

CUBA'S LABOR FAMINE.

MORE HANDS NEEDED FOR THE SUGAR AND TOBACCO PLANTATIONS.

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

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HAVANA.—Cuba is suffering from a labor famine. Wages were never higher in the tobacco districts, and some of the sugar crop of the past season was not harvested for lack of hands. Thousands of Americans who have purchased lands here are doing more or less to develop their holdings, and the good times have created an increased demand for workmen in every part of the island. There have been a number of projects before congress to encourage immigration and some of these will probably be adopted. The immigrants most wanted are those from the Canary Islands and northern Spain, and they already constitute a large part of the white labor. They are thrifty, industrious and easily controlled. They are in many respects better than the native Cubans, and are considered the best unskilled laborers of Europe.

Attempts are also being made to bring in Italians. The climate here is about the same as that of Italy, and the Italians have proved a success in Argentina, Brazil and other South American countries. At present there is a floating immigration to Cuba from Spain which comes and goes every year. The men are brought in for the harvest season, working chiefly in the tobacco districts. It costs them about \$40 each for their round trip, and the wages are such that each can save \$40 in a single harvest. A similar immigration is carried on between the coffee plantations of Brazil and the wheat fields of Argentina, the men going regularly back and forth.

FAIRM HANDS IN CUBA.

The greatest demand for labor is on the farms and plantations. Cuba is an agricultural country, and one-fifth of the whole population works on the farms. The island has about 1,500,000 inhabitants, and of these 600,000 are workers of one kind or another. Three hundred thousand do farming, and only a little over 300,000 are engaged in manufacturing. There are less than 10,000 at work in the mines and four or five thousand employed on the railroads.

Farm hands get all the way from \$15 to \$20 a month and found. In some places they are paid a dollar a day and at harvest time the wages rise to those

of the United States. A great deal of work is done by contract. A man will take care of a certain piece of land on its shares, or keep it clean at so much per acre per month. I know of men who make \$30 and \$40 a month in this way. They have their children help them in the fields and do the work by the piece or by the day in addition to their contract.

WORK ON THE SHARES.

Many of the farms are rented out. Near Havana a tenant gets the use of five acres and a yoke of oxen for half the crop. Two-thirds of the tobacco of Pinar del Rio is raised by tenants, and a great deal of vegetable gardening is carried on on the shares. The land is so fertile that a small tract will produce three or four crops a year. There are tenants raising corn near Havana who cut five crops of fodder a year. They can raise about 20 tons to the acre, and a man can, I am told, realize \$300 a year from a five-acre crop.

Much of the sugar raising is done on the shares, a tenant taking care of so many acres for a part of the crop, which is disposed of at a sugar mill nearby. Such farming, however, is more profitable in the tobacco regions. The labor is lighter there and it is such that almost all the members of the family can work in the field.

There is quite a movement now in coffee plantings. There is a high tariff on home-grown coffee and this will probably be continued for many years to come. It takes three years to get the first crop, and during this time the tenants are paid about \$50 per annum harvest. A similar immigration is carried on between the coffee plantations of Brazil and the wheat fields of Argentina, the men going regularly back and forth.

WAGES IN CUBA.

Wages are high here considering that Cuba is a part of the West Indies, where the common laborer often gets but 25 cents a day. In Havana such workmen get from \$1 a day upward. Outside they receive \$1 silver, and a little over 50 cents are engaged in manufacturing. There are less than 10,000 at work in the mines and four or five thousand employed on the railroads.

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Congress and Its Immigration Schemes—Farm Labor and Prices—Tenants Who Work on the Shares—Big Pay of Cigar-Makers—Cuba's Timber Industry—Wages in the Building Trades—Cuban Masons vs. American—Among the Ironworkers and Railway Employees—Something About Negro and Chinese Labor.

seeded, wormed and bedded, and when the leaves are gathered they must be cured, bunched and baled. Much of this is done by the piece. Five dollars is paid for setting out a thousand plants, and the packers get from \$5 to \$3 a bale. It is estimated that one can raise and tend about 10,000 seed plants. It requires that many to set out an acre and to tend five such acres it will keep one family busy. Much of the best tobacco is now raised under shade at a cost of several hundred dollars per acre.

