



A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER IN  
SOUTH AMERICA.



*Harbor of Rio*

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER IN  
SOUTH AMERICA

Being  
the Experiences and Impressions of an American Business  
Man on a Trip through Panama, Ecuador, Peru,  
Chile, the Argentine and Brazil

BY

FRANK WIBORG



*Illustrated*

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THEORY OF  
ADD TO  
YASU

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TO

A. S. M.

Who couldn't go and  
didn't want the writer to go,  
this little volume is  
affectionately  
dedicated

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## FOREWORD





## FOREWORD

**T**AKEN all in all, there have been a good many books written on South America and, looked at from a standpoint of numbers, there may be little excuse for adding another. But conditions in South America have been changing so rapidly in the past twenty or thirty years that books on the subject, written even ten years ago, are out of date, and those written earlier than this are of no use whatever to the traveller, or to the student interested in present economic conditions.

The American business man is slowly awakening to the fact that while the United States is complacently regarding what is

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called the American invasion of Europe, and while American business interests in the Orient are being jealously guarded both by skilful diplomacy and the persuasive presence of armed forces, yet right at our very doors the trade of a great continent is slipping beyond our reach, and, while we are talking, Germany, England, and France are engaged in a commercial invasion of American soil, and meeting with little or no opposition from us. How has this come about? How does it happen that a people, ordinarily the most enterprising on earth, for once stands back and without protest allows other nations to carry off the plum of commerce? Well, business men have said to me: "Why go to South America? Haven't we all we can do here at home?" This sort of reasoning can not be serious, for American business men know too well that even if to-day we have all we can do at home, it behooves

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us to prepare for to-morrow. As in all other vital organisms the law of business life is growth or decay; and the moment growth is checked decay sets in. A flourishing business at a standstill is a contradiction of terms; yet it is what those men are looking forward to who think home markets will be enough to engage our attention for all time. A truer reason than the one offered for our indifference to South American trade is the fact that the business methods of South America are not our methods, and South America insists upon retaining her methods, refusing to conform to ours. Now, the American is so cocksure his methods are the best in creation that, for a situation like this, he has neither patience nor tact. So long as there is no immediate and pressing need for new commercial fields, therefore, he is willing to hug a cherished prejudice and to look askance at South America. England and Germany, on

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the contrary, face the situation squarely, and meet the South American on his own footing. This is the secret of their great success. As a result of their affability, South America trusts them, and believes that they are sincerely interested in her welfare. But she doubts our friendship, and it seems to me not surprising that she does.

Though there has been no general American invasion of South America, many firms in all parts of the country have for years been sending representatives there. These men, selected for the most part for peculiar reasons, have often been incapable of introducing properly the products in their charge, and by their ignorance and their mistakes have, in many cases, harmed the business interests they represented. For a commercial traveller in South America, an understanding of Spanish or Portuguese has been considered a prime requisite of such im-

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portance that very often an intimate knowledge of the wares in hand — the first qualification of a good salesman at home — is overlooked altogether.

In the early part of 1904, the misunderstandings and business entanglements brought about by an incapable representative, made it necessary for The Ault & Wiborg Company of Cincinnati to send a member of their firm to South America to straighten matters out. This mission fell to me. I left New York on the 19th of January, 1904; crossed the Isthmus of Panama; then, making many stops, went down the west coast of South America as far as Valparaíso; crossed the Andes and the pampas of Argentina to Buenos Aires; and up the east coast of South America to Rio Janerio. Thus I passed over a great part of the geographical extent of South America and I had, besides, an excellent opportunity to meet many

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classes of people, and to see many strange customs.

A number of my business friends have persuaded me that an account of my journey, apart from the particular business for which it was undertaken, would be of general interest. If much the same ground has been gone over by other writers, I can only plead that, so far as I know, no one has approached the subject from exactly my point of view, namely: that of an American business man. Yet I have not dealt in statistics; any one who wishes can find statistics presented fully in such publications as the "Statesman's Year Book." My effort has been to give a general impression of the country, and to correct as far as possible some of the woeful misconceptions that I find prevailing everywhere. If I fail to hold the reader's attention, I beg him to place the blame on me and not on South America, for in spite of the

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assurances of my friends, that they have been deeply interested in what I have to say, I realize what risk they are taking in advising me to write for others what I have spoken to them. As in case of success I shall ask these same friends to share it with me, so in case of failure I devoutly trust that they will voluntarily stand by me.





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## CHAPTER ONE

### FROM NEW YORK TO PANAMA

THE prospective traveller in South America might do well not to seek information too earnestly beforehand. For some reason of all the countries, little known to us in the United States, there is none with quite such an all around bad name as South America. One's friends and acquaintances have heard only disquieting rumours and protest against one voluntarily going to a place which is overrun with yellow fever, or, at least, may be any moment, or if not that, devastated by a revolution. Of course, it is a land of yellow fever and revolutions, and any one looking for one or the other will likely be successful.



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One has to concede that much, though declaring at the same time his firm conviction that he, at any rate, will be able to pass through unharmed by either. Unfortunately, the insurance companies, when consulted, do not share in this conviction. Like one's friends, they shake the head ominously, and gravely state: "It is a very serious risk. Indeed, a man takes his life in his hands when he goes to South America!"

Moreover, to the other discouragements that were offered the present writer, a final one was added, when, a few hours before sailing, the man who was to accompany him, who had been in the country before and knew something of the language, wired suddenly that it would be impossible for him to go. Consequently, it was in a rather subdued frame of mind that I boarded the steamship "City of Washington" in New York Harbour on the bleak afternoon of January 19,

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1904, with South America my general, and Colon, Isthmus of Panama, my particular destination.

Yet, once aboard, misgivings vanished, and after a day or so at sea I found myself again looking forward to the expedition in high spirits. My fellow-passengers were probably responsible for this change. They were typical of the people one would always meet going to South America. There was the inevitable party of English globe-trotters who had been everywhere, and had come to the conclusion that England was the only country on earth that knew how to govern herself and her colonies. Then there was the General — a real South American General, a Venezuelan by birth, a Parisian by card, a Revolutionist by profession, and, at present, on his way to Panama where, it was understood, men of his stamp were in demand. A naval officer with a small detachment of

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workmen was on his way to the Isthmus to install the wireless telegraph. There were two or three engineers for work on the Canal; a handful of commercial travellers, well-stocked with stories after their kind; a couple of young mining engineers bound for Ecuador and Peru, and a group not so easily classified — the men who were going out to embark on the various risky enterprises that a new country always affords. In the snug security of New York my friends might succeed in impressing me with the perils of my proposed journey, but in this company such fancied perils were soon forgotten. Many of these men could not expect to return to their homes for years, and then only in case of the success of their enterprises. And of all who had gone before them with like plans, how many had fallen into premature graves, how many had failed! Could these hope for a better fate?

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But no time was taken up on board the "City of Washington" in idle forebodings. Instead, the situation at Panama was defended or attacked, as the politics or the nationality of the speaker dictated; calculations were offered as to the output of the placer mines in Ecuador, and the whole subject of South American trade was thoroughly canvassed.

The trip was not exciting, but, like most ocean voyages, devoid of any positive discomfort, was pleasant enough. One soon falls into the daily routine of ship life, and grows to enjoy it; the morning salt-water shower, the leisurely meals, the desultory reading, the deck promenades, and the long discussions and interesting personal experiences.

A week's run, and we had covered the 1970 miles between New York and Colon, and had exchanged the freezing winter

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of New York for the sultry heat of the tropics.

As the ship enters the tiny harbour of Colon, one is charmed with the loveliness of the scene. The low hills, grouped about in a semicircle, are covered with tropical vegetation, and everywhere the sky-line is broken with groups of tall, graceful palms.

The town of Colon is low, and from a distance presents an attractive appearance, in keeping with its picturesque surroundings. But a closer view is very disappointing. Filth of every description litters the streets; the houses, most of which are frame, are in a sad state of repair, and the place swarms with a population of negroes and half-breeds. Parts of the town have been burned at different times, and in places the débris yet remains.

On a tongue of land running out into the bay are to be seen the handsome villas, erected

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by De Lesseps for himself and other of Canal officials. These are the first witnesses the traveller meets of that reckless expenditure which characterized the whole enterprise of De Lesseps from the start. From this on he will see evidences of it wherever he turns.

As the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Railway and the Isthmian Canal, Colon is an important place. It is clear then, that whatever can be done to make it habitable, in an American sense, will be done soon. Generous filling in would certainly rob the marshy ground of much of its deadliness; a modern sewage system would certainly carry away much of the present filth; and a street-cleaning department introducing sanitary methods could certainly be organized that would be more effective than the buzzards which, at present, do whatever is done in the way of cleaning.

My stay in Colon was short, but even so I

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felt it was enough. Colon is not a place I would choose as a home. My last impression of it, as seen from the train-window, was of the miserable houses on the outskirts of the town, supported on stilts, and stilts which rested in mud and filthy water.

The Panama Railway runs between Colon and Panama, a distance of forty-seven miles. It follows pretty closely the route of the great Canal. It crosses and recrosses the Chagres River, that stream of ill-fame — which, with the Culebra Cut, has presented the most serious problem the engineers of the Canal have had to solve. When I saw it, the Chagres was a pretty little river and quiet enough. There was nothing about it to suggest the raging torrent, which, at certain times of the year it becomes, rising, it is said, with scarcely a warning, forty feet and more in a night. The Chagres flows to the Atlantic in a general northwest direction

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from the main watershed of the Isthmus, which is situated about fifteen miles from the Pacific Coast. The watershed is drained on the Pacific side by the Rio Grande, which the railway crosses but once.

It was the plan of the De Lesseps Company to build a tide-water canal continuing, as it were, the bed of the Chagres River to the Pacific. The second French Company abandoned this plan, in consideration of the enormous expenditure necessary to reduce the Culebra Cut to such a low level, and of the difficulties presented both by the variations in the height of the tides of the two oceans, and also by the floods of the Chagres. It substituted instead the plan of a five-lock canal. In this plan all danger from the Chagres was to be averted by the formation, in its course, of a huge lake, occupying a section of the canal fourteen miles long, between the towns of Bohio and Obispo. Into



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this lake, Lake Bohio, the floods of the Chagres could pour with little chance of overflowing, and be held as in a reservoir until needed in the dry season.

The De Lesseps Company worked on the Canal from both ends, and completed at sea level, about fifteen miles on the Atlantic side, that is to the town of Bohio, and seven miles on the Pacific side to the town of Miraflores. This work is now badly choked up with débris, and covered from sight by the rank, tropical vegetation that seems to grow up in a night. However, it is said, that with our great modern dredging machines it can be cleared out in a short time, and at comparatively little cost.

The second French Company confined its excavations to the highest, most difficult section of the canal, the Culebra Cut. Here an enormous amount of earth has been removed, but so huge is the under-

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taking that an even greater amount still remains.

Up to the present time our government has not decided which is preferable, the tide-water or the lock-canal. And it is very possible that whichever it decides upon it will work out in a new way. For instance, one of our engineers has presented strong evidence to show that a tide-water canal may easily be made practicable by diverting the course of the Chagres from the Atlantic into the Pacific. Such a thing has never before been suggested, but is now being given careful consideration.

Along the whole length of the Canal one sees the numerous construction sheds and stations of the Canal Company. These have been kept in fairly good repair, and were some of the most valuable assets the French Company had to offer the United States. The same cannot be said of the enormous amount

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of machinery — overturned trucks, dredging machines, engines and implements of all kinds, that are strewn about everywhere in great profusion. Rust and decay have done their work on these. But even if this were not so, it is doubtful whether the machinery, as a whole, would be of much value under any circumstances. Though the best France could produce twenty years ago, to-day it looks very antiquated.

An evidence of the presence of the United States on the Canal strip was an encampment I saw about midway between Colon and Panama, of some two or three thousand marines. Every possible sanitary precaution was being taken to preserve the health of the men; and I was told that, except on special permit, they were never allowed to make trips either to Colon or Panama, for fear of exposure to some tropical disease.

The railroad trip across the Isthmus takes

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about three hours and costs ten dollars, gold. A few miles beyond the end of the Culebra Cut, before reaching the station at Panama, the railway forks, one branch going to Panama, the other to La Boca. The Canal ends, or begins, at La Boca (*the mouth*) which is about three miles of coast-line from Panama. La Boca is the property of the Canal Company, and is fitted up with docks, to which a deep waterway has been dredged.

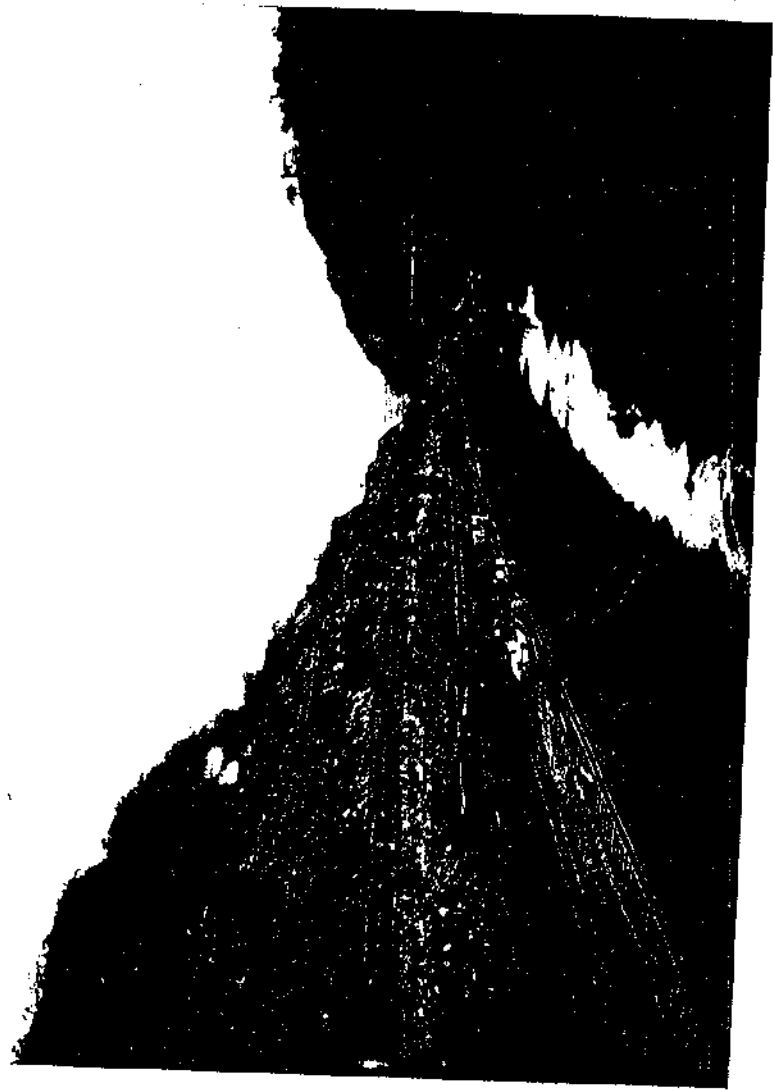
At Panama, the first thing I noticed was the railway station, all shot up with bullet-holes from the last revolution. At home we are apt to smile at the mention of a South American revolution. These bullet-holes made me decide that, like many other things, they were amusing only when viewed from a safe distance.

Like most tourists, I registered at the Grand Central, the most expensive and,

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presumably, the best hotel in town. It is a large, imposing structure, showily equipped, but with little real comfort for lodging and less for fare. However, it's the place of all others to meet people, and to hear the news and gossip of the day discussed from the English and Spanish and French columns of the *Star* and *Herald*. Moreover, it is the place to see things, for it is on one side of a pretty, little plaza or park. The offices of the Canal Company occupy another side of the plaza; the Cathedral the third; and the bishop's palace the last. The hotel is centrally located, and with more progressive management it could doubtless be made to pay well.

