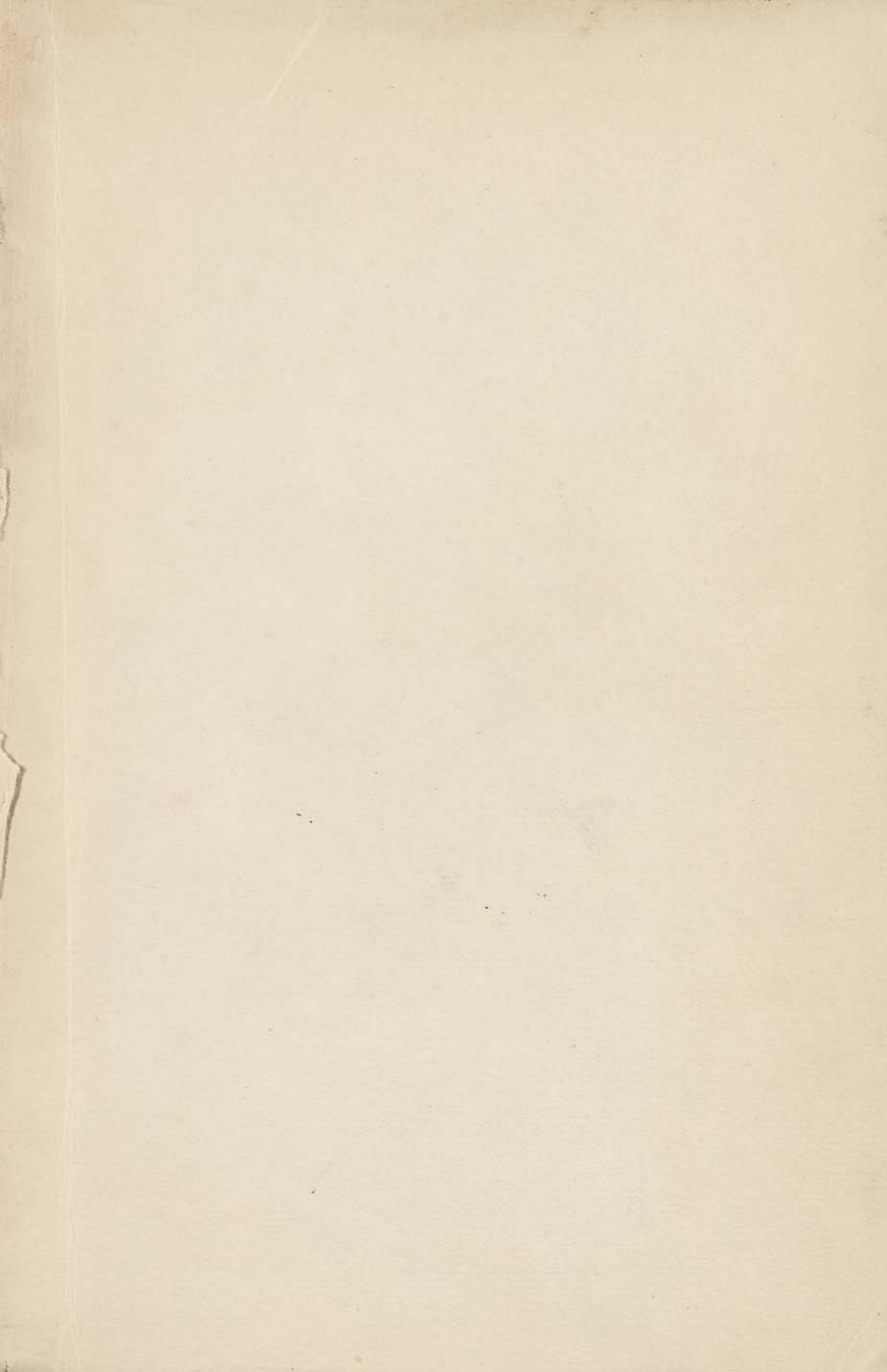




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# CARPENTER'S WORLD TRAVELS

*Familiar Talks About Countries  
and Peoples*

WITH THE AUTHOR ON THE SPOT AND THE  
READER IN HIS HOME, BASED ON A  
HALF MILLION MILES OF TRAVEL  
OVER THE GLOBE

"READING CARPENTER IS SEEING THE WORLD"

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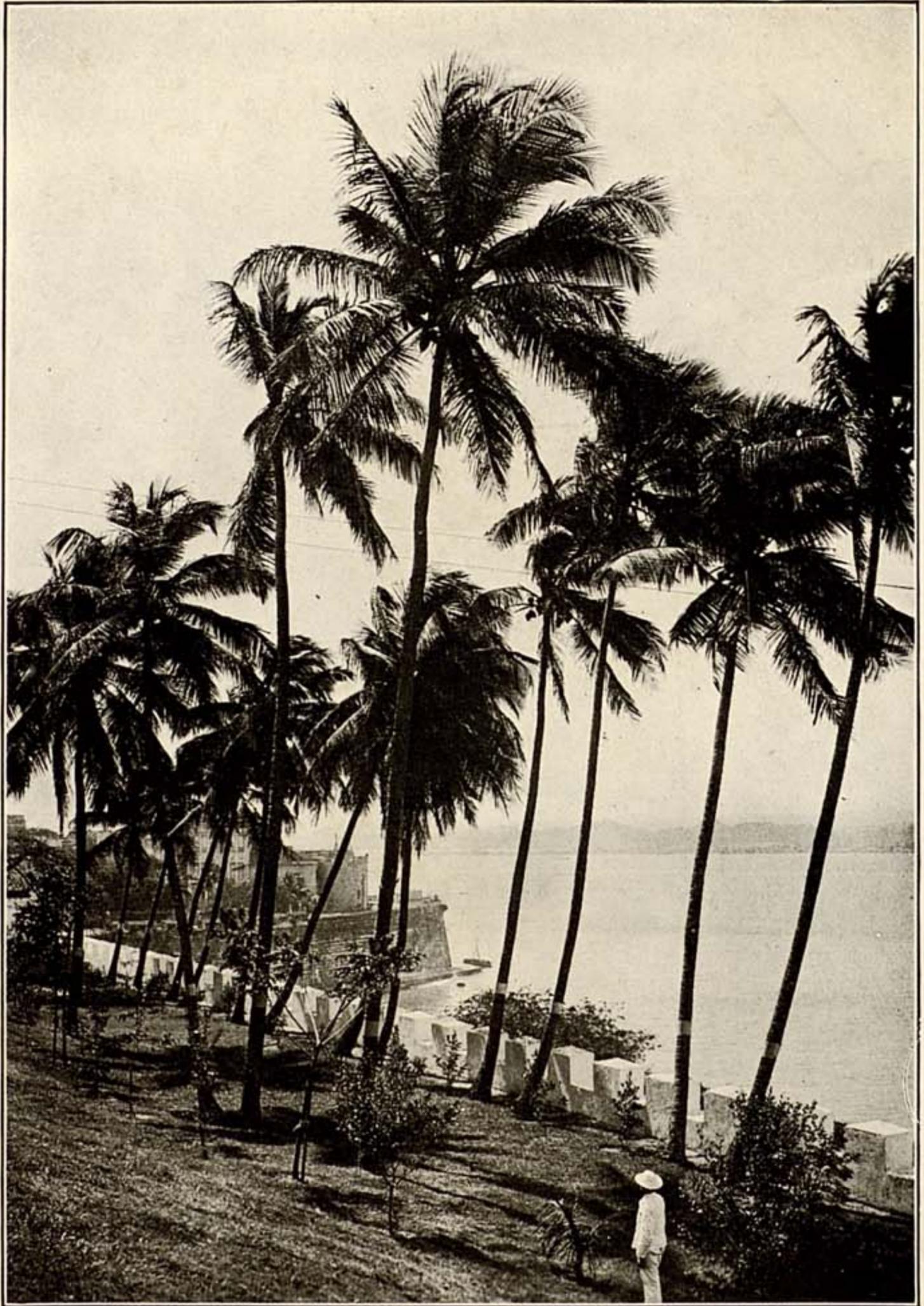


**LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN**

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### IN THE LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

San Juan, Porto Rico, whence Ponce de León, founder of the city, sailed four centuries ago to seek "the fountain of eternal youth," is to-day a centre of American authority and influence.

CARPENTER'S WORLD TRAVELS

# Lands of the Caribbean

*The Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica,  
Nicaragua, Salvador, Honduras,  
Guatemala, Cuba, Jamaica,  
Haiti, Santo Domingo,  
Porto Rico, and the  
Virgin Islands*

BY

FRANK G. CARPENTER

LITT. D., F.R.G.S.



WITH 96 ILLUSTRATIONS  
FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

GARDEN CITY                      NEW YORK,  
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

1930

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AMERICA

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*General*

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IN THE publication of this volume on my travels in Central America and the West Indies, I wish to thank our Secretary of State for letters that have given me the assistance of our official representatives in the countries visited. I thank also our Secretary of Agriculture and our Secretary of Labour for appointing me an honorary commissioner of their departments in foreign lands. Their credentials have been of great value, making accessible sources of information seldom opened to the ordinary traveller.

I acknowledge also the assistance and coöperation of Mr. Dudley Harmon, my editor, and of Miss Josephine Lehmann, associate editor, in the revision of notes dictated or penned by me on the ground.

While most of the illustrations in CARPENTER'S WORLD TRAVELS are from my own negatives, those in this volume have been supplemented by photographs from the United States Bureau of Insular Affairs, the Panama Canal, the Pan-American Union, Ewing Galloway, the Publishers' Photo Service, and William Thompson.

F. G. C.

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## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JUST A WORD BEFORE WE START . . .	1
II. THE STORY OF PANAMA . . . . .	3
III. THROUGH THE CANAL . . . . .	17
IV. AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS . . . . .	30
V. PANAMA CITY . . . . .	38
VI. IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS	46
VII. UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ . . .	54
VIII. THE PICTURESQUE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA . . . . .	67
IX. AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES .	78
X. AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT . . . . .	89
XI. NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS . . . . .	98
XII. AMERICA'S TINIEST REPUBLIC . . . . .	110
XIII. IN GUATEMALA CITY . . . . .	117
XIV. A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA .	128
XV. INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS . . . . .	139
XVI. AN ANCIENT CAPITAL . . . . .	148
XVII. QUIRIGUÁ, CITY OF THE MAYAS . . .	156
XVIII. PUERTO BARRIOS AND THE LAND OF MAHOGANY . . . . .	164

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES . . . .	172
XX. HAVANA, OLD AND NEW . . . .	179
XXI. THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD. . .	190
XXII. ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY . . . .	199
XXIII. SANTIAGO AND THE SAN JUAN BATTLE- FIELDS . . . . .	212
XXIV. BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA . . . . .	221
XXV. THE BLACK REPUBLIC OF THE CARIBBEAN	232
XXVI. THE LAND OF COLUMBUS . . . . .	241
XXVII. BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO . .	253
XXVIII. IN SAN JUAN . . . . .	263
XXIX. AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO . . . . .	272
XXX. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS . . . . .	281
INDEX . . . . .	295

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The city of Ponce de León . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Old-time transportation in the West Indies . . . . .	2
United States battleship in the Canal . . . . .	3
Panamanian Negroes . . . . .	10
Fighting the yellow-fever mosquitoes. . . . .	11
A street in Colón . . . . .	18
Building the locks at Gatun . . . . .	19
The Gatun Dam . . . . .	22
Through the Gaillard Cut . . . . .	23
In palm-shaded Balboa. . . . .	30
Chinese truck gardens . . . . .	31
American school in the Canal Zone . . . . .	34
Bringing bananas to market . . . . .	34
Modern street in Panama City . . . . .	35
Along the Panama waterfront . . . . .	38
The pearl-covered spires of the cathedral . . . . .	39
The ruins of Old Panama . . . . .	46
The beach at Porto Bello . . . . .	47
A Panamanian country home . . . . .	50
The San Blas Indians . . . . .	51
Cutting bananas . . . . .	54
The old-time Costa Rican . . . . .	55
Drying coffee . . . . .	62
Mountain waterfalls . . . . .	63
National Theatre of San José . . . . .	70
Costa Rican women . . . . .	71

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
A bull fight in San José . . . . .	78
A farmer and his saddle bag . . . . .	79
On ponyback through the mountains. . . . .	82
Mt. Irazú in eruption . . . . .	83
The crater of Poas . . . . .	86
Picking coffee . . . . .	87
The ubiquitous ox-cart . . . . .	94
Road building in the country . . . . .	95
Sugar cane awaiting shipment . . . . .	98
Young Nicaraguans . . . . .	99
The cathedral in León . . . . .	102
View of Tegucigalpa . . . . .	103
The "gang plank" at Acajutla . . . . .	110
In the capital of Salvador . . . . .	111
Guatemalan architecture . . . . .	118
Porters from the country . . . . .	119
A market woman and her wares . . . . .	126
On a Guatemalan ranch . . . . .	127
Native dugout canoes . . . . .	134
At the Temple of Minerva . . . . .	135
Children burden bearers . . . . .	142
A primitive loom . . . . .	143
A typical Indian hut . . . . .	146
Labourers' homes on a coffee plantation . . . . .	147
The Volcán de Agua . . . . .	150
Ruins of old Antigua . . . . .	151
Modern industry amidst ancient ruins . . . . .	158
Studying the secrets of the Mayas . . . . .	159
A monolith at Quirigua . . . . .	162
Tapping a rubber tree . . . . .	163
Indian mother and baby . . . . .	166
Where our mahogany comes from . . . . .	167

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Entrance to the harbour of Havana . . . . .	174
The time-worn battlements of Morro Castle . . . . .	175
The Fifth Avenue of Havana . . . . .	178
Patio of a Havana home . . . . .	179
The Columbus Cathedral . . . . .	182
Winter tourists from the United States . . . . .	183
The Caves of Bellamar . . . . .	190
Avenue of royal palms . . . . .	191
Unloading sugar cane . . . . .	194
The beginnings of a "good Havana" . . . . .	195
Nipe Bay. . . . .	198
Gathering coconuts in eastern Cuba . . . . .	199
Donkeys as milk carts . . . . .	206
The plaza in Santiago . . . . .	207
The ancient fort of Santiago . . . . .	214
At the San Juan Monument . . . . .	215
Irrigation canal on a Jamaican plantation . . . . .	222
Jamaican Negro's home . . . . .	223
On the road across Jamaica . . . . .	230
Negro women loading bananas . . . . .	231
The cathedral at Port-au-Prince . . . . .	238
Haitian woman coming to market . . . . .	239
A village in Haiti . . . . .	242
The oldest fortress in America . . . . .	243
Where Columbus lies buried . . . . .	246
American-built roads in Santo Domingo . . . . .	247
<i>Jibaro</i> home in Porto Rico . . . . .	254
The military road across Porto Rico . . . . .	255
A Porto Rican laundry . . . . .	258
Picking grapefruit for export . . . . .	259
Business street in San Juan . . . . .	262
In the suburbs of San Juan . . . . .	263

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The governor's palace . . . . .	270
In a Porto Rican school . . . . .	271
A lacemaker . . . . .	278
Bluebeard's Castle . . . . .	279
A street in St. Thomas . . . . .	286
The United States in the Virgin Islands . . . . .	287

**LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN**



# LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

## CHAPTER I

### JUST A WORD BEFORE WE START

**L**ANDS of the Caribbean! The very words breathe adventure and romance, and well they may, for the travels I ask you to take with me in this volume will be amid the scenes of the very beginnings of American history. We shall see the island upon which white men first set foot in the New World, and in giant ocean vessels shall steam through waters over which Columbus sailed in his tiny caravels more than four centuries ago. We shall go over the routes of Cortés, Pizarro, Balboa, and the other Spanish *conquistadores* who came later to search for gold and spread Christianity among the natives—achieving both purposes by cruelty and armed force. We shall explore lands indelibly associated with the exploits of the “gentleman adventurers” of England, the corsairs of France, and the sea rovers of Holland; and shall visit great cities, the land-locked harbours of which once furnished lairs for pirates and buccaneers, who, offering allegiance to no country or crown, preyed upon the treasure ships on the high seas, regardless of their nationality.