BIG PAY OF CIGARMAKERS.

The workers in the cigar factories get big pay. There are thousands of such men in Havana who receive from two to five dollars a day. They have been employed in stripping the leaves from the stems and spreading them out for the cigar rollers. These girls make on the average \$2 a day, the pay roll for female labor in that factory alone being about \$300 per day. The most of these girls are young. Fully 200 of them were under 18, a few were middle aged and one or two gray haired.

There are about 1,600 women employed in the tobacco trade in this island. Some of them work by the piece, some by the day. The cigars are packed by women and the same is true of cigar boxes. In some factories the women earn \$12 a week, while in others they make something like \$30 a month. In most factories the women and men have separate rooms, and in some no women are employed.

New saw mills are being started

throughout eastern Cuba. The country is just opening up, and a large number of men are employed in getting out timber. There are hundreds hewing mahogany logs which are carried to the ports on the railroads or down the rivers at the times of the floods. Others are making railroad ties and others sawing lumber and preparing it for shipment. At such work unskilled men are getting \$1 a day. The price for cutting down and barking a tree which will make a log 30 feet long and four feet in diameter is 50 cents, and 30 cents is paid for trees above that size.

The sawyers in the Havana lumber mills receive from \$50 to \$100 a month, and the mahogany hewers are paid from \$5 to \$7 per thousand feet. Engineers are paid \$100 a month, while head sawyers get \$3 or \$4 a day. Wood choppers receive \$12 a month and board and charcoal burners about the same.

There is an enormous business in charcoal here. This furnishes the fuel for domestic uses. All cooking is done over braziers or in little holes in ledges built up against the wall of the kitchen, making a sort of brick stove as it were. The houses seldom have chimneys and only the fewest have cook stoves of the American or European pattern. The charcoal pedler is to be seen everywhere. He carries his fuel in a cart drawn by a mule or horse and goes from door to door like a huckster.

THE BUILDING TRADES.

Mechanics of all kinds are paid less here than in the United States. The native Cubans are naturally skillful. Many of the workmen are jacks of all trades, and our mechanics would probably do excellent work and some of the buildings made by them are magnificent. There are about 14,000 carpenters in Cuba. They work almost exclusively by the rule of thumb. In building they cut the pieces too large and then saw or shave them down to fit. When they make a roof they will construct the framework on the ground until they get it of the right dimensions and shape. They will then take it to pieces and re-erect it in its proper position.

Such methods are time consuming, and the Cuban carpenter at half price is dear in comparison to ours. The ordinary native bricklayer does well if he can put up 500 bricks per day. The American on rough work can lay 1,800. The superiority of our masons was shown in the building of a brewery which was erected in Havana not long ago. A gang of bricklayers was imported from the United States, and was worked side by side with the Cuban bricklayers. The Americans laid three times as many bricks per day as the Cubans.

It was a repetition of the experiment made on the Westinghouse building at Manchester, England. The contractor there was an American. He became disgusted with the slow work of the English bricklayers and imported a large number of American masons to work side by side with them. Before the Americans came the English bricklayers laid 400 bricks per day. They opened their eyes when the Americans laid from 1,800 to 2,000, and they gradually put on a spurt, which brought them up close to the Americans.

Skilled bricklayers in Cuba get \$1.50 to \$2 a day, hodcarriers \$1 and white-washers and brushmen \$1 and upward. All buildings here have thick walls. The brick is laid up in the rough and the wall covered with plaster or stucco where it faces the street. It is then painted in bright colors.

AMONG THE IRON WORKERS.

Most of the public buildings have a great deal of iron about them. Their windows are covered with a lacework of iron and iron balconies extend out from the second stories. The material used is wrought iron, and its making requires considerable skill. The men employed upon it get daily wages of \$5.50 in gold, while their helpers and apprentices receive \$1 and upward.

There are several machine shops in Cuba. One here in Havana works about 500 men. It pays its best mechanics at \$1 a day, and this wage is received by pattern-makers, molders, foundry men and others. Such men are scarce here. Helpers get \$1.50 a day and apprentices about the same. Piecemen are paid from \$1 to \$2, and outside laborers from \$1 to \$1.50.

