

YORKVILLE ENQUIRER.

ISSUED SEMI-WEEKLY.

L. M. GRIST & SONS, Publishers.

A Family Newspaper: For the Promotion of the Political, Social, Agricultural, and Commercial Interests of the People.

TERMS—\$2.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. SINGLE COPY, FIVE CENTS.

ESTABLISHED 1855.

YORKVILLE, S. C., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 1899.

NO. 49.

THE FOUR PRESIDENTS.

By W. L. ALDEN.

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"It was along back in the year 1861," said the American ambassador, "that I was appointed American minister to Torzoniza, which, as you probably know, was at that time an independent Central American republic, though since then it has been annexed by one of its neighbors. There was only one town in Torzoniza of any size, and that was the capital and principal seaport. The government sent me out in a frigate, and when we arrived at Porto Nuevo and I was on the point of going ashore the captain, who was a particularly good fellow, said he'd lie at anchor for a few days, so as to be ready in case I should need any protection. You see, there was most generally a revolution in progress in Torzoniza, and the captain, being a thoughtful man, calculated that in case I should be accidentally shot he could bombard the town and make a big reputation at home for energy and patriotism.

"I was put ashore in one of the frigate's boats, and after I had convinced an Indian custom house officer who didn't wear shoes and who couldn't read my passport that I wasn't dangerous I gave my trunks to a couple of porters and walked up to the hotel. There was only one hotel in the place, and that was kept by a man who had been a waiter at a San Francisco hotel and spoke English pretty near as well as I or you. It was a small hotel, and I had it all to myself except for the barroom, where part of the Torzonizian army was always drinking itself crazy. I had a fairish sort of dinner, and after I had started in to smoke the landlord came in and talked with me in a sociable sort of way, though he was very careful not to sit down in the presence of a great man like myself.

"I told him I was the new American minister, and I asked him if the president was in town, for I wanted to present myself to the president as soon as possible so as to get to work, providing there should be any work for a minister to do.

"President Almonte is here," said the landlord, "but the other presidents are in different parts of the country."

"How many presidents does this country require?" said I. "The United States is a middling big country, but we contrive to get along with one president at a time."

"There are four of them just now, sir," replied the landlord, "but of course they'll be thinned out considerably when they get to fighting. There's President Almonte, whose term expired six months ago, but who is holding on to office till he can collect some more taxes. He's got 500 men and all the artillery in the grounds of the presidential mansion, and he'll make a good fight for it before he's turned out.

"Then there's General Garcia, who was elected president at the last election, but has never been able to get in to the presidential mansion. He's got about 1,500 men with him, and he's in camp about five miles from here.

"Then there's President Alvarez, who was vice president under Almonte and considers that he ought to have been elected in place of Garcia. He is supposed to have 1,000 men in his camp, which is, say, ten miles north of here.

"President Del Valle has about the same number of men with him, and he's somewhere to the south of us, though I can't say precisely where. He was the senior officer of the army, and he set up as president because he said that neither of the three other presidents was justified in starting revolutions and that it was his duty as a patriot to punish them. Most people here think that old Almonte, having all the artillery with him, has the best right to the presidency, but nobody knows how the thing will end when once the fighting gets fairly started."

"Now, this news didn't suit me at all. You see, I had to present my credentials to the president of Torzoniza before I could act as minister and earn my salary. But how was I to know which of the four rascals was the genuine and only president? Moreover, it was a ticklish business for me to select a president and stick to him. By so doing I recognized his government and became, so to speak, responsible for him.

"At first I was inclined to recognize Almonte, who was within handy reach, and who had certainly been president up to the time of the last election, whatever might be the legality of his present position. But, then, in case I called on Almonte and presented my papers I should be treating the chap who had been elected president with gross injustice. There would have been no use in writing to Washington for instructions, for the mail for the United States left Torzoniza only once in two months, and it had left the day before I arrived. I saw I should have to act on my own responsibility, and I didn't like it at all.