The flag of Spain has now been swept from the Caribbean, the lands in the New World that once bowed to

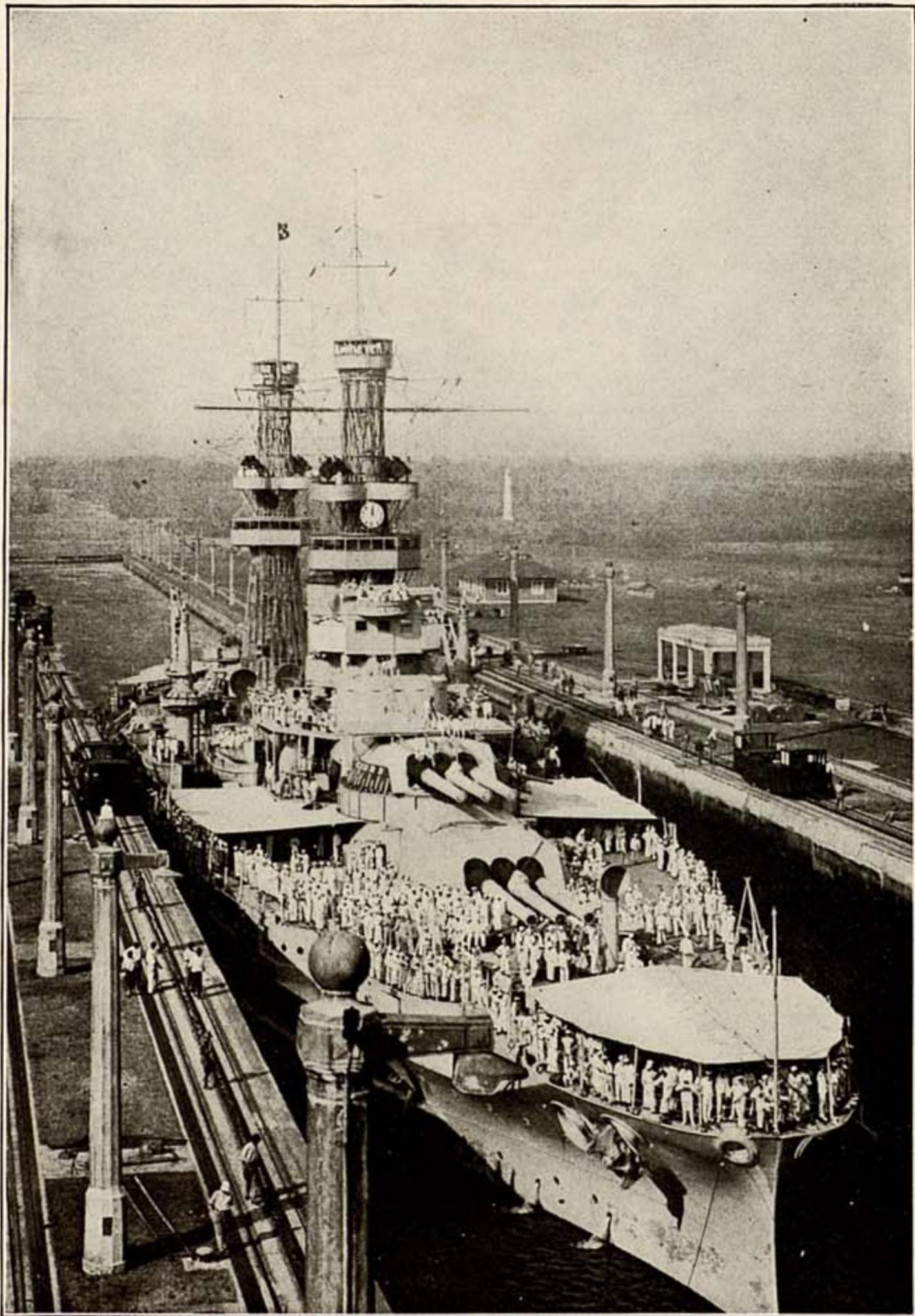
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Spanish domination having gained their freedom or passed into the possession of rival nations. Likewise, the last of the swashbuckling buccaneers and their "pieces of eight" have long since vanished, existing to-day only in legend. Nevertheless, as we travel from place to place, the spirit of old Spain will be ever present. We shall visit hardly a country whose history is not steeped in stories of Spanish conquest, with its attendant enslavement and bloodshed, and not an island that has not its tales of buried treasure and plundered cities.

At the same time, we shall find everywhere the signs of twentieth-century progress and achievement. The hills from which Balboa first sighted the Pacific, and over which long trains of pack-mules once carried the wealth of Peru across the Isthmus to the Spanish galleons waiting in the Atlantic, are now pierced by the Panama Canal. Farther north, where once flourished the ancient civilization of the Mayas, vast banana plantations have been established by American industry. New cities are rising from the ruins caused by mighty earthquakes, and struggling republics, born in revolution and dissension, are trying to cast off their heritage of bloodshed and ignorance and to attain higher standards of national existence and better relations with one another.



“My travels through the lands of the Caribbean were made by the most primitive as well as the most advanced means of transportation—on muleback and in antiquated carriages, and by swift motor-car and modern railways.”



The Panama Canal is invaluable to our national defence. In the movement of battleships of our navy from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, it has effected a saving in time of almost a month, and in distance of thirteen thousand miles.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STORY OF PANAMA

I WRITE these notes at the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Canal, that stupendous triumph of engineering science that has sliced the New World in two at its hourglass waist and created what Columbus sought for in vain—a shorter route to the East. In front of me is the warm Caribbean Sea, its waves dashing a silvery spray almost at my feet. Stretching along the shore is a row of palm trees loaded with great bunches of green coconuts each as big as the head of that half-naked Jamaican Negro baby playing there on the beach. The air from the land is like that of a hot July day at home, but the breeze from the water is soft, cool, and refreshing.

I visited the Panama Canal again and again while it was being built. I saw it late in the '90's, when the French were in charge, and again in 1905, when our first chief engineer, John F. Wallace, was dragging the old French machinery out of the jungle, and when our steam shovels were taking their first Gargantuan bites from the backbone of the continent. I was on the ground several times during the administration of Colonel George W. Goethals, when almost fifty thousand men were labouring here, and I have come now to see the Canal at its completion.

Before I ask you to step on board the ship of your imagination and ride through the Canal with me, let me tell

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

you something of this strip of land that for so long was an obstacle in the path of navigation between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Its history is almost as old as that of the New World itself. It is supposed to have been first visited by white men in 1499, only seven years after America was discovered, when an expedition from Spain coasted along its shores. Three years later Columbus touched here on his fourth voyage to America, still seeking a passage to India. He founded a small settlement, but this was soon destroyed by Indians and not reëstablished until several years later. In the meantime, other Spanish adventurers had landed on the Isthmus and formed the colony of Darien, which in 1510 was placed under the command of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the Spaniard who was later to discover the Pacific.

It was on the 1st of September, 1513, that Balboa started out with an expedition to verify the rumours he had heard about a great sea to the westward. With him he took one hundred and ninety white men and a party of Indians. As he made his way inland he met other natives who were unfriendly, and had to fight his way through much of the country. It was not until twenty-five days later that he reached the heights from which

with eagle eyes

He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

On this spot he erected a rude cross, and then pushed onward down the mountains. The expedition reached the coast four days later, and Balboa, rushing waist deep into the water, proclaimed possession of the ocean and all the lands bordering it, in the name of the King of Spain.

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

The discovery of the Pacific at first brought Balboa great fame and influence, but it was not long before his enemies began to conspire against him. His career was brought to an untimely end by the jealousy of a later governor of Darien, who caused the explorer to be beheaded for alleged treason. The lust for gold and treasure was making this period of Isthmian history an era of bloodshed and crime—when the Spanish *conquistadores* fought one another for the favour of the king as well as for gold, and when the Indians by thousands were murdered or reduced to slavery. Again and again the natives revolted, destroying the Spanish settlements and taking a horrible revenge upon their gold-thirsty conquerors by melting the precious metal and pouring the flaming liquid down their throats. Nevertheless, the enslavement of the Indians and the search for treasure continued unabated. Ships had been carried across the Isthmus piece by piece and put together on the Pacific coast, and in these crude vessels Pizarro had sailed southward and conquered Peru, the land of the Incas.

Everyone knows the bloody story of how the treasure-trove of that ancient Indian nation was looted by the Spaniards. The Isthmus immediately became an outfitting base for the exploitation of Peru, and expedition after expedition left the city of Panama, which had been founded on the Pacific coast in 1519. From that town to Porto Bello on the Atlantic the Spaniards built a road that for almost a hundred years was one of the richest trade routes in the world. All the gold that Pizarro took from the Incas was brought to Panama and carried across the Isthmus by horses and slaves. That treasure alone was enormous, and it was followed by the silver from the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

fabulously rich mines of Potosí in Bolivia. Indeed, silver was then so plentiful here that the horses of the soldiers were shod with it.

As we know from history, the treasure ships of the *conquistadores* did not reach Spain unmolested. Pirates and buccaneers from the other countries of Europe were swarming about the Caribbean with an acquisitive eye on the Spanish treasure, and the gold that was not sunk or captured reached Spain literally drenched in the blood of its protectors. The depredations of the buccaneers were carried on not only on the high seas but also on land. In Panama they reached a climax in 1671, when Henry Morgan marched his band of twelve hundred followers across the Isthmus and sacked and burned to the ground the city of Panama. It was then one of the richest settlements of the Western Hemisphere, and is said to have been much larger than the size ever attained by the present Panama City, which was founded a few years afterward.

Later, with the decline of the spoils from Peru and the steady exploration and development of the two continents of North America and South America, Panama slumped into a state of inactivity. Settlers were frightened by its unhealthfulness and its high death rate from yellow fever and malaria, and many who had come here at the height of its fortunes now left for other fields of adventure. It sank in importance, until finally it lost even its entity as a separate dependency of Spain, and was made a province of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, which then included what is now Colombia.

The history of Panama through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a part of the history of Colombia.

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

It did not again come into the limelight of world events until the California gold rush of 1849. Rather than brave the dangers of the overland trip across the United States, many prospectors chose the route through Panama. The only highway over the Isthmus was still the old road built by the Spaniards three hundred years before, and over it started the "Forty-niners." Some of them turned back after a day in the jungle and many died along the route, but others kept on and reached Panama City. There, I may add, many of them remained for lack of ships, most of the vessels plying between the Isthmus and California having been left to rot in the harbour at San Francisco while their crews struck out for the gold fields.

It was during the height of the gold rush that three enterprising Americans secured a concession for a railway across Panama. They laid the first rails in 1850, and five years later had joined the Atlantic and the Pacific by a steel track, the first transcontinental railway in America. The Isthmus was then nothing but a miasmatic jungle, and the line ran through the swamps and along the valleys of the Chagres and the Rio Grande rivers, crossing the mountain range at an elevation of almost three hundred feet. Engineers had estimated that this road would take a million dollars to build, but actual construction multiplied that figure eight times. Nevertheless, the line began to earn money as soon as the first few miles of track were laid. When the entire road was opened for traffic, in 1855, it had already taken in more than two million dollars for passenger and freight transportation, and within four years its earnings had exceeded its original cost. During one year it carried

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

twelve hundred thousand passengers, receiving thirty million dollars from that source alone. It transported as much as a half million tons of freight in a single year, and within twelve years after it was finished, seven hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of specie had passed over it from San Francisco en route to New York. It carried all the gold passengers of the early '50's who crossed the Isthmus, and in addition to the fare of twenty-five dollars it made them pay heavy charges for their mining outfits.

Even at these rates the fare was cheap, for the railway shortened the trip by several days, and lessened the danger of the fevers that lay in wait for the gold hunters who crossed on foot. Health conditions were then so bad on the Isthmus that it was commonly said that more labourers died during the building of the road than there were ties in the entire line, although actual statistics, I find, fall far short of proving this statement. Among the workmen imported to help lay the track were a thousand Chinese coolies, so many of whom died of fever or committed suicide that one of the stations on the railway was known as Matachin, which means "dead Chinaman." The railway company operated a daily funeral train, carrying the dead to pits where they were piled one on top of the other and covered with earth.

It was the building of the Panama Railway that revived the discussion of the feasibility of a canal across the Isthmus. Such a waterway was even then by no means a new idea, as almost from the time Balboa had sighted the Pacific the union of that ocean with the Atlantic had been thought of. Charles V of Spain had ordered a survey of the Isthmus with a view to build-

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

ing a canal here, and as the years passed the project was brought to public notice from time to time, but that was all. Then came the acquisition of California by the United States, and, close upon its heels, the gold rush, which brought forcibly to this country the importance of lessening the distance between its two coasts. About seven years after the close of the Civil War a resolution was finally passed by Congress providing for a survey of the Isthmus by officers of the United States Navy, but before any action was taken a concession for building a canal here had been granted by the Colombian government to Lieutenant Wyse of the French Army. That concession was later sold to a French syndicate, which in 1881 purchased the Panama Railroad and began operations for the excavation of a sea-level canal. The work was put in charge of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the man who had so recently been the toast of all Europe because of his success in joining the Mediterranean and the Red seas by the building of the canal at Suez.

It did not take long for the French to discover that there was a great difference between Suez and Panama. The Suez Canal is a sea-level waterway, little more than a great ditch dug through the desert. The ground is almost flat, so that the sand and rock could be taken out and thrown up on the banks, making it possible for the excavation to be done by human labour. Panama, on the other hand, was a mass of jungle and mountains that rose several hundred feet above the sea, and proved to be a vastly more difficult engineering problem. One unforeseen obstacle after another presented itself; funds ran short, and the tropical diseases killed off thousands and thousands of workers, both engineers and labourers.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

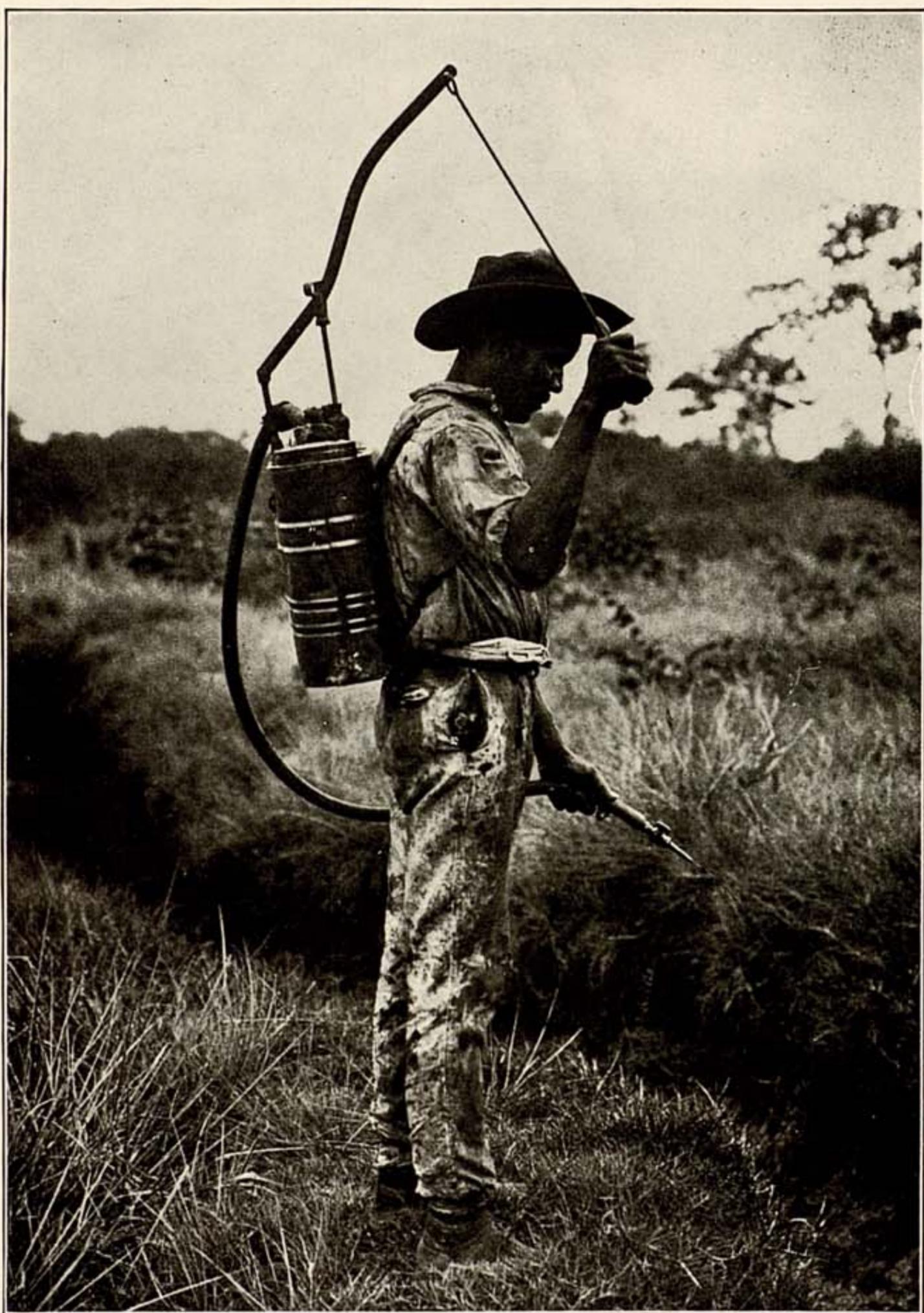
The money for building the Canal had been subscribed largely by the thrifty peasants of France, and to obtain more the officials of the company launched one of the worst schemes of corruption in history. They painted the progress of the Canal in the rosiest colours, subsidized French newspapers for their own purposes, and even bribed members of the French Chamber of Deputies. One assessment after another was levied upon stockholders, until thousands of them had lost the patient savings of years.

All together, the French people put three hundred million dollars into the project. Only one third of this, it is said, was actually spent on the Canal, the remainder having been stolen or wasted. Machinery and supplies of all kinds were purchased seemingly without relation to the actual needs of the work, and when finally the Canal was taken over by the Americans, our engineers found large quantities of materials that had never been used, falling to pieces from rust and neglect. One item among the things we took over was a ton of metal pen points that had never been opened.