Panama is an ancient city. Walking through its narrow cobblestone-streets, I could almost persuade myself that I was in a corner of old Spain. The houses, two or three stories in height, are all built in Spanish style around an open court, with balcon-



*Panama Canal—Culebra—View Looking South*



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ies extending from the upper windows out into the street. Unlike Colon, many of the buildings are of concrete.

During the time I was there, a great deal of drilling was going on among the native Panaman troops. The commander-in-chief of the army, a little general who had risen from the ranks, was in great popular favour; and every afternoon, at guard mount, the ceremony of lowering the flag was greeted enthusiastically.

Every evening the military band gave a concert, one night in this park, the next night in another. The whole city turned out. There seemed to be a positive need for some such chance as this for gay promenading; and I felt the government, in giving these concerts, did so in the hope of keeping the public amused.

In the daytime Panama is a sleepy, quiet enough sort of place, but after nightfall it



wakes up, and one suddenly realizes what a "wide open" town it is. At all the hotels and saloons, roulette is played without the least pretext of restriction. The gambling, the loud gaiety, the cigarette smoking, the reckless drinking to be seen everywhere, reminded me much of our own frontier towns out West. Time and again the cities of South America impressed me so.

The roads in and about Panama are in a wretched condition. The people attribute this to the ravages of the last revolution, before the separation from Colombia, but the run-down state of things in general makes the visitor a little doubtful about putting all the blame upon this particular revolution. Under favourable conditions the drive of only three miles to the ruins of the old City of Panama, which the buccaneer Morgan burned more than two hundred years ago, would be most pleasant.

Hospital Park, the property of the Canal Company, overlooks La Boca. It is laid out in lovely walks and gardens, palms, tropical fruits, trees, and ferns, and has been well kept up. The grounds are carefully guarded, and visitors are admitted only on permits obtainable at the Company's offices. Here are the spacious hospital buildings — substantial evidence of the thoughtfulness of the De Lesseps Company for the welfare of its employees — and the handsome homes of various of the company's officials. About one of the finest villas a sad story is told. De Lesseps's chief engineer built it for himself, and after its completion sent to Paris for his family. They came, and the day after their arrival the wife died, the next day the son. The tragedy cast a cloud, not only over the heartbroken husband and father, but over the house itself, which has since never been occupied.

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Crossing the road in this park I observed a curious thing which, at first sight, was unaccountable. Green leaves — thousands of them — the size of a small oak or maple leaf, were moving in regular “marching” order alongside the road, a continuous line, as far as the eye could reach. It proved to be an army of ants, each one carrying a leaf on its back, which completely hid its little body. On closer view, I saw another parallel line of ants returning unloaded, or empty-backed, to the place of supply up a rather long, steep hill. The driver of our carriage crossing the roadway, stupidly ran over both lines. A few ants fell out, never to go back, but the broken ranks instantly filled, and the procession moved on unceasingly as before. In the tropics these members of the ant family are designated as “Soldiers,” for the reason that they work, or carry, in single-file alignment and close-up order. During

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the busy season they march day and night, laying in their supply of food. If some of the dirty and lazy-looking Panamans I saw in the city would be forced to follow the example of the Soldier ants, things might be different on the Isthmus.

The business life of Panama seemed to me very dull. I talked to many of business men and merchants about business chances and conditions. All business, they thought, had suffered much in the recent past on account of the revolutions and the uncertainties of the times. But they saw no reason why it should not improve, when work on the Canal was once more seriously begun, under the direction and protection of the United States. While it could not be hoped that the coming of the United States would be signalized by the shower of gold that fell on the Isthmus at the time of De Lesseps's arrival, yet it is confidently expected that the foun-

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dations of a more lasting prosperity will be laid.

From all I saw and all I heard, it seems to me, with the strict sanitary measures that will be among the first things our government will introduce — modern sewage systems, and an ample supply of running water — not only the City of Panama, but the whole Isthmus will be rendered a pleasant, healthful place to live and to carry on the huge shipping interests which the future, in the completion of the great Canal, has in store.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DOWN THE COAST TO GUAYAQUIL

OWING to the universal and unavoidable delays that one soon becomes accustomed to in South America, the steamship "Guatemala," on which I was to continue my journey southward from Panama, sailed three days late. This gave me plenty of time to explore the town and ask questions; but, fresh from New York and cold weather, with a good supply of winter blood on hand, I suffered so much from the heat that I felt deeply grateful when at last the "Guatemala" weighed anchor. This was on Friday, January 29th. Another thing to make us all thankful to be off was the rumour, on the very

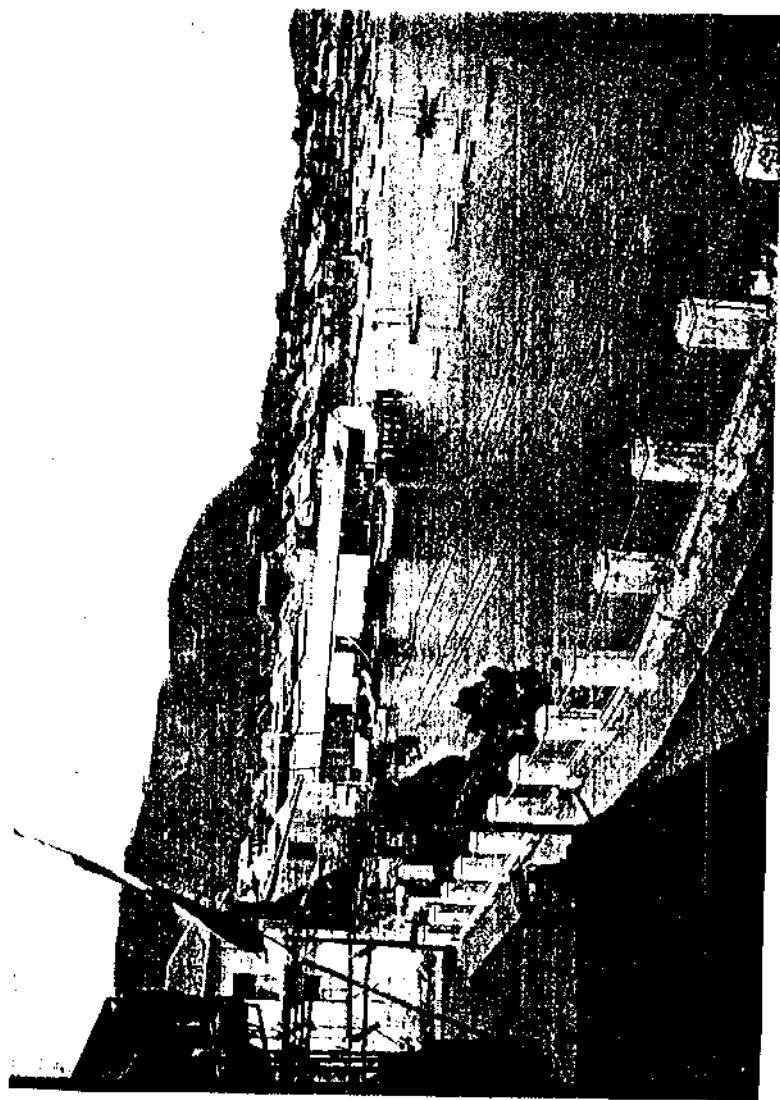
## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

morning we sailed, of eight cases of yellow fever.

The Bay of Panama is fully fifty miles across, and encloses one of the great harbours of the world. It is a beautiful expanse of water, dotted with many islands — giving to-day the same general view, I suppose, that stout, old Balboa looked out on four hundred years ago,

“ . . . when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific.”

From old Panama, and from certain of the islands in the Bay, he, and after him, Pizarro and other daring Spaniards, fitted out various expeditions for conquest and exploration. Many of them went southward by much the same route that we are to follow, and everywhere we shall come upon reminders of them in the cities they built, and in the customs they introduced.



*The Harbor of Panama*





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Calm weather is taken so much for granted in this part of the Pacific that the steamers are built accordingly. They impress one as being open and exposed. There are several decks, and the cabins which lead out upon them are fitted with unusually large doors and windows. In this way all the benefit possible is derived from every breeze.

A curious feature of steamer life is the pedlars who are on for the round trip. They have a little of anything and everything in stock. When a port is made they spread their wares in a corner of the deck; the people from shore come out and some brisk trading ensues. It is real trading, for as often as not it is an exchange of merchandise.

These steamers are like local trains, they make so many stops at little towns along the coast. Freight, of course, is of first importance, and this fact is not hidden from the passengers' attention as it is elsewhere. The

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decks are always being choked up with merchandise either in process of loading or of unloading by pulley and crane. What is worse, live-stock is penned about everywhere, the larger animals on the lower decks, and the smaller above, until one accustomed only to Atlantic liners might wonder if he were not by some chance aboard a cattle-ship. The many smells that arise from the cattle, the sheep, the fowl, might seem very well in a barn-yard, but I did not enjoy meeting them every time I took a deck promenade. However, I didn't complain, for I remembered in time the story a friend of mine tells about an Indianapolis pork packer. The people living near his packing establishment stood the awful smells for a long time, but at last entered a complaint. The case was brought up in a Squire's court, and the defendant after listening to the charges attentively, remarked in an injured, sad tone:

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“Well, it seems to me that any man who doesn’t like the smell of a hog is just a leetle too good for Indianapolis!”

Now I certainly did not consider myself too good either for South America or for the steamship “Guatemala.” Moreover, the captain and the chief steward did everything in their power to make my voyage pleasant and comfortable. I realized how much I was indebted to them by the plight of one of my fellow-passengers. From the moment he had come aboard this man found fault with everything. Officers and crew alike seemed from past experience to recognize his genus, and to have ideas in common as to how it should be treated. As a result, the unfortunate man found just cause for most of his complaints before he landed.

After the heat of Panama, the ocean voyage was positively refreshing. Not that it was really cool; in these equatorial regions this

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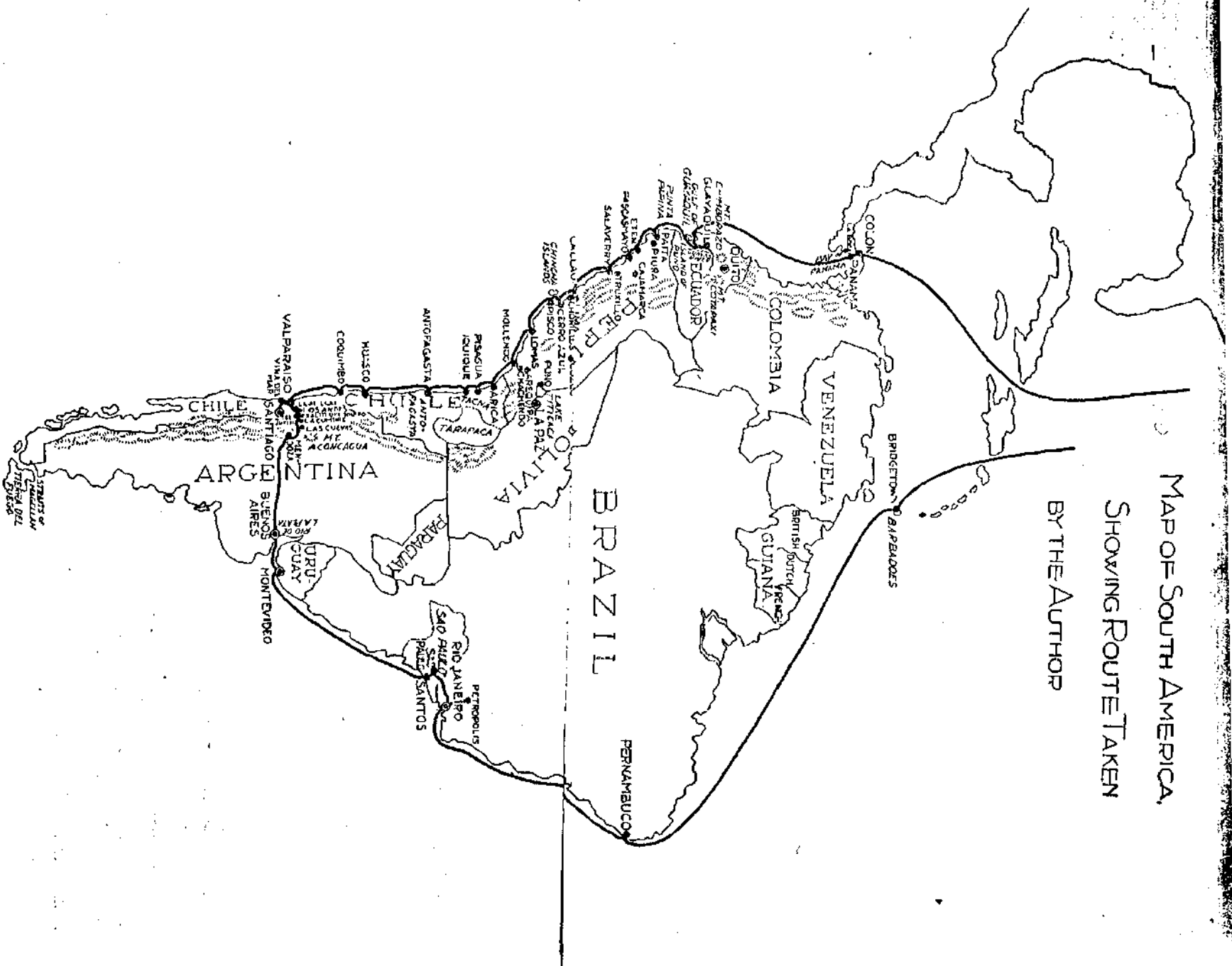
could not be expected except in high altitudes. But the trade-winds, the land-breezes from the Andes, and the Antarctic current make life here not merely endurable but pleasant.

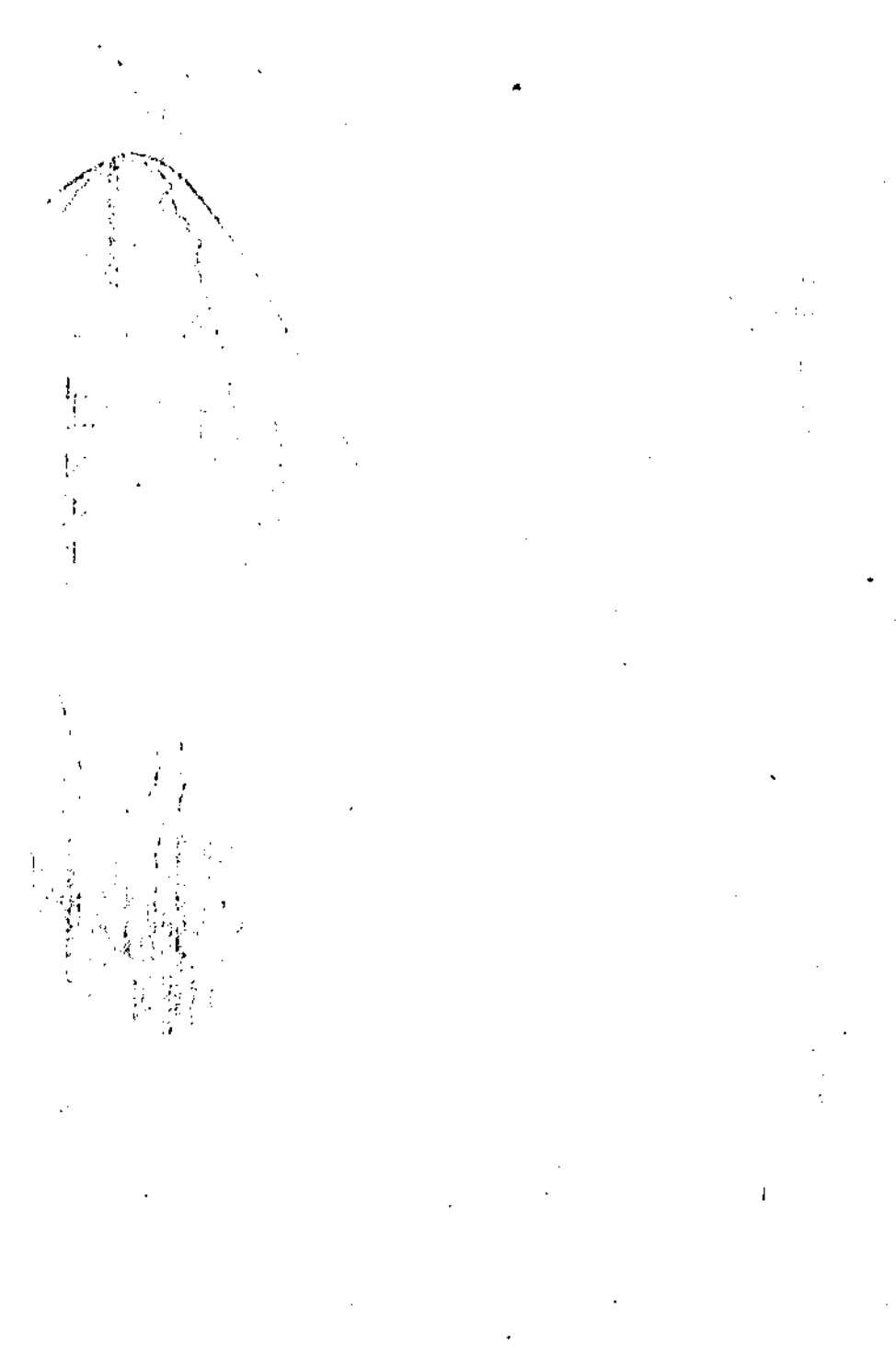
The "Guatemala" made none of the Colombian ports, although the chart showed us at times only one hundred and fifty miles from the coast.