"You see that I couldn't afford to spend three or four months waiting for the presidents to thin one another out, for my salary didn't become due until I had been regularly received by the lawful president. Of course, being a practical man, I knew that any one of the presidents would be mighty glad to be recognized by me and that if I should set them bidding against one another and agree to recognize the highest bidder I could make a handsome thing out of it. But that wouldn't have been honorable considering that I was in the diplomatic service.

"I'd always been an active politician, and I had always held that a politician is worthy of his hire, as the palmist says, but a diplomatic officer is different. He is bound to obey the regulations, and I considered then, as I do now, that a diplomatic officer would not be acting in a way worthy of his high office.

"I thought over the situation that night, and when morning came I called on the doctor who was at the head of the hospital and told him that I wanted to see the differences between the four presidents amicably settled. In a place like Porto Nuevo the head of the hospital is always the most influential man in town, with the exception of the president and the chief of police. You see that whenever a revolution breaks out and the parties to it begin to shoot the hospital fills up pretty rapidly, and the wounded men are mighty anxious to be on good terms with the doctor, so that he won't try any carving experiments on them.

"This particular doctor was the most level headed man in Torzoniza, and when he and I had talked things over we agreed that the best thing to do would be for me to arrange an interview with the four presidents and induce them to compromise their differences. The doctor said that they would agree to anything, provided the consideration was large enough, and he thought that if the four presidents were to form a syndicate and govern the country in partnership it would be a satisfactory arrangement all round.

"I went back to the hotel and wrote an invitation to each of the presidents to dine with me on the next day but one,



"Naturally I dropped under the table," promising to send an escort of United States marines to bring each president to the hotel and to see him safe back to his camp. Then I went aboard the frigate and arranged with the captain for the use of four detachments of marines, consisting of four men each. I got the correct addresses of the four presidents and started each detachment in time to reach its particular guest and to bring him to the hotel at 6 o'clock sharp.

"Of course I wasn't so foolish as to let one president know that I had invited any of his rivals. Each man naturally came to the conclusion that I meant to recognize him as the only lawful president. This made it reasonably certain that every one of the four would come to dinner, and I calculated when I had got them comfortably full of the captain's champagne they would be ready to listen to reason.

"For the first time in the history of Central America my invited guests arrived promptly at the hour specified. This wasn't their fault, for if they could have had their way they would have straggled in at all hours from 6 to 10. But the midshipmen that were in command of the different escorts knew their business and, being ordered to deliver the presidents to me at 10 minutes before 6, had them on hand at the precise moment. How they did this I never inquired. One of the presidents—I think it was Garcia—complained that it was contrary to the law of nations for American marines to prod Central American presidents in the back with bayonets, but I didn't take any notice of what he said, knowing that it would be impossible to convince a Central American of the value of punctuality.

"When the four presidents met, they were considerably surprised, and there would very likely have been a difficulty then and there if I hadn't made them a little speech and begged them to observe the laws of hospitality and to abstain from shooting on the premises. They saw the force of what I said and concluded to keep the peace. Each man gave the other a dignified salute, but not a word would one of them speak to another until dinner was about half over. They then gradually began to ask one another to pass the salt or to circulate the bottle, and in a little while they were all talking together as fast as so many monkeys.

"When the coffee was brought in and we were all as sociable as if none of us had ever heard of politics, I got up and said: 'Gentlemen, I have asked you to meet together in order to settle your differences and enable me to find out which president my government ought to recognize. You can't help seeing that this country is too small to furnish a decent living for four presidents. You'll have to go on fighting till there's only one of you left, and it's a mere matter of chance which one that will be. You are playing a game in which you stake your lives against the presidency, and, though I can't say what you value your lives at, it's my opinion that the stakes are far too high.

"Now, I propose that you settle this business by a friendly game of cards. I don't know your Spanish games, but you can easily choose some game in which each man that is beaten goes out and leaves the others to play. The man who finally wins is to take the presidency, and the others are to agree to support him for, say, two years, at the end of which they shall be at liberty to start a revolution if they feel so disposed. You will arrive at the same sort of result by playing a game of cards that you will by fighting and raising Cain for the next year or two, and the man who loses will only lose their expectations of being president, instead of losing both their expectations and

their lives. Now, gentlemen, here are the cards. Will you take my advice and settle your difference like Christians or will you fight like barbarians?"

