa. A vast deal of her territory, however, is in the Desert of Sahara. It is made up of stone and sand which might form good building materials, but which are of no value where they lie. Great Britain comes next among the national land owners. She has close to another third of the continent. If we consider Egypt and its Soudan as a part of her possessions, Germany has not quite one-eleventh of the whole and Portugal almost one-thirtieth, while Turkey has in Tripoli, has about as much land as Spain.

WHAT SPAIN OWNS.

Before I describe the God-forsaken spot where I now am, I would like to tell you just what Spain has in Africa. She owns the Island of Fernando Po and a small tract on the mainland on the Gulf of Guinea. Her country there contains, I believe, about 9,000 square miles, or a little more than the state of Massachusetts. The land is swampy and so unhealthy that it has become known as the "White Man's Grave." It is covered with a luxuriant vegetation and produces some India rubber and palm oil. The only foreigners there are a few Spanish, French and English merchants. The natives are among the most degraded of the Africans. They are negroes of the lowest type, and slavery is common. Fernando Po itself has convict settlements, and the criminals sent there seldom return.

North of the Gulf of Guinea, between Morocco and the French Soudan, Spain has a wide strip of land which is ruled by the governor of the Canary Islands. It stretches for several hundred miles along the Atlantic coast, but it is one of the worst parts of the whole Desert of Sahara. It has no rivers nor any oases of value, and is very thinly populated. It begins in the neighborhood of Cape Blanco, and its chief town is Rio de Oro, which is golden oil in name.

CONVICT COLONIES OF MEDITERRANEAN.

In addition to these possessions, Spain has several convict colonies on the Moroccan coast of the Mediterranean sea. The first is Ceuta, just across the way from Gibraltar. I passed it on my way to Tangier. It can be reached from Algiers by a government steamer which takes over dispatches and mail every day. It consists of a rock on which the

town stands and where the fortifications and prisons are. It now has about 3,000 convicts, who are poorly fed and badly treated.

Ceuta is one of the oldest towns in history. It is the Heptadelpht of Ptolemy and is supposed to be one of the first three cities of the world. The others were Saurium in Italy and Salem in Judea.

This place was where the Moors embarked when they first crossed over from Africa to invade Spain many centuries ago. They held all the country about it today, and they still so dislike the Spaniards that it is impossible for the Ceuta people to go back into the country unless accompanied by soldiers. The mountains nearby are controlled now, I believe, by the bands of Rifaill, Melilla, where I write this letter, is another of Spain's convict settlements. It lies on the Mediterranean several hundred miles east of Ceuta and about 50 hours by steamer across the bay from Malaga. There are also several islands near here which are used to cage Spanish convicts. They contain murderers, burglars and political exiles.

A SPANISH MILITARY PRISON.

Melilla itself is a Spanish military prison. There are 8,000 soldiers stationed here, and a large number of them have come as punishment for desertion, crime and for various transgressions of military discipline. I cannot imagine a worse place. It makes one think of the inscription over the door of Dante's hell, which reads:

"All hope abandon ye who enter here."

The town is built upon a great bluff which runs out into the sea. There are thirty hills all about, each with a great white round fort upon it, and large iron-barred barracks in and about the city. Outside these large buildings the houses are one and two-story structures of brick and stucco, painted all colors of the rainbow. They are built Spanish fashion in blocks, and the iron-barred windows are as prison-like as their surroundings.

The inhabitants are chiefly Spanish Jews and moody Moors. The Jews have little stores in the town, and the Moors have bazars just inside the walls, where each turbaned merchant stands in a sort of a hole, with his goods piled around him. There is a Moorish encampment nearby, and there is quite a caravan trade with all western and southern Morocco.