On Sunday, January 31st, we crossed the equator. Unfortunately Neptune did not come aboard. He had received, I fear, no very pressing invitation from our captain, who had been so long in these waters that he had grown careless about the respect due his Marine Majesty. So we had to be satisfied with the stories that every one told of what the old Sea King had done on previous occasions. And with a jolly crew ready to meet him half-way, what hadn't he done? We let our imaginations run riot picturing his vari-



BY THE AUTHOR







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ous exploits, until we were in the condition of the Englishman who had just landed in America. He, so the story goes, had gone to a hotel, sent the announcement of his arrival to some American friends, and then with a sigh of relief, had sought the bath-tub. While he was in the midst of his splashings, the bell-boy pounded on the door. "Who's there?" the Englishman asked. "Here's a letter for you," the bell-boy said. "Well, I can't take it now. I'm tubbing." "It's marked 'urgent,'" the bell-boy said, "so I'll shove it under the door." As it was "urgent" the Englishman stepped out of the tub, all dripping, and picked it up. "Dear Charles," he read, "Delighted to hear from you. Can't you take dinner with us? Come just as you are. Don't stop to dress — " The Englishman looked up slowly, blinked once or twice, and finally ejaculated, "Just fawncy?" So while we were reduced to "just fawncyng" we made

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the best of the occasion, and "fawned" all sorts of things.

The next day we put into the Gulf of Guayaquil, passed the island of Puno, now pointed out to the traveller as one of the places where Pizarro halted on his way to Peru, and entered the huge mouth of the Guayas River. This river is the largest that drains the western slopes of the Andes. The city of Guayaquil is forty miles inland, but the Pacific steamers are able to make the entire distance, and load and unload in front of the city by lighters.

The trip up the river is interesting and picturesque but very hot. The water is alive with native craft; great rafts laden with produce, floating down stream, and dugouts and canoes filled with Indians in bright-coloured blankets. Along the banks are villages of thatched houses built high on stilts in anticipation of floods. The tropical verdure comes

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down to the water's edge on each side. There are rich plantations of cacao and sugar-cane, groves of cocoanut palms and bananas, which at the height of the wet season are often submerged. Beyond this strip of tropical vegetation rise the foot-hills of the Andes with their fine grazing lands, and beyond them tower the monster peaks of the Andes themselves.

In all South America there is said to be no more magnificent mountain scenery than here in Ecuador. Travellers who make the arduous trip to Quito, the inland capital, return delighted with the natural beauties of the country. The Andes extend in a general north and south direction in two parallel ranges. Between these ranges are high, rich plains, on one of which Quito is situated at an altitude of 9500 feet. The line of mountains does not extend in a series of unbroken heights, but lower masses covered with vege-

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tation of vivid green alternate with the great white peaks, and thus make a charming diversity of scene. No fewer than twenty lofty volcanic peaks are clustered about Quito, one of which, Cotopaxi, is the highest active volcano in the world. Another, Chimborazo, which to the Indian means "Mountain of Snow" is visible on clear days from Guayaquil. I had a splendid view of it — its snow-crowned summit standing out distinct and glittering in the distance.

Though almost in sight of these snowy heights, Guayaquil languishes and stooms in the heat of the coast. The town is odd and very pretty as seen from the river. The houses, built in Spanish style with latticed balconies overhead, are covered with a coating of stucco or cement, which is put on most artistically and produces an appearance of great solidity. It is a solidity in appearance only, for in reality, the houses are the merest

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shells built up on a light frame-work of split bamboo. This curious mode of construction offers the least possible resistance to the earthquake shocks that are of common occurrence.

I called on United States Vice-Consul, Mr. Rheinberg, and later took lunch with him at the Hotel de Paris. Native oysters, fish, and alligator pear salad were served us in French fashion out on the sidewalk, where I had a good opportunity to watch the Guayaquil world go by, as well as enjoy the conversation of my host. As most if not all of the commerce of the country passes through Guayaquil, it was a simple matter for me to get a good idea of the various products and industries. Guayaquil is the great distributing centre for Panama hats. One sees here all grades of hats from the comparatively coarse, cheaper ones, to the fabulously expensive ones that have been woven entirely

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under water. It is said the supply of these hats never equals the demand. Many of the finest ones do not leave the country at all, but are instantly bought up by the rich planters for themselves or their friends.

A considerable quantity of vegetable ivory is sent to Europe, and rubber to the United States; but by far the most important article of export is the cacao bean from which chocolate is made. In 1902 Ecuador produced 21,500,000 kilos of this bean, or, nearly a third of the total world output.

From where I was sitting in front of the Hotel de Paris, I could see several large warehouses into which great sacks of cacao beans were being carried on the backs of labourers. Inside many hands were busy cleaning and sorting the turned-out beans and preparing them for shipment.

The tree upon which the cacao grows is much like a bush, and from ten to twenty-

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five feet high. The fruit pods are rough and oval in shape, and of a pinkish yellow colour. They are filled with a white pulp of tart, pleasant taste, in which the beans are imbedded in long rows; from two to two and a half-dozen of them in each pod. When the beans are taken from the pod, they have to be well rubbed and washed, and after that carefully dried. If this is not done properly they rot.

The large planters of Ecuador complain that they lose a part of their crop every year through inability to get sufficient labourers to harvest it. As in most tropical countries, the labour question is most serious; for, among the lower classes, the necessities of life are so few and so easily obtainable that there is little or no incentive for steady, day in and day out application. In Ecuador, the attempted solution of this, shall I say, climatic condition, is the introduction of the same

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vicious system which our government found in force in the Philippines, and ever since has been trying so desperately to root out, namely, peonage, or debt service. To gain a hold on the labourer the planter offers him a small loan which he, with characteristic improvidence, eagerly accepts with the understanding that he is to enter the service of the planter and pay back the debt little by little. Until it is paid, he cannot enter the employ of any one else. As it is to the advantage of the planter to keep the debt unpaid, and as the labourer is scarcely ever a day ahead in his resources, it seldom happens that a debt once contracted in this way is ever cancelled. Moreover, the debt always grows, for fines are constantly checked against the labourer's account — if he misses a day or if he breaks a tool — until it actually results that the longer he works the more deeply he is in debt. Then the various members of his



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family are drawn into the employ of the planter for the ostensible purpose of helping to lift the debt and gradually they, too, become bound body and soul. The peons are not slaves; this is vigorously asserted on all sides. But they might almost as well be slaves, for even if their bodies are not purchasable, their debts are, and through their debts their service; and a planter, desiring the service of a certain peon, can get it by paying the peon's present employer the amount of his indebtedness. This transfer of debt and service is a common practice.

Illiteracy is so widespread in Ecuador that the governing class, the people who by law can vote, are only about one-tenth of the total population. So long as peonage obtains, there seems little chance of reducing this appalling illiteracy. Moreover, aside from its degrading effects, the system is a failure for it does not insure the planter reliable work-

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men. The larger his debt, the lazier and more listless the peon is likely to become; and consequently, as time goes by the more he has to bear in harsh treatment and poor food, until he ends it all by dying or running away.

Every planter one meets can tell of having from ten to a hundred thousand dollars in credit outstanding among his peons, the greater part of which he can never expect to realize. With some knowledge of how the planter is accustomed to reckon these amounts, one does not listen quite so sympathetically as he might otherwise.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PERU AND ITS CAPITAL

**AFTER** leaving the estuary of the Guayas River, but a few hours pass before we are told that the dim line of coast on our left is Peru. From a distance it looks monotonous and uninteresting — a succession of barren hillocks and sandy wastes — and it does not improve upon nearer view. This is the beginning of the great South American desert. A narrow parched strip of earth between ocean and mountains, it extends through Peru and Chile about 2000 miles, and to these countries has been and still is the source of untold wealth in nitrates and guano.

The morning after we left Guayaquil we

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passed Punta Parina, the westernmost point of South America, and a little later made our first Peruvian port, Païta. Païta is a desolate, little place, set in the midst of the desert, with nothing to justify its existence until one learns that it is the port for Piura, the great cotton-growing town and district some distance inland, with which it is connected by rail. The cotton grown about Piura is brownish in colour, and of unusually long fibre which makes it suitable for weaving with wool. It is an important article of commerce and much sought after by European and American manufacturers.

I met the United States consul and with him visited the church of Santa Merced, famous for two things - its Virgin and its conch shells. About the Virgin, the story goes that, a century or two ago while an Englishman named Anson was sacking the town, one of his men entered the church and

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with his sword struck the image of the Virgin on the neck. Instantly blood flowed from the wound, and on the anniversary of the day has flowed ever since. Unfortunately, the third of February is not the day the miracle takes place; so I had no chance to witness it for myself. The two huge shells which stand on either side of the church door, filled with holy water, are said to be the votive offering of a sailor whom our Lady of Païta once saved from death in a typhoon.

In Païta, when I was there, it hadn't rained for thirteen years. This year the people are expecting rain. One hears similar stories all the way down the coast. Here it hasn't rained for ten years, there for a generation, and somewhere else for such a time that most of the people have never seen rain.

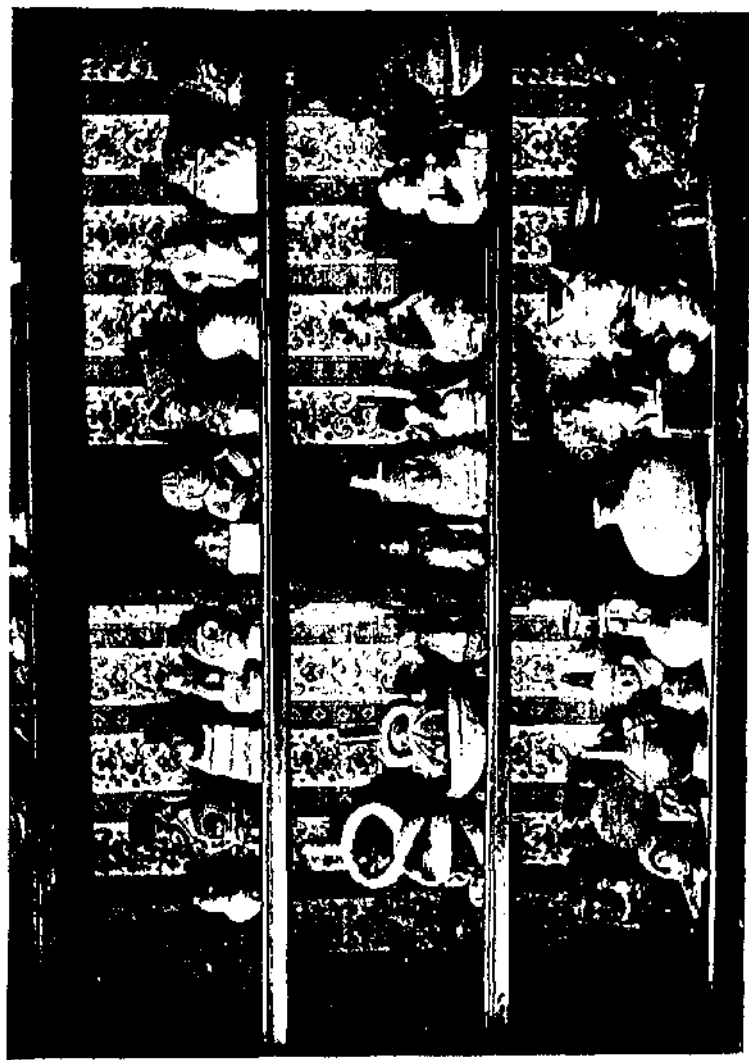
The common joke about Païta is that people never die there. They simply get tired

out. Judging from its appearance I can well believe that they get tired out.

We left Païta the afternoon of the same day. Standing on the bridge with the captain, I had my first sight of guano deposit, and I shouldn't have known what it was if I hadn't been told. The captain pointed it out to me — what seemed at that distance a white or greyish stretch of sandy coast.

The next port we touched was Eten, a small uninteresting place made up of mud huts and warehouses. We stayed most of the day taking on board a large quantity of sugar and rice, the products of the rich valley a short distance inland.

We left Eten at three in the afternoon and made Pascasmayo by six, but too late to land as the lighters refused to come out to us, thinking, no doubt, that “mañana” (to-morrow) would be soon enough. There is a fine iron mole here, half a mile long or more,



*Huachos from Pascasmayo*





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upon which freight is run out on the cars of the Peruvian Corporation Railway. This railway connects Pascasmayo with the half-dozen towns of the rich Jequetepec valley. One of these towns is Cajamarca, the ancient capital of the Incas, where Atahualpa, the last of the Incas, was murdered by Pizarro. The ruins of the Inca palaces still remain, and the room is still pointed out that the unfortunate Atahualpa filled with gold to satisfy the Spaniards' greed. The country all about Pascasmayo is rich in ruins and mementos of the Inca civilization, and tourists are able to get fine specimens of the ancient "huachos" or pottery.

On board the "Guatemala" was one group of passengers especially interested in such things. This was a party of three Swedish scientists, who were on an exploring and archæological expedition under the auspices of the Swedish Geographical Society. Their

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cards read: Baron Irland Nordenskiöld, Dr. Nils Holmgren, and Lieut. Didrick de Bildt. Every stop we made they would go ashore curio hunting, and would return enthusiastic over their finds.

Just before leaving Pascasmayo I got a good snapshot of that oddest of South American water-craft, the "caballito" or little horse. This is nothing more than bundles of straw tied together, yet it is so seaworthy that it can ride the waves in all weather. As often as not the native sits it astride in proper horse fashion, and in this way not only paddles about the harbours, but makes long trips up and down the coast.

Salaverry, the port for Truxillo, proved a repetition of the miserable coast towns we had been seeing; a collection of mud huts and a few warehouses. It is the outlet, though, for a rich agricultural district which produces much sugar.



*A Caballito*



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We made no more stops north of Lima; and after a thirty-six hour run woke up on Sunday morning, February 7th, in the harbour of Callao. This harbour with its scores of vessels — merchantmen, men-of-war, and small craft in endless variety — looked very different from the small ports we had been seeing for several days. And from the shore we caught glimpses of a modern city of business blocks and factory chimneys. The ordinary sounds and sights of business activity, however, were lacking, hushed by the church bells that, from all sides, were calling saints and sinners to mass.

There was great bustle on board the "Guatemala," for most of the passengers had reached their destination and were all hurry and excitement to land. I waited for the captain, and after some delay we went ashore in a small boat.