"The presidents listened to my speech in a very respectful way, and when it was ended old Almonte, who, as I afterward learned, was the biggest card sharp in Torzoniza, said that he cordially agreed with all his excellency the United States minister had said and that he was quite ready to play the other three gentlemen for the presidency. The other three didn't seem very anxious to play, but first one of them and then another said that while he had perfect confidence in the justice of his claim he would adopt my proposal, feeling certain that the Blessed Virgin would see him through all right. The upshot was that they all sat down to some unearthly Spanish-American sort of game that I never pretended to understand and presently they were playing as quietly as you and I would play if we had a little game of draw on hand with unlimited stakes and a straight flush barred.

"I sat at the end of the table smoking a cigar and saying to myself that I was a born diplomat and had made a splendid beginning as minister to Torzoniza. Say what you will of the presidents, they were gentlemen so far as their manners went, and nobody could have been more polite than they were to one another. By and by old Almonte smiled sweetly at Garcia and remarked that, inasmuch as Garcia had revoked or done something equivalent to revoking, he was beaten and must consider himself out of the game.

"I never in all my life saw a man pull his gun quicker than Garcia pulled his, but quick as he was, he had got in only one shot when all the other three presidents were on their feet and blazing away promiscuously at one another. Naturally I dropped under the table, for it would have been contrary to diplomatic etiquette for me to take a hand in the shooting. All the same I hated to be out of it, for it was one of the liveliest difficulties I ever struck. It didn't last over four or five minutes, and by the end of that time all four of the six shooters were empty, and all four presidents were lying on the floor. Then I got up and called the landlord, and after he had found that nobody was killed—though every man had from two to five bullets in him—I called up the marines, and they carried the presidents to the hospital in a sort of procession.

"My little plan for settling the presidential dispute hadn't panned out quite as I expected, but it wasn't my fault. I saw Dr. Moreno after he had examined the wounded men, and he told me that they would all recover, though they would probably have to remain in the hospital for several weeks. He said that the government would be carried on in the name of President Almonte, the chap who had occupied the presidential mansion, until such time as all the four claimants were discharged from the hospital.

"I shall take the best of care of them and maintain a strict neutrality," said the doctor, "and I shall recommend you to do the same hereafter. You've tried to arrange things without bloodshed, and you've failed, and now your best plan is to let those four fellows fight their quarrel out according to the laws and customs of Torzoniza."

"The four presidents lay in the hospital exactly six weeks. None of them was severely wounded, and they might all have been discharged after ten days or a fortnight, but the doctor said that not a man should stir until his wound had entirely healed. I went to see the presidents every day and got to be quite friendly with the whole gang of them. I found out by their own confessions that each man was bribing the doctor to keep the others in the hospital. You see that if one of the presidents could have got out of the hospital a day or two in advance of the others he would have had a free field and could have seized the presidency without any opposition.

"According to their account, those four men must have paid the doctor an average of \$1,000 each in bribes, and each one thought that he was getting his money's worth and stealing a march on his rivals. The doctor, being a practical man, took all the money that was offered him and earned it honestly by keeping the men in the hospital. Whenever one of the presidents complained that he was being kept in longer than was necessary the doctor would tell him that there were certain complications in his case that made it necessary for him to remain in bed a short time longer, but at the same time he promised that under no circumstances would he allow any one of his rivals to leave the hospital in advance of him.

"Being Spanish-American, with a native talent for lying in bed, and feeling sure that the doctor would keep his word about not letting any of the other men out of hospital too early, each president was minding well satisfied with the way things shaped themselves. They were all so sure of the presidency that they constantly bothered me to recognize them then and there, but I always put them off by saying that I had written home for instructions and felt sure that my government would direct me to recognize the best man. Every one of the four told me confidently that he was to be discharged three days before any of the others and that he expected to seize the presidency and shoot his rivals the moment they came out of the hospital.

