

# THE NEW SEOUL

HOW THE CAPITAL OF KOREA IS CHANGING UNDER JAPANESE RULE.

(Special Correspondence.)  
SEOUL, Korea, 1909.—I want to tell you what the Japanese are doing in Korea. They have taken the Hermit Kingdom by the neck, and are shaking its dry bones into action. They are establishing courts, abolishing squeezing and reorganizing the finances. They propose to build roads, to reforest the mountains, to open the mines and to turn this half-barren country into a garden. All these things are in their beginnings, but a start has been made and signs of progress are everywhere to be seen.

## THE NEW CITY OF SEOUL.

The capital, Seoul, is fast becoming a new city. When I came here 20 years ago the tip from the seaport, Chemulpo, took over 12 hours, and I had to have a pony and eight men to bring myself and wife to the walls. I rode the pony and the madame came in a chair, borne on the shoulders of four coolies, with a relay of four others to help them. Toward the end of the journey we had to push on for fear we might not get to Seoul before the gates closed. The city is surrounded by a massive wall nine miles in length and 30 feet high. At that time this wall was entered only by gates, and these were closed at night by heavy doors plated with iron, which were not opened again until the next day. We got in just in time to see the gates close. There was no hotel, and we had to be met by the soldiers of our legion, and were quartered there during our stay.

The city still has its walls, but the gates now stand open day and night, and an electric street car line runs through two of them and on out into the country. An electric light globe prevents the closing of the one which we entered, and another gate has proved too small to accommodate the traffic and has been cut out by the Japanese, wide roads being made through the walls on each side. The gate itself, which is a temple-like structure with a double roof of heavy tiles, has been faced with stone; and it is now proposed to put a commercial museum in the soldiers' guardroom above it. In that old gate all the industries of the new Korea will be shown side by side with those of other nations, and the people will thus be taught the various methods of manufacture and sale.

**SIGNAL FIRES VS. ELECTRICITY.**  
As we came into Seoul that night we could see the signal fires blazing on the mountains which surround the city, and were told that they were the last of the long series of watch fires built upon the hills of the other parts of Korea to notify the king that the country was quiet and was at peace. Today there are watch fires no longer, but in their place Korea has its wireless telegraph stations and the capital is covered with telephone wires. One of the oldest buildings of the palace, in which the emperor now lives, has been turned into a telephone booth, and Japanese hello girls sit there and take messages from all parts of the city. There are telegraph wires to every large village, with more than 2,000 miles of line open, and cables across to Japan.

**ELECTRIC LIGHTS AND STREET CARS.**  
The old Seoul was pitch dark at night. The laws were that the ordinary man should not go about after dark, only officials and foreigners and their servants being permitted to do so. Women were never seen on the streets in the daytime, and the night was supposed to be their time for calling. When we went out we took the keso of the legion to carry our lantern, and this consisted of a framed work, holding a candle with a red, white and blue gauze cloth thrown over it. The Seoul of today is fairly well lighted. Many of the stores keep open during the evening, and most of the houses have an oil lamp or an electric light globe at their front gate. Looking

down the wide main streets of the city makes one think of one of the larger towns of our country, for the lights alone are to be seen, and the low one-story buildings are lost in the darkness. Seoul has now an electric car line run by Americans. It was put in long before the Japanese took hold of the government, and about half of the stock belongs to the retired emperor, who has refused to sell out to the Japanese capitalists. The Koreans are now patronizing the road. At first they said it was magic, and a mob destroyed some of the cars. Their theory was that the line would prevent the spirits giving them rain. They said the cars were boats, and that the gods, looking down from the skies, seeing them swimming to and fro through the streets, would say: "These people need no rain, for their city is swimming in water."

A somewhat similar feeling prevailed as to the magic in the telephone and telegraph systems. Many of the Korean women, knowing this speech went over the wires, thought the poles must contain spirits and that the sound buzzing on the wires was their voices. These beliefs have since been put to the telephone poles at the time.