I visited the Canal in 1898, after the first French company had gone into bankruptcy and another had purchased its holdings. At that time about twenty miles of the waterway was practically completed, but had been so neglected that it was filling up with silt. Machinery that had cost millions upon millions of dollars was lying along the line of the Canal, rotting and rusting. Expensive dredges had become utterly worthless, enough car wheels to equip a trunk line of railroad were scattered from one end of the route to the other, and the rotten trucks would have made a train reaching halfway across



Many of the thousands of Negro inhabitants of the Canal Zone and the Panama Republic were brought here from Jamaica and Barbadoes by the Americans to work on the Canal while it was being built.



The fight against the mosquito that carries the yellow-fever germ has never been allowed to lapse in the Canal Zone, every possible breeding place being kept coated or sprayed with oil.

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

the Isthmus. When a car or a train fell down an embankment or merely ran off the track, the French let it lie and used some of the surplus remaining. I could see such overturned cars at almost any point along their excavations.

With the failure of the French, the United States once more took up the consideration of a canal to bring our Atlantic and Pacific coasts nearer together. This need had been demonstrated to us again during the Spanish-American War, when our battleship *Oregon* came from the Pacific to join the fleet in the Atlantic, making a voyage of thirteen thousand miles around Cape Horn. With this in mind, Congress appropriated forty million dollars to buy the holdings and rights of the company that had succeeded De Lesseps, and negotiated a treaty with Colombia, offering to pay that country ten million dollars for a strip of land, together with an annual payment of one hundred thousand dollars, to start nine years later. When this was refused by Colombia, the people of Panama became alarmed, fearing that Uncle Sam would favour Nicaragua as the site of a canal, which would mean that they would lose entirely the prosperity that such a waterway would give them. Therefore they revolted against their parent country and declared themselves an independent republic. Their action was recognized by the United States, and a new treaty was made awarding us a lease in perpetuity on a five-mile strip of land on each side of the route of the Canal, excepting, however, the cities of Panama and Colón, in which we were given the right to maintain order and sanitary conditions, if necessary. For this we paid ten million dollars outright and agreed to pay a quarter of a million dollars annually after nine years.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The Canal Zone was formally taken over by us on May 8, 1904, and not long thereafter our engineers were at work here.

Instead of the sea-level canal contemplated by the French, the United States soon decided that a lock canal would be a far more feasible waterway, as well as a cheaper one. A study of conditions showed that it would be easier to build locks to raise and lower the ships at the Atlantic and Pacific slopes than to cut the ridge of mountains, low as they were, down to sea level. It was according to this changed plan, therefore, that the work proceeded when the American forces got under way.

Just here I want to say something about health conditions on the Isthmus and the gigantic sanitation problem that confronted the American canal builders. For four hundred years yellow fever and malaria had taken their annual toll of lives here, linking the name of Panama in the minds of the rest of the world with those other pestholes of disease in America—Havana, Guayaquil, and Santos. "There are two seasons at Panama," was the common saying. "First there is the wet season, lasting from the 15th of April to the 15th of December, when people die of yellow fever in four or five days. Next, there is the dry or healthy season, when people die of pernicious fever in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours."

In the swampy regions along the Chagres River, conditions were probably worse than anywhere else. According to J. S. Gilbert, the poet of Panama,

Beyond the Chagres River  
Are the paths that lead to death;  
To fever's deadly breezes—  
To malaria's poisonous breath!

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

Beyond the tropic foliage  
Where the alligator waits,  
Is the palace of the devil—  
His original estates.

. . . . .

Beyond the Chagres River,  
'Tis said—the story's old—  
Are paths that lead to mountains  
Of purest virgin gold;  
But 'tis my firm conviction,  
Whatever tales they tell,  
That beyond the Chagres River  
All paths lead straight to hell!

One of the reasons for the failure of the French companies was, as I have said, the enormous death rate among their employees, and it was this death rate that the United States government realized it must reduce before it could achieve success here. The dreaded yellow fever broke out among our labourers almost as soon as we began work on the Canal. I remember that when I was here in 1905 the hospitals were crowded, and John W. Barrett, then our Minister to Panama, was doing all he could to enforce every precaution possible on the part of the Americans. When I called upon him at the Legation I found him as solemn as the traditional owl. Before I could ask him any questions, he began talking about the fever, inquiring whether I was afraid of it. I replied that I was, but that he who was born to be hanged would never be drowned, and that I doubted whether Yellow Jack was to be the cause of my taking off.

“I hope not,” said the Minister, “and, indeed, I don't want to alarm you, but a woman had yellow fever in that building to the right, a man has just been taken to the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

hospital from the building across the street, and a third party is ailing on the floor below where we are sitting."

As he said this I felt my face growing yellow, and I hung on his every word.

"Still, the danger is not very great," he continued. "It will occur only in case you are bitten by a female *stegomyia* that has already fed upon a yellow-fever patient. If its bloody jaws get into you, you are gone."

"A *stegomyia*!" I repeated, parrot-like, thinking of the panthers, tigers, painted rabbits, iguanas, and other beasts of the Isthmian jungles. "What is a *stegomyia*? I never heard of one."

"The *stegomyia* is the yellow-fever mosquito," he said. "It is about one third the size of the Jersey mosquito, and is black and white, with zebra stripes upon its body and legs. If a female of that breed bites a yellow-fever patient its blood becomes inoculated with yellow-fever bacteria, and in case it then bites you, there is no chance of your escaping the fever."

The discovery that yellow fever is carried by mosquitoes had been made by United States army surgeons at Havana in their campaign to stamp out the disease in the Cuban capital. The man who carried that work to a successful completion was General William C. Gorgas, and it was he who was selected to clean up Panama. He established quarantines at the ports, fumigated buildings, destroyed cisterns, wells, rain-water barrels, and other breeding places of the mosquito, filled in swamps, had miles of permanent drainage ditches dug, and covered ponds and water holes with oil. His campaign to exterminate the deadly *stegomyia* was never allowed to lapse, and how well it succeeded is shown by the fact that yellow

## THE STORY OF PANAMA

fever has not reappeared in the Canal Zone since 1906. Indeed, the sanitation results achieved by General Gorgas were of so much consequence that his name has gone down into historical fame with that of General George W. Goethals, who was in charge of the actual construction work in the completion of the Canal.

I went over the route of the Canal with General Goethals, then a Colonel, several times during its building. I found him the supreme manager of all things on the Isthmus. His title was Chairman of the Canal Commission and Chief Engineer, but he was far more than that. He was the dictator, the administrator, the executive, and, in short, the ultimate authority from whose commands there was no appeal. Such power was found absolutely necessary for success in the canal construction. The lack of it was to a great extent responsible for the resignations of Chief Engineers Wallace and Stevens, who had been in charge here before Colonel Goethals was appointed. It tied their hands and those of their subordinates with governmental red tape as restricting as the band with which the Lilliputians bound the giant Gulliver. It was only by presenting the matter to President Roosevelt, who had watched the vain and chaotic struggles of the past, that Goethals was able to get the power that enabled him to accomplish this mighty work.

More than this, General Goethals used his authority so that his thousands of workers were glad to obey. He brought harmony out of discord among the American employees, and did the same with the thirty-odd thousand Central American, Jamaican, and other West Indian labourers under him. He not only preached the square deal but he gave a square deal to everyone, and with the excep-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

tion of a few constitutional kickers, he had as contented a working force as was possible for so large an enterprise.

General Goethals was in charge of the work at Panama from 1907 until after the last load of earth was taken from the route of the waterway. That was in October, 1913, when President Wilson pressed a button in the White House in Washington, sending an electric current two thousand miles to explode the charge of dynamite that demolished the Gamboa dike. The removal of that dike marked the final stage in the actual excavation of the Canal, and brought the amount of earth taken out of the waterway to a total greater than two hundred and fifty million cubic yards. Stop a moment and think what that means! It is so much that if it were spread over the ground to a depth of one foot it would cover an area three times the size of the District of Columbia and leave some to spare. Or, if it were packed together, it would make a great wall of earth six feet wide and nine feet high reaching clear around the equatorial waist of old Mother Earth. Only one third of that much earth was excavated for the Suez Canal, although the latter waterway is more than twice as long.

The Panama Canal was opened to commerce on August 15, 1914, just ten years after the United States had begun work here, and four hundred years after Balboa had sighted the Pacific from the heights of Darien. It had been intended to have a formal opening on January 1, 1915, at which all the navies of the world would be represented, but that plan was shattered by the World War, and it was not until July 12, 1920, that the Canal was proclaimed by the President to be finally opened to international commerce.

## CHAPTER III

### THROUGH THE CANAL

**C**OME with me this morning for a trip through the Panama Canal. In a twentieth-century steamer we shall follow approximately the path first trod by white men when Balboa and his followers fought their way through jungles and over mountains to the mighty Pacific, and we shall not be far from the route taken by the first man to ride across the Isthmus. History tells us that the latter was a Spaniard with a jackass as his steed, and that the natives, who had never seen horses before, fell upon their faces in fear at the braying of the animal. The Spaniard, it is said, made capital of their fright by telling them his mount was a four-footed demon asking for gold. The "demon's" request being granted, I suppose he rode on to repeat the experiment.

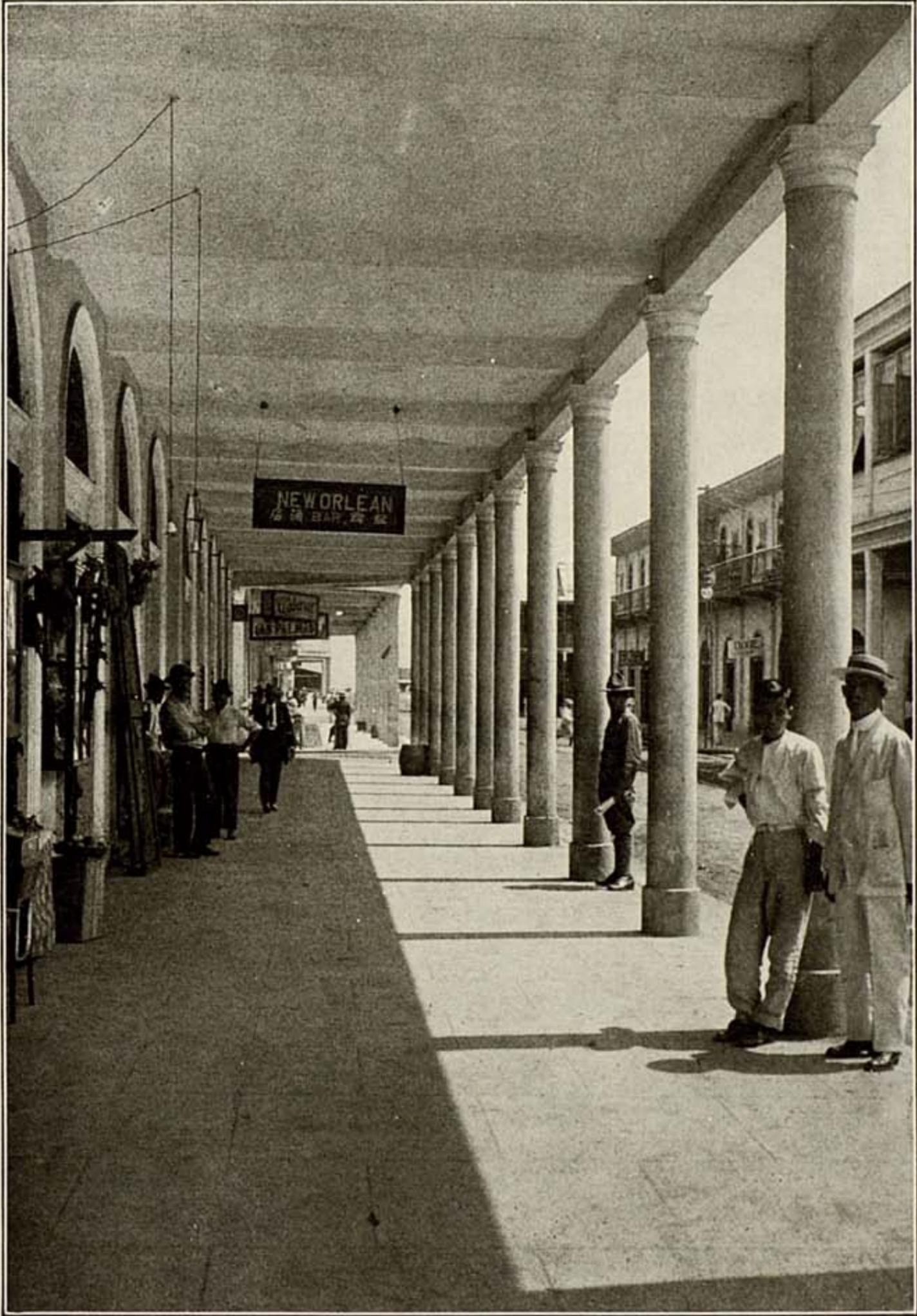
Before we start on our voyage through the Canal, let us see just where we are. Panama is at the very foot of North America, and at the south adjoins the republic of Colombia, thus forming the link that joins our continent with South America. Few people realize how far to the east it is. If we were to step into an airplane and fly straight north we should skirt the east coast of Florida, pass over Charlestown, South Carolina, and eventually reach the smoky city of Pittsburgh. South America lies much farther east on the globe than does

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

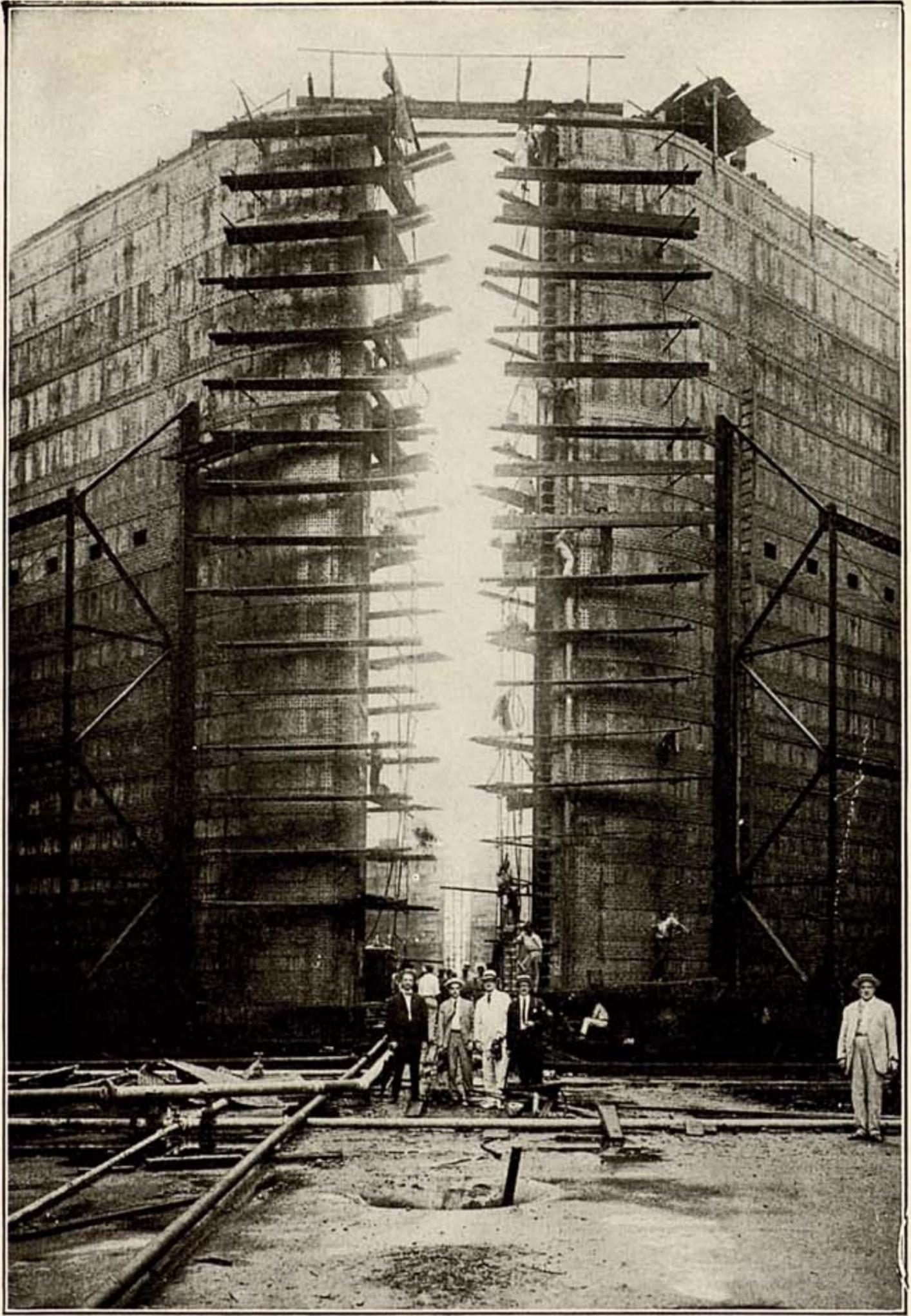
North America, and the strip of land that connects the two continents at Panama extends from west to east instead of from north to south. In passing through the Canal, therefore, we shall not go from the Atlantic westward to the Pacific; indeed, the Isthmus is so looped here that the Pacific entrance to the Canal is twenty-three miles farther east than the Atlantic. As we face the waterway this morning at its Atlantic terminus, we may think we are looking toward the west, but it is really the southeast and the sun is shining almost into our faces, winking at our astonishment, as we see it seemingly rising out of the Pacific. This part of the Isthmus is the only place I know of on our hemisphere where one can observe this geographical anomaly.