Putting off sight-seeing in Callao for an-

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other time, we took the first train for Lima. The ten miles from Callao to Lima is over a rather level stretch of country, which, from the train-windows, looked fertile compared with the barrenness we had seen on this coast. This plain is crossed by the rails of two rival companies, American and English. There is in building an electric road as well.

One's first view of Lima is from the harbour. Its roofs and church spires showing against a background of Andean foot-hills, gleam white and picturesque in the neutral tints of the desert. From this distance the traveller might suppose he was approaching a city of marble. As ever in South America closer inspection changes all this, and in place of the massive stone edifices he had seen from afar, he finds elaborate buildings of sunburned brick, or mud stucco, sometimes covered with a coating of plaster of Paris fancifully painted. Much of the city of

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Lima would melt away in a hard rain-storm; but it never rains, so perhaps mud is the building material of all others best suited to the peculiar conditions of climate and the dangers from seismic disturbances.

Overcoming our northern prejudice against the sham of solid appearances, we find ourselves interested and charmed. The buildings for the most part are low, and consequently the city is well spread out. Spanish architecture of course prevails, and in the *patios*, or inner courts, one catches glimpses of beautiful flowers and shrubs in great profusion. Like many of our own arid lands of the West, water is all that is needed to make this South America desert blossom like the rose. Lima with its well cared trees and gardens is a good illustration of this.

Lima is built on both sides of the small River Rimac, and dates back to 1535, and the feast of the Epiphany. In honour of the

day, Pizarro called it, "*La Ciudad de los Tres Reyes*," or, "The City of the Three Kings." Later it became known as Lima, probably a corruption of the name of the River Rimac. Six years after the founding of the city, Pizarro was assassinated by the supporters of the son of his rival Almagro. The house where the assassination is said so have taken place is still pointed out, and what pass for the bones of the victim are still preserved in the cathedral. On payment of a small fee the monks are always ready to exhibit them.

This cathedral, which occupies a corner of the Grand Plaza, is one of the finest sights of the city. It is of impressive and beautiful architecture, with two massive towers that can be seen for miles around. It is viewed in the full dignity of its proportions, for it stands on a marble terrace raised about six feet above the level of the Plaza. Inside, one



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is sadly disappointed to find only the usual array of tawdry images and pictures. Originally, the cathedral is said to have cost nine millions of dollars. History credits Pizarro with robbing the Inca palaces and temples of gold and silver ornaments to the value of ninety millions. The crown received a fifth of this, and the church an even larger part. So it was well able to build imposing edifices, and many of them. This cathedral of Lima is still looked upon as one of the most beautiful churches in South America.

There are so many things in Lima to remind one of the early days of the Conquistadores that very naturally one recalls the spirited history that Prescott wrote on the "Conquest of Peru," and in particular that absorbing passage which relates to the capture and death of the last Inca. Atahualpa had just ended a victorious campaign against his half-brother, Huascar, and was

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resting, encamped on the pleasant hills about Cajamarca, when Pizarro with his tiny band of 168 adventurers appeared. The Spaniards were courteously received and assigned quarters in the town in a spacious building that commanded the plaza. Here Pizarro conceived and put into execution one of the most daring exploits of history. It was no less than to gain possession of the sacred person of the Inca. To this end he invited Atahualpa to dine with him, and the Inca, not suspecting treachery, accepted. He came attended by a large bodyguard, but unarmed. Scarcely had he entered the plaza when the signal was given, and Pizarro's men rushed out from all sides and surrounded the royal chair. The onslaught was so fierce and unexpected that in spite of their numbers the Indians were thrown into hopeless confusion and butchered like animals. The Spanish victory was complete; they took Atahualpa without the

loss of a single man. The Indian hosts seemed paralysed by the misfortune that had befallen their Emperor; and instead of making any effort to crush the handful of Spaniards, waited and trembled in a state of panic. Atahualpa was shown every mark of respect by his captors; his personal attendants had free access to him, as well as the women of his household. The old Spanish chroniclers have only admiration to express for the cool, fearless demeanour that Atahualpa maintained throughout his confinement. He seemed, in fact, the only one of his race not one bit cowed by Spanish prowess. He was not long in discovering the Spaniards' lust of gold, and was soon negotiating his liberty for a huge ransom. He agreed to fill the apartment where he was imprisoned with gold as high as he could reach. So the Spaniards made him stand on tiptoe and make a mark on the wall which measured

nine feet from the floor. The other dimensions of the room were seventeen by twenty-two feet. Moreover, a smaller room was to be filled twice with silver. For all this the Inca was allowed two months. He sent couriers to the distant capital of Cuzco with orders to strip the royal palaces and the temples of the Sun of their precious ornaments. These returned laden with golden cups and vases of cunning workmanship, and plates, discs and elaborate cornices torn from the walls. As the mass grew in bulk, the Spaniards crushed it down, and finally set the Indian goldsmiths to work melting it into ingots. At length the Inca was told that he might desist, but the promised freedom was not granted, for it seemed expedient to Pizarro to get his royal prisoner out of the way at once for all. So a series of charges were trumped up, and Atahualpa was tried and condemned to a heretic's death of

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burning at the stake. On his consenting to embrace the true faith the less painful mode of death by garrote was substituted. The Inca was calm and collected up to the last. After the execution the women of his household, with loud weeping and with every expression of extreme grief, surrounded his body. Many of them wished to sacrifice their own lives in order to accompany the spirit of their lord in the other world. It is this moment that a modern artist has seized on and pictured with much feeling. The prayers of the Indians that they might bear the remains to Quito were denied, as the church claimed them. Later, however, it is said that his people succeeded in spiriting them away, and they are supposed to be resting to this day in some hidden place in Quito.

In 1821 Peru declared its independence of Spain, and for the next three years was occupied in making good its declaration. It

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was the last Spanish possession on the mainland to secede from the mother country. Strange to say the power and influence of the church remained unchanged in the new republic. Even the present constitution which provides in striking terms for political freedom, plainly denies religious freedom. It prohibits the public exercise of any but the Roman religion. However, public opinion is tolerant, and the Methodist and Anglican churches which foreigners have established in the larger towns have not been troubled of late.

In addition to her many churches, Lima can make the proud boast of being the birth-place and home of the only American saint in the calendar. This is "Santa Rosa de Lima," who was canonized in 1668, and whose remains to this day are lovingly cherished in the church of Santo Domingo.

The Peruvian Congress, a senate and a

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house of deputies, both occupy buildings of historic interest. The Senate Chamber is the old Palace of the Holy Inquisition, where tortures were meted out to heretics for years after such practices had been suppressed in Europe. The ceiling of the chamber was a gift from the monks of Spain, and dates back to the year 1560. It is of dark wood exquisitely carved, and though now in a state of partial decay, is still beautiful.

The House of Deputies meets in what used to be the "Collegio de San Marcos." This was the first university to be established in America. It was founded by the Jesuits, under charter granted by Philip II in 1572.

Lima has also the remains of her once famous museum and great library which the Chileans looted twenty years ago. An object which always attracts the attention of a foreigner, is the large historical picture, "The

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Death of Atahualpa," which hangs in the Exposition Gallery. This picture, notable both for its subject and its execution, was cut from its frame by the Chileans and shipped with other art treasures to Santiago. The protests from the foreign diplomats were so strong that later it was returned.

On my arrival in Lima, I registered at the Hotel Maury, and then, in company with Captain Gronow, presented my letters to United States Minister, Mr. Irving B. Dudley. At Mr. Dudley's suggestion we went to the bull-fight, which, of course, in a Spanish-speaking country is always the great event of Sunday afternoon. Six bulls were slaughtered amid the shouts of thousands of enthusiastic spectators. The hero of the occasion was a famous matadore from Spain who was making his last appearance. The crowds shouted themselves hoarse over him, and flung him cigars and cigarettes, and threw



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their hats down into the arena, in expression of their approval and admiration. I was reminded of a bull-fight I had witnessed in Madrid. The gaily-coloured costumes of the women, which added much to the picturesqueness of that scene, were lacking here; for the women of Peru when they appear in public, are always wrapped in black shawl-like garments called "mantas."

After the bull-fight, we strolled to the Metropolitan Club. Here the foreign residents of Lima congregate, and one meets members of the different legations, and the representatives of the foreign business houses. It is the most exclusive club in town, and is handsomely equipped. In the evening we went to the theatre, where there was a good vaudeville performance.

The mornings of the next few days I spent in business among the printers and lithographers, making headquarters at the large,

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modern establishment of Carlos Fabbri, and using as interpreter a young American recommended by Mr. Dudley. In the late afternoons and evenings I went sight-seeing.

One evening I dined at the Union Club with Mr. Rodriguez, a Peruvian American whom I met in a business way. The Union is a fine club, and was very interesting to me, as its membership is made up of the leading resident business men of Lima. It is to them what the Metropolitan is to the foreigners.

I found no opportunity to visit any of the pleasant, seaside resorts which are within easy reach of Lima, though I did go one evening to Chorillos, the favourite one of all. It was the occasion of a dinner given by the United States Consul, Mr. Gottschalk. We went by train, a party of three or four, leaving Lima after nightfall. So the trip, while a very pleasant one, did not afford much sight-seeing.

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Nor had I time to take a trip on the famous Oroya Railway. This is the railroad that was planned and partly executed by the American engineer, Henry Meiggs. It has been in building since 1870, but the tracks have not yet reached the Cerro de Pasco mines, the originally proposed terminus. At an enormous outlay of money and life, and by a series of engineering feats among the most marvellous of the age, one hundred and thirty-eight miles have been completed.

Callao, though always spoken of as the port of Lima, is fast becoming an important city on its own account. It has good streets that are well paved, a modern sewage system, and fine business blocks that are rapidly increasing in number. Its exports are the exports of Peru — sugar, cotton, rice, cinchona from which quinine is made, dyes, rubber, alapaca, sheep's wool, llamas's wool,

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and the minerals, gold, silver, copper. Our imports from Peru in 1903 amounted to \$2,703,646, and were chiefly in sugar and cotton. Our exports for the same year were \$2,971,411 in breadstuffs and iron work. In the distribution of Peru's foreign trade, Great Britain comes first and the United States second.

On my last afternoon Mr. Dudley made up a party for the Swimming Club at Callao, which has a bathing beach of its own carefully fenced off. The shore, unfortunately is rocky, and the bathers have to wear sandals. To my surprise I found the water very cold, due, I suppose, to that same Humboldt Current that does so much to temper the heat of the whole western coast. Lima and Callao, though but twelve degrees south of the equator, have a beautiful, temperate climate that seldom rises above 85° Fahrenheit in summer, nor falls below 65° in winter.

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After bathing, Mr. Dudley entertained us with the usual afternoon tea in the club house, and then I had to say farewell to Lima, and the kindly Americans who had made my stay so pleasant, and once again to go aboard the "Guatemala."

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE GUANO AND THE NITRATE COUNTRY

**T**HE "Guatemala" was crowded to overflowing with passengers for Valparaiso. The cabins were all full, and every night the saloon was turned into a temporary dormitory. The decks were more of a market-place than ever, piled with merchandise of every description.

We touched at the small port of Cerro Azul the next morning, and later passed the Chincha Islands, famous for guano deposits that at one time yielded Peru enormous wealth. Guano is the accumulation from ages of the droppings of the sea-birds, mixed with decomposing animal matter, such as

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the bodies of birds and seals, both of which frequent the coast in great numbers. These seals are not the seals of commerce, for their fur is valueless. Guano is not so offensive as I supposed it would be. Only once did we get a strong whiff of it, and that was as we were passing between two of the islands, and the wind caught us full in the face. In her halcyon days, Peru sold her guano as fast as the markets of Europe would buy, never thinking of the time when the supply might be exhausted. When that time came, Peru lost one of her two great sources of income. In 1880, when Chile took from her her nitrate fields, she lost the other. As a result, all she has left to remind her of her past riches is the now senseless proverb, "As wealthy as a Peruvian."

The guano, as well as the nitrate deposits, depends upon the rainless condition of the coast. Heavy rains would wash both away.

Every one realizes this now, but there was a time when it was not so generally understood. The story goes, that in the seventeenth century all Christendom was stirred up over the plight of poor people, doomed always to live in a state of unending drought, and by papal order from the Vatican all the faithful joined in prayers for rain. Happily for the next generation, a far-seeing Providence turned a deaf ear to these united supplications. This story, while not an example of the efficacy of prayer furnishes, we are told, a good illustration of the wisdom of the Almighty. So be it.

We spent an afternoon at Pisco, a miserable enough little place, but having a tiny river of its own and a pleasant green valley. Pisco produces a strong, spirituous liquor which is in great demand up and down the coast. It is called Pisco, after the town, is clear as water, and is a powerful stimulant.



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It is made from luscious grapes which, with other fruit, grow here in abundance. It is probable that when irrigation has increased the cultivable area suitable for vineyards, that wine-making will become an important industry here.

I went ashore with my Swedish acquaintances, and while they wandered about the fields hunting curios and relics, I watched a group of natives who had come down to the beach to bathe. It was a mixed party of men and women, and I found myself both surprised and impressed at the modesty and decorum with which they conducted themselves. Right out there in the open they changed every garment before going into the water, but not for an instant were their bodies exposed. As each part of a garment, a sleeve, for instance, was taken off, the corresponding part of another garment in which they were going to bathe was instantly put on. It was

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really wonderful. There was never a slip or mishap. A like process was again gone through when they had finished bathing, and were ready to resume their ordinary clothes. Afterwards I saw the same thing at other places a number of times, and it always excited my admiration.

After a short stop at the little port of Lomas, we made Mollendo, which is situated on a bit of rocky coast and a harbour where the swell is so great that landing is often difficult and even impossible. Mollendo is the terminus of the Southern Railway of Peru, and the outlet for a number of the towns of the interior — Arequipa, the quaint, old Spanish city where Harvard has her famous observatory; Puno, on Lake Titicaca, which is connected by steamboat lines with the towns on the Bolivian shore; and Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incas.

At Mollendo we saw the last of the Swed-

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ish scientists. From this place they were to start out on their extensive explorations of Peru, in which they expected to be engaged for three years.

The representative of the English Railway of Lima, a Mr. Schatzman, had come down with us on his way to La Paz, the capital of Bolivia. Some English friends were going to take the railroad trip from Mollendo with him, and he very kindly invited Captain Gronow and me to join them. We had the day to spend as we liked, so we gladly accepted. My only regret was that we hadn't time to go as far as Arequipa; but that is an eight-hours' trip one way, so it was out of the question. We got no further than Chachendo, a distance less, I should judge, than fifty miles, but reaching an elevation of 3250 feet above sea-level. After leaving the barren coast, as we climbed the mountains vegetation improved, and I saw considerable

sugar-cane and coffee, and a kind of cotton that grows on trees. There are nicely built, little stations along the road, and as the train pulls in, Indian women and children crowd about with fruit to sell, native sweets, and bottles of "chica," the native drink. At one of these stations I saw a most beautiful Indian boy. He was moulded like a little god in bronze, and had the air and bearing of an Inca prince of the blood royal. But he was only a poor, barefoot, little Indian lad, so poor that the thought suddenly occurred to me, that if I liked, I could probably get him and take him back with me to America. I was enthusiastic at once, and, in spite of the protests of Captain Gronow, made inquiries about the boy of the station-master. The station-master was discouraging. He knew the boy's mother, and said she would never consent to giving him up; and if he were taken from her, she would never cease griev-

ing. I did my best to make the captain and the station-master see the plausibility of my plan; but they were sceptical and obstinate. Then the train started, and my arguments were cut short, and I was dragged away with nothing of my little Inca prince to bear me company but a sweet memory.