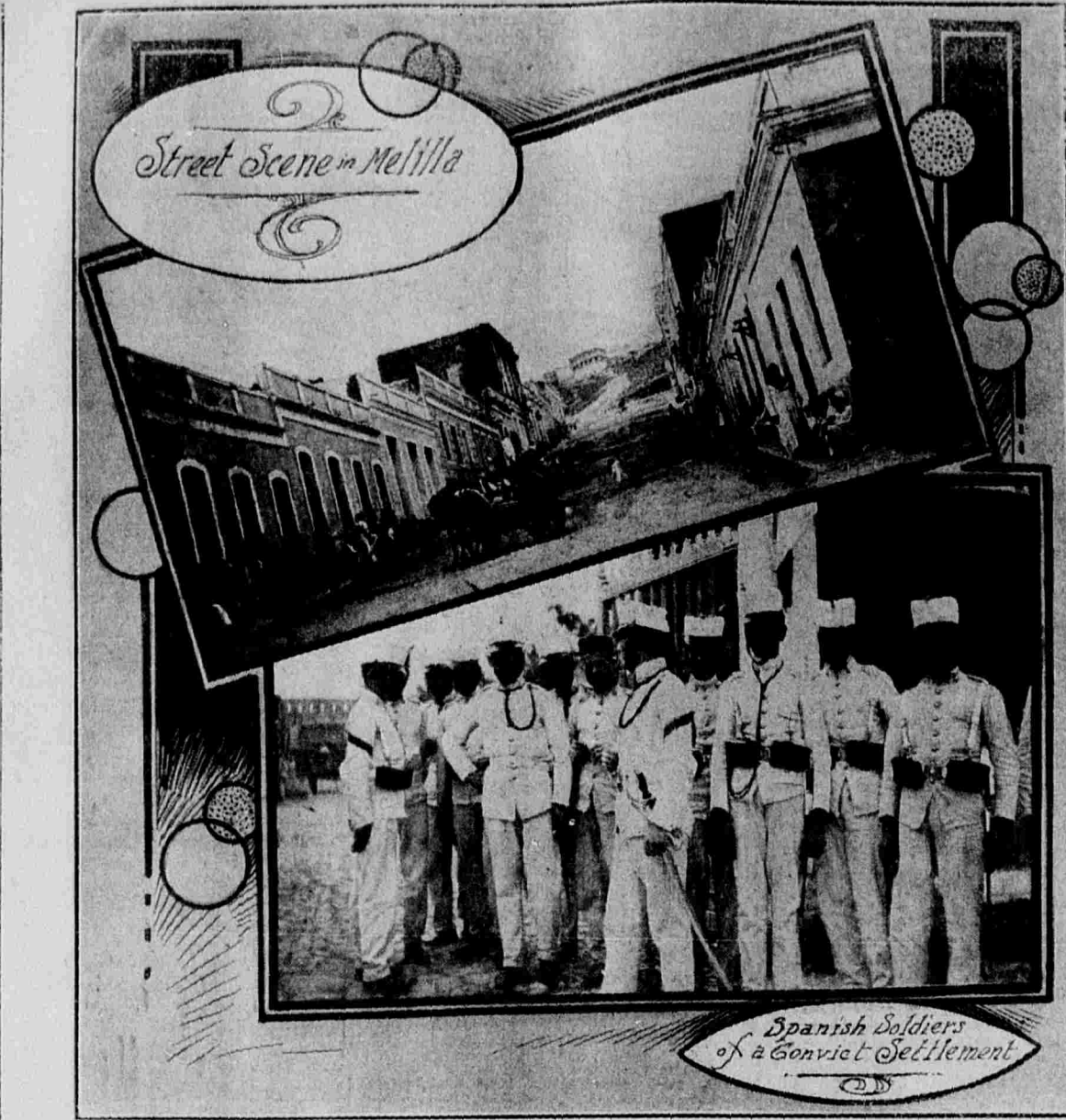
STONED BY THE SPANIARDS.

I have not found the natives here any too friendly, and I am glad to be on the little steamship Emir, far out in the harbor, where I am writing this letter. When we landed and showed our passports describing us as Americans, the soldiers scowled and were none too pleasant, although I succeeded in getting some excellent photographs of them during my stay. In the town it became known that we were Americans, and the boys and men gathered around us with no friendly air. One of them threw a rock the size of a man's fist at the carriage and narrowly missed hitting me. As it was it struck the door handle and bent it. Our coachman jumped down and ran after the boy, but we concluded not to give the offenders rather glad when we were safe out of the town.

A LAND OF PIRATES.

It seems odd to think of pirates carrying on their trade in this modern century, but that is a regular business with certain of the tribes of the Rif mountains near here. They do not go out with large ships and attack the vessels of the Mediterranean, as they did at the beginning of the last century, but they rob and somewhat craft when the bad seas drive them upon the shore. Not long ago the whole of Morocco was filled with pirates, and there were pirates all the way from the Straits of Gibraltar to Tripoli. Just before entering the strait one sees on the north coast the town of Tarifa with its old Moorish forts, from where the Moors swooped down upon all vessels going through the strait and made them pay tribute. From that town and custom came our word "tariff."

About that same time the Moors of Morocco and Algeria were preying on the commerce of the Mediterranean, and nearly every great nation submitted to their actions. We did so for a time, but in 1815 we declared war upon these pirates, and were the first to bring them to time. We had trouble with the dey of Algiers, and sent Com-



Street Scene in Melilla

Spanish Soldiers of a Convict Settlement

modore Decatur over to tell him that Americans would pay him tribute no longer. The dey insisted until Decatur pointed his guns at the city of Algiers, when he began to weaken. He then sent out word to our commodore suggesting that if he would pretend to storm the town, using powder only, the tribute might be omitted. Commodore Decatur replied that cannon balls always went with American powder and that if the dey received the one he must take the other. Soon afterward Decatur captured some of the Algerian ships, and the dey finally had to pay him damages to the amount of about \$50,000 and to conclude a treaty which renounced all tribute from Americans for the future.