We start our trip through the Canal at Cristóbal, the American town just outside the old Panamanian city of Colón. When I first saw Colón in 1898 it was as ragged a town as one could find on this hemisphere. It was almost impossible to walk anywhere without stumbling over rusting and rotting débris of cars, dredges, and other machines brought here at a cost of millions of dollars and found to be worthless, or soon allowed to become so. A part of the town was known as the French Quarter, and here was the home of De Lesseps, afterward used as the office of the Isthmian Canal Commission.

Colón is now six times as large as it was then, and owes its progress in population, sanitation, and order to Uncle Sam. We see many Americans on its streets, and at Colón Beach is a large hotel, the New Washington, which was erected and is now operated by the United States government. It is built of concrete after the Spanish style of architecture, and everything about it is arranged



At the eastern end of the Panama Canal, opposite the American town of Cristóbal, is the old city of Colón, with its balconied houses and its narrow streets lined with Spanish *portales*.



The stupendous size of the lock gates at Gatun can be fully realized only by those who saw them in the building, before the locks were filled with water to a minimum depth of forty-one feet.

## THROUGH THE CANAL

to insure the greatest comfort possible in the heat of the tropics. It has large parlours, lounging rooms and billiard rooms, a ballroom fifty feet long, and a concrete-walled swimming pool covering about a quarter of an acre.

The Atlantic end of the Canal is marked by a breakwater jutting out from Toro Point. This breakwater, built to protect Limón Bay from the storms of the Caribbean, is more than two miles long and cost five and a half million dollars. On each side of it are concealed fortifications, overlooking the harbour and amply able to resist the entrance of enemy ships in time of war. The only warlike craft here now is a cruiser of the United States Navy, passing between our Atlantic and Pacific shores. At the wharves of Cristóbal more than a dozen ocean steamers are loading and unloading passengers and freight or taking on coal or fuel oil, and out in the harbour are others at anchor. We see a vessel loaded with nitrate from Chile, refrigerator ships carrying apples from our Pacific Northwest, and oil tankers from California and Peru.

From Cristóbal the Canal runs straight south as far as the locks of Gatun, and then continues across the Isthmus in a southeasterly direction. Leaving Limón Bay we soon pass Mount Hope, formerly known as Monkey Hill, in the cemetery of which thousands of French were buried, and shortly afterward see looming up before us the gigantic locks of Gatun. Looking at the locks from our steamer, we can obtain only a faint conception of their immensity and cost, and it is hard to realize that forty or fifty million dollars was spent in their construction. They consist of three pairs of gigantic concrete chambers,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

each one a thousand feet long and one hundred and ten feet wide, covering all together a distance of more than a half mile, and rising in three giant steps from the level of the Atlantic to Lake Gatun, eighty-five feet higher.

Everything connected with the locks is massive beyond description, and yet the machinery is so delicate that a child could operate it. As our steamer enters the first lock the sailors throw out lines that are connected with the steel cables of electric locomotives on each side of the Canal. These locomotives, known as "mules," are to pull us through the locks, our ship having shut off its power as we entered. At the same time, the great steel gates behind us swing together like the folding doors of an old-fashioned barn. They move as smoothly and as noiselessly as though swung by an invisible hand, and it is hard to believe they are seven feet thick and so heavy that if they were taken to pieces it would require eighty of our largest trucks to move one of them. They do not have to be locked or fastened in any way to keep out the water, for they fit together so tightly that a piece of metal thinner than the hair of a baby could not be wedged between them.

The moment the gates are shut the openings under the lock are unclosed by machinery and the water begins rushing in through mighty concrete pipes each as big as the tunnel under the Hudson River between Jersey City and New York. Slowly and steadily our ship rises, until it is at the second level, when the gates in front of us swing apart, and the "mules" tow us on into the second lock. Once more the gates close behind us, and once more we are lifted upward by the rising water and then moved forward. We are now in the third lock, eighty-five feet

## THROUGH THE CANAL

above the level of the first, which we entered an hour ago.

As we leave the Gatun locks and begin to steam across the roof of the Isthmus, we see at our right the great Gatun dam, which joins the hills on each side of the lower valley of the Chagres River and holds back the waters of that stream to form Gatun Lake. This dam is a mile and a half long, a half mile wide at its base, four hundred feet wide at the surface of the water, and one hundred feet on top. To build it required twenty-one million cubic yards of rock and earth, most of it excavated from the Canal.

More like the side hills of a great field ploughed by the gods than like any kind of masonry construction, the dam is, in fact, a mountain of earth and rock, which the slaves of Uncle Sam's Aladdin lamp have lifted up bodily and dropped down between two mountains. With the ground sloping up gradually from the lake and sloping down on the other side, it seems to be a barrier created by Nature rather than by man. Indeed, when it was building the engineer in charge of this part of the work suggested that it was wide enough to be turned into a golf links, using the spillway for a hazard. This spillway, or overflow, is directly in the centre of the dam and consists of a concrete-lined opening, a little more than a quarter of a mile long, fitted with gates to regulate the water level of the lake. The fall of water here is utilized to generate electricity to operate the Canal locks and the towing "mules," to furnish power for the machine shops and other equipment at the terminals, and to light the Canal Zone.

And now let us look about us as we move out upon the surface of Gatun Lake. This artificial body of water, formed by the damming of the Chagres, has an area of

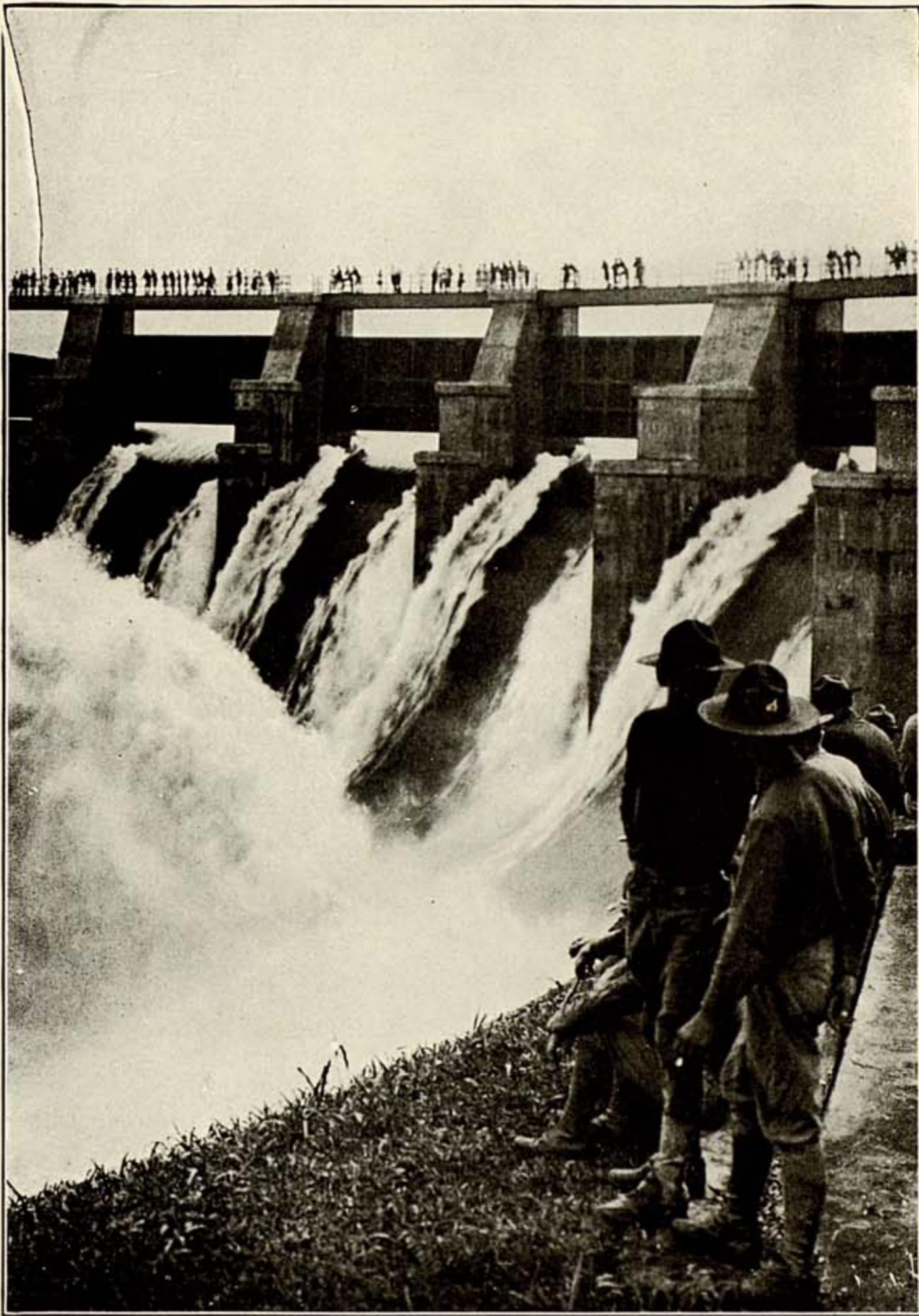
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

about a hundred and fifty square miles. At times we are close to the shores, where herds of cattle belonging to the government commissary are grazing on patches of cleared land. At other times we are in the midst of a broad expanse of silvery water, fringed in the distance by the vegetation of the tropics. Off to the south we can see a range of low mountains, the beginning of the Andes, which are here like ant-hills in comparison with the giant volcanic peaks that wall the western side of our sister continent.

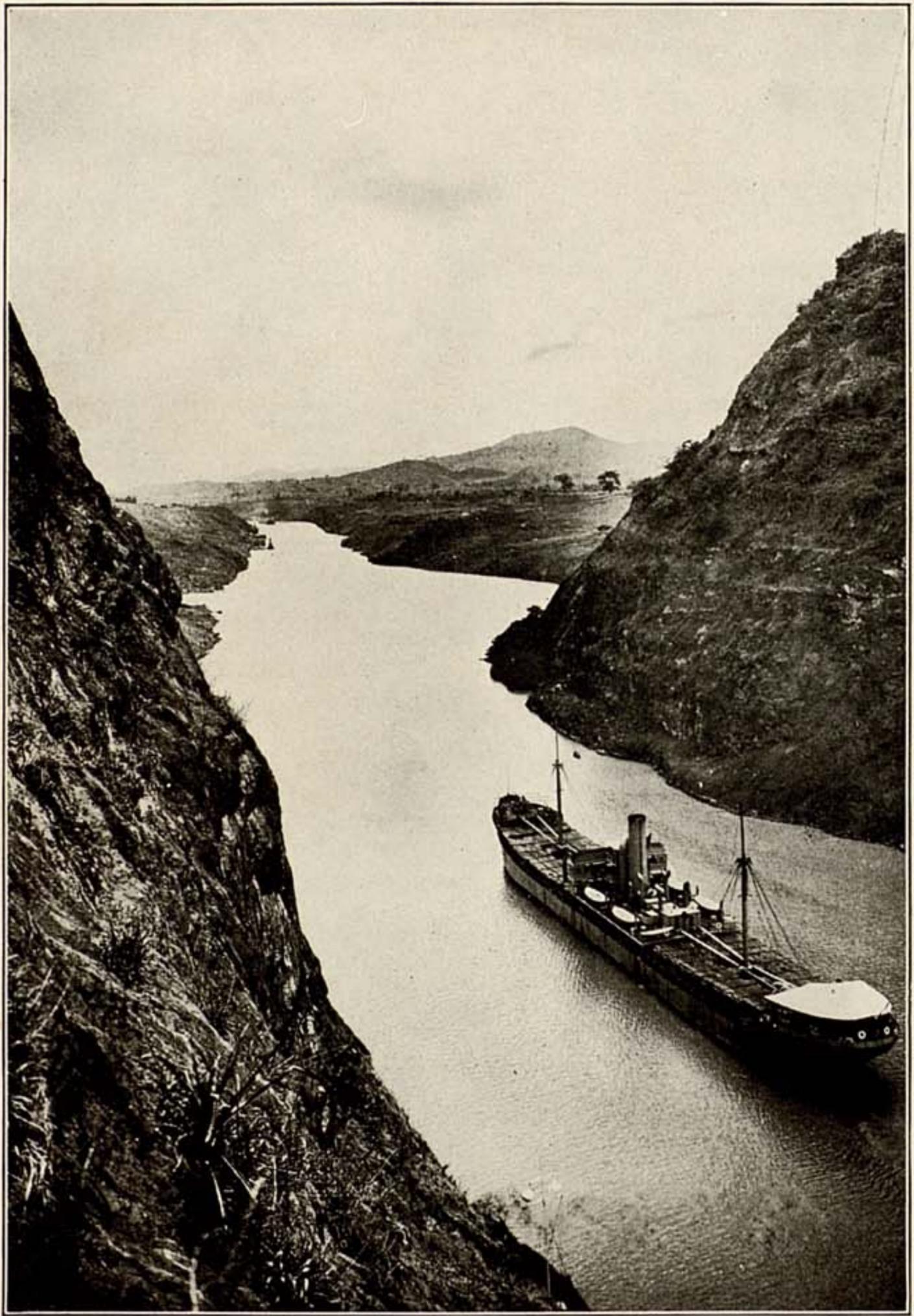
Farther out on the lake we sail between the shores of beautiful islands with palm trees growing at the edge of the water. On some of them are clumps of bamboo, and on others beds of papyrus. Now and then we pass floating islands formed by bits of the tropical swamp that have been lifted from their foundations by the water and are being carried by the winds here and there over the lake. Some of these islands are several acres in extent and they rise and fall with the waves made by our vessel.

Outside the route of the dredged channel through which the steamer passes, great beds of water lettuce and masses of water hyacinths are floating about, and another green plant unfamiliar to me covers parts of the surface like a thick scum. The water lettuce has short roots and will not impede navigation, but the roots of the hyacinths are ten or twelve feet long.

The most striking feature of Lake Gatun, and the one that most visitors to the Canal remember longest, is the forests of dead trees. When the Canal was building, the water held back by the dam rose higher and higher until it submerged a vast area of jungle, the high spots of which formed the islands we now see. On the lower



The great Gatun Dam holds back the waters of the Chagres River to form Lake Gatun. The fall from the spillway is used to generate electric power for operating the lock gates and the machinery of the Canal.



The greatest single piece of engineering on the Canal was the excavation at Gaillard Cut, where the continental divide is now pierced by a nine-mile gash through the mountains.

## THROUGH THE CANAL

levels the trees were partly or completely inundated, and many of them have since died. Some of them are naked of bark and as white as the bones of a skeleton, and others are loaded with orchids. Some have only their tops out of the water, and we now and then see green palm trees, the trunks of which are in the bed of the lake, while the branches, looking like bunches of gigantic ferns, seem to be floating on the surface.

The formation of Lake Gatun also necessitated relaying the Panama Railroad for much of its length. The old track ran through what is now the bed of the lake and has long since been swallowed up by the waters held back by the dam. The new line winds its way around the lake and in places takes its passengers far from the route of the Canal. The first road was built with ties of mahogany and *lignum vitæ*, the only woods that in their natural state will withstand destruction by ants. There are some hardwood ties in the present road, but most of them are pine and cypress soaked in creosote. The trains are pulled by oil-burning engines.

Three hours of steaming from the Gatun locks brings us out of the lake and again into the Canal proper. We are now more than halfway across the Isthmus, and are about to enter that part of the waterway which presented the greatest difficulties to the American engineers. This is what was formerly known as the Culebra Cut, but which was later officially renamed the Gaillard Cut, in honour of Colonel David D. Gaillard, who was in charge of the work on it from 1907 to 1913. It is a nine-mile gash through the Andes, those mighty mountains which in South America rise more than four miles above the level of the sea, but which bow down humbly as they reach the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Isthmus on their way north to join hands with the Rockies. Here the tallest peak, known as Gold Hill, is but five hundred feet high, and the lowest pass only three hundred feet. It is the latter that has been cut down so that ships can steam through it only eighty-five feet above the level of the two oceans.

I visited this cut several times while the mountains were being blasted with dynamite and gouged out with giant steam shovels. I remember walking among the workmen and machinery, and dodging the trains carrying their loads of earth and rock down to the great dam at Gatun or to the mighty Pacific Ocean breakwater that now connects the port of Balboa with the island of Naos. In those days this gap was the busiest place along the route of the Canal. Everywhere I went I saw hundreds of Negroes engaged in drilling, gangs of Spaniards moving the tracks, and other gangs of Negroes and whites, in water up to their waists, repairing the steam shovels. At times I was in veritable thickets of derricks used for drilling holes for dynamite charges. As I watched the men charging the holes I observed that the dynamite was wrapped in pink paper, and asked Colonel Gaillard why this was.

“That is to prevent the workmen from stealing it to dynamite the waters for fishing,” he replied. “Such a charge kills the fish and they rise to the surface and can be easily taken out. The loss from these thefts was at first considerable, but now whenever we catch a man with dynamite so wrapped we arrest him.”

