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FALSE IMPRESSIONS OF THE ISLANDS.

We have before us at present the Century Magazine for September in which appears a rather lengthy article on these islands by Harry A. Franck.

The article which is entitled "The Virgin Islands," and which deals with many problems affecting us, is written in a rather more or less facetious manner. In many instances, it proves the author's superficial knowledge of things concerning us, while in others it proves his utter ignorance of real conditions past and present. His description of things in general are vague. While in some they are misleading, in others they are utterly false. His expressions, too, relative to the natives are not only quizzical and border on the ridiculous, but savor of that impertinence with which one meets from a certain section coming from the mainland.

After giving some description of his voyage from Porto Rico to St. Thomas in the "Virginia," and wherein he complains of Congressional Committees and our governors having their battleships and commodious steam-yachts in which to travel, while the tax-paying citizen has to be left to the mercies of the "Virginia," he launches his first blow.

The first thing that strikes him after landing is "the loose-kneed stroll" of the Virgin Islander which he claims is typical of all his processes, mental, moral, or physical, a characterization, which he likewise applies to the town. Then he charges the people of being undernourished, as "most of their money is spent on dress." Anent this matter of food he says: The chief diet of the

rank and file is sugar. A sugar-cane three times a day is sufficient to keep many of them alive. "Continuing, he remarks, how in the afternoon "their real food consisting of a plate of fungee, which is a nauseating mixture of fish and cornmeal," which is preferred to the most succulent beefsteak, is taken." Doubtless, the writer has in mind, conditions prevailing elsewhere his own homestead, doubtless, but his statements, vague as they are, nevertheless speak for themselves. He next touches upon the greater amount of industry displayed by the women over the men, which, he says, is due to the disparity of the sexes, and which "renders the possession of a man, something in the nature of a luxury."

Touching next upon the overwhelming preponderancy of the negro population, the writer has a good deal to say. But it is, indeed, strange, that Mr. Franck like so many other Americans should not have known that the islands were peopled by Negroes. But what a blessing it is that he has not found them the prototype of his black American brethren.

Touching upon the subject of the sale of these islands to the United States, he has not a word to say in favour of the Danes. According to his estimation, they were the biggest set of blackguards and rascals that ever existed. They removed every stick of furniture from the public buildings; they tore out the mirrors from the walls; they tore down the embossed leather paper from the walls and finally, took down and carried away the rope on the Government flag-pole!

Touching next upon the schools, he draws some very unfavourable pictures of them, and those in charge, thereof. But knowing the sound, healthy principles on which the workings of the schools were based under the Danish administration, our only wonder is that any individual could allow himself to become such an unmitigated falsifier!

Mr. Frank has doubtless visited some obscure country school, and from what he might have seen and met with there, tries to embody all the schools into this category. There is one thing with which we are all perfectly well acquainted that the Danes had in these islands, a very thorough and systematic idea of education.

Mr. Franck crowns his impertinence when he writes: "Though his (the Governor's) private yacht may be on the

very point of steaming from St. Thomas to St. Croix or vice versa, even American white women are left to the mercies of the filthy "Creole".... Yet native Negro girls are readily carried back and forth, because they happen to be the daughters, relatives or dependents of members of the Colonial Council or some other local officials of the islands we are paying taxes to support." This is indeed, the acme of impertinence, bred of ignorance!

There are other things in the article that are beneath the regards of any respectable and intelligent reader, as for instance, his undeserved attacks upon both Governor Oman and Judge Thiele; his characterization of the inhabitants as a parcel of unsophisticated beggars. Nor must we forget his remarks relative to the general state of morals he found prevailing in the islands. Without going into any further details, we will just inform, that never until the advent of the new-comers have there been such open prostitution and vagrancy. They seem to be the result of that peculiar idea of liberty of which we hear so much boast. There was a system adopted by the Danish Government, however, by which vice especially by the young was held firmly in check, instead of being encouraged as it is today. As we have already stated, the article is such, that one hardly knows into what class to place the writer. There can be no doubt of it however, but that he is of those, from whom the Negro can expect but little.—St. Thomas Mail Notes, Nov. 2nd.



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