From Chachendo we returned to Mollendo, and sailed that same evening. The next morning we found ourselves off Arica, and in sight of the rocky Morro above which, easily discernible as one enters the harbour, are the great, white letters: "Viva Battalion No. 4." We had reached Chile's first port, that is, the first of the ports in the valuable nitrate zone which Chile wrested from Peru more than twenty years ago. The inscription is in commemoration of a Chilean victory and a Peruvian massacre which took place at Arica, 1880. The provinces of Arica, Tacna, and Tarapaca, were a part of Peru

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before the war, and Peru still looks upon them as her Alsace-Lorraine. In 1880, when the Chilean army invaded Peru with, as the historian of the times puts it, nothing to lose in case of reverses, and everything to gain — riches, territory, and commerce — in case of success, it left in utter ruin all the country through which it passed, wantonly destroyed all property — public buildings, machinery, factories, private houses — and indiscriminately slaughtered animals as well as human beings. Peru, entirely unprepared for resistance, was vanquished and had to submit. By the treaty of 1883-1884, Chile annexed Tarapaca, and was to occupy the provinces of Arica and Tacna for a term of ten years, when a *plebiscite* was to decide to which country they should revert. For one reason or another the *plebiscite* was not taken in 1894, nor has it been taken since. In 1884, Bolivia also ceded to Chile the coast

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province of Autofagasta, which lies south of Tarapaca. So Chile was able to retire from her war not only with a good supply of art treasures to adorn her capital, but also with complete control of the richest nitrate country in the world. Prosperity has been hers ever since.

We stopped at a number of the nitrate towns, Pisagua, Iquique, Autofagasta, and I visited some of the mills or *oficinas*, in order to see something of the industry. Deposits of the crude nitrate of soda, called here *caliche*, are found in the pampa, or rolling plateau, beyond the first range of foot-hills. In some places this plateau is but ten miles from the coast; in others as far as fifty miles. The pampa is an utterly barren desert. On the surface there is nothing to tempt the heart of man, but a few feet down lies the nitrate or stratum. This presents much the appearance of rock salt, and varies in colour, according

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to the purity of the deposit, from a whitish tint to a dark gray. The upper earth is blown away by a blasting of dynamite, and then the *caliche* is dug out with pick and shovel, loaded on iron carts, and carried to the *oficinas*. These *oficinas* are fitted up with most expensive machinery, and represent much capital. The *caliche* is first broken into small pieces by heavy crushers, and then put into large boiling vats. Inside these vats are coils of steam pipes, by means of which the temperature can be accurately regulated. Sea water is poured in, and the *caliche* is boiled for a certain time. The liquid solution that results is then drawn off into settling vats, which are exposed to the open air and the sun. Evaporation is rapid, and the pure nitrate of soda soon begins crystallizing and settling to the bottom. After this has gone on for some time, the remaining liquid is drawn off, and the crust of



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nitrate is scraped from the sides and bottom of the vat, and thoroughly dried in the sun. Then it is graded according to quality, and packed for shipment in one-hundred-pound sacks.

From the last liquid drawn off there is precipitated a by-product of the *caliche*, almost as valuable as the nitrate of soda itself. This is a black powder from which, by chemical action, crystals of iodine are produced.

Most of the nitrate exported is used as a fertilizer, but a part goes to the manufacture of power and high explosives. Germany is the largest importer, then comes France, the United States, Great Britain, and Belgium. In 1902, the latest statistics available, 1,400,400 tons were produced, and the export amounted in pesos to 126,407,000. The number of workmen employed was 24,538. These figures give some idea of how import-

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ant the nitrate industry is for Chile. From the time of the late Colonel North, "the nitrate king," most of the business has been in the hands of Englishmen, and most of the capital invested has come from Great Britain. Yet Germany is also well represented.

The nitrate towns are even barer and drier and less inviting than most of the other bare, dry towns of the coast. To some of them fresh water is brought in pipes from a distance of more than one hundred miles. Before the day of these pipes, it used to be sold in the streets by the gallon. That water even now, though not scarce, yet is not plentiful, is perhaps some excuse for the awful dust that blows about everywhere. The smells are bad, too. Autofagasta, a large, busy place, seemed to me especially objectionable in this. I was not surprised to hear that small-pox was a very common scourge there; that

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in the past three years it had numbered more victims than bubonic plague and yellow fever together.

In the nitrate zone and in the country south of it much copper is also produced. In 1902 Chile's copper exports amounted to \$17,123,000. Coal, too, is mined in paying quantities, though for some reason the business of the sailing vessels which bring cargoes of it from Cardiff, has not yet been ruined.

At the little town of Huascho, where we took on some bar copper, there was a sight of grass and trees once again, for which we felt very grateful after the barren, monotonous country we had been passing through.

Coquimbo, our last port before Valparaiso, though not an attractive place, had much green to recommend it. The trees and shrubs were as good an indication as any that the great South American desert had

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come to an end, and that we had seen the last of the guano and nitrate country.'

It was growing much cooler, too, and I was glad to change my tropical clothes for others of heavier weight.

I cannot conclude this part of my journey without adding a word about the glorious nights we had been having all down the coast. There is, I am sure, no moonlight so beautiful as moonlight on the Pacific; but starlight is even more splendid. Night after night I sat on deck gazing at constellations that seemed to me more brilliant than any I had ever seen in other parts of the world. This was not my first glimpse of the Southern Cross; but heretofore I had seen it only from the northern hemisphere and accordingly had been disappointed. Here, south of the Equator, there was no room for disappointment. It was all and more than description had pictured it, and glowed in the sky

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like the flaming cross that Constantine saw. It is one of the few among these southern constellations that the northern eye, if only in imagination, is familiar with, and expects to find. This is one reason it is always hailed with such joy. Another constellation especially attractive to us is the lovely Magellan's Cloud, which sweeps across the heavens much as our own Milky Way does.

These starlight nights are among my happiest memories of South America.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VALPARAISO AND SANTIAGO

**V**ALPARAISO is the finest harbour next to 'Frisco on the western coast of America, and from where we lay at anchor that Saturday, February 20th, we could see steamers and sailing vessels from every part of the world. The entrance to the Bay is no wider than the Golden Gate but, unfortunately, facing the north, it admits the fury of the hurricanes that occasionally sweep along the coast during two or three months of the year. For the rest of the year the harbour is perfectly safe; but in the stormy season the seafaring folk sleep uneasily and are ready at a moment's notice to put out to open sea. A

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breakwater would remedy this, but the traveller is told the enormous cost of such an undertaking, due to the great depth of the water, has up to the present proved prohibitive. People still talk of the terrific storms of 1899 when the damage on shore mounted up in the millions, and the incredulous are referred to photographs taken at the time which show the sections of the city in utter ruin.

The only excuse that Valparaiso has for its site as a city is the harbour. On shore the hills come down almost to the water's edge, leaving a coast plain of scant dimensions for man and his activities. At one place there is room for only one street, and at best there are but four. The rest of Valparaiso is scattered over the sides and tops of a score of hills, and so of a dark night the city hangs above the harbour like a black wall pierced by a million lights in all directions.

I thought of Hong Kong, yet the effect was different.

Owing to its scroll-like setting Valparaiso makes a brave showing seen from the decks of incoming steamers. A closer view does not altogether dispel this impression, for the public buildings and business blocks are handsome, imposing edifices, and there are stores and shops filled with all the beautiful things that money and taste can demand. and everywhere the bustle of much business is going on and a great deal of shipping.

Valparaiso has several newspapers and newspaper buildings with as fine presses and equipment as found anywhere in the United States. One that I remember in particular was *El Mercurio*, the property of a man of great wealth and prominence, Augustin Edwards. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Edwards both here and in New York. Although still quite young — under thirty, I



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believe — in addition to the successful management of his newspaper and large business interests, he has been a force in politics. He also publishes a paper in Santiago. His magnificent country place midway between the two cities is one of the sights of Chile.

The street cars in Valparaiso are double deckers, and what is more surprising, the conductors are women. I don't believe there is another country in the world where this is so. It seems that during the war against Peru such a large percentage of men and youths were drafted into the army that the women who were left alone had to do men's work as best they could. As conductresses they proved so satisfactory and honest that they have been retained ever since. They make a good appearance dressed in a neat uniform, and seem quite unconcerned and well able to take care of themselves and their cars. I would suggest to American women seeking

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new fields of industry to consider the street cars. I should add that the platforms of the cars are all furnished with a small seat for the conductress.

The conductresses are not the only relics of the war that one still sees. When foreigners notice two handsome bronze lions that stand in the public park, Chileans smile knowingly and if pressed, tell the story with evident satisfaction and gusto. Looking at these lions which were once the pride of Lima, I could well understand how Peru has never overcome the bitterness of her defeat.

There is another custom in vogue in Valparaiso as curious to outsiders as the women conductors. A city ordinance providing that bodies after death be disposed of within twenty-four hours, often results in the solemnization of funerals by night. So it is a common occurrence to see funeral processions winding their way through the streets

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after dusk. The flaring torches, the dark robes of the clergy and the mourners and the low chanting produce a most weird scene. Moreover, and this is the most surprising feature of all, women are strictly forbidden to take part in the burial services.

During my stay at Valparaiso I was put up at the English Club Albion, through the courtesy of Captain Gronow. I met the American consul, Mr. Mansfield, who did all he could to assist me in my business mission and in spending my sight-seeing time to best advantage. On Sunday morning, in his company, I went to Vina del Mar,—the Newport of Chile — which is on the railway a few miles from Valparaiso in the direction of Santiago. Vina del Mar is a delightful place with all the accessories of a gay summer resort; sea-bathing, horse racing, polo, tennis, and golf. It is built up in pretty summer homes and has a good summer hotel. United

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States Minister, Mr. H. L. Wilson, and his family were there for the hot weather, and First Secretary of Legation, Mr. Norman Hutchinson, was visiting them for the day. Golf was at once a common subject for enthusiasm between Mr. Wilson and me, and in a morning on the links we became pleasantly acquainted. In the afternoon we went to the races which were attended by a gay crowd and much excitement. Horse racing is a prominent feature of social life all over Chile, for the country produces a great many fine horses. The animals are cheap, too, so even the very poor ride, and every one is more or less a judge of horse-flesh.

Santiago is by rail about five hours from Valparaiso. The trip is an easy one made in a comfortable parlour car. It was ten o'clock at night that I had my first view of Santiago, and the great iron station brilliantly alight with electricity impressed me mightily. It

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seemed to me about the most metropolitan thing I had seen since leaving New York. A cab ride of two or three miles to the Anexo del Hotel Addo prepared me for the long streets of Santiago, of which I was to see more by daylight. This is one of the first things a visitor notices. The houses are low, only one or two stories, and spreading out in all directions, make a city of great distances.

The natural setting of Santiago is so beautiful that the longer I was there the more delighted I became. The city is on a plateau or high valley surrounded by a wall of magnificent mountains. This makes a glorious view always, but especially lovely in late afternoon when the snow-capped peaks are aglow in the brilliant tints of the sunset. In the valley are the rich estates or "haciendas" that produce in abundance most of the cereal crops of the temperate zone, and here also

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are the fine stock farms for which the country is famous. On the lower slopes of the mountains are extensive vineyards and grazing lands for vast herds of cattle.

At one end of Santiago itself, commanding a fine view of the city and the surrounding valley, there is a hill, "Cerro de San Lucia," which the art and patience of man — to be precise, of one man named McKenna — has made strikingly lovely. San Lucia rises to the height of 400 feet and at one time was nothing more than an unsightly pile of barren rocks. Now its precipitous sides look like the battlements and towers of a mediæval castle, and the whole is covered with beautiful shrubbery and trees, and laid out in gardens and winding walks. Crowds of people saunter here of afternoons and stay on through the evening, for there is a good restaurant where one may dine, and here and there a number of picturesque band-stands that en-

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courage one to linger and listen. At the top of the hill is a tiny chapel which the man who beautified the whole and gave it to the city built as a tomb. His bones seem to rest quietly enough undisturbed by the noise and gaiety of the careless promenaders who now frequent the walks of his beloved hill.

I dined on the San Lucia one evening with Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, and enjoyed the occasion to the utmost watching the restless, vivacious people. After dinner we walked to a place where a game of Basque pelota was in progress. This is a Spanish ball game very popular among Chileans. It is played in a rectangular court with a concrete floor two hundred feet long by sixty-five feet wide. At either end is a wall thirty-six feet square; one the front wall, the other the rebounding wall. On the front wall red strips mark the boundaries within which the ball must strike, and on the floor there are

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likewise boundary markings of spaces where the ball on its rebound must touch to be counted. The game, as I saw it, was played in singles by six players who occupied the court two at a time. Each man wore a long, dipper-shaped wicker *cesta* attached to his wrist with which he caught and batted the ball. The *delantaro* or forward man sends the ball against the front wall, and the *saguero* or back man must return it either before it touches the floor or on the first rebound. The first man to drive the ball outside the proper limits loses; a new player takes his place and the victor scores one. This continues until one of the players scores six, which is the game.

Pelota is a favourite sport in all Spanish speaking countries and in the large cities there are always courts of permanent construction with good seating capacity. A single game takes about twenty minutes and



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before each game is called, pools are sold in the same way as on running horses, odds given on a favourite player. As a contest of skill, a game of Basque pelota is an interesting exhibition, but it is the chance it affords of gambling that gives it its wide popularity. For some reason attempts to introduce it into America have always failed, and most Americans have heard of it only in connection with the "Jai Alai Concession" scandals that cropped up during our military occupation of Havana.

From the foot of San Lucia the Alameda, a fine boulevard, stretches across the city for a distance of four or five miles. The Alameda is 600 feet wide, and is divided by rows of shady poplars and acacias into different avenues for pedestrians, vehicles, and street cars. Here every afternoon the wealth and fashion of Santiago drive and promenade. Along the Alameda are square after square

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of handsome residences, which are the pride of the city. Many of these owing to their low construction are spread out over enormous ground space. They are built mostly of brick, covered with yellow and white stucco, and adorned with Corinthian pillars which give them an appearance very stately and substantial. Inside they are filled with costly ornaments, and in some the walls have been embellished by famous Parisian decorators. One of the best known show places is that erected by the late Señora Cousina, who for years was known as the Countess of Monte Cristo, on account of her great wealth and lavish expenditure.

Cousina Park on the other side of Santiago was a gift from her to the city. To the poorer people Cousina Park is what the Alameda and the Plaza are to the rich. It has a beautiful lake, extensive grounds and walks, band-stands and numerous refresh-

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ment booths. Cousina Park is as much one of the sights of Santiago as San Lucia, for there better than anywhere else one can see certain phases of the life of the peon class. There they spend their holidays and their playtime as boisterously as they like, eating and drinking and dancing the "zama-cuaca," the graceful native dance of Chile.

Another public pleasure ground is the "Quintal Normal" at the end of the Alameda. Here also the government has its agricultural college, a museum, and a small zoo.

Santiago is a large city as South American cities go, with a population of something like 300,000. Its first importance is as the political capital and social centre of the country, but it is as well the outlet of a limited yet exceedingly rich agricultural district. We scarcely think of the Chileans as an agricultural people; however, nearly half of an en-

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tire population of about 3,000,000 is engaged in agricultural pursuits. There are single *haciendas* or plantations famous all over the world. Macul, the estate of the late Señora Cousina, is a notable one.

It is easy to see that the government of *Santiago* considers it of utmost importance to keep the people amused, and it does all it can to this end. In the summer there are the public parks and play-grounds made attractive with music and vaudeville. In the winter the opera is encouraged, and the government makes such a general subsidy to the management that it is enabled every year to import a famous troupe of Italian singers. Besides being irreproachable musically, the opera is made the leading social event of the season and while it lasts the Chilean ladies appear night after night in beautiful Parisian gowns and blazing with jewels.

The extravagance displayed on all sides by

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the wealthy class rather startles us of the more economical north. For a landed owner to mortgage his next crop heavily does not even excite comment. If he is short of funds it never occurs to him to curtail his extravagance; how to raise more money is all he thinks of.