From the bottom of the cut I climbed out of its ragged sides, fervently hoping, I recall, that there would be no slides before I reached the top. The slope was so steep

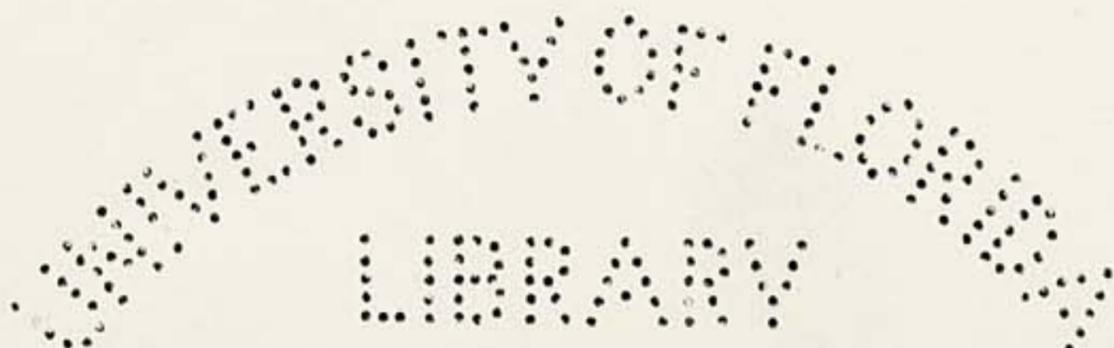
## THROUGH THE CANAL

that I went up on my hands and feet, resting at every few steps. The climb was hard work in this tropical heat, and it took me something like a quarter of an hour to make my way to the top. Once there, however, the view more than paid for my strenuous exertion.

As I stood on the heights I could see the cut stretching to the right and to the left until the windings of the mountains hid it from view. It was so vast that the workers at the bottom looked like tiny insects scurrying about, and the steam shovels seemed some strange species of carnivorous animals. There were scores of these shovels at work in the cut, each accomplishing more than the labour of five hundred men, and all together equalling an army of fifty thousand Samsons.

To-day it is hard to realize that this cut through the mountains has been made by steam shovels. Its slopes are so nearly covered with vegetation that it seems almost like a natural valley. For this reason it is almost impossible to conceive the vast amount of earth that has been taken from what the employees of the Canal called their "Big Ditch." It is at least two hundred feet narrower than most of the remainder of the Canal, but even so it is three hundred feet wide at the bottom, and to dig it meant the removal of more than two hundred million cubic yards of earth and rock, or four fifths of the total excavation for the entire Canal. Of this amount, twenty million cubic yards was taken out by the French before we began work.

Although the Panama Canal has been open to traffic for more than a decade, the work on the Gaillard Cut has not yet ceased. This is chiefly because of the slides, which may continue to cause trouble for a long time to come.

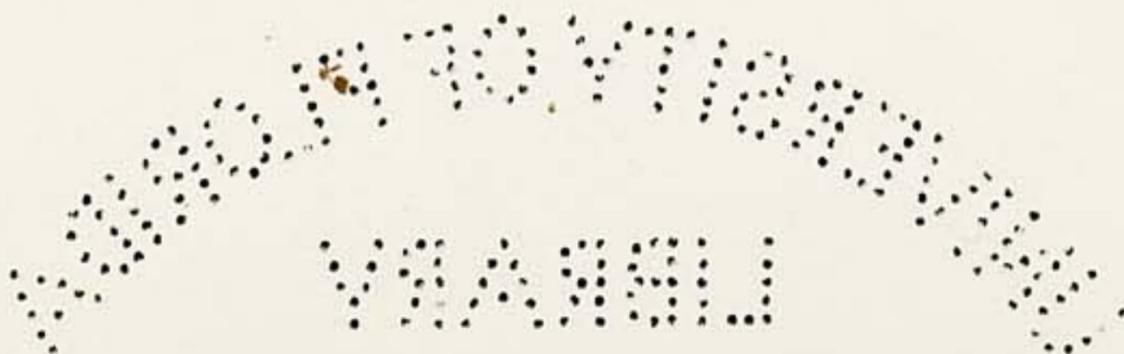


## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

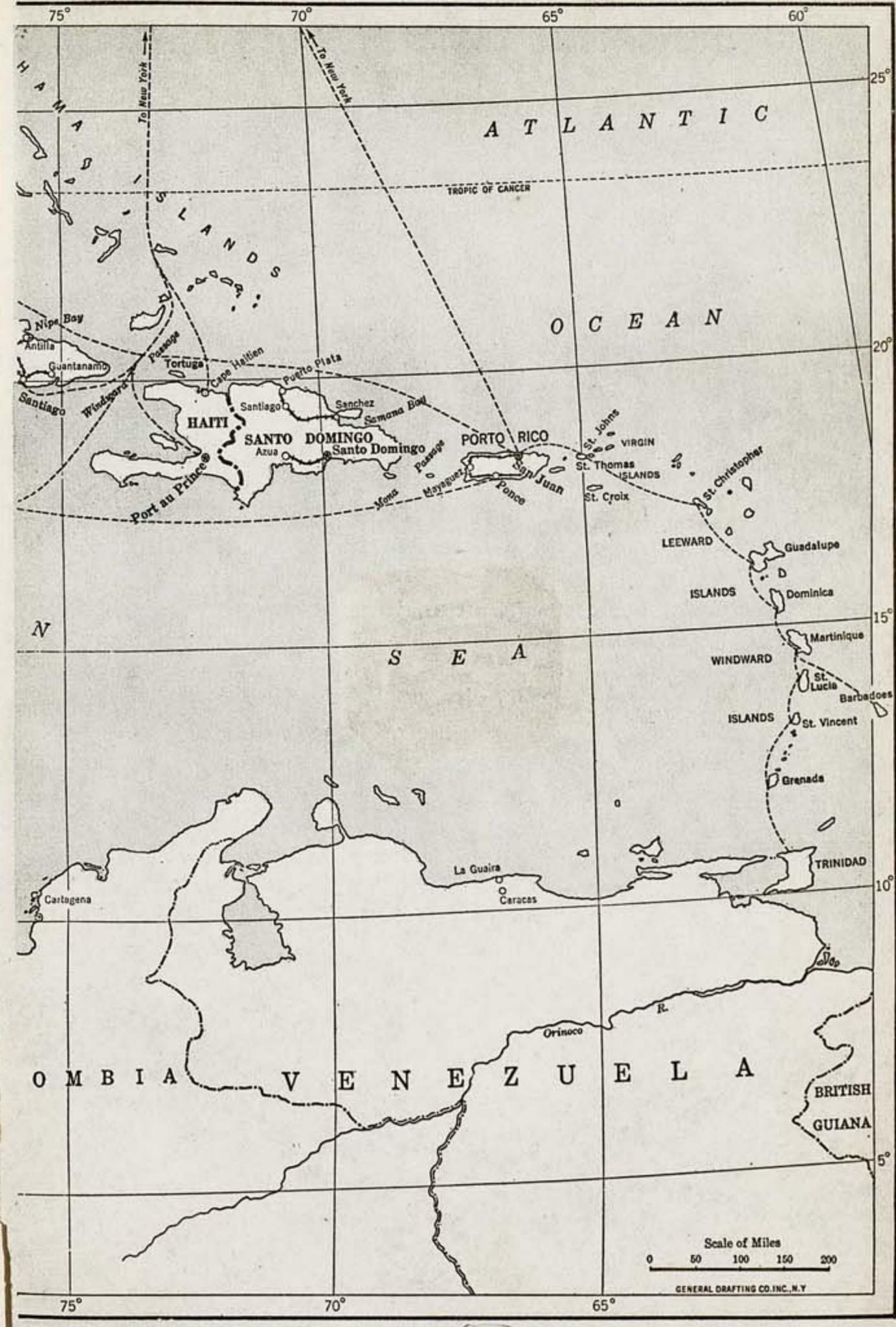
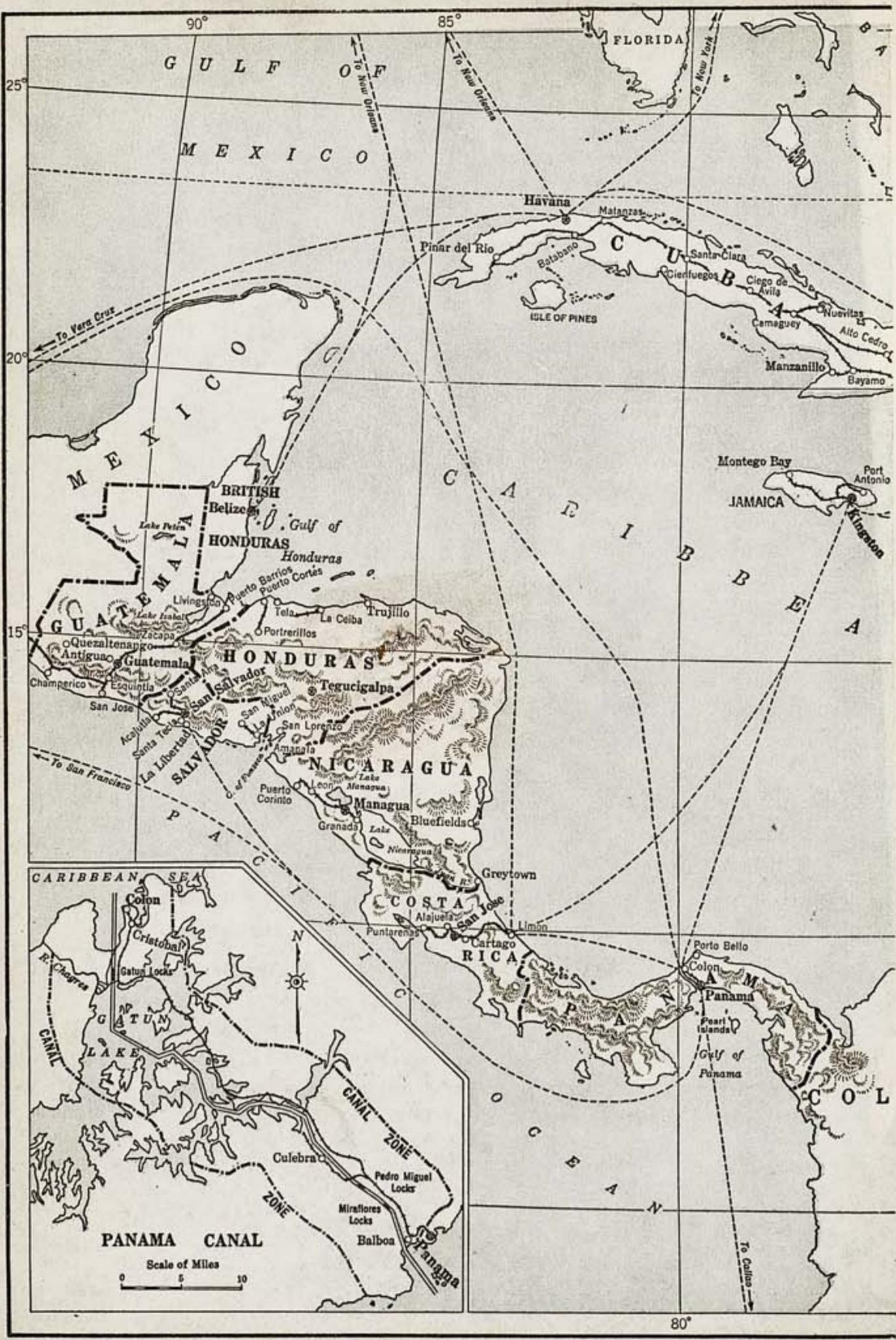
The hills on each side are being steadily washed away by hydraulic sluices to decrease the grade, and dredges are always at work keeping the channel open. They operate chiefly at night, when the waterway is clear of traffic, ships not being allowed to start through unless they will be able to pass the cut before eight o'clock in the evening. Since the Canal was opened, traffic has been held up more than once by landslides, but usually for only a few days or hours. The worst slide was the one at Gold Hill, which blocked the cut from September, 1915, to April, 1916.

During the digging of the Canal our engineers had to be ever alert to the dangers of landslides. "They are of two kinds," said Colonel Gaillard in talking with me about them at that time. "One is the slide proper, which consists of the movement of material lying on the bed rock. This is composed of clay and earth, and may have a great deal of rock mixed with it, and it moves by gravity on a smooth inclined surface of harder underlying material. The motion can best be compared to that of a glacier, and it ranges in speed from a few inches a month to fourteen feet a day. In the large slides the motion is uniform. In one instance the speed was about ten feet a day, and the variation during the first ten days of the movement did not amount at any time to more than ten per cent. That was the famous Cucaracha slide, which carried down a mass of moving material measuring several million cubic yards.

"The word 'cucaracha' means 'cockroach,'" continued Colonel Gaillard, "and this cockroach was the biggest of its kind upon earth. It covered an area of forty-seven acres and formed a great mass of earth that had broken off eighteen hundred feet from the centre line of the Canal. It began when the French were still working here,









## THROUGH THE CANAL

and it has caused us trouble ever since we started to dig. Nevertheless, the steam shovels ate it up as it came, going back and forth and chewing off its toes as they were pushed down into the cut.

“The other class of slide,” the Colonel went on, “is known as a ‘break.’ Such slides are caused by the crushing of a weaker underlying layer of rock through the enormous pressure of the high bank on the side of the Canal above it. If this weak layer runs across under the Canal at a few feet below the level of the bottom, the material is forced laterally toward the centre of the Canal and is heaved up through the bed. If it is above the bottom level it may be squeezed out from the sides or walls of the Canal. It is just as though you were to take a jelly layer cake and press on it. The jelly, of course, will ooze out. Well, the pressure is so great upon these weaker layers of rock that they ooze out or are forced up into the bed of the Canal.”

But let us continue our journey. With the Gaillard Cut behind us, we are on the Pacific slope of the Isthmus, and shall descend to the ocean through another series of locks. The first of these is Pedro Miguel, which has been nicknamed “Peter McGill,” and which lowers us thirty feet into Lake Miraflores, a body of water that seems only a pond when compared with Lake Gatun. At its opposite end are two more locks, the Miraflores, which lower us the remaining fifty-five feet to sea level. From here to the ocean is a ride of only about five miles, and it is not long before we sight the port of Balboa, and the great breakwater that stretches out into the Pacific, uniting the fortified island of Naos with the mainland.

As we end our voyage through the Canal we may well

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

stop to realize just what this waterway means to us in the saving of time and distance. In less than ten hours we have come by water from the Atlantic to the Pacific, an accomplishment that, prior to 1914, would have taken thirty days and which would have meant a voyage of thirteen thousand miles around stormy Cape Horn. The ships we see plying between New York and San Francisco are saving a distance of eight thousand miles, and those on their way to Valparaiso have had their voyages reduced by almost half that much. By way of the Canal the distance from New York to New Zealand is twenty-five hundred miles less than by any other route, and to Japan thirty-six hundred miles shorter. These savings mean so much to international commerce that the Canal is now used by the ships of practically every seafaring nation on earth.

The chief importance of the Canal to the United States has proved to be the shortening of time and distance between our Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and the shipping between these two sections of our country to-day constitutes one third of all the traffic that passes through here. Ranking second is the amount of shipping between our Atlantic ports and the Far East, and next comes that between Europe and our Western seaboard. Records show that more United States vessels use the Canal than those of all other countries combined, and that the shipping of our country, Great Britain, Japan, Germany, Norway, and Holland constitutes ninety per cent. of the total commercial traffic.

During the first years of the existence of the Canal, normal shipping was much curtailed by the World War. More recently its traffic has been increasing, and at times

## THROUGH THE CANAL

has been greater than that through Suez. The first decade since its completion witnessed the passage of more than twenty-five thousand commercial vessels alone, or an average of twenty-five hundred a year. As a matter of fact, the traffic through the Canal in the year 1924 amounted to twice that number, or an average of fifteen ships a day. The maximum capacity of the Canal is from fifty to seventy ships a day, depending upon their size. Small vessels can be put through the locks two at a time.