At this time they not only seized the ships, but they enslaved their captives. Capt. John Smith served as such a slave. Shortly after our refusal to pay tribute the English did likewise and bombarded Algiers. The French followed in a war with the pirates, and in 1830 they threw the dey from his throne and captured \$10,000,000 of gold and silver which they found in his treasury.

BLINDED FOR STEALING.

I saw a blind beggar going through the streets here this morning. His eyes had been burned out with red-hot pokers by one of the Berber chiefs of the mountains near by, and he presented a horrible sight. I am told that this was done as a punishment for stealing and that it is not uncommon in certain parts of Morocco. At the first theft the man's hand is cut off and at the second his eyes are burned out. Sometimes a foot is also cut off, after which the thief must move about upon crutches with a boy to lead him.

During my stay in Tangier I rode one day out into the country and made some photographs of a village which had taken summary vengeance upon an under official, who had been unjust and oppressive in collecting taxes for the basha who held office prior to the present governor. This official was caught

as he passed through the village and his eyes were burned out. That was not long ago, and it shows that such crimes are still possible in this land of Morocco.

SALTED TO DEATH.

About the only reason why things are not in a worse condition than they are now is the mildness of the present autumn. He is more of a boy than anything else, and he tends to western ways in that he is not at all blood-thirsty. His father, Mulai Hassan, was just the reverse, and he had some punishments which were horrible to an extreme. One of these might be called "salting to death." It consisted of cutting four great gashes out of the palms of the hands of the offender and of filling them with salt. The fingers were then bent inward and fitted tightly into the holes of cuts. After that each hand was sewed up in green rawhide, which shrank as it dried, causing terrible pain. In some cases the rawhide was sprinkled with lemon juice, which, it is said, rapidly accelerated the shrinking of the hide, often forcing the finger nails clear through the palm and out of the back of the hand. After this the criminal was taken to jail and left without water. The torture was such that he usually died within a few days.

ENGLISH TIRED OF GIBRALTAR.

Speaking of Spain, I understand that there is a bare possibility that it may some day again have possession of Gibraltar, and thus regain its old stepping stone to Africa. The English are said to be tired of spending money upon the fortifications there and that especially since a commission of parliament has reported that the place as far as the Atlantic side is concerned is practically defenseless as a naval base and that it would not be of great good in time of war. England has already spent upon these fortifications about \$250,000,000, which is almost as much as we will spend upon the Panama canal. In 1904 the military ex-

penses of Gibraltar amounted to more than \$2,000,000, and costly improvements in the way of new docks and a large coaling island are now being made. These new works are all on the side of the rock facing the Atlantic ocean. It is there that the town of Gibraltar lies and there also are the bay and the landing places for ships.

I spent some time at Gibraltar on my way to Morocco, and had a good chance to inspect the outside of the fortifications and the new improvements. A deep harbor of 260 acres is being formed and about 50 acres of water area has been reclaimed for a new dock yard. The largest of the naval war vessels can be dry docked there and the harbor is big enough for the whole British Atlantic fleet.

EIGHTY MILES OF TUNNELS.

The rock of Gibraltar lies at the end of a narrow neck of land which connects it with the Spanish peninsula. One could walk across this neck in a few minutes. The town of Gibraltar, which contains something like 30,000 people, is situated upon it and its houses extend from it along the lower sides of the rock itself.

This rock is a gigantic piece of solid limestone, which rises almost straight from the water on the side facing the Mediterranean sea, to a height almost as great as that of the Blue Ridge mountains in Virginia. If you could put two Washington monuments, one on top of the other, and on these a spire as tall as the dome of the Capitol you have just about the height of Gibraltar. The rock is about three miles long and less than a mile wide at its widest part.

As one approaches it from the sea one sees many port holes here and there along the sides. They come from the tunnels within. The whole rock has been tunneled. It has 80 miles of galleries burrowed through it and it is a honeycomb of chambers. The fortifications have, of course, the finest of modern guns and other war machinery. Only a few parts of them are

The Last of Spain's Colonies and Their Criminal Population—A Military Prison—Stoned by the Natives—A Land of Pirates—Horrible Punishments of the Moors—Thieves Blinded With Red-Hot Pokers and Rebels Salted to Death—The English Tired of Gibraltar—It Has Cost Hundreds of Millions, and Its Value is Over-Estimated—The Fortifications and the Soldiers—Its Governor and His Enormous Salary.

shown to visitors, and only the British soldiers and war office know just how the works are constructed and defended. There are undoubtedly some big 12-inch guns and some which could probably land shot in Africa across the way. The strait is something like 12 miles wide at that point, and there are modern guns which will shoot 12 or 13 miles. Among the guns known to be at Gibraltar are two of 100 tons each, so heavy that it would take about 200 horses to haul one of them. Those guns are each 32 feet long, and each will throw a shot weighing a ton a distance of eight miles.