Roman Catholicism is the church maintained and supported by the state; but the constitution provides for the freedom and protection of all other religions. Civil marriage is the only form acknowledged by law. This regulation was passed because of the prohibitive wedding fees that used to be demanded by the church. On this account as much as any other, the rate of illegitimacy among the poorer classes was so appalling that the government felt constrained to take some extreme measure. In the civil courts the fee is, of course, a mere trifle fixed by law. Among the better classes the marriage

ceremony now is usually performed twice; first by a civil official, and then by the priest. Our own government has had much this same situation to meet in the Philippines, and for the same reason is encouraging civil marriage in the face of strong opposition from the church.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ACROSS THE ANDES TO BUENOS AIRES

THE traveller, bent more on seeing strange sights than saving time, would probably prefer to go from Valparaiso to Buenos Aires by the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego, rather than across the country by the swifter and more commonplace means of the railway. By steamer the distance is about sixteen days, and by rail two and a half days. Being an ordinary business man on a business trip, for me there was no alternative as to route. It was simply foreordained that I should go by rail and cross the cordilleras of the Andes. The next time I am in South America I hope a kind Providence will so

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arrange matters that I may round the continent.

The morning of my departure from Valparaiso for the journey over the Andes was Sunday, February 28th. The weather was fine, and I found the railway station fairly alive with gay parties of picnickers, who were going to the various seaside resorts for the day, or to the country. Baskets of lovely flowers, and crates of beautiful fruit that had just come in by train and were awaiting distribution, gave me some idea of how delightful the country must be at this season; and a group of jovial, handsome youths, all of whom carried towels, which clearly marked their destination, almost made me wish to join them on their expedition to the beach. Sunday is, without doubt, the greatest day of all the week in Chile, and so widely appreciated that (I was told), it takes a great part of the population all Monday to recover from its effects.



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At 7.45 the conductor clapped his hands violently, which is the South American way of saying "All aboard!" there was a last moment's scurry for places, and the train started.

The picnickers got off at the numerous little stations along the way, or staid on the whole distance to Santiago. Those of us who were going to make the transcontinental journey, changed cars at Llai Llai, (pronounced Yi-Yi), on which by noon we reached Los Andes, the Chilean terminus of the Trans-andine Railway. Here, after lunch, there was another change of cars to a narrow gauge — the mountain railroad — and by mid-afternoon we arrived at Salto del Solado (The Soldier's Leap). This is as far as the trains ran at that time, though the tracks were laid for a considerable distance further. On account of the same tracks stretching out ahead, I came near missing the stage-coach; for when the rest of the passengers left the

train I supposed they were going merely because they had reached their destination. So I remained calmly seated in the midst of my baggage until a train-man happened to spy me, and with voluble ejaculations, of which I understood nothing, and excited gesticulations, which I understood a little better, explained that the train would go no further, and that if I wished to proceed I should have to hurry out to the coach which was ready to start. So I hurried and caught it in good time.

There was a tiresome five-hour ride on the stage which ended, at last, in front of the little road-house at that point of the trail which goes by the name of El Juncal. Of El Juncal and its road-house I have not very pleasant recollections. It is the only place on the whole journey where I suffered positive and, as it seemed to me, unnecessary discomforts. I was tired and hungry, but not

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quite hungry enough to relish the miserable fare that was offered us. It was very cold, or I might have been tempted to spend hours out-doors, gazing at the full moon, which I thought I had never seen so large and clear. But as there was no one with whom I could talk and share my enthusiasm, I soon had enough of stargazing, and was ready for bed. There were four beds crowded into the small sleeping-room to which I was assigned, but happily, through the persuasive power of a fee, I was allowed to occupy all four alone. However, one was enough, and more than I could have stood on ordinary occasions. As it was the long stage-ride served me in good stead and I slept soundly.

We were awakened the next morning while it was still dark, and hurried into the coach a little before three to begin our ascent of La Cumbre, or "The Summit." It was

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mid-summer in South America, but at that latitude ice and snow covered the ground. We reached La Cumbre in time to catch the full glory of the rising sun. The early morning light, and the deep hush that lay over the mountain like a silence in suspense, made the gaunt heights that were grouped about us in all directions as far as the eye could reach, seem all the more rugged and impressive. I have never seen the Himalayas, but nothing in the Alps or the Rockies has ever affected me so much as the view from La Cumbre. When the work of tunnelling La Cumbre is completed, the traveller may come and go across the continent without the inconvenience of having to sleep at a tenth-rate road-house, or to scale the summit in a jolty coach, or on muleback. He will congratulate himself on the good time the train is making, and, counting the hours that the tunnel is saving him, never dream that he is

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missing, in consequence, one of the most superb views on earth. Standing there at silent gaze, and storing in my memory impressions of the grandeur and loneliness of it all, I forgot the petty inconveniences that had gone before, and only felt that it was good for me to be there. Paraphrasing what Lord Roberts says of the Taj-Mahal and India, I remember the view from La Cumbre as something that, in itself, is worth a trip to South America.

The boundary line between Chile and the Argentine passes through La Cumbre, and since the treaty signed at Santiago in 1902, providing thereafter for the settlement of all disputes by arbitration, both nations have agreed to commemorate their friendship by the joint erection of a Peace Monument somewhere hereabouts. If the work has progressed as originally planned, the monument must, by this time, be finished.

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By a more gradual descent on the Argentine slope of La Cumbre, at seven o'clock we reached Las Cuevas, the frontier mountain town of the Argentine. Here we breakfasted and went through the formalities of having our baggage examined by the customs officials. Then we boarded the narrow-gauge cars of the Transandine, once again bound for its eastern terminus, the flourishing little town of Mendoza. This is a ride of about eight hours, and remarkable for the fine view one gets, a greater part of the distance, of Aconcagua, the loftiest mountain in both Americas. Its heights, shrouded in everlasting snow, tower above all surrounding peaks, seemingly twice as high as any of them. Until within the last few years its summit had never been reached by any mountain climber; but Sir Martin Conway now claims the honour, and some members of the Fitzgerald expedition have also

been successful. The latest figures place its height above sea level as 22,863, feet or some 6,000 feet less than Mt. Everest, the giant of the Himalayas.

Shortly after leaving Las Cuevas we crossed El Puente del Inca, a remarkable natural bridge, which is very beautiful in a picture. There is a hotel or sanitarium near and some hot springs which are famous in the Argentine for curing rheumatism and skin diseases.

We arrived at Medoza in the late afternoon, but did not wait long enough to see anything of the town. It is a busy, progressive little place, noted for its salubrious climate and its vineyards. From here it is only twenty-four hours journey to Buenos Aires. At Mendoza we left our Transandine narrow-gauge, changing to the broad-gauge of the Buenos Aires and Pacific and Argentine Great Western Railway. The new train was

made up of dining-car, regular coaches, and two sleepers, which were scarcely as commodious as our Pullmans. There were extra charges, too, for such things as sheets, and towels, and soap - something that may seem a matter of course to South Americans, but certainly surprising to a North American. Yet, as the proof of the pudding is the eating, I suppose the proof of the bed and the bedding, too, is the sleeping, and after registering these complaints, I must add that I never slept more soundly.

But when I awoke next morning, I was tempted to assign another cause to the soothing influence of the night, for we were gliding ahead, mile after mile, without a single turn or curve, through the most wonderful railroad country in the world. There was no need for skilled engineers in road construction to build this road, for with a bit of grading here and a little filling in there the road-



bed stood ready for the rails. The track is actually laid in as straight a line as our railway companies are in the habit of picturing their various lines in advertisements. The country is flat as a table, which is a flatness not at all like the billowy flatness of our prairies. As I looked out I remembered having heard this about the Argentine pampas. How different, I thought, to the dreary pampas of the nitrate country through which I had passed some days before. This was the finest agricultural country in extent and richness that I had seen in South America. Hour after hour we sped by huge stock farms of cattle and sheep which explained sufficiently the reason we go to the Argentine when we want to import hides. Both this rich part of the country and the poorer pampas further south are so well suited for pasturage that Argentine is acquiring an enormous trade with the markets of Europe, which she

is able to furnish with frozen meats and meat extracts. Wool and hides have always been her leading exports, but now since the rising importance of these other animal products, more attention than ever is being paid to scientific stock-raising. Many of these *estancias*, or ranches, number their heads of cattle up in the hundred thousands; or, rather, in the millions, for instead of counting the heads of cattle it is customary, in South America, *to count the feet*.

We passed beautiful wheat lands, too, as fine as our own vast wheat farms of the West. This, too, is an industry of comparatively recent growth. Not many years ago Argentine was importing wheat from the United States. Now she exports to the markets of Europe, besides feeding most of South America. Since the first experiments that proved how well adapted some of the provinces of the Argentine were to wheat raising, irrigation

## IN SOUTH AMERICA

has opened up other parts of the country theretofore looked upon as barren deserts.

What the Argentine needs most is people to develop her agricultural resources. The government realizes this, and offers special inducements to immigrants, such as advancing farming implements and stock, and other necessities until such a time as they are able to pay for them.

At present, of the foreign born population, the Italians are in preponderance. They are the labourers on the railroads, on the farms, in the cities and everywhere. They are not attractive to look at, and do not seem to throw off their slovenly, lazy habits of life so quickly as their countrymen who come to the United States.

The Argentine owes a great debt to the English, for English capital and English brains have done much in the development of the country. The business relations of the

two countries are very close, and in Argentine's foreign trade Great Britain comes first both in imports and exports. In her import trade we come third; in her export trade, fifth. She sends us hides; we send her timber, coal, mineral oils, iron, steel, and machinery.

The richness of the country and its limitations were plain enough to any one looking out of the train-window, as I did on my ride to Buenos Aires. There were the wheat fields and the pasture lands, both with the possibilities of untold wealth. But neither here nor further south was there any timber to speak of, nor any mines of iron or coal. The Argentine will have to be a great agricultural and stock-raising country or nothing.

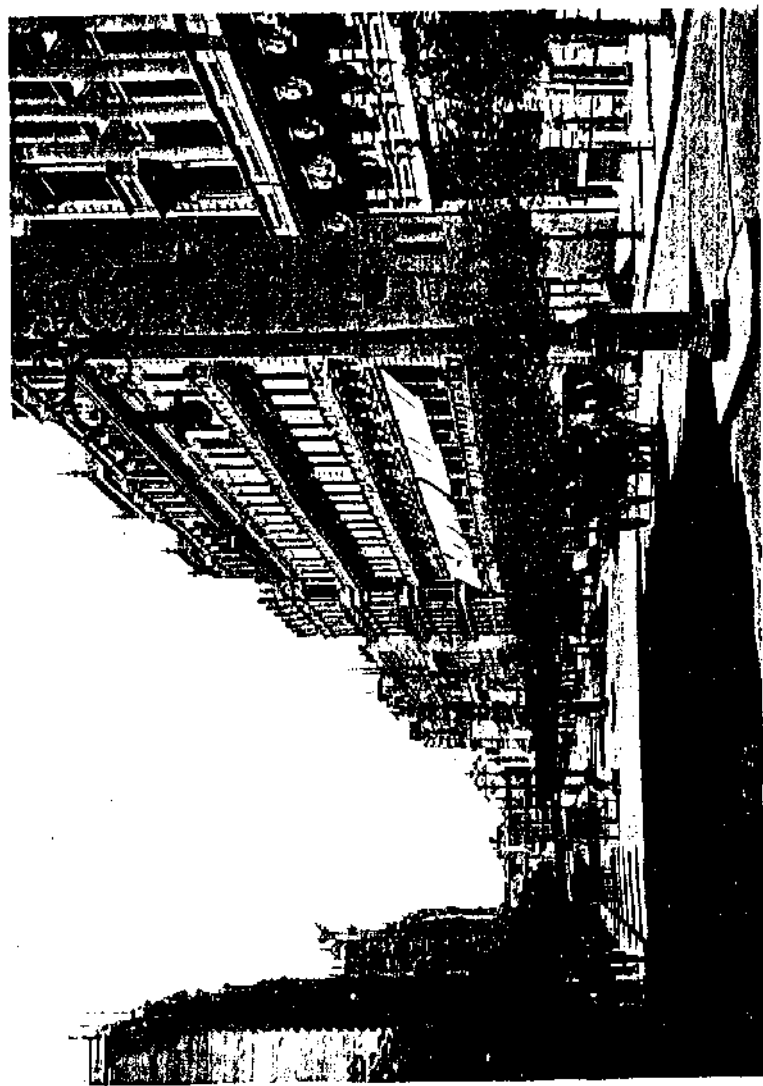
## CHAPTER SEVEN

### BUENOS AIRES

**MOST** people think of Buenos Aires as merely another name for the Argentina, just as Paris so often spells France. Indeed had it not been for the deep impression made upon my imagination by the vast, fertile stretches of the Argentine pampas, I think that I, too, should suppose the country but a tail-like appendage to the kite of its largest city. The size of Buenos Aires dwarfed the other South American cities I had seen, up to this time, villages and small towns. The bustle of the place, too, and the growth that was actually going on while you waited and watched was more like the mushroom expansion

of a Chicago than of a Latin-American capital.

The feeling of admiration and enchantment that took possession of me the first night in Buenos Aires has never quite left me. Early in the evening I presented my card at the American Legation and was cordially received by the Honourable John Barrett, who at that time was still our minister to the Argentine. As a good introduction to the city Mr. Barrett suggested a drive to Palermo Park. This took us through brilliantly lighted streets, past square after square of handsome business blocks, and down the Avenida de Mayo, a beautiful boulevard which, modelled after the Grand Boulevard of Paris, was laid out through the very heart of the city ten years ago at enormous expense. At Palermo quiet and moonlight reigned among the palms, and as I lay back enjoying the restfulness of it, I thought I should prob-



*Avenida de Mayo—Buenos Aires*





## IN SOUTH AMERICA

ably never again find this beautiful park so attractive. But I thought the same a few nights later when the walks were crowded with people and we passed and repassed hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of carriages whose occupants — the men in evening dress, and the women in costly gowns and a blaze of precious stones — were making of their evening drive a social event of some magnitude. Palermo is the great playground of Buenos Aires. It is always the scene of such celebrations as the Battle of Flowers which Latin-America enjoys as much as Latin-Europe. When the Battle is in progress the array of vehicles and beautiful horses is as astonishing as the army of lovely women who drive them and keep up a laughing fusilade of bouquets. Of course everybody attends from the President down. But even so one is surprised. Is there actually no end to the number of carriages in Bue-

nos Aires, and lovely women and — flowers? In the Battle of Flowers it would seem not.

The morning after my arrival when I began my business calls and found that merely travelling out to Barracas, the shipping district at the south end of the city, took nearly a half day, I was ready to agree to the boast of the natives that in point of area Buenos Aires is larger than Paris. The population according to the last official census, that of 1902, is less than 900,000. The rate of increase since then has been tremendous, and though we may not care to go so far as enthusiastic Buenos Airians and put it at a million and a half, yet there is little doubt that it is well past the million mark. This makes Buenos Aires after Paris the most important centre of Latin civilization in the world. I am tempted to call it a cosmopolitan, or at any rate, an all-embracing Latin civilization, for

Spanish is the language that prevails, French the taste, and Italian the labour.

Buenos Aires was founded in the year 1535, a fact which accounts for the narrow streets that cut the city up into Spanish rectangles. In many of them two carriages cannot pass each other, and as a result there is a general regulation against carriages stopping and blocking up the way. Little plazas and boulevards have improved these old streets, but they are still out of keeping with the handsome, modern buildings that have been erected in recent years. Architecturally these buildings reflect very strongly the general tendency to cast aside Spanish models in favour of French. No more low houses are going up built around a *patio* or inner court.

The cathedral on the Plaza at one end of the Avenida de Mayo, is an imposing edifice that looks like a government building or an art gallery or anything but a Roman Church.

Instead of the regulation Gothic it is severe Greek in character, with a wide portico in front and twelve great Corinthian pillars to support the roof. The nearest thing to a spire is a squat Byzantine tower that rises over the altar, but so far back that the Greek effect of the front is not spoiled.

On the Calle Florida is the Jockey Club, one of the most luxuriously appointed club buildings in the world, famous for its marble halls and onyx staircases. Buenos Aires is well supplied with clubs. Club del Progreso is almost as expensive and quite as well known as the Jockey Club, and there are dozens of others where the properly introduced visitor may meet all the wealth and business brains of the country. Through Mr. Barrett's courtesy I was able to make my headquarters at the Strangers' Club, where I became very pleasantly acquainted with a number of Americans and Englishmen who

had been for years residents of the Argentina.