## CHIN-GO-KAI.

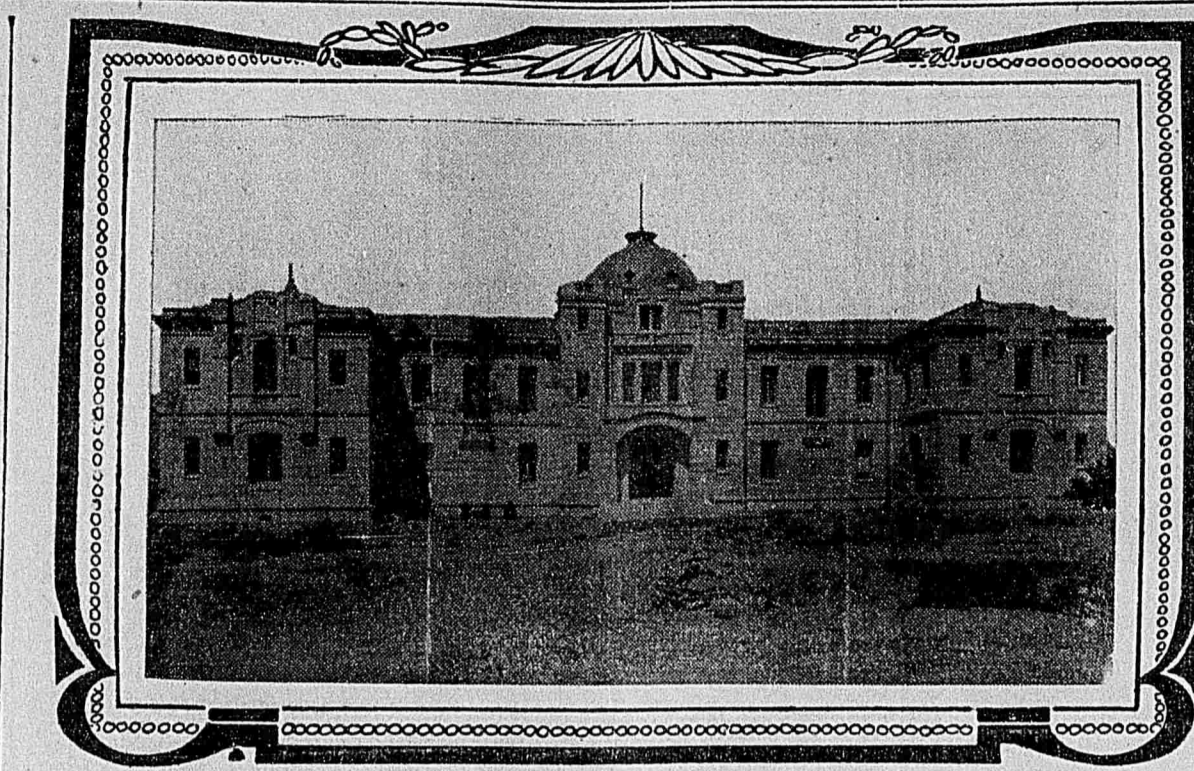
Have you ever heard of Chin-Go-Kai? It is a section of Seoul which contains 20,000 Japanese people. It has big official buildings, many two-story houses and long streets of stores, which would be a credit to Tokio. Some of the stores have plate glass windows, and nearly all carry large stocks of goods. Here everything is clean. The roadways are swept, and most of them are as smooth as a mirror. There are brick school buildings, a postoffice and all sorts of business establishments.

At one side of this section is a great frame office structure devoted to the resident general, who governs Korea, with the emperor as the nominal head; and back of it is the home of the high official, with a thousand acres or more of Nam-San mountain about it. The old mountain had lain there a wilderness for a thousand years. It had seen the wall built more than 600 years ago, and had watched the generations rise and fall from then until now. The old mountain had lain there a wilderness for a thousand years. It had seen the wall built more than 600 years ago, and had watched the generations rise and fall from then until now. The old mountain had lain there a wilderness for a thousand years. It had seen the wall built more than 600 years ago, and had watched the generations rise and fall from then until now.

I had the good fortune to be invited to a garden party given there by the resident general the other day. More than 2,000 of the high-class Koreans and Japanese officials were present. His excellency received us out in the open, and there were lunchrooms and tea-houses throughout the grounds whose waiters were beautiful Japanese maidens. At the close we had dinner in a great tent, covering tables sufficient to seat the 2,000 guests and the Japanese military band sang a song composed by Viscount Sone in honor of the occasion.