"About six weeks after my dinner party I was waked up one morning by the sound of rifles. I heard what was clearly a volley fired somewhere near the hotel, followed by three or four single shots. Then I heard the noise of heavy wooden shutters being closed in a hurry, and I knew that a revolution was being broken out. I got up and dressed and was going out to see what was to be seen, but I found the front door locked and barred and was obliged to hunt up the landlord and ask him for information. He hadn't much to tell me, except that Dr. Moreno had installed himself in the presidential mansion and

had placarded the town with proclamations saying that he had resolved to put an end to the era of revolutions in Torzoniza and to give the people peace and security.

"The landlord said that the revolution had opened at precisely 11 o'clock in the evening and that there had been no resistance to the submission of all the troops belonging to the four presidents. I was a little astonished to hear the public men are either infidels or rapidly becoming so," says The Christian Herald, and in order to "test the truth of this charge," that paper recently sent to the president, members of the cabinet, supreme court, United States senate, commanders of the army and navy and governors of the various states, the following questions:

I. Are you a friend of Christianity?
II. Do you believe that Christianity is the friend of mankind?
III. Does your belief extend to the recognition of the Supreme Being; to the Divinity of Christ; to the surpassing potency of Christianity as a civilizing influence?

Hundreds of replies were received and all were in the affirmative. Many of them have the positive ring of the true metal and many are of a hesitating nature. Some of the senators failed to answer and some of the governors failed to answer. This failure, if intentional, can only be taken to mean that they dare not say no to any of the questions, and this, more than anything else, goes to prove what a force they recognize the Christian religion to be.

President McKinley replied: "My belief embraces the Divinity of Christ and the recognition of Christianity as the mightiest factor in the world's civilization."
The custom of the members of the supreme court to decline to answer questions of any kind; but all the same Chief Justice Fuller declared, "I am a friend to Christianity." Hon. George Shiras said, "I am a Christian, of course." The other members of the court refused to be interviewed; but The Christian Herald thinks that all of them are Christians.

Senator John L. McLaurin said: "To all your questions, I answer, Yes."
Senator B. R. Tillman said: "True Christianity is a very rare thing even in the churches, and he would be a fool who denies the beneficent influence of the Christian religion upon men as taught by Christ. It is the best code of morals to live by that has ever been formulated."

SPONGES FOR HONEYCOMBS.
A Maine Man Thinks He Has Solved a Problem in Bee Culture.

If the honey bees are wise, they will refrain from stinging or annoying Tom Kyah during the remainder of his natural life, because he has lately adopted a labor-saving device that enables the industrious occupants of the hives to accumulate double the amount of honey they could before Kyah turned his energies to bee-keeping. Tom is a hardy, by trade, and raises bees as a hobby, so as to keep his mind occupied. As a result he entertains his customers with tales of the apiany instead of trying to sell them a new hair invigorator, and finds that his patronage is increasing every week. He reads whatever books on bee culture come to hand, besides doing a fair amount of thinking and close observation on his own hives.

According to Tom's idea, a bee is a well meaning and poorly educated insect that needs the guiding hand of man to bring it to fullest perfection. The making of honey is a secondary consideration in the economy of bee life. The stuff which costs time and labor is the comb, which is manufactured into storage vaults, in which the honey is preserved in air-tight sealed packages, stamped and labeled with trade-mark of the queen bee who presides over the destinies of the colony. Different men have constructed machinery for a crude imitation of the genuine comb, and the bees have accepted this as a passable substitute for the real thing, but Tom is the first apiarist who has done away with the beeswax in any form and satisfied the bees.

One day last June, after washing his buggy and sponging it off, he threw the sponge, which was large and porous, into an empty beehive that was in his stable. Here it stayed until thoroughly dry. A swarm of bees coming out, Tom housed them in this hive without thinking to remove the sponge, which had clung to a nail in the top board. Two weeks later Tom looked into his hive and found it was almost filled with nice white clover honey. As the swarm was not a large one, the great store was a surprise to Tom, who thought it would not be full before September. On closer observation he found that his bees had utilized the porous sponge as a storehouse for their honey, filling it cell by cell and sealing it up as if sponge was the very article that progressive bees had been seeking all their lives.