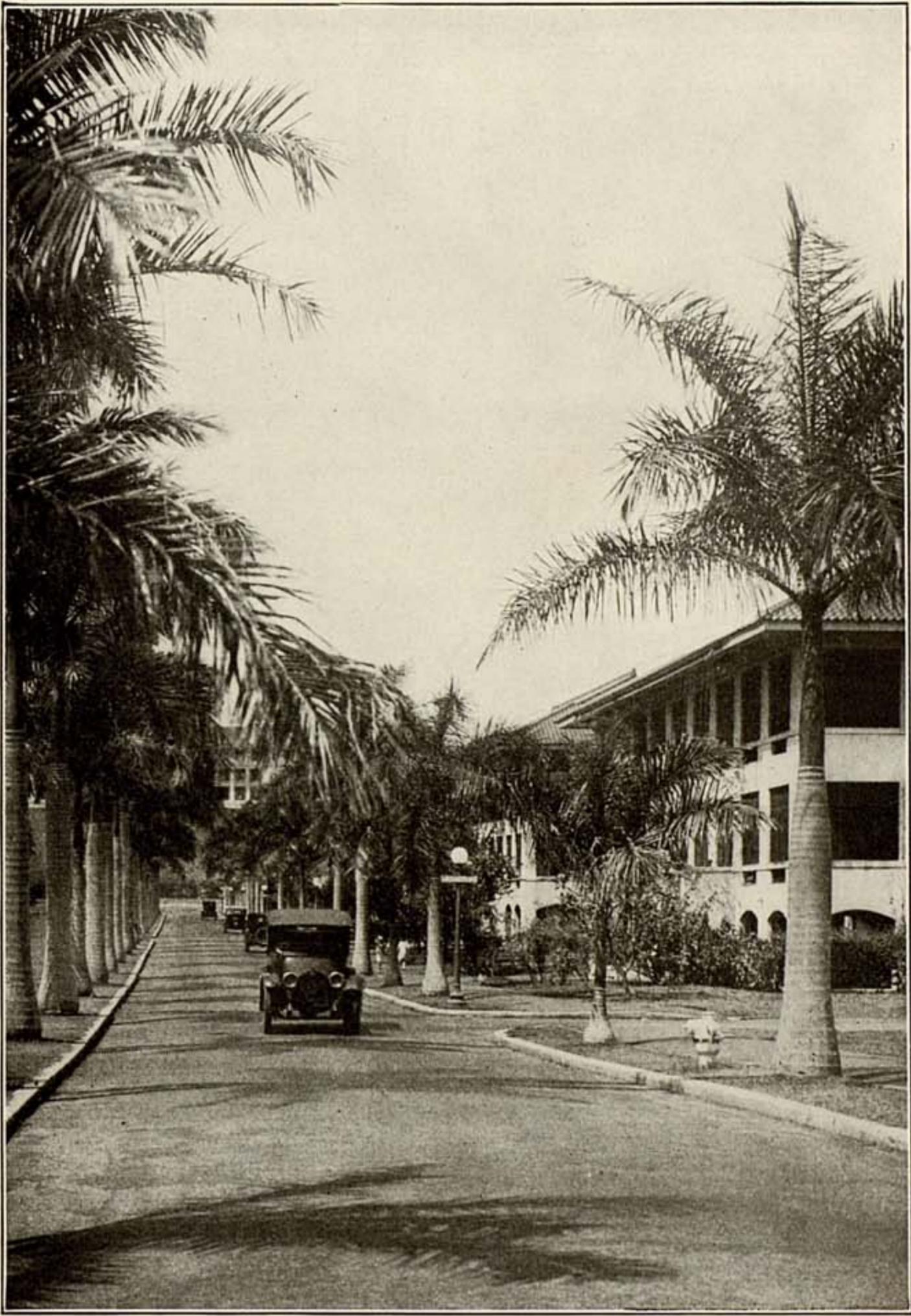
The tolls on all this shipping are levied on the basis of the net tonnage of the boats. These charges now amount to between twenty-two and twenty-five million dollars a year, which is three times as much as it actually costs to operate the Canal and maintain the Canal Zone. The latter figure does not include, however, our annual payment to Panama or the interest on the three hundred and seventy-five million dollars we spent in building the Canal, and officials say that it will be many years before we should expect the Canal to yield a profit on a commercial basis. Even while it does not, it must be remembered that its commercial usefulness is only a part of the reason for its existence, and that its military value in bringing our two coasts nearer in time of war more than offsets any lack of actual cash dividends.

## CHAPTER IV

### AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

I HAVE just come from a call upon the Governor of the Panama Canal, with whom I have been talking about this little principality that Uncle Sam owns here on the Isthmus. His territory is the Canal Zone, the strip of land that borders our great waterway and cuts in two the Central American republic of Panama. It is fifty miles long and ten miles wide, and it originally contained 532 square miles, or almost half as much land as our state of Rhode Island. Recently this area has been enlarged by twenty-one square miles, which the United States has taken over in the upper Chagres Valley, where it is planned to build another dam to provide an additional reservoir of water that can be let into Gatun Lake during the dry season.

The people living within the narrow boundaries of the Canal Zone, outside of the cities of Panama and Colón, and not including the military and naval forces, number all together less than twenty-five thousand. For the most part they are connected with the management, upkeep, or protection of the Canal, and are known as "gold" or "silver" employees. The first class is composed of officials, clerks, and skilled white workmen, who are paid in United States currency, or on a gold basis. The second class are mostly Panamanians and West Indian Negroes, whose wage is based on the currency of Panama, the peso of which is worth just half as much as an American dollar.



At Balboa, at the Pacific end of the Canal, are the administrative offices of the Canal Zone, the governor's residence, and the homes of most of the officials and civilian employees.



Since the discontinuance of the former ruling limiting the inhabitants of the Canal Zone to government employees, many Chinese have started truck gardens in the jungle where they raise vegetables for the Americans.

## AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

For several years after the completion of the Canal no one except government employees was supposed to live in the Zone, but since 1922 this ruling has gone out of effect, and areas here and there are now occupied by natives or Chinese engaged in truck gardening. Americans living here have always found it difficult to obtain fresh vegetables, and a large part of the supply is still shipped down from our Southern states.

Few people realize the multitude of activities carried on by our government in the Canal Zone, or the volume of work necessary in connection with the efficient operation of the Canal. In the first place, the government must see that the Canal is amply protected, and for this purpose it keeps about ten thousand troops here. These are stationed at the heavily fortified terminals and at military posts at Gatun, Culebra, and Miraflores, along the route of the waterway. The United States maintains also land and naval air stations, a submarine base, wireless towers, and a police force of about one hundred and seventy-five men to keep order in the Zone.

“One half of this force,” the governor told me, “are Americans, many of them ex-soldiers of the United States Army. The others are Negroes who have served in the police and military forces of the West Indies and have made good records there. As a result, our policemen are efficient in their work. The Negroes, who are used chiefly in handling the coloured population of the Zone, are paid wages almost three times as large as they received under the British, and they give good service. Indeed, our police officers are held in much the same respect as are the famous Mounted Police of Canada.

“In the matter of the civil administration of the Zone,”

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

continued the governor, "we have quarantine officers to inspect all vessels coming into Zone waters, and we maintain coal and fuel oil stations, dry docks, and repair shops for ships passing through the Canal. We own and operate the Panama Railroad, which now runs three trains a day each way during the week and two on Sundays. We have a division of posts, customs, and revenue, and we have a printing plant, the Panama Canal Press, which furnishes our supplies and stationery and each week publishes the *Panama Canal Record*. Our division of fire protection, I believe, compares in efficiency with any in the States. Then we have a division of public works, which operates not only in the Zone, but also maintains the water, street, and sewerage systems in the cities of Panama and Colón, and collects all the water rentals of those cities, this money going to repay the United States for the cost of constructing the systems. And there is the division of schools, which provides educational facilities equal to those of the best graded schools at home. At Balboa and Cristóbal we have high schools to which pupils from all Zone points are transported by railroad. Indeed, we have all the branches characteristic of a territorial government."

A by no means small part of the activities of the United States in Panama is devoted to the comfort of the employees of the Canal and the thousands of tourists who come here each winter. The government maintains several thousand head of cattle to supply the Americans with fresh meat, as well as with butter and milk, and it operates hotels, commissary stores, ice and cold-storage plants, laundries, hospitals, and dispensaries. Along the route of the Canal it has built villages of comfortable

## AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

homes for its employees and it has established handsome quarters for the Canal officials. On the Atlantic side of the Isthmus, separated from Colón by only a narrow street, it has founded the town of Cristóbal, and at the other end of the Canal is the port of Balboa, named after the discoverer of the ocean on which it lies. On Balboa Heights is the administration building of the Zone, and not far away is Ancón Hill, where the governor and most of the officials live. The gubernatorial residence, with its wide screened verandas and its beautiful flowers, is one of the most delightful homes on the Isthmus. I cannot begin to describe the exquisite orchids I saw there. Some burst out in a shower of bloom, and others have blossoms that take on the forms of miniature birds, animals, and even humans. One variety, called "the flower of the Holy Spirit," has snowy petals the shape of a beautiful dove with outstretched wings.

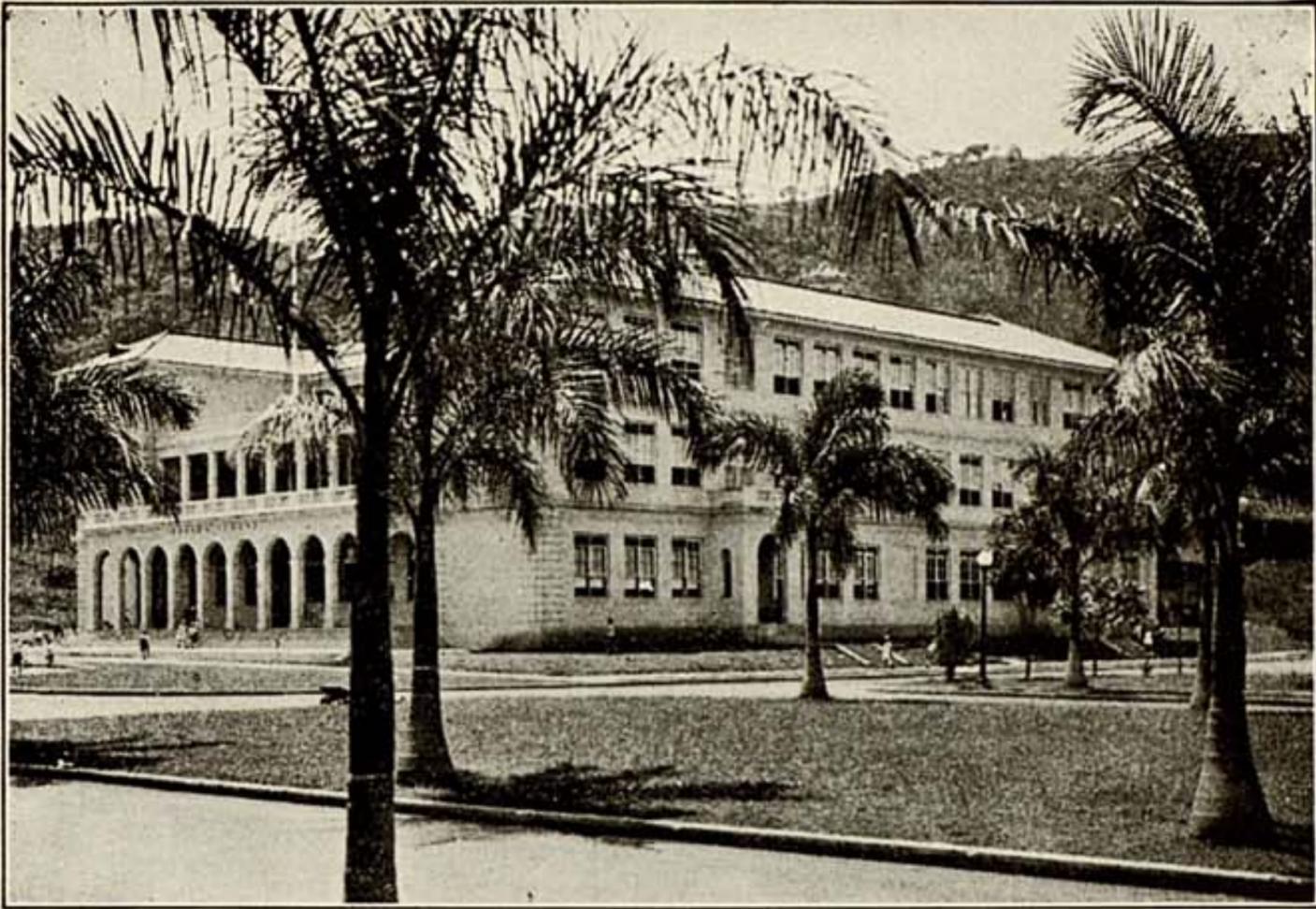
Indeed, I doubt whether there is a more beautiful spot on the Isthmus than Ancón Hill. Said to be the cone of an extinct volcano, it rises almost straight up from the sea on the edge of Panama City, commanding a wide view of the Pacific Ocean and the Culebra hills. Its top is wooded, and its lower slopes were laid out by French landscape gardeners. Beautiful driveways shaded by royal and coconut palms wind their way from level to level, and along them, surrounded by grassy lawns and tropical flowers and plants, stand the homes of the Canal employees and the Ancón hospital. The hospital is large enough to accommodate fifteen hundred patients. All its rooms have high ceilings, and its wide doors and many windows are well screened. It has verandas on all sides and is so situated that the breezes from the ocean and

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

from the mountains blow through it day and night, year in and year out.

Here at Ancón the government has a great establishment where tourists and high officials are entertained, and where also live some of the Canal employees. This is the Hotel Tivoli, which has a fine outlook over the city of Panama and the Pacific Ocean. It is a three-story building, part frame and part brick, more than three hundred feet long, and built around three sides of a rectangular court. The entire hotel is so screened that it is impossible for flies, mosquitoes, or insects of any kind to get into the rooms, and it is one of the most comfortable resorts in this part of the continent. As one of its guests, I have found Uncle Sam to be a most satisfactory innkeeper. His service is infinitely superior to that offered by the hotels that were here during the régime of the French. At that time I stayed in an ancient hostelry in Panama City, my principal memory of which concerns the burs I used to find in my towels. The hotel linen, I learned, was washed in the streams and hung to dry on the bushes and weeds, which is the method still followed by the native laundresses.

Since coming to Panama I have been much interested in the way the American women keep house here. There are many features of home life different from that in the States, but taken all in all, everything is made remarkably easy for Americans. The army officers and their families are furnished quarters, light, and heat practically free, and the civilian employees pay only a nominal charge for rent, water, electricity, and fuel. The warm climate makes any artificial heat unnecessary, but the dampness during the rainy season is so great that to prevent clothes from



The schools built and maintained by our government in the Canal Zone, and the educational facilities provided, are equal to the best of their kind in the United States.



Probably the cheapest and most plentiful food in Panama is the banana, which is brought down the streams in native dugouts to the city markets at each end of the Canal.



Although Panama City is the capital of the republic and politically outside of American jurisdiction, our government has the right to enforce order, cleanliness, and the observance of strict sanitary regulations.

## AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

mildewing they are hung in closets kept dry by electricity. For cooking, gas is available at Ancón, Balboa, and Cristóbal, but elsewhere throughout the Zone the fuel is soft coal, and many a housewife thinks yearningly of the gas and electric ranges of the States. One interesting part of the kitchen equipment is the little pans of coal oil in which stand the legs of the refrigerator and the kitchen table. These are to prevent the ants from crawling up and getting at the provisions. The Panamanian ants, the chief pests of the Isthmus, are of all sizes and of innumerable varieties. Like those that at times invade our kitchens at home, some species are particularly fond of sugar or sweets, while others will devour wood in any form.

About the only source of food supply here is the government commissary, where provisions of all kinds are sold. Uncle Sam has a big grocery store at Cristóbal, with branches throughout the Zone, and he furnishes practically all the food that his employees have. I asked the wife of an American the other day to tell me just how she orders her provisions.

"It is done by means of commissary books," she replied, "which each employee has the right to buy up to sixty per cent. of his salary. All our orders have to be given the day before they are filled. The government has its regular order man, who comes around every morning. We have to pay him in advance for everything we order, and he leaves a copy of the order with us and takes two copies with him. One of these goes to the commissary store, and the other is used in keeping the accounts."

"Do you always get what you order?" I asked.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

“As a general thing, yes, but the trouble is we cannot select what we want and have to take what is sent us. I may order porterhouse steak, but if I receive a cut from the round there is nothing I can do about it. I know of certain housekeepers who, when they receive a tough steak, get even with Uncle Sam by setting it aside until it spoils, when they take it to the health officers and recover what they have paid. As a rule, however, the supplies are excellent. The bread is always fresh and good, and the ice is made from distilled water.”

As far as I can learn, there is practically no servant problem to contend with in the Canal Zone. Jamrican Negroes are easy to secure, and make excellent cooks and nurses. Moreover, wages are low, and one can get a cook for twenty dollars a month, a butler for about the same, and a maid or nurse for sixteen dollars. Laundresses are cheap, and there are a few Panamanian or Jamaican dress-makers who do simple sewing. Summer clothing, of course, is worn the year round, and one has no use here for tailored suits, furs, or heavy woollens of any type.

Ready-made garments of every kind may be obtained in the Panama shops, but most of the American women, I am told, buy their clothes in sufficient quantities before they come here, or else have them purchased in New York by professional shoppers. For many things, however, the shops of the Isthmus are not excelled in the States. Linens are especially cheap, as Panama charges practically no duty upon them, and the same is true of the beautiful grass cloths known as Canton linens, which are shipped here from China and sold by the Chinese merchants. Silks of all kinds are inexpensive, and there are bazaars where one may purchase the most beautiful hand-carved

## AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

articles, ranging from ivory beads to furniture. There are, of course, many stores that sell hats of the type known as Panama, which, although they are noted all over the world by this name, are really made in Ecuador and shipped in to the local merchants.

For amusements, there are picture theatres and cabarets, but for the most part the Americans must rely upon their own resources. There are several fine clubs, the most important of which are the Union and the Century, at the Pacific end of the Canal, and the Strangers' Club at Colón on the Atlantic. The Century Club, although located only a short distance from the Tivoli Hotel, is really across the boundary in Panama City, and out of our jurisdiction. Its bar, I may add, seems to be freely patronized by residents of the "dry" Canal Zone. At all these places, as well as at the Tivoli Hotel, many balls and dances are held, and at the army posts there are big regimental dinners and other social activities all through the year. Several islands not far from the mainland have been turned into summer resorts, and during the hottest weather many of the Americans go up into the Caldera Valley in the Panama republic. Tennis and golf are popular throughout the Zone, and there are dozens of places where there is excellent surf bathing.