One gentleman, a Mr. Cassells, who had spent a lifetime there but officially was still an American, told me a little story that seems to me to illustrate a certain phase of the national character of the Englishman and the American at variance with that of the peoples of continental Europe. He said that, considering he had no personal ties to hold him to America and that he had spent the working years of his life in the Argentine and had accumulated a fortune there, he had at one time serious thoughts of becoming a naturalized citizen. He spoke to several of his friends, Americans and Englishmen, who were in much the same position as he, and after discussing the subject thoroughly they all agreed that if they could persuade one hundred of their fellow countrymen to join them — the British population in Buenos

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

Aires alone is more than seven thousand — they would take the step. They made an honest canvass, but were never able to work up the specified quota. Though it was only pride and sentiment against the just dues of the new country, the English and Americans could not bring themselves to change their nationalities. So Mr. Cassells is still an American.

Nothing shows the activity and the progressiveness of Buenos Aires more than the number of newspapers it publishes and the class of world news these papers offer. The entire number of publications including weeklies and monthlies is one hundred and fifty. Of these twenty-three are daily newspapers which are printed in Spanish, Italian, French, English, German, and Russian. The paper and the newspaper building most likely to attract the attention of the visitor is *La Prensa*. In company with Mr. Barrett

and the editor of the paper I made the tour of *La Prensa*, and it seemed to me that the equipment and management of the building were equal to anything I had ever seen in New York, London, or Paris. The Buenos Aireans say it is superior; perhaps it is. The presses and machinery are all of the latest and most approved models; but it is not this part of *La Prensa's* equipment that surprised me most. It was rather certain departments of activity not ordinarily connected with a newspaper establishment, such as a free dispensary. This dispensary, they told me, was started at a time when Buenos Aires was not so well supplied with hospitals and ambulances as it is now. The original idea was to have a small, well organized medical force that could be reached by any one in case of emergency, and would be always at the disposal of the poor. This intention has been admirably carried out, and *La Prensa* has

spared no expense in making its dispensary a thoroughly useful public institution. In the same building there is a handsome auditorium where lectures, charity benefits, and such things take place. There are besides billiard-rooms and lounging-rooms for the staff, which is further taken care of in the matter of a midnight lunch. Most surprising of all, however, are some suites of rooms intended for entertainment. These are actually placed at the disposal of distinguished foreigners and official guests of the government. So *La Prensa* takes an active part in the life of its city in ways that would be undreamed of among us.

On our drives to Palermo Park my attention was drawn to what looked to me a palace of most ornate architecture with windows of coloured glass and numerous turrets and balconies. It occupied a solid square and the grounds about it were laid out in well-



## IN SOUTH AMERICA

kept gardens and walks. Mr. Barrett explained to me that I was not looking at a palace, but only at the blank walls of one of the city reservoirs. Could anything mark more sharply the temperamental differences between us and our South American neighbours than the toleration with which we regard the unsightliness of reservoirs in our cities, and the taste with which they conceal the necessary hideousness of theirs? Best foot forward and appearances above all things, is the motto of South America. It isn't a half bad motto when united to the push and progressiveness that I found everywhere in Buenos Aires.

On Sunday, March 6th, I saw the outside workings of an election for senator. The voting booths arranged for the Australian ballot system were placed at the entrances of the various churches. By night when returns began to be published, the streets were alive

with excited, noisy crowds. The successful candidate's name made no impression on me, but I remember that he was president of the Jockey Club. A very disheartening feature of politics universal in South America but especially emphasized on an occasion like this, is the custom of speaking disrespectfully of all representatives of government. No matter what a man's standing may have been before election to office, once he is in, it is taken for granted that he is there to make what he can out of it. Even the highest offices lend no dignity to the men who occupy them. Public sentiment seems rather to be, the higher the office the bigger the chance for graft. Whatever its cause this seems to me a very unfortunate habit for people living under a democratic form of government to fall into.

For amusements Buenos Aires is well provided with theatres. At present there is in erection a Grand Opera House, which, when

finished, will be one of the largest and finest in the world. As it was summer I couldn't see this side of the social life of the city in its full glory. One night I went to the Vaudeville, which financially was said to be the most successful theatre in the city. It is decorated in pronounced French style, and has large lobbies where cigars and drinks are sold, and where the beauties of the demi-monde promenade between acts. In intention it was all very Parisian, but somehow it did not produce the same impression of light gaiety and charm which one instantly recognizes at the Moulin Rouge or at the Ambassadors.

Before I left Buenos Aires confirmation arrived of Mr. Barrett's appointment to Panama. The news caused a good deal of stir in official circles, and I was pleased to see the genuine regret that the other legations, and the Argentinians as well, felt at the prospect of losing the American minister. I took

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

it as a good indication that Mr. Barrett on the new and more delicate mission he was about to undertake would be just as well able to win the liking and respect of another South American people.

After a stay of ten days into which I had tried to crowd the business and sight-seeing of three months, I had to leave Buenos Aires and proceed northward on my trip. Whisked about as I had been in cabs from one end of the city to the other, I have a lasting memory of the distances in Buenos Aires, and also of the lines of shops and stores that extend for miles in seemingly endless vistas. It can almost be said that all the stores of the Argentine are crowded into Buenos Aires. I can close my eyes now and see their signs fly by — Sombreria, Zapateria, Libreria, Candelaria, Papeleria, and a dozen other — erias, until I am fain to call Buenos Aires the City of Erias.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### A GLIMPSE OF MONTEVIDEO IN REVOLUTION

THE frequency of revolutions in South America is not, unfortunately, quite the joke that our comic papers would have us believe. For the country where a revolution is taking place, it is something more than an explosion of Spanish expletives, a show of gilt braid and epaulets, and an array of generals with long titles and high-sounding names. I had the opportunity to see this in my glimpse of Montevideo, which at that time was going through what is now called, I believe, "the last revolution."

The trip from Buenos Aires on the Royal Mail Steamship "Clyde" across the broad

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

estuary known as the Rio de la Plata took one night. We woke up the next morning within the harbour of Montevideo, a few miles from shore but in full sight of the Cerro with its light-house. The "Clyde" was not to sail until late afternoon, but we were told that as a revolution was on, passengers would probably not be allowed to land. However, I took my chances and going to shore on one of the ship's boats, declared my business at the Captain of Port's office, answered questions, left my name and description, and was granted the liberty of the town with the understanding that I report promptly at three o'clock. I was warned not to wear anything that might look like a red badge for fear of being made a target by the Whites, nor anything conspicuously white for fear of attracting the attention of the Reds.

This prepared me for exciting surprises

that I supposed would be cropping up at every street corner. But nothing of the sort happened. I called on the American Minister and the American Consul, and then made a round of business calls on the firms on my list. The streets were quiet, unnaturally quiet, and at every corner or two there was a group of soldiers doing police duty. The city was, of course, under martial law and the same air of arrested activity pervaded everything. Business was dead, as dead as a door-nail, and there was no way of foretelling when it would again have chance to revive. I heard of little bloodshed, but there was talk of much slaughter of live stock on the part of the contending factions. This seemed to me a horrible method of warfare, but the revolutionists looked upon it merely as a means of crippling their opponents' resources. Even so, I could not disabuse my mind of the picture of herds of beautiful cattle and sheep

butchered ruthlessly and left to welter and rot in the fields.

Montevideo has a population of 300,000 and is a well-built, well-paved city. It has a fine outlook, and a good natural harbour that needs only a little dredging to make it excellent. Uruguay, as a country, is blessed with fertile wheat fields and rich grazing lands, out of all proportion to its diminutive size and its importance as an independent state. It is counted a prosperous country and small wonder, for a little industry and business judgment is all that is required to make it one of the wealthiest spots of South America. I am sure that in revolutionless times Montevideo, the capital, principal city, largest seaport — in fact, the giant head to the dwarfed body of the country — must be a gay, bustling place. But when I saw it, in the thralls of a revolution, it was quiet and gloomy with all its business life crushed out.



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Among the people who took passage on the "Clyde" from Montevideo was one woman, an American, with whom naturally I became acquainted and whose trying experience I am tempted to record as illustrating another unhappy phase of life in a country subject to revolutions. She had been traveling with her husband, a business man from Chicago, when he was taken ill at Montevideo and died. In preparing his body for shipment home and seeking the necessary licenses and permits, she was met with seemingly insurmountable obstacles at every turn. Such outrageous fees were demanded and so many of them, that the poor woman was in despair, and at length had to apply to the United States Consul for protection and assistance. Through his exertions, she was able finally to meet the requirements of law, and at the same time escape the shameless fleecing that had been at first attempted. When I

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saw her she was bound for home by the most direct and quickest route, namely, by Southampton. In returning from South America it will be remembered the old adage still holds: "The longest way round is the shortest way home." This incident seems to me as good a commentary as any of the shocking inadequacy of steamer communication between the two Americas.

## CHAPTER NINE

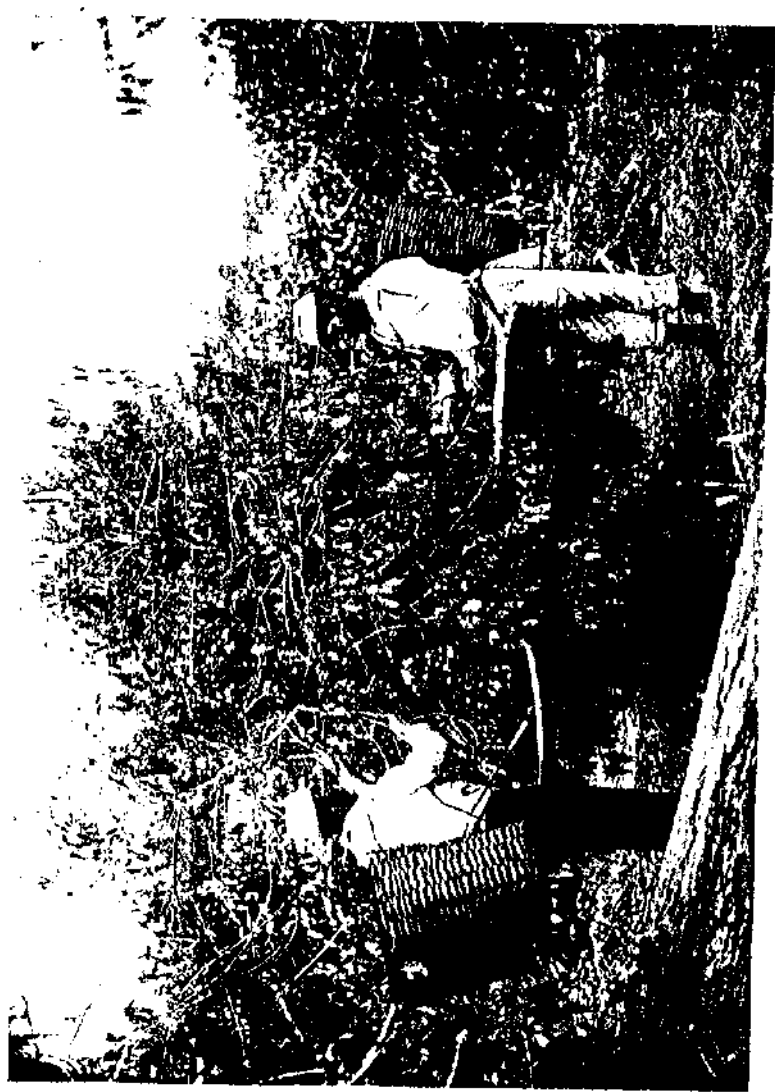
### FROM SAO PAULO TO RIO JANEIRO AND HOME

**L**EAVING Montevideo the temperature grew rapidly warmer and no map was needed to tell us that we were again approaching Capricorn. After a twelve days' run we left the ocean, and went up a deep winding river between banks covered with a green tropical growth and past coffee plantations that extended as far as the eye could see. We reached Santos, the great coffee port, after a river trip of two and a half hours, and anchored at the docks in one of the finest river harbours I have seen anywhere. The docks and the harbour improvements are comparatively recent, and have done more than any other one

thing to advance the growing importance of Santos. Santos is the port for Sao Paulo and for the Sao Paulo state, which is the richest coffee-growing district in Brazil.

Although Santos is losing the bad name it once had as a hotbed for yellow-fever germs, even yet no one who can afford to live at Sao Paulo or elsewhere cares to make it a permanent residence. The morning we got in the heat was terrific, though probably it seemed no worse than usual to the hundreds of labourers who were running back and forth between warehouse and steamer with sacks of coffee on their shoulders. We had the usual unnecessary delays in getting through the customs, on account of which we missed the train to Sao Paulo and had to sit waiting half an afternoon, with nothing to look at but the sluggish green water of the harbour and the hot roofs of the warehouses.

The two hours' trip to Sao Paulo was



*Gathering Coffee Beans*



## IN SOUTH AMERICA

probably tiresome to the crowd of business men who were with me on the train returning home. But as it wasn't a daily occurrence for me, as it was for them, I found the journey most interesting. Through the glossy, green plantations of coffee we travelled on a steady up grade to a height of 2700 feet. The railway was cogwheeled and arranged in a series of six inclined planes which, in construction, bespeak considerable mechanical ingenuity as well as expense. At the top of the last inclined plane there is a restaurant where the train stops long enough for the passengers to get a cup of coffee before continuing the last half hour's run to Sao Paulo.

In size Sao Paulo is the third city of Brazil. It is a busy, enterprising place with a population estimated at 175,000. Its streets are narrow and its buildings unimposing and ordinary. It boasts, however, a modern and most satisfactory street-railway system, the

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

work of an American engineer named Mitchell. The foreigner thinks of Sao Paulo as the place where he is likely to meet the coffee buyers of the world, but throughout Brazil at least the city is looked upon as an educational centre and noted for its fine schools and museums. Portuguese is the prevailing language, as in all parts of Brazil, though there are a great many German residents and one also hears French and English.

The State of Sao Paulo, of which the city of the same name is the capital, is not so large as many other of the states of Brazil, but richer and more important than most of them. It is so well adapted to the growth of coffee that, so it is said, it could make its supply large enough to meet the demand of the world. It has now, in round numbers, 16,000 plantations each with from 50,000 to 500,000 trees. Every brand of coffee on the market is produced from the Rio and Santos that one



## IN SOUTH AMERICA

in South America would expect to find, as well as what is sold in the American market, as Mocha and Java. Indeed coffee from the same tree is graded according to size and colour into these and more classes. Moreover, any coffee producing area in the world can call on Sao Paulo to swell its own limited supply just as Mocha and Java have long done. Sao Paulo caters well to the taste of all its patrons. Take South Africa, for instance. It prefers to boil its coffee from black coffee-beans; so the beans sent there are coloured the desired shade!

In 1901-2 the coffee output in Brazil was 14,387,647 bags valued in sterling at £23,-322,058. The next year the output was 12,-199,865 bags valued at £18,209,451. We are Brazil's heaviest customer in coffee, our annual imports mounting up to nearly \$60,000,000.00. A Brazilian commissioner whom I met at the St. Louis Fair, and with

whom I was talking about the coffee trade, expressed to me his disgust at the anti-coffee literature in general which he found scattered so broadcast over America. No wonder he was disgusted. Any blow at the American coffee-pot is a blow at Brazil.

From Sao Paulo I went to Rio de Janeiro by rail, a one night's trip of about fifteen hours. The railway station at Rio is a long distance from the centre of town, so my first hour's sight-seeing was from a cab on the way to the Hotel Dos Estrangeros. This took me through the Cattete, one of the pleasant resident districts along the Bay, where nature in providing conditions favourable for the growth of the royal palm has made the laying out of picturesque drives a simple matter. These same royal palms are one of the glories of Rio and to be mentioned with the Sugar Loaf, that monster of rock that



*Botanical Gardens—Bamboo Trees*



## IN SOUTH AMERICA

rises abruptly out of the Bay, and with the Corcovado, the "stoop-shouldered" mountain which crouches high above the city. Everywhere in Rio the royal palm is in evidence, but where one sees it in its proudest beauty is at the Botanical Gardens. Here there is an avenue, the most regal I think on earth, bordered on either side by a row of these palms, planted fifteen or twenty feet apart, and shooting straight up into the air a distance of eighty or a hundred feet. No branch or leaf breaks the stiffness of their smooth, slender trunks that end up at the very top in prim leafy tufts which, looked at from below, remind one of umbrellas. This avenue of palms is to a Northerner the wonder sight of Rio — the veritable dream of the tropics come true.