## MUD VS. BRICK.

Twenty-five years ago there was not a brick in Korea. The houses were all made of mud, or wood or of stones piled up on top of the other and covered with roofs of heavy black tiles, of straw thatch, held down with straw ropes. When I visited the city 20 years ago outside of the homes of the missionaries and the palaces of the king there was not a two-story structure to be seen anywhere. The place contained two or three hundred thousand people, the most of whom lived in mud huts with roofs of straw thatch. The huts were all made in the shape of a horseshoe with quarters at the back for the women. There were larger houses roofed with tiles which formed the homes of the nobles and these were shut off from the streets by low stable-like structures, in which the servants and retainers were quartered. The houses were all heated by flues which ran under the floors and emptied their smoke into the streets through openings cut at about the height of one's waist from the ground. At meal times, and more especially mornings and evenings, these holes poured forth vol-



THE NEW SUPREME COURT BUILDING AT SEOUL.

umes, making one think of a great forest fire. The air was so thick that one could almost cut it and the passerby had to cough.

Today Seoul has thousands of similar houses. Of the 200,000 and odd which make up the native population, 99 per cent live in such quarters. They have no sewers, and the slops run out into the open ditches which have been cut through the streets. The Japanese have covered some of these ditches and they are now putting in drains.

As to the buildings, a new class of structure is rapidly rising and the people stand and gaze at them in open-mouthed wonder. The Young Men's Christian association has just completed a brick home of two stories, which is heated by steam. It is a wonder of wonders to the average Korean, who cannot tell whence comes the heat.

The bricks for that building are being made outside the city. Yards have been there constructed, which are now turning out bricks by the millions. The clay is excellent and a large part of the new Seoul will be built of these bricks. There are other brickyards at Yong-San, the military city on the edge of Seoul, and there is no lack of fine building material.

## NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

Among the large buildings are many which are going up for the government. These are nominally Korean, but are really Japanese. The cabinet ministers act as the nominal advisers to the emperor, but under them are Japanese vice ministers who really control and whose clerks are almost all Japanese.

Not far from where I am living in the foreign section of Seoul is the new finance department. This is a two-story brick structure covered with stucco. It is built on an elevation, overlooking the palace in which the retired emperor lives, so that the clerks can see all that goes on inside the palace grounds. This is very offensive to his majesty, who has always objected to anyone looking over his walls, and has bought several foreign structures because they commanded such a view. He paid \$200,000 for the French legation for this reason and he has, I am told, several times tried to buy the American consulate, which is on a hill, lower down. Some men have even bought lots and started buildings in order to make his majesty buy them at high prices.

Another fine government building is

that of the supreme court. This is somewhat similar to the structure of the finance department. It is situated on the main street, which runs between the east and west gates, and not far from a big two-story brick which is being built for a native Korean bank.

## HOW THE OFFICIALS RAISED MONEY.

That bank, by the way, marks one of the most wonderful changes which is going on here. Until lately no Korean was supposed to have any right to money that the king was bound to respect. Every official squeezed the man below him, and if he did not give up a share of his goods upon demand had him whipped or tortured in some way or other until he did so. The most common persuader was a flexible paddle about as wide as the palm of your hand and 10 or 12 feet in length. The man to be squeezed was stripped to the skin and laid face downward on the ground and held there by men, or he was tied to a bench so that it was impossible for him to move. Then the paddlers would strike him so many blows on the thighs. The second or third always brought blood, and 100 was supposed to mean death. Burning and bone crushing were other methods of torture, and men were kept for years in prison on false charges as means of extortion. Under such conditions the man who showed he had money was sure of persecution and all loans were secretly made. The Japanese have done away with this squeezing, and the thousands of officials who lived upon it have now gone to the wall.

## THE NEW CURRENCY.

The money is changed. During that trip across country to Seoul I had to have an extra man to carry the money to pay the coolies at the end of the trip, and for my expenses in the capital I got an order upon a merchant in Seoul. The coins were of copper with a square hole in the center, and it took 1,000 of them to equal the value of an American dollar. They were made upon strings of 100 each, and whenever I went out shopping I had to take a servant along to carry my purse. Such cash was in use here when I crossed Korea in 1894, and it continued for some time after the Japanese-Chinese war. Then the Korean nickel was made; but this was counterfeited both here

and in Japan to such an extent that it fell to half its original value. The Japanese have now introduced their own coinage, accepting the Korean nickel at the market rate; and from now on the country will be on a gold basis. Japanese bank notes are everywhere taken and Japanese silver, nickel and copper coins are in common use. This reorganization of the finances has been one of the great problems that the Japanese have had to deal with, but the vice minister of finance, Mr. Arai, tells me that it is now practically solved, and that he anticipated no further trouble. He says the government has lost money in taking the Korean nickel at half rate and that the counterfeits they have had to accept have amounted to millions. They have already exchanged about 7,000,000 yen of them, the average nickel being worth something like three-fifths of its value instead of the twenty-five-fifths at which it is taken.