ENGINEERS AND RAILWAY MEN.

There are many engineers employed on the plantations. Every big sugar mill has to have one or more, and there must be at the same time mechanics to keep the machinery in order. Many such mills cost several hundred thousand dollars for their machinery alone, and they require skilled men. Blacksmiths are employed on every plantation. They get \$30 and upward a month.

There are about 5,000 men at work on the railroads, and among them a large number of engineers and firemen. The wages are different on different roads, but everywhere they are less than in the United States. Few of the plantations pay more than \$100 a month for their best engineers, and on the roads the locomotive engineers get from \$100 to \$150, and firemen from \$35 to \$50. On the Cuba road a large number of Americans are employed. They are, I suppose, paid better wages.

The most of the railroad conductors are natives. They are polite and efficient. They receive less than the engineers. Brake-men get about \$30 a month and station agents from \$40 to \$60 a month and quarters. The average men employed in the traffic service of the Cuba road do not earn more than \$1,000 a year, and many of them much less.

HOURS OF WORK.

In railroad building the natives work under foreign civil engineers. This was the way the Cuba road was constructed. It had at times 10,000 men, and it pushed them as they had never been pushed before. The officials once attempted to change the hours of work. It is customary here to start the day at 6 and work until 11, then lay off until 2, when the work goes on until 6 in the evening. I understand that the Cuba road company tried to extend the morning until noon and stop off an hour earlier in the evening. This did not satisfy the natives and it had to be abandoned. One reason was that the men start the day on a light meal, and they become played out if they work after 11 o'clock without further food. They like the noon hours for rest, and after their 11 o'clock breakfast of rice, jerked beef and plantains with coffee take a nap, lying flat on their

backs. In the evening they have a good dinner, and after it coffee and a smoke. The first sleep comes at 10 and is taken before going to work, usually at 11. It is not unusual to find a man dozing in a chair or on a bench, or even asleep in a hammock, at 11 o'clock.

NEGROES AND CHINESE.

A large part of the labor here is done by negroes, mulattoes and Chinese. The Chinese were imported years ago under contracts to work for eight years at from 25 to 30 cents a day, and the negroes originally came as slaves. The Cubans had slaves as late as 1880, and it is estimated that it has cost the country about 100,000 negroes during its history. At present about one-third of the population is black, and they are not so strong as in the United States. The lower classes of Spaniards and negroes having intermarried. Indeed, the negro has a higher standing here than in the United States, and for this reason it is said that the Cuban negroes they will not be so well treated by them as by the native whites.

CUBAN NEGROES VS. AMERICAN NEGROES.

A large part of the negro labor is lazy and unreliable. This was found in the work upon the street railroads of Havana, and is being largely to Americans. In building the tracks not long ago a gang of negroes went so slowly that American negroes were brought over and put on the work. They were twice as fast as the Cuban negroes. Both sets of hands were boarded, but the American Cubans and they would not work as cheap as double the money. The best of the negroes was not worth the cost of pay, however, and a strike on the part of the native negroes, and the result was that they got a release of wages, although the Americans still did the most work.

In closing, I would say that I don't think Cuba is a good place for a common laborer without money. When the wages are high for Cuba, they are comparatively low as regards the United States. Our laborer cannot live on the ordinary Cuban wage. They will find the hours of work different and it will take them a long time to become accustomed to Cuban life. If they have money beforehand, they can come here assured of work in any of the American colonies, they may as well; but otherwise the venture is to say the least, doubtful.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Togo's Wife Boss of the Household

MRS. TETSUKO TOGO, wife of the admiral who smashed Russia's powerful armadas at Port Arthur and in the Korean Straits, is commander in chief of her household at Tokio, commander in chief and keeper of the purse, ruler of the four children and "boss."

If Admiral Togo decides to celebrate his great victory over the Russian Baltic fleet he will be forced to appeal to Mrs. Togo for funds unless he has saved enough out of his annual allowance of \$2,500 a year to furnish the banquet for himself and his friends.

