

St. Croix Avis.

75TH YEAR.

CHRISTIANSTED, V. I. U. S. A., WEDNESDAY, 14TH JANUARY 1920.

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Contribution to this paper will be gladly received when the same deals with matters of general interest, and is accompanied with the author's name, as a guarantee of good faith. The editor cannot be responsible for the views of his correspondents nor does he necessarily endorse them.

JAPANESE THEATRES.

Japan must be a happy land for theatre-goers, because in that land seats are not paid for—in fact, there are no seats.

The Japanese much prefers to squat, feeling, no doubt, much more at home in this comfortable attitude. Seats, however, are usually brought for the use of any foreigners who may be present.

There are no hard and fast laws of convention. The Japanese playgoer may do as he pleases; he may eat, drink, smoke, and criticise to his heart's content.

Conversations are carried on, and, if they merit it, the actors are met by a storm of criticism and chaff.

When a man enters the auditorium he removes his boots, and if the weather is hot, any clothing that appears to him to be superfluous.

The naive frankness of the actors' prompter is rather delightful, for if an actor forgets his lines the prompter comes on the stage and, quite openly, points out to the actor where he is wrong.

A boy is kept for the express purpose of walking on the stage and wiping the perspiration off the actors' faces; this duty he carries out without disturbing the even tenor of the play.—*Everyday Life.*

INSECT INGENUITY.

There is no better place than a garden to study insects. The dark-colored beetle—the oil-beetle—may be observed, and as soon as the bees come the larva of this beetle contrives to get upon a bee's body so as to be carried a way to the bee's

home, where it feeds upon the food there, and eventually leaves as a perfect beetle.

Other kinds of beetles act as grave-diggers; certain ants keep a diary; and there are masons, carpenters, and upholsterers among the bees. The mason-bee constructs its cell of mortar. By dropping saliva on bits of earth and mixing both together it pounds the mixture into a sort of cement. It works this into the shape of a mould, inside which the female deposits her egg. Several such mortar cells may often be found lying close together.

The carpenter bee makes its house on decayed wood and lines it with pieces of leaves, which it cuts off in the form of a circle, and adjusts so skillfully that its nest is made watertight without any coating. A very ingeniously constructed home is also that of the upholsterer bee, which dexteriously cuts out the petals of the half-expanded flowers of a poppy. It then strengthens the folds, and fits them so that a splendid tapestry everhangs the walls of its home in which the honey is deposited.—*Ibid.*

PORTO RICO'S PROGRESS.

(Atlanta Journal)

Porto Rico's Progress under the Stars and Stripes is described by Governor Yager in his recent report on two decades of American administration as constituting a record unequalled "by any people anywhere in the world, in the same length of time,"—a record, he adds, "creditable alike to the Porto Ricans themselves and to the great free Republic to which they owe allegiance."

That this is not the mere praise of over-zealous pride appears from a look into authenticated facts and figures. In the twenty year period, for example, approximately 6 and a half million dollars have been expended for public building and nearly five millions for an irrigation system. Furthermore, and specially significant.

There has been created in Porto Rico a modern, democratic school system offering free education to the children of the island. As a result of this system of instruction the percentage of adult illiteracy has been reduced from 79.9 in 1899 to less than 60 per cent in 1919. In 1899 there were 21,873 children attending school, as compared with 160,794 children in 1919-20. The number of

teachers has increased from 525 to 2,984. There were no public school buildings twenty years ago; now there are 529. The expenditure for schools twenty years ago was \$288,098, and for 1918-19 the school appropriation was \$2,467,703.

At the same time laws and court procedure have been changed so completely "as to leave few of the old Spanish practices unaltered." The fearfully insanitary conditions which once prevailed have been supplanted by a public health service of a most effective and beneficent character. The system of taxation also has been modernized, wages generally increased, and conditions of labor much bettered. The public debt created for all of these improvements is now little more than ten million dollars, while the value of the improvements themselves is more than fifteen and a half millions. Assuredly, this is a record of which all concerned may well be proud.—*Porto Rico Progress.*

NOTICE

Fr. 10,000

can be loaned on first priority mortgage in a property, by applying to the Upper Guardian.

St Thomas January 1920.

Publication

IT is hereby made known that the Horse, Carriage and Boat Tax for the first half year 1920 will be received by the Policemasters in Christiansted and Frederiksted from the 20th January to the 10th February 1920, both days included, after which the list of arrears will be transmitted to the same authorities for further measures.

Each debtor of tax will be subject to a fine Fres. 1.00 if the tax be under Fres. 25.00 and Fres 2.00 if the tax be Fres. 25.00 or above, beside the ordinary levy expenses.

Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States of America, St. Croix, December 30, 1919.

For the Governor,

R. O'HAGAN.

Government Secretary.