It was too late to continue the experiment, as all the bees had swarmed; but this year Tom has equipped all of his new hives with sponge comb, and believes he has solved a problem that has mystified bee-keepers for years. Instead of compelling his bees to waste three-fourths of their time in chewing vegetable gum and making it into wax for cells, he will now furnish them with ready-made comb, thus multiplying his honey output three or four times. When he wants some new honey, he will remove a sponge, put it in a cider press, and having squeezed out the liquid sweetness, he will replace the sponge in the hive to be filled again.—New York Sun.

COW PEAS.—A correspondent in The Practical Farmer says: I have made a short cut to success in cow pea growing by sowing at the proper time. If sown before the ground is warm and dry I get a poor stand of sickly plants. Weeds will thrive in cold soil, and as peas will not, the weeds will soon get ahead of the peas. If sown when the ground is dry and hot, cow peas will outgrow anything I ever saw. Best results are obtained by sowing when the cold nights are passed, which, in our latitude, is about June 1.

Never make a confidant of everybody's friend.

Miscellaneous Reading.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Leading Men of the Nation Interviewed on This Important Subject.

"The charge is pretty frequently made by agnostics, free thinkers and atheists that this is a Godless nation and a large proportion of the leading public men are either infidels or rapidly becoming so," says The Christian Herald, and in order to "test the truth of this charge," that paper recently sent to the president, members of the cabinet, supreme court, United States senate, commanders of the army and navy and governors of the various states, the following questions:

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SOON TO BE AT LIBERTY.
Mrs. Maybrick Almost Sure of Her Release.

Philadelphia Times.

LONDON, June 2.—After 10 years in Aylesbury jail charged with poisoning her husband Mrs. Florence Maybrick stands at last in the shadow of freedom. The efforts of the American government, the press of that country and the American ambassador to England, Joseph H. Choate, are at last to bear fruit. Ever since his arrival in London Mr. Choate has taken the greatest interest in Mrs. Maybrick's case and has several times talked it over with Lord Salisbury. A review of the case furnished him by J. H. Levy, one of Mrs. Maybrick's advocates, has convinced him of the injustice of her imprisonment, and acting under instructions from his government he has determined to see the case through and secure Mrs. Maybrick's freedom.

The Maybrick case in London has been as celebrated and sensational as the Dreyfus case in Paris. In both cases it seems that after years of injustice both countries are endeavoring to grant justice and blot out as far as possible the stain upon their governments.

About 20 years ago a bright, pretty American young woman, Miss Florence Holbrook arrived in London and was at once received in the best society. She was a lovely, vivacious girl, sought after by the women and admired by the men. She came from a good family, was highly educated and took an active part in the social activities of London. Among the acquaintances she made was a wealthy old London merchant named Maybrick, who fell desperately in love with the charming American. So attentive was he that it was quickly noticed, and soon after society received the announcement of their engagement with considerable surprise. The wedding was one of the social events, and after a continental tour Maybrick and his young bride settled down in a beautiful country seat outside of London. Apparently the marriage was a happy one. Three children blessed the union.

Maybrick died very suddenly and an investigation revealed the presence of arsenic in his stomach. Upon this fact the young wife was arrested and charged with murder, her children taken from her and she was thrown into prison, pending a trial. The case excited the most profound excitement. Influential friends of the accused woman, both of her own nationality and of England, endeavored to secure her release, but without avail. She was shut up alone, denied visitors and harassed for a confession. Her protest of innocence were useless. Finally, realizing her position, she secured learned counsel and awaited trial.

When the case finally came before the courts the one thing lacking in the case of the crown was the proof of motive. It is true the queen's counsel endeavored to show that Mrs. Maybrick was prompted to rid herself of her aged husband and secure his estate, but there was absolutely nothing to substantiate this allegation. On the other side, however, counsel for Mrs. Maybrick produced proof to show that her husband was a confirmed arsenic eater, and that his death was due to this habit. Medical experts verified the statements of the accused wife, yet in spite of the testimony she was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The verdict

and sentence created as much excitement as her arrest. Influences were immediately set to work to have the case retried. The American government, through its ambassador, took an active part and has continued to do so ever since Mrs. Maybrick's conviction.