## A MODERN BANKING SYSTEM.

system for Korea. The central treasury is now the Dai Ichi bank, and there are in addition industrial banks which are loaning money against land to the farmers. They make long loans at 12 and 15 per cent a year, which are considered especially low rates for Korea. These industrial banks have savings departments connected with them, and there are also postoffice savings banks, which have more than 1,400,000 yen on deposit. Many Koreans are putting their money into these banks, although the interest is comparatively low.

In addition to this the government is now organizing a system of small capital associations. These will have a central head, with about one hundred branches, and will issue small loans to petty farmers. The loans will be as low as 25, and may be secured by crops and chattel mortgages. All these things will tend to create thrift among the Koreans, which heretofore has been impossible on account of the squeezing and insecurity of all money.

Indeed, one of the common Korean banks of the past has been old Mother Earth, and this especially so during the winter. When a farmer sold his crops and wanted to keep the money over until spring he would dig a pit six feet deep and four or more feet square; and at the first frost would put down a layer of cash and sprinkle earth and

water over it. By morning it would be frozen stiff. The next night he would put down another layer of coins with mud on top. This would freeze and so he would go on until he had a block of frozen earth as hard as ice, filled with these coins at a thousand to the dollar. The work was done secretly and the result was such that it would take days to recover the coins.

## HIGH INTEREST.

I am surprised at the enormous interest which the Koreans are paying. Loans on good security are made at from 2 to 5 per cent a month, and the unscrupulous Japanese money lenders are getting much more. It is only fair to say that the natives do likewise. A common way of loaning on property is to hand over the deed to the house or lot in case the loan is not paid and as, until now, there have been no means of registration, this means the transfer of the property. The Japanese should protect the Koreans as to such transactions. If they do not, all the lands and houses of the country will soon go into the hands of the former. The Koreans are great borrowers and they cannot resist the money temptation. They do not think of pay day until it comes, and as a result are not able to meet their obligations.

## A NATION OF CHILDREN.

Indeed, it is up to the Japanese government to protect the Koreans from one class of its subjects who are now overrunning this country. The Koreans are a nation of children. They have been so ground down in the past that they have not learned to hustle and to look out for themselves. They are wonderfully gentle and trusting, and the shrewd Japanese can easily take advantage of them. He is doing so today, notwithstanding the government tries to prevent it, and the authorities should put on the screws and punish severely all such offenses. Prince Ito has tried to do this, even to the extent of sending back a large number of the Japanese who have come here, saying that they were not fit to be in the country.

It is this element that knocks the Korean about, cheats him out of his wages, and if possible, by means of loans, takes his houses and lands. It is the low class element among the soldiers, scattered in small bands over the country away from their superior officers, which is leading to the killing of many innocent Koreans under the name of insurgents; and which, if the government does not pursue a more rigid policy, is likely to lose Japan its reputation as having the best, the kindest, the most refined and the most humane soldiers on earth. Indeed, it seems to me that Japan has in this low class element which has come to Korea a problem far more serious than its people think. If Prince Ito could transmit to the Japanese in Korea the same feeling of brotherly love and charity

which he and the better class Japanese have they would soon make the Koreans the strong friends of Japan and build them up as an independent but powerful element for good in the Japanese empire.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## THE KETTLEDRUM.

It Is an Instrument That is Pretty Difficult to Handle.