## CHAPTER V

### PANAMA CITY

I AM writing from Panama City, the metropolis of the Isthmus. Like Colón, it is geographically in the Canal Zone, but politically it is the capital of the republic of Panama, and is under the jurisdiction of the United States only to a limited extent. Washington requires that good order be kept here, and enforces the necessary sanitary regulations, but otherwise the city abides, outwardly at least, by the laws of the republic.

The Panama of to-day was founded in 1673, only two years after Morgan had destroyed old Panama. For the site of the new city the people chose this rocky projection almost surrounded by the sea, and enclosed it by a wall thirty feet high, inside of which they built their houses. Part of that wall still stands. In places it is double, and on one side of the city it forms a promenade, where in the evening the grown-ups stroll and the children dash about on roller skates or play games. In some places the double wall was separated by a moat, much of which has long since grown up with trees or has been covered with hedges.

When I first visited Panama City, back in 1898, it was swarming with flies and mosquitoes and reeking with vile smells. It had no sewers, and its wells and cesspools were side by side in the courts of the town. Business was dead, the bare-footed cabmen slept in their shabby old coaches, and the merchants dozed in the doorways of their



In contrast with the fine new buildings about the central plaza of Panama City are the ramshackle houses in the narrow streets of the old sections of the city near the waterfront.



One of the oldest churches in America is the cathedral in Panama City, the twin spires of which are covered with an inlay of mother-of-pearl brought from the Pearl Islands off the Pacific coast.

## PANAMA CITY

shops. It was at the time of my second visit here that Uncle Sam took hold of Panama and made it sanitary. He dug up the streets, put in a sewerage system and a water supply, and paved the main thoroughfares with vitrified brick. To-day the town is alive and growing. It has modern improvements, electric street cars, and automobiles, although the old-fashioned cabs are still to be seen everywhere. There are new buildings on almost every block, and the Avenida Central, which extends from the railroad station to the plaza, is lined with houses and stores all the way.

The plaza is the heart of Panama City. On one side is the bishop's palace, with the lottery on the ground floor, and on another is the old cathedral, the spires of its twin towers covered with mother-of-pearl from the Pearl Islands in the Pacific. It is one of the oldest churches in America, and was built by a Negro bishop whose father, a freed slave, had made a fortune selling charcoal. Scattered throughout the city are many other old churches, several of which date back to the seventeenth century. One of the first houses of worship in Panama, the Church of Santo Domingo, was destroyed by fire in 1737, but its ruins may still be seen, consisting of part of the walls and a famous flat arch, which has stood for almost two hundred years.

In the neighbourhood of the plaza are many fine buildings, built since Panama declared its independence. These include the national palace, the national theatre, and the new city hall. Farther out is the University of Panama, which was established in 1911. These buildings are only a part of what the country has to show for the ten million dollars it received from the United States

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

when we leased the Canal Zone, and for the quarter of a million it is now being paid by us every year.

Panama is not only making use of United States money, but is adopting United States customs and using United States products. Indeed, the influence of the Canal Zone has spread far beyond its geographical limits. The American system has determined the type of house, the manner of sanitation, the means of water supply, and the methods of road building, not only in Panama, but outside the city. American manufacturers are furnishing the homes of Panamanians of all classes and descriptions; they are clothing the people, rich and poor, and are even supplying a large part of the food of the republic and of the city of Panama.

These signs of Americanization are most marked in a business way here in Panama City. I see store fronts plastered with the advertisements of American brands of shoes, and I find the stock inside as good as that carried by any dealer in a city of the same size in the States. The clerk may be Panamanian, Jamaican Negro, or what not, but he speaks English, takes American money, and rings up each purchase on an American cash register. In the business streets the signs are in mixed Spanish and American. "La Tropical" saloon, for instance, advertises an American near beer, and a *botica*, or drug store, points with pride to its American soda-water fountain. In the houses of even the poorest Negroes, Chinese, and Panamanians, one is almost certain to find an American sewing-machine and American-made furniture.

Many of the stores of Panama are little more than caves, mere holes in the wall about ten feet square and perhaps eight feet high. They have no windows facing

## PANAMA CITY

the street, and the door alone admits light. In some of these little shops shoemakers are pounding away, in others women and girls are making lace, while elsewhere cigar-makers, carpenters, and blacksmiths are plying their trades. Much of the work is done out on the sidewalks. I see many women sewing on the edge of the street, and the tailors bring their chairs out to the roadway and stitch in the sun. The store is often the home of the family that runs it, and from a workshop in the daytime it is transformed into a sleeping place after dark.

In the better residential streets the houses have balconies extending from the second stories over the streets. The wealthier people live upstairs, and these balconies are their sitting rooms during the evening. In the stories below, where a whole family may have but one room, the people come out on the sidewalks and sit on the doorsteps or curbstones. Every evening the streets are filled with two long lines of humanity, one below and the other in the balconies above.

The greater part of the wealth of Panama City is divided among a comparatively few families, who have handsome summer residences in the country, entertain in grand style, and send their children abroad to be educated. Middle-class families in comfortable circumstances are but a small proportion of the population, and the majority of the people earn only enough to keep soul and body together. The home of the average family of the lower classes is but one room so small that the cooking is done in a common hall or out of doors. The kitchen stove is usually nothing but a pot of charcoal.

I am having my photographic films developed by a photographer here whose studio is at the top of a three-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

story frame building. He tells me that more than a thousand men, women, and children live in this structure, herded into between two and three hundred rooms. Looking into some of those rooms, I found them as dark as a pocket, the smoke from the cooking in the halls outside having turned the walls almost black. Many were only ten feet square and had no ventilation except through the doors. That building is all wood except the roof, which is of galvanized iron, and I tremble to think of what might happen in case of a fire.

I asked my photographer as to the rents, and was told that they are from seven to ten dollars gold a month for each room. Similar rates prevail in the Jamaican Negro quarters in New Caledonia, which is only a stone's throw from the Hotel Tivoli. There a single room will often house an entire family and a few boarders besides. Some of them are curtained off into compartments, but as a rule the Negroes nest like rabbits in a warren, and filth reigns supreme.

Not far from these Negro quarters are other sections where, as in Port Said and Suez, "there ain't no Ten Commandments," and where it is said that vice still flourishes almost as much as in the old days, when Panama was indeed a rival of the places of which Kipling wrote. The American government is doing all it can to reduce the vice in Panama, and to improve the moral as well as the sanitary aspect of the city, but it is probable that there is still a good deal of "boot-legging" in white slaves and opium, the latter being brought in by the Chinese.

The Chinese are but one of the many nationalities represented here. If you will sit down with me in the plaza and watch the crowds as they pass, you will see Ameri-

## PANAMA CITY

cans, Spaniards, Italians, French, English, Hindus, Jamaican Negroes, Indians, and native Panamanians. Upon the last the American workers on the Canal bestowed the name of "spiggoties." When the Americans first arrived on the Isthmus, the cab drivers, looking for fares, would shout "Me speak it, the English!" This soon changed to "spickety," and then to "spiggoty," and to this day the name has clung.

Only a few of the Americans we see are connected with the Canal, the others being visitors. It is doubtful if the people of the States realize how many of their neighbours are making winter tours to Panama. While the Canal was building it was estimated that not less than two thousand came here every month for stays of varying length, and the steamships were unable to take care of the increasing throngs. Since the Canal has been completed the Panama cruise has been as popular as ever, and at the Tivoli one sees a constant procession of Americans coming and going. I might easily imagine myself at an American summer resort, and I find my carefully acquired bits of Spanish becoming decidedly rusty from lack of use.

Another surprise to me is to meet Panamanians with names such as Boyd, Lewis, LeFevre, and the like, many of whom no more resemble the Spanish type than do their names. They are, of course, descendants of Europeans or Americans who settled here a generation or more ago, intermarrying with the Spanish or native families. As a consequence, there is a wide variation in the types of Panamanians.

A not uncommon sight in many parts of Panama City is the little boys who play in the streets, innocent of so much as a shred of clothing. I am told, however, that

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

most Panamanian parents now take a certain pride in clothing their children from infancy, and that the natives of the poorer class are discarding their pleasant custom of giving a boy a hat when he reaches the age of eight, a pair of shoes when he is ten, and leaving it to his own ingenuity to obtain the remainder of a wardrobe as he grows older.

As we sit in the plaza we are accosted by a couple of children with lottery tickets for sale. Such tickets are hawked about on every street of Panama City and Colón, although it is against the law to sell them in the Canal Zone. Nevertheless, most of the Americans take at least one chance at them. The Panama lottery belongs to a naturalized American who came here from Cuba, and each week a grand prize of twenty thousand dollars is given away, in addition to the smaller amounts. Often the grand prizes are won by the poorest people, but I have never heard of any of them investing the money to good advantage.

Next to playing the lottery, the favourite sports of the Panamanians are horse racing and cock fighting. There is a bull-ring outside Panama City where fights formerly took place every Sunday, whenever there were any fighters here on their way from Spain to Lima or Mexico City. The bulls, however, were not dangerous, and the sport was usually a fraud and a fiasco. At one time I watched a score of Panamanian boys rush into the ring and have a hand-to-hand struggle with the bull. Each of them carried a red blanket to throw over the animal's eyes, as they tried to get a ten-dollar gold piece that had been tied to its horns. Several of the boys were badly injured, but one of them finally secured the ten dollars. Bull-

## PANAMA CITY

fights now are rather rare occurrences here, the ring being used for prize fights instead.

The one cock fight I have witnessed was a rather sickening and, to an American, unsportsmanlike affair. It was held in a round building about fifty feet in diameter, in the centre of which was a fifteen-foot arena surrounded by three banks of galleries. On one side was the judges' stand, and a scale for weighing the fowls. When I entered, the galleries were filled and an orchestra was playing, its music mingling with and at times being almost drowned out by the crowing and squawking from the cages. The waiting combatants were game cocks with their spurs sharpened and their feathers cut close around the back and pulled from the legs, giving them a curiously plucked appearance. To start a fight between two birds, the owners put the cocks into the ring and tried to anger them. At first the birds apparently took no notice of each other, but at a given signal each darted at his enemy and drove in his spurs while the audience went wild with applause. However, after the first spurt of fighting, the birds evidently lost all liking for the conflict, which ended by the two roosters, bloody and bedraggled, alternately chasing each other around the arena until one fell from exhaustion.

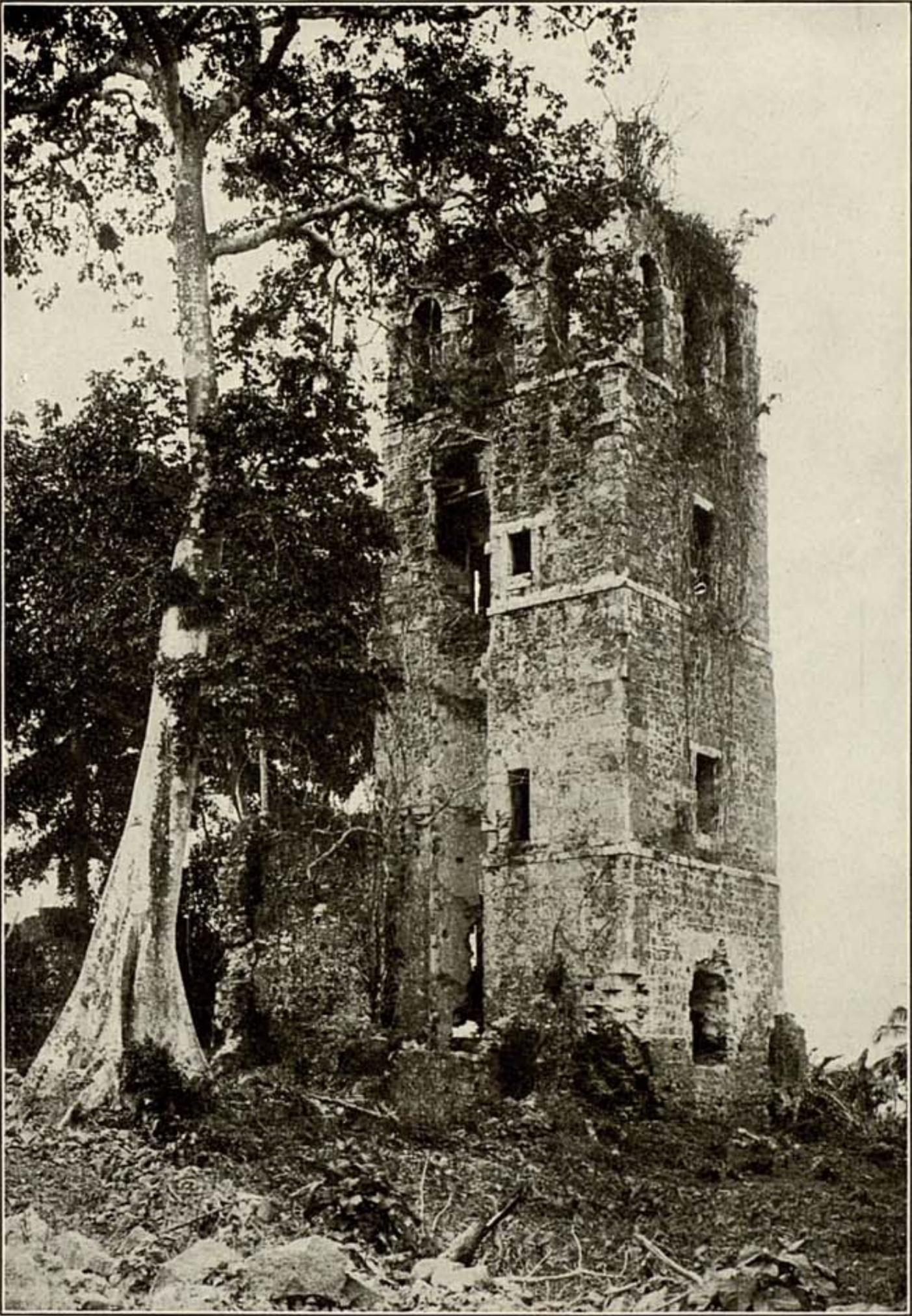
## CHAPTER VI

### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS

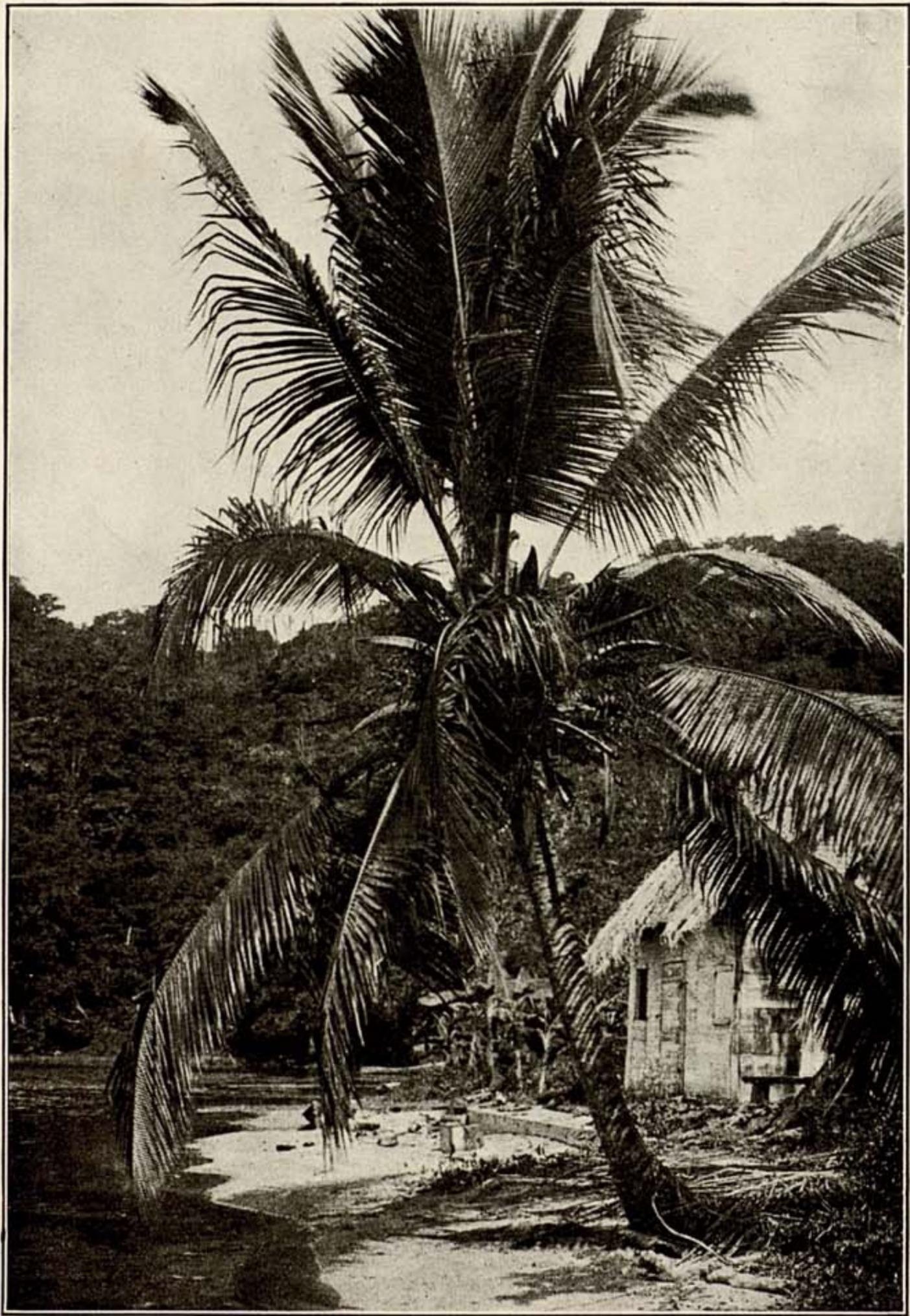
**T**O-DAY I visited the ruins of old Panama, the first city to be founded by white men on the American continent. It was situated six miles from the Panama City of the present days. The road follows the route used by the Spaniards centuries ago, and some of its cobblestones were taken from the old highway over which Indians and mules carried the golden treasure of the Incas, and along which Henry Morgan, the buccaneer, marched to capture old Panama.