Sir James Stephen, who presided at the trial, was afterward declared incompetent and forced to resign from the bench, but in view of this Mrs. Maybrick was kept in prison. Soon after her imprisonment her baby died. Her other two children, a son and daughter, have been denied to her from the day she was taken from the court room. Pictures of them, which are taken once a year, are sent to her; but neither of the children have been allowed inside the prison gates. The boy is being educated by relatives, while the girl has been adopted by a well-known London physician.

WAR OF THE ASTERISKS.

Business Office Strategy and Editorial Acumen Swelled Coffers.

New York Sun.

"It didn't take much to kick up a row in my town, where my father was the editor of the paper," said the son, who lives in New York.

"You wouldn't think," he continued, "that an asterisk at the end of a political announcement would set people to wondering. Well, it did, or they did, for there was several asterisks. There was no primaries or conventions at the time of which I speak. When a man wanted an office he announced the fact in the newspapers. Sometimes a call would be printed, signed by a number of taxpayers and prominent citizens, urging some man to allow his name to be used in the ensuing election.

"The announcements began to appear about six weeks before the election. They helped out the exchequer wonderfully. I often heard my father say, when he was pressed to buy something for the home, 'wait until the political announcements come in.'"

"The asterisk war of which I spoke occurred the year before the civil war. The announcements had appeared sooner than usual. The asterisk appeared at the end of some announcements, and the question of that day was: 'What is the meaning of the star in 'Squire Blank's announcement?'

"I remember several citizens called at my father's house that night and asked, in the most serious manner, if 'Squire Blank' was all right on the gose." That was the query of that age when you wanted to know if a man stood well socially politically or financially. In this case it referred to the 'Secesh' proclivities of 'Squire Blank. My father informed the citizen that he was glad to say that 'Squire Blank' was all right on the gose."

"Then there is Judge Dash," said the chairman of the committee, "he is not all right on the gose." My father hastened to correct the chairman by saying that Judge Dash was one of the very first men of the town to get all right on the gose. While the committee was trying to satisfy itself at the sideboard, 'Squire Blank' rushed in without waiting even to pass the compliments of the day and, thumping on the table, he asked vehemently: 'See here, what do you mean by saying in your paper that I am 'not all right on the gose?'

"Before my father had a chance to explain, Judge Dash rushed in with all the characteristics of a fighter. He didn't stop to say anything about the weather, but bristled up and demanded to know why The Cycle—that was the name of the paper—had intimated that he was not all right on the gose. By that time that was the unanimous inquiry in the room. My father had put on some war paint by that time and demanded an explanation.

"If it's a joke," he said, "all right, and the sideboard is open. But if you have come to me seriously about this, tell me what you mean, for I'm d—d if I know."

"'Squire Blank was the first to be heard: 'It's this way,' he said. 'When The Cycle came out with my announcement it had a star after my name, and some of my neighbors said that spotted me as not all right on the gose. Now, what did you mean by that?'

"'Yes, and what in the Dickens did you mean by not putting one after my name?' broke in Judge Dash. 'My friends came lumbering into my court room this morning and wanted to know if I wasn't all right on the gose, and said that The Cycle said I was not, and that no star following an announcement meant that the candidate is not all right on the gose and it has cost me \$4 to prove I am what I am.'"

My father gave a hearty laugh that shook the stoppers out of the decanters and explained: 'Why, my dear friends, it is a business office matter. You see we have a new rule in the business office that where a man pays in advance for his advertisement or announcement the book keeper puts an asterisk on it and the printer sets it up, so when the bookkeeper goes to post he does it from the paper, don't you see? Asterisk, cash; no asterisk, credit. That's all. Have something with me, gentlemen.'"

"At the top of the first editorial column of The Cycle the next day was this paragraph:

"Politically every candidate who announces in The Cycle is all right on the gose."

"And it was but a few days before an asterisk was at the end of every announcement. It was what my father called 'business office strategy, linked to editorial perspicuity.'"

WHAT LIQUID AIR WILL DO.
Think—a kettle of liquid air on a cake of ice—the ice is so much hotter than the liquid air that it sets the kettle a-boiling.

Spill a dipperful of it on your best

silk dress. You see it saturated. Look again—Not a mark of moisture.