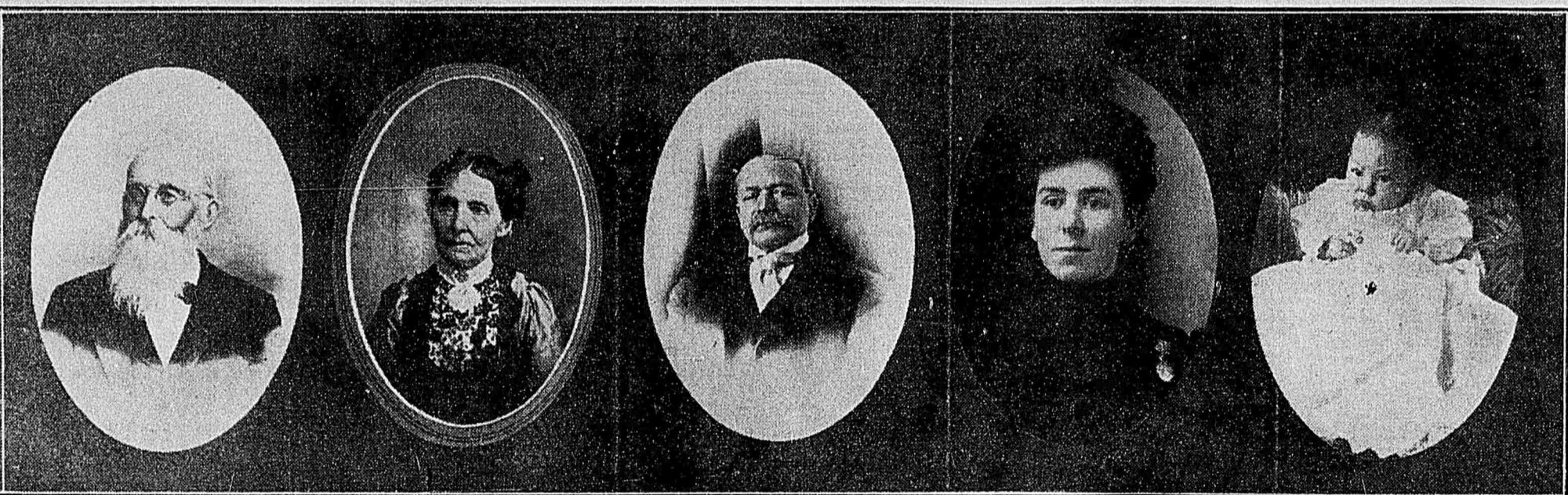
The kettledrum has been so far improved that it has a pitch; in fact, it contains the large range of four notes. It is, as its name shows, a copper kettle, or basin, covered over with skin, which can be tightened or loosened by screws placed around the edge. Drums of this shape were used by the Romans and even earlier by the Greeks and Persians. But they were not known in western Europe before the crusades.

Although it may appear so, the kettledrum is not at all an easy instrument to manage, for in order to get each of the four notes the player has to turn all the screws and adjust the parchment anew. For this reason kettledrums are often used in pairs, one tuned to the keynote, the other to the fourth below. In this way the drummer has always the two chief notes in the scale to work upon, and if the composer has not exacted much from him he will have quite an easy time. But when a change of key is approached it is quite exciting to watch the drummer screwing and unscrewing the drum and lightly tapping to hear if the pitch is true, and if we recollect that he often has to tune his drum while the whole orchestra is lifting up its voice we realize that he must be no mean musician; that he must possess an exquisitely sensitive and well trained ear and a steady hand and nerve as well.—Jessie K. MacDonald in St. Nicholas.

## SAFETY ON ENGLISH RAILROADS.

Once more, after an interval of six years, the English railroads have achieved the remarkable record of carrying on their operations for a whole twelve months without the loss of a single life. The last period in which this was achieved was the year 1901. In 1902 six lives were lost, in 1903 25, in 1904 six, in 1905 39, in 1906 58 and in 1907 18. As a matter of fact, there has been no loss of life for 15 months past. The relatively large number of fatalities in 1906 was mainly the result of three disasters which were found upon investigation to be due entirely to the failure of the human element, all the mechanical arrangements on train and track being found perfect.—Scientific American.

## ORANGEVILLE, UTAH, BOASTS OF FIVE GENERATIONS LIVING TODAY.



To. N. T. Guymond of Orangeville Utah, belongs the distinction of having a daughter, grandson, great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter all living in Utah. Mr. Guymond will be 90 years of age on the last of next month. He, in addition, has the somewhat unique distinction of being the oldest subscriber to the Deseret News. There could be none older for

the simple reason that he has been receiving a copy for 58 years, from the first issue to date. His daughter, Mrs. M. J. Matson, lives in Springville and will be 71 on October 25. She is now

an invalid and has been confined to her bed for some months past. She was born in Caldwell county, Mo., the night of Crooked river battle, and is the wife of George B. Matson, one of the Utah

pioneers. George B. Matson, Jr., her son, also resides at Springville, where he is agent for the Deseret News. Mr. Matson's daughter and grand-daughter, Mrs. Ella M. Petrie and Thelma Petrie, reside at Mapleton.