Mrs. Togo has full charge of the exchequer. She receives her husband's pay, which now amounts to about \$2,500

a year, with an occasional gift as a reward of bravery and merit, so that his total income as hero and the central figure of the world is less than \$3,000, and every cent of this income is turned over to his wife, who supplies him with spending money. Out of this income she makes him an allowance approximately \$500 a year, and on the remainder she must educate her four children, maintain her quaint little home, pay servants and dress herself and children in a manner worthy the wife and child of the national hero.

The fact that Togo's pay is turned over to his wife has revealed to the world the fact that in the best households of Japan the wife is the treasurer and controller of the business manager of the household.

The Japanese household is conducted on an ideal co-operative plan, and Satori Kato, one of the best known Jap-

anese who writes English, has told the story of the domestic arrangements among the social leaders of Tokio, revealing a glimpse into the home lives of the samurai.

"The Japanese household of the better class," he writes, "is conducted on the co-operative plan. From the day of their wedding the wife is the treasurer and has absolute charge of the disbursement of funds. The husband turns over the entire income to his wife, who manages it with a skill and with results that would astound the average woman of Europe or America."

"Admiral Togo, as I happen to know, turns over his entire income, which is less than \$3,000, to his wife, who has shown herself as able in the management of the household finances and the control of the children as her now famous husband has been in warfare. She makes him a regular allowance of pocket money—a sum which would seem paltry to an American or European army or naval officer of much lower rank—and with the rest she accomplishes wonders."

"She has educated her four children well, her home is one of the most picturesque, sweet and tasteful in all Tokio, although extremely unpretentious."

"Miss Chiyoko Togo, the admiral's fourteen-year-old daughter, is a little beauty of the strictest Japanese type and one of the central figures in the peerless school, which she attends. The sons, Hyo and Miori, are manly boys, one of them being a cadet in the naval school at Tokio, and Arimura, a foster son, is their companion and adviser, being a little their senior."

"The Togo family lives in a small, rambling tiled house inclosed, with its back garden, by a high board fence, an open gate with two big wooden posts affording an opening."

"Mrs. Togo was the daughter of Viscount Kaleda, and when she married the young officer she assumed charge of the salary, then less than \$1,500 a year, and her management has enabled them to improve their little home and furnish it in exquisite taste, although with extreme simplicity and with little cost."

"There is no trace of luxury in the whole establishment beyond two little American brass beds and one dainty little white bed for Miss Chiyoko's room, which are innovations in a Japanese household. The admiral's room is of severe simplicity, his books and charts being arranged on a severely plain table. The only other sign of luxury consists of the flowers, which are arranged with beautiful taste through the living rooms."

"I saw the inside of the house on one of Admiral Togo's returns to his home, and then the gifts of flowers—simple bunches, mostly of white blossoms—were more lavish than usual."

"The house is not noticeable among those of thousands of middle-class people in Tokio and the only outward sign of pretense is a plate set against the gate post with the word 'Togo' on it and above it a small incandescent electric light, which Mrs. Togo caused to be placed there for the convenience of processions that came along the street to shout banzais in front of the house."

"Mrs. Togo does most of her own

housework and employs but one servant to help her in her household duties, and when Admiral Togo is away she calls upon one of her relatives as a protector of the family and general caretaker."

"The family keeps no carriage or richly, but after the war commenced Mrs. Togo purchased a bicycle for Miori so that he might ride downtown to get the news from the front, as no correspondence passed between her and her husband except brief greetings sent by messengers during the weary days in front of Port Arthur an dthe soul-travelling wait for the arrival of Rojstevsky."

"The Togo household, like those of the majority of middle and high class Japanese, is extremely clean—painfully clean almost—being of unpainted wood secured to whiteness at every spot from kitchen to sleeping rooms, and covered with new and scented matting, tastefully colored at the borders. The cleanliness of these homes accentuates the dirtiness of the poorer houses and the lanes."

The cooking arrangements and washing arrangements are simple and effective, the stoves small and the fire acquired through labor, for as yet they have not accepted the European tub. Beds, too, are a rarity, sleeping mats and the hard head rests being placed upon the floors in most cases.

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