Dip a handkerchief in it; soak it thoroughly. Draw it out—dry as can be.

Throw a quart on the floor. Hear it fall; see it spread—in a second no sign.

Put you finger in it—feels like velvet.

Put an egg in you'll need a big hammer to break it.

Mercury becomes as metal—drives nails.

Iron and steel become as brittle as glass.

Potatoes become like ivory balls.

Lead—stiff and elastic like steel.

Rubber ball—fragile as an egg shell.

—New York Times.

WEEKLY COTTON REPORT.

Conditions Last Week Showed Considerable Improvement.

The condition of the growing cotton crop improved noticeably in the Mississippi valley and the Gulf and South Atlantic states, and continues to look very promising in Texas; but the crop as a whole is late. Insects are less destructive than usual at this season; but in some states there is complaint of poor stands and foul fields. Generally the crop is well cultivated and clean.

In North Carolina cotton withstood the drought well, and even made excellent growth. Recent rains have induced rapid growth.

In South Carolina cotton of early planting is doing well everywhere and some is putting on squares freely; late planted is not all up, and some fields have been replowed and planted in corn. The stands of cotton are generally fair; but the plants are smaller than usual to the season. Sea Island cotton is in splendid condition, and some blooms have been noted.

In Georgia cotton seems to be holding its own and in some sections has made some growth.

In Florida cotton is free from grass and in fair condition, but late.

In Alabama cotton is growing slowly, but continues generally promising, though some damaging features ("black rot," and bud worms and cut worms in southern counties, with local "spotting" and grasshoppers in various parts of the state) are reported. The late planted is a poor stand, so far, though squares are forming rapidly and blooms are becoming general in the early planted.

In Mississippi early cotton has been extensively worked in every section of the state and the farmer has it well in hand, although grass has given much trouble. The stand varies, but is generally good. Late cotton, although improved, is very backward and promises but little.

In Louisiana the growth of cotton was slow, but the plants retained good color. Cotton is beginning to blossom.

In Texas the cotton crop is as a rule in an excellent state of cultivation; the plant is growing rapidly. It is fruiting well over the central portion. There are scattered complaints of damage from the caterpillar, boll weevil and other insects, but so far this damage is small.

In Arkansas the weather has been favorable for the cultivation and growth of cotton, the farmers have taken advantage of the favorable conditions and have put their cotton in fine condition, where it has been properly cultivated and is looking well.

In Tennessee cotton has improved and in most sections is making fair growth, where well cultivated and clean, but in some localities a few fields have been abandoned on account of the want of sufficient labor to cultivate; there are still many complaints of poor stands.

SPURGEON HELPED BY AN ECHO.
No orator ever less needed the aid of art than the great London preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, and none ever used them less; but when nature helped him, not only in himself; but outside of himself he welcomed the effect, as he had a right to do. One striking instance of a sermon reinforced in this way is related by a clergyman of the church of England, the Rev. D. A. Doudney.

Mr. Spurgeon was holding outdoor meetings in the county of Hants (opposite the Isle of Wight), and one afternoon he preached to a very great throng of people in a beautiful valley near the market town of Havant.

His text was from the fifty-first Psalm, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways," and the sermon was a gospel invitation. The air was still, and a cloudless sun was sinking as he approached the end of his discourse, while the attentive hearers caught every word.

Apparently they had not noticed, carried along as they were by the sweep of his powerful voice, that the valley was the home of echoes. Mr. Spurgeon had discovered the fact. At the close of his last appeal, raising his voice, he called to the congregation: "All things are ready! Come! The Spirit and the bride say 'Come!' and nature herself accents the heavenly invitation again and again: 'Come! Come! Come!'

The echoes took up the word, and from side to side the breathless assembly heard the repeated call, "Come! Come! Come! Come!" till it sank to a whisper in the distance.

The narrator describes the effect as "like an electric shock." It was as if the preacher's eloquent peroration had wakened supernatural voices.

We have no written record of the fruits of the meeting, but there was a solemnity in the aptness of its close that lifted it above mere dramatic artifice or any of the devices employed to trick.

The individual who spends his time in telling what he is going to do after he gets there fails to arrive.