## The Furniture and Stove Exchange.



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## THE GREAT BOMBARDMENT.

The regions of space beyond our planet are filled with flying fragments. Some meet the earth in its onward rush; others, having attained inconceivable velocity, overtake and crash into the whirling sphere with loud detonation and ominous glare, finding destruction in its molecular armor or perhaps recoiling from it again into the unknown. Some come singly, vagrant fragments from the infinity of space; others fall in showers, like golden rain, all constituting a bombardment appalling in its magnitude. It has been estimated that every 24 hours the earth or its atmosphere is struck by 400,000,000 missiles of iron or stone, ranging from an ounce up to tons in weight. Every month there rush upon the flying globe at least 12,000,000,000 iron and stone fragments, which, with lurid accompaniment, crash into the circumambient atmosphere.

Owing to the resistance offered by the air few of these solid shots strike the earth. They move out of space with a possible velocity of 30 or 40 miles per second and, like moths, plunge into the revolving globe, tured to their destruction by its fatal attraction. The moment they enter our at-

mosphere they ignite, and the air is filled up and compressed ahead of them with inconceivable force, the resultant friction producing an immediate rise in temperature, and the shooting star, the meteor of popular parlance, is the result.

## FRESH AIR TABLETS.

In these modern days a food or medicine that can't be put up in a tablet is almost a back number. Even the air is prepared in compressed form. A few days ago, when an apartment in Washington's fashionable Connecticut avenue district became too warm and the hostess complained of the stuffiness of the atmosphere, her visitor, who was just back from Paris, handed her a brown tablet and told her to dissolve it in water. The tablet bubbled away at a great rate, and the hostess said she felt relieved. The stale air seemed to become pure and bracing—in fact, it was oxygenized. "I bought these tablets in France," said the visitor. "They are the invention of the acetylene specialist. They are a combination of chemicals that in water give off oxygen in abundance. The tablets are in vogue very popular in France, where one is considered equal to a window wide open for an hour."—Pathfinder.

## CULTURE OF BANANAS.

Bananas were first imported into Europe on a large scale from the Canary Islands. Until a few years ago they successfully met the competition of the Andalus and the coast of Africa, says the Scientific American. But a disease has spread in the banana cultures, and exportation has fallen off in alarming measure. As the banana figures prominently in the food of the town population of England, the British government appointed a commission to investigate the causes of the degeneration of this useful plant.

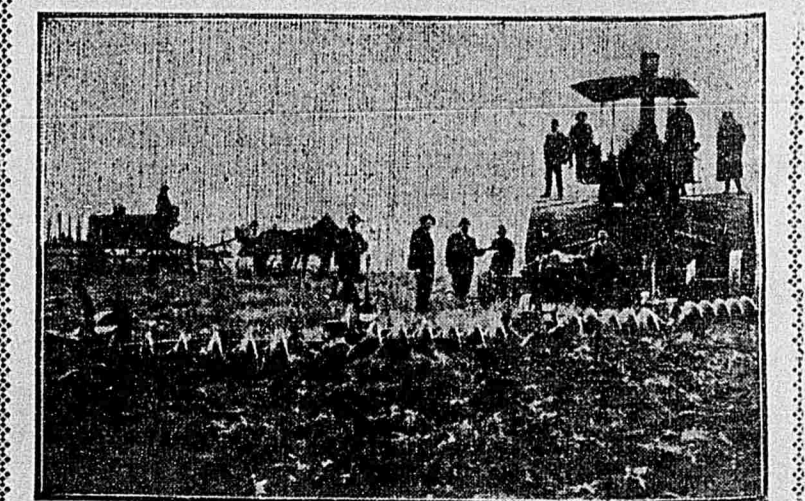
According to the report of this commission, the planters have only themselves to blame. They have given the soil no rest for years past nor practiced any rotation of crops. Confident of the proverbial richness of their soil, they have applied no fertilizers. The enfeebled plants have fallen a prey to a disease known as closterium masarum, which is gradually gaining a foothold in all plantations. The report closes with the observation that the disease is successfully fought by a proper application of fertilizer to the soil.

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