Rio covers an area of about thirty square miles, and is credited with a population of between 800,000 and 1,000,000. The

white population is estimated at two-thirds of the whole. The natural surroundings of the city are most picturesque. Looking in from the Bay one is charmed with the gently rising terraces upon which the city spreads out over the lower slopes of the mountains and hills. Gazing down from the height of Corcovado on the other hand, one sees the harbour in all its beauty, and suddenly recalls that it is the commonplace of every traveller to group the Bay of Rio with the Golden Horn at Constantinople and with the Bay of Naples. One enthusiastic writer extravagantly calls the harbour, "a miniature summer sea upon whose bosom rest a hundred fairy isles, and upon whose shores dimple a hundred bays." In addition to its tropical beauty the harbour is one of the largest in South America and one of the safest. Following the example of Santos and in hopes of reclaiming a part of the rich trade lost to that

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port, Rio is now constructing great modern docks which are costing millions of money.

Modelled after Lisbon most of the streets in Rio are narrow and overhung with the balconies and windows of the houses which as usual are built flush with the sidewalks. Naturally the air is close and malodours are prevalent. The most interesting street in the city is the Rua Ouvidor, where the finest shops are situated. Yet the Rua Ouvidor is only eight or ten squares in length and so narrow that horses and carriages are not allowed to drive through it even in one direction.

Realizing that Buenos Aires's experiment in building the Avenida de Mayo has proved successful beyond all expectation, Rio is now doing the same thing and at great expense, clearing a broad boulevard through the central, most congested part of the city.

In the narrow streets of Rio the old-fashioned "Tilbury" is still seen, a heavy, two-

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

wheeled affair drawn by one horse. On the Tilbury, as on the street-cars, following the custom of Europe, the cost of fare is in proportion to the length of the ride. On the street cars the conductor always gives a receipt. No one is allowed to ride in a car without a coat, not even an American in a fashionable shirt-waist. And people with bundles are not permitted to board a car. There is, however, at least one thing you may do; anywhere in the car you may smoke.

The lottery still continues to be a state institution in Brazil, and on nearly every street corner in Rio I saw venders of lottery tickets. Indeed selling lottery tickets might be put down as one of the most flourishing branches of business in Rio. Everybody buys tickets, and the stories of great fortunes suddenly acquired not only keep up the excitement of the natives but as often as not arouse the interest of the passing stranger as well.



## IN SOUTH AMERICA

The hills and peaks which surround Rio and in their tropical greenness look so cool and fresh are not so beneficial as they look, for they shut out the purifying draughts of air, and in the summer season are the means of keeping the city languishing in breathless heat and, too often, in the clutches of yellow fever and bubonic plague. It should be said, though, that new and stricter sanitary measures have in the past few years greatly lessened the danger and spread of these scourges.

Europeans and Americans are still afraid during some seasons of the year to pass many nights in Rio. Fortunately there are a number of healthful summer resorts within reachable distance which solve the problem of conducting a business in Rio without living there.

Tijuca is such a place. In itself it is a delightful suburb, but I remember it chiefly for

the wonderful stretches of tropical forest which the tram and electric railway pass through in reaching it. Fortunately, these forests are protected and maintained by the government, and so, with the Corcovado and the Botanical Gardens, may be put down as one more of the beautiful and permanent landscape features which nature in her lavishness has bestowed upon Rio.

Another favourite and famous summer resort is Petropolis. It was named after the Emperor, Dom Pedro II, who had his summer palace there. There is no doubt about its location being healthful, for it is perched high up in the breezy Organ Mountains, forty-five miles away from the heat and smells of Rio. After a warm, noisy night at the hotel I was more than pleased to accept the invitation of Mr. Eugene Seeger, the American Consul, to spend Saturday night and Sunday at his home in Petropolis. The

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ferry-boat ride across the Bay was delightful; the boat was comfortable, and the Bay itself, dotted with lovely green islands and with an irregular coast-line fringed with palms and other tropical growths, was as beautiful on close view as it had looked from a distance.

At the pier the train was waiting for us. The same men use this train week in and week out until custom has reserved each man his own seat. The railway ride like the boat ride is about an hour. After a run of fifteen miles we reached the beginning of the cog-wheel road, and the train was broken up into sections to make the ascent. At every turn we seemed to catch new views of the valley and Bay behind, of the tropical forests at hand, and the mountain peaks above.

Petropolis is at an elevation of 3000 feet. It is a charming little place of five or six thousand people, and with its foreign air and

## A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

German hotels reminds one of Carlsbad. It is prettily laid out, and the homes of the American and English residents are handsome and comfortable. There are well-kept lawns and beautiful gardens, but these last are to be expected in a land of palms and ferns and orchids. Moreover, anything green would flourish, for running water is everywhere at hand. Below the city down in a little valley to which we drove on Sunday morning is the race-course, and in all directions there are pleasant walks and drives. I thought it an ideal place of residence for the families of the foreign officials, and most of them seemed to feel much the same, for I heard very little complaint over the long two hours' journey to and from Rio, which as a consequence many of them had to make daily. The men who come and go regularly are together so much that they form clubs and matches for entertainment on the train

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and the "barca," as the ferry is universally called. Subsequent visits to Petropolis increased rather than diminished my liking for the little place which I learned to know pretty thoroughly under the friendly guidance of Mr. and Mrs. Seeger and another American resident and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Moulinier.

There was no yellow fever at that time reported in Rio, but vessels coming and going were nevertheless most strict in their quarantine regulations. I had amusing evidence of this one morning. I received word from a friend who was anchored out in the Bay on a steamer from New York bound for Buenos Aires. The quarantine regulations of the ship forbade through passengers from landing, and allowed no visitors aboard. Notwithstanding these strict orders I went out in a small boat and succeeded in talking to my man, but under rather trying circumstances, for I had to

keep my distance from the steamer and he could come out no further than the gangway. So conversation was a luxury not to be indulged in too recklessly.

After a stay of two weeks in Rio, I took passage on the steamship "Byron" of the Lamport and Holt Line to sail on April 2d for New York by way of the intermediate ports of Bahia, Pernambuco, and Bridgetown in the Barbadoes. Mr. Seeger and one or two friends went out to the "Byron" with me, giving me the last of those cordial little farewell receptions which had been so pleasant a feature of my experience at almost every stage of my journey. From the resident Americans everywhere I had met with the same unfailing courtesy and friendliness, and I shall probably never know what business difficulties I should have had without their help and what discomforts I should have suffered.

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On board the "Byron" besides the bright young American engineers, the coffee buyers and the tourists, there were some of the Brazilian representatives to the World's Fair. So there was opportunity to hear discussion about other parts of those great United States of Brazil which in area stretch out as broad as our own United States without Alaska and the Island Possessions. There was talk of the rubber industry in the forests of the Amazon, and of the mineral deposits of which later so fine an exhibit was made in St. Louis. Sugar flourishes in many parts; tobacco and cotton are grown extensively; and the hard woods of the vast tropical forests will always find a ready market.

Brazil has all the riches of a tropical country and unfortunately all the drawbacks. It is opening up as fast as capital can be attracted, but this is not very fast for the white man has to move slowly in these latitudes. The

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plague and the fever stand ever beside him as he builds railroads, cuts tunnels, and dredges rivers, and he knows from experience that their menace is not an empty one.

On arrival at Bahia and later at Pernambuco, we were disappointed at finding the quarantine regulations against everything coming from Rio so strict that we were not allowed to land. There was a fumigative alternative offered the more insistent of us, but it was of so severe a nature, internal and external, that courage failed us. So I saw both ports only from shipboard.

Bahia which in population is the second city of Brazil is a little more than 700 miles from Rio. It is divided into an upper and a lower town. The upper town is reached by an inclined plane and is the handsome residence district. The bright tiles of the roofs and the bright colours of the houses show very prettily from a distance. Tobacco is the



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great industry at Bahia, and there are many cigar and cigarette factories. As a centre of the sugar industry, Bahia counts third in Brazil.

Pernambuco outranks Bahia as a sugar port, but is not so large a town. It is about 400 miles from Bahia. There's a curious extent of coral reef in front of the town that forms a protected inner harbour. This inner harbour is large and commodious, but not very deep. Vessels drawing twenty-three feet have to load and unload outside the reef. Pernambuco was not described as a very attractive place by the people who knew it, but from our distance it looked pretty enough.

Our last stop was at Bridgetown in the Barbadoes, where we arrived after a six days' cruise from Pernambuco. This is a delightful little English garrison town with clean streets, crowds of smiling, indolent negroes, and all the lovely vegetation of the

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tropics. The army officers and their families and the Governor-General and his staff have pleasant homes and live as the better class English live everywhere, adapting to whatever corner of the earth they may be sent the fine old social traditions of the mother country.

We left Bridgetown with all its summer warmth and colour, and without further delay steamed straight for New York. Soon the temperature changed, and we passed through an uncomfortable fall that made the South American shiver and shake, and into a winter that foretold a cold reception for us in New York.

We made harbour on April the 19th, seventeen days out from Rio. The air was heavy with fog, and it was as cold and raw as it had been three months before on the day I had sailed from New York bound for Colon.

## CHAPTER TEN

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON OUR TRADE WITH SOUTH AMERICA

**H**OWEVER casual our view of trade conditions in South America, it is astonishing to our complacent American sense of business supremacy to see how the nations of Europe—Great Britain, France, and Germany—have outdistanced us of the United States right on our own western hemisphere. It is clear enough that the European markets got their first footing in South America at a period when all our time and energies were employed in opening up the resources of our own expanding country. But now the question arises, why in more recent years have we not bestirred ourselves?

It would be foolish to assign as reason for this the manifest and the manifold obstacles which at present stand in the way of our taking a more commanding place in South American trade. Without doubt if our interest had been truly keen, ways and means for overcoming these obstacles would long ago have been devised as they have been in other directions where it has seemed desirable for us to push out. No more time would now be lost if the American business world once realized to its full extent the growing commercial importance of South America. Not only would the trade that already exists be more carefully fostered but means for creating a demand for American goods, where before this there has been no demand, would be searched for and found — similar perhaps to the very successful methods followed by our government in demonstrating at the Paris Exposition the various uses of our

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great staple, corn. Brazil herself did missionary work of this kind in St. Louis when she taught hundreds and hundreds of visitors the true secret of making coffee.

Any work like this in South America would call for concerted action of some sort and perhaps the aid of the government. To be sure, many private enterprises are at present doing what they can in this direction. The results they obtain, however, are slight and will be until the volume of effort shall somehow be greatly increased.

After speaking thus vaguely of the obstacles that beset our path to South American trade, let me touch upon some of them more definitely. To better our trade relations, one of the first things we must do is greatly to improve and increase the present facilities in lines of communication and transportation. We must have our own carrying vessels for we can not continue forever

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to depend upon slow, foreign lines if we are to equal, to say nothing of surpassing, the promptness of the European shipper. The steamship lines on the west coast stop, as I have described, like local trains at every tiny port *en route*, and the one fairly good line between Rio de Janeiro and New York compares in no way with the first-class Transatlantic lines. Improved service has been promised us again and again, but what American shippers need more than promises are American ships owned and managed by American capital. Until we have these it will always be a slow and difficult matter for orders from South America to reach us, and equally as slow and difficult for us to fill them.

Then there must be devised some better system of banking and collections than at present exists between the two Americas. Now collections for the most part are made

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on Europe, and American sellers find themselves entirely unprotected against the fluctuations of the money-market and liable to charges at once unsatisfactory and excessive. This is not a simple matter to remedy, and I shall not hazard a suggestion where men who have studied the problem for years still find it too difficult for solution. It is impossible that it should be otherwise with a different monetary standard in every country. It is true that the tendency of late years in the various countries of South America has been to put their money systems on a gold basis. But as we have found in the Philippines, it takes something more than a governmental proclamation to make a new monetary system effective.

In Brazil the monetary unit is a *milreis* valued in United States currency at \$.54,6. The gold *peso* of the Argentine is quoted at \$.96,5. The gold *condor* of Chile is worth

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twenty gold *pesos*, and in our money \$7.30. This puts the uncoined Chilean gold *peso* at \$.36,5. Since 1901, Peru has been on a gold basis with a *libra* corresponding to the English £ sterling, and made up of ten *soles* rated in American money at \$.48,7 each. Yet just as in the Philippines where the fluctuating Mexican silver still flourishes side by side with the new Philippine coinage, so in many of these countries, a debased currency still exists. In Brazil there is a silver *milreis* worth, when I was there, about \$.23 or less than one-half a gold *milreis*; and there are corresponding paper or silver *pesos* in the Argentine, Chile, and Peru, which rise and fall in value almost daily. Therefore, though technically on a gold basis, the money of South America is in constant fluctuation and responds readily to the manipulations of speculators.

The progress of American trade in South



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America has very often been hampered by the class of representatives that we have sent. A smattering of Spanish or Portuguese does not, in my estimation, make up for incapacity as a salesman nor for ignorance of the products in hand. In choice between an indifferent salesman<sup>or</sup> who speaks the language and a good one who does not, I should advise selecting the good salesman; for with an interpreter he could do better work, or at least less harm, than the other man. But neither Spanish nor Portuguese are difficult languages to acquire, and a good salesman should certainly be willing to add to his efficiency by a little hard study. A man starting out with an interpreter and studying in spare moments should in three months' time have a good conversational command of the language. So I would say send good men to South America, even if they can't speak the language, and encourage them to study it as

they would anything at home which was distinctly advantageous to their business careers.

The men sent to South America should not expect to use the same business methods that are in vogue here. The American salesman believes that American business methods are the best on earth. So they are — for the American. But the South American is very differently constituted from the American, and many an argument that sells goods in Chicago avails nothing in Rio. For instance, one of the prime requisites of an article in America is that it should be “up-to-date.” Now this quality of “up-to-dateness” appeals to the South American buyer very little. To something entirely new he much prefers what he has been accustomed to use. German and English salesmen understand this prejudice, and are ready to humour it rather than spend their time and energy in

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efforts to change it. Consequently they very often succeed where the American salesman fails.

At the present stage of our business relations with South America the greatest care, and not carelessness, should be taken in the matter of filling orders. The existing prejudice against some American products is directly traceable to this. Then goods should be packed as the South American merchant wishes them, even if it is not the way in which we are accustomed to pack them. And if he prefers them billed in *kilos*, well and good; let them be billed in *kilos*, and in whatever language and money he desires. In such things the South American should be treated with every consideration, since he is the buyer and, presumably, the man who meets the charges. All this is thoroughly understood by the European salesman, and should be by us. Lastly, I would suggest that more heads of

firms, business men of standing in their various lines, visit South America and see conditions for themselves. This would be not only advantageous to them in conducting the South American branches of their business, but, what is of greater and general importance, would prove to the South American merchants better than anything else could prove, that American merchants really are interested in South American trade to the very considerable extent of looking into it personally. The prevailing feeling in South America is that we care very little for South America or South American trade. Europe, on the other hand, protests vehemently that she cares much, and by her activity she proves what she says. Time and again I was told by the merchants and business men whom I called on, that I was the first head of a firm in my particular business who had ever made them a personal visit. Whether

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this was accurately true or not matters little. It is enough that it shows conclusively the impression among South Americans that American heads of firms are prone to look upon South America as a negligible quantity.

But South America is not a negligible quantity by any means. Now, as never before, is the time to realize this, and while the United States is severing the connecting tie of land between the two Americas, American business men should be strengthening those other and closer ties of commerce and trade.

THE END