DOGS AS SMUGGLERS.

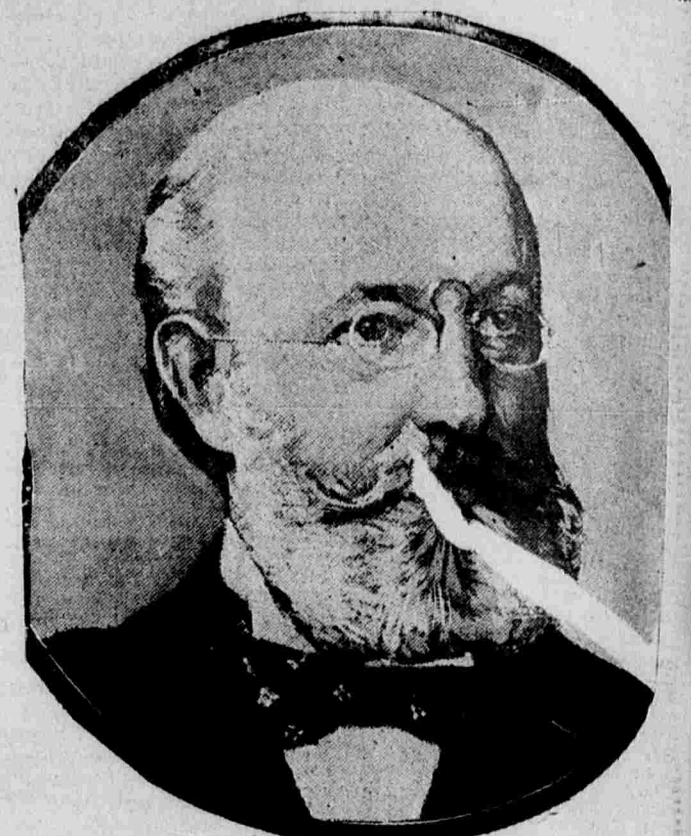
Gibraltar is practically a free port, and tobacco and everything else is cheaper there than in Spain, which is only two miles away across the isthmus. The land between is called "the neutral ground," and there is now a high wire-fence across it, which is guarded day and night by the Spanish customs officers. The fence was put up in order to prevent tobacco being carried across without paying duty. The smugglers had trained dogs to carry parcels from one side to the other. The way they did it was to dress up one of their number as a Spanish customs officer, and then having tied a bag of

tobacco to the neck of the pup they wished to train they would drive him in the direction of this bogus officer. As soon as the dog came near the man in the customs uniform would run to him, and if he caught him would run him a good thrashing. The pup was learned that all men so dressed were his enemies and he naturally gave the wide berth. The dogs were brought from the Spanish side to Gibraltar and there loaded with tobacco. They would start home on the run and the customs official could get within a few feet of them until this fence was erected.

A HIGH-PRICED OFFICIAL.

The British have now 6,000 soldiers at Gibraltar. The place is a crown colony and it has a governor general, who is also commander-in-chief. In promotion to the area which he rules the governor of Gibraltar is one of the highest paid officials on earth. His principal salary is \$25,000 a year. That is half as much as President Roosevelt gets, and he governs about 3,600,000 square miles. If our president was paid at the same rate per square mile as is the governor of Gibraltar he would be receiving the enormous sum of \$45,000,000 a year.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



WILL BACK CANAL CONTRACT WITH MILLIONS.

Frederick C. Stevens, New York state superintendent of public works, will provide the cash capital of \$5,000,000 demanded by the government, and W. J. Oliver, the lowest bidder, will probably dig the Panama canal. Oliver is confident his syndicate will be approved by the president and secretary of war, and that the actual work will soon begin. Two associates will work with Mr. Oliver on the undertaking, and the company will be capitalized \$5,000,000, but it is unlikely that any of the stock will pass from the hands of Mr. Stevens. The backer of this great enterprise is president of the Commercial National Bank of Washington, D. C., and has long been known as a bank organizer and financier of great ability. He does not contemplate resigning his office as superintendent of public works, but has merely acted as the fiduciary agent in giving Mr. Oliver the opportunity to show that he could dig the canal at the low bid he entered for the contract and still make a satisfactory profit for his backer.

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