Old Panama was founded more than one hundred years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, and, fed by the riches of Peru, it increased in importance and size until it rivalled the Peruvian capital itself. According to some authorities, it was considerably larger than the Panama City of to-day, and at the height of its glory contained eight monasteries, two churches, a hospital, two hundred warehouses, and seven thousand dwellings, one third of which were large and handsome structures.

The story of the capture of old Panama by Morgan was first told by one of the pirates in his band. About seven years after the event occurred, the tale was published in Dutch, and later was translated into Spanish and English. This pirate, one Esquemeling, tells first of Morgan's capture of Porto Bello on the Caribbean side of the



On the site of the old city of Panama, which was plundered and destroyed in 1671 by Henry Morgan, still stands the tower of the cathedral, in which is part of the spiral stairway to the belfry.



To the beach at Porto Bello the gold and silver of Peru used to be brought across the Isthmus by pack mules and Indian slaves, and then put aboard the Spanish treasure ships.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS

Isthmus. To-day, remains of that town have almost disappeared, but in 1668 it was one of the chief landmarks of the New World, and was noted for its wealth and importance. Among its buildings were warehouses where silver and gold were stored, and wharves where the ships landed Negroes brought over to be used as slaves. Next to Havana in Cuba and Cartagena in Colombia, it was then the most strongly fortified town in Spanish America. Esquemeling says that its castles were almost impregnable, and that the garrison consisted of three hundred soldiers.

When Morgan took Porto Bello he landed some distance up the coast and then marched his buccaneers down to the forts. He blew up one of the castles and set fire to another, but the Spaniards fought bravely and the governor of the town refused to surrender, saying, "I would rather die as a soldier than be hanged as a coward." And die as soldiers is what the Spaniards did, fighting on almost to the last man.

After taking Porto Bello, the pirates looted it and tortured the citizens to make them give up any gold that had been hidden. Morgan then sent word across the Isthmus to Panama, demanding a ransom for the prisoners he held. This being refused, the pirate took his crew back to Cuba and thence to Jamaica to lay in supplies for an attack upon Panama. The fleet with which he finally started out was perhaps the largest pirate organization ever assembled, being composed of thirty-seven ships and two thousand men. Morgan as admiral formed the vessels into two squadrons and worked out in advance a scheme for determining each man's share of the booty.

Reaching the Isthmus a second time, Morgan made his way up the Chagres River to what is known as San Lorenzo,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

and among the ruins of which the Americans now hold picnics and outings. There was then a fort on that spot and a structure called the Castle of the Chagres, which I suppose was merely a blockhouse. These the English took after a hard battle with the Spaniards, and then proceeded on across the Isthmus. They were beset by illness and attacked by Indians, and many died of starvation, the Spaniards having destroyed all crops along the line of march. At one time the buccaneers were in such straits that they ate strips of leather, and at another time many of them were poisoned by drinking some wine left behind by the Spaniards. That was at Las Cruces, the inhabitants of which had set fire to the buildings and fled.

Leaving Las Cruces, the remainder of the pirate army went on until they came to a mountain from where they could see the city of Panama. Descending the Pacific slope, they fell upon and slaughtered a herd of cattle, eating the meat half raw, and then marched to the attack. It did not take Morgan long to capture the city and loot it, although it was set on fire by the Spanish governor when he saw that defeat was inevitable. According to Esquemeling's story, it contained a vast treasure. The churches and monasteries were full of gold and silver, much of which was melted by the flames, and there were other stores of gold awaiting transshipment across the Isthmus. All of this Morgan took, and then tortured the people to make them tell if they had any hidden wealth. Even the women and the priests were put on the rack.

After the city had been stripped of everything of value, Morgan marched his men back to Fort San Lorenzo, taking with him so much treasure that it required one hundred and seventy-five donkeys to carry it. Returning

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS

to the West Indies, he later purchased a pardon from King Charles II, became lieutenant governor of Jamaica, and in the years that followed caught and hanged many of his former comrades.

With the founding of new Panama two years after Morgan's attack, the ruins of the old city were practically forgotten, and for more than two centuries the jungle took its course in claiming again the land that had been wrested from it. The ruins were soon grown over, and their existence was known to few but bands of lawless guerrillas, who were left practically undisturbed in possession of this territory. Then, with the coming of the Americans, the rediscovering of the ruins aroused a wave of interest, and the Panamanian government set about to uncover them.

The chief remnant left of old Panama is the ruin of the cathedral, of which the tower and parts of the walls are still standing. Many of its arches are intact, the brick and mortar showing little sign of deterioration through the centuries. According to a map made by an engineer of Seville early in the seventeenth century, this cathedral was situated on what was the plaza of old Panama. It was almost on the highest point near the beach, and the belfry was undoubtedly used as a watchtower. In it may be seen a half dozen or more stone steps of the old spiral stairs that led to the top, but the bell that was once here now hangs in the church of Santa Ana in the Panama of to-day.

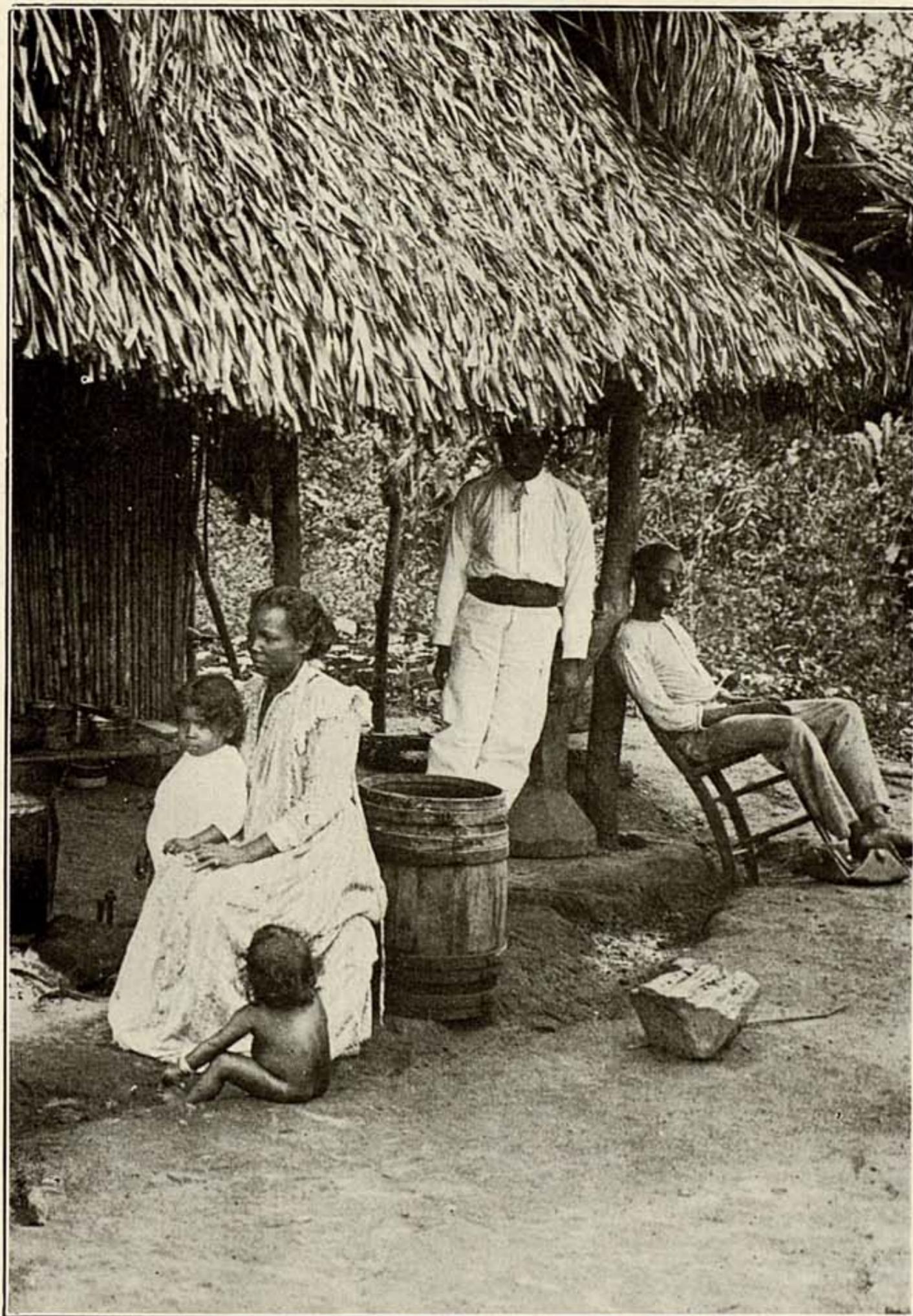
Across the plaza from the cathedral are ruins that have been identified as the remains of the Jesuit convent, in one corner of which several graves were discovered, probably those of the Jesuit sisters who died there. Just behind the convent is some low-vaulted stone work, supposed to have been the treasure house of Panama, the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

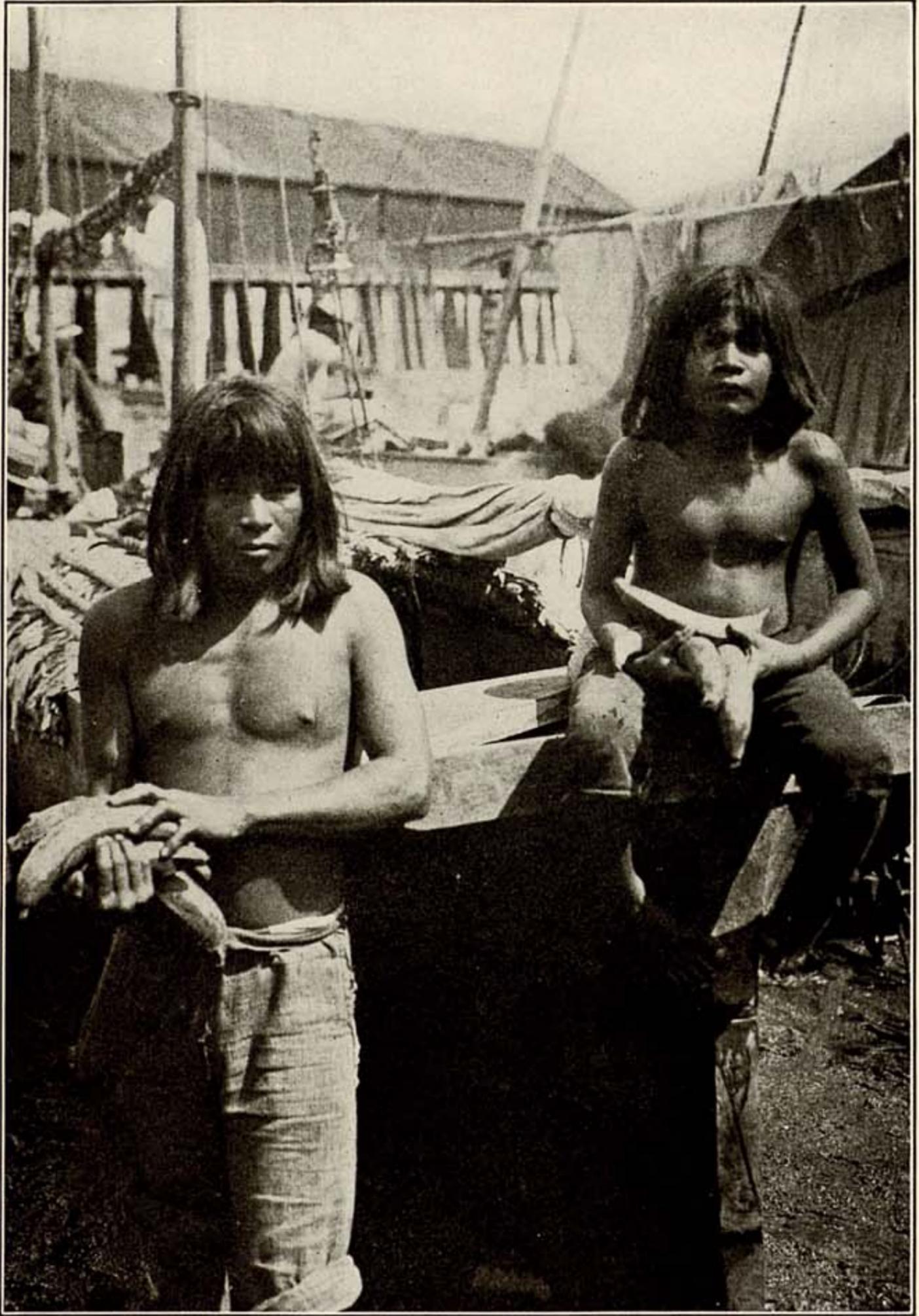
place where the gold and silver from Peru were stored to await transportation across the Isthmus to the ships from Spain. This structure was divided into sections, the vaulted roofs of two of which are to-day almost intact, with hardly a brick missing.

The ruins of old Panama are probably all of this country outside of the Canal Zone that the average visitor sees. Ninety-nine out of every hundred Americans who come here know almost nothing of Panama as a republic. This, however, is not to be wondered at, as this land of the oldest white settlement in America is to-day the youngest republic on the continent, and, away from the Canal Zone, one of the least developed. With an area as large as Indiana, it has less than a half million people, no cities of any size aside from Panama and Colón, only a beginning toward a railway system, and practically no good roads at all. In dry weather the highways are little more than wagon trails; in the wet season they may be described more appropriately as ditches. More than half of the republic is unoccupied, and only a small part of the remainder is cultivated, yet it has large areas of rich lands. The most important product is the banana, which is exploited largely by the United Fruit Company, which has extensive plantations in the province of Bocas del Toro. Rubber, coffee, and coconuts are commercially important also, as well as sugar and tobacco. On the Pacific coast, Panama has thousands of acres of savannas, or rich grass lands, and the Chiriquí province, much of which is three thousand feet above sea level, is noted for its fine grazing regions.

In the meantime, the undeveloped and often unexplored parts of Panama are interesting chiefly from a zoölogical



Out in the country the average Panamanian works only enough to procure the bare necessities of daily life. His food, clothing, and shelter are all of the simplest kinds.



The San Blas Indians have resisted practically every attempt made to lead them out of their primitive life, and have preserved their tribal identity through four hundred years under the rule of the whites.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS

and horticultural standpoint. The birds are noted for their gorgeous plumage, and the lowlands are full of crocodiles, armadillos, jaguars, monkeys, snakes, and other reptiles of all kinds. There are lizards that range from a few inches to several feet in length. One of them, the fat, grass-green iguana, is sold in the markets, and its flesh is much relished by the natives. I am told that it is considered as great a delicacy here as is the diamond-back terrapin in the Chesapeake Bay region in the States. Panama is also a land of game and wild fowl. The highlands are full of deer and wild hogs, and a hunter may now and then bag a tapir.

And then the fruits of Panama! One of them contains so much pepsin that he who eats it can digest a meal of buckwheat cakes, Welsh rarebit, and pork chops! We have it down here. It looks like a muskmelon, and it grows at the top of a tree not unlike a small palm. This fruit is the papaya, and one may order it at any hotel. As to alligator pears, I can have them almost for the asking. There are also delicious bananas from Bocas del Toro, pineapples from the Island of Taboga so luscious they can be eaten with a spoon, and mangoes fit for a queen's table. Moreover, apples and pears and all the other fruits of the temperate zone are brought here from the United States.

Taking a trip out through the jungles of Panama is for the most part like riding through a botanical garden, with Nature running riot in the luxuriance of her tropical vegetation. There are palms of a hundred varieties, wild bananas, and strange trees in which air plants and orchids hang from the limbs and nestle at the base of the branches. There are great clumps of bamboo with their feathery

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

leaves, and beds of tasselled papyrus, the same plant as that used in old Egypt to make the boat-like cradle in which little Moses rocked when he was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter.

Some of the trees have magnificent foliage, being covered with blossoms of the brightest of red, yellow, and blue, and others are bearded with Spanish moss. Parts of the jungle remind me of the Himalaya foothills above the plains of the Ganges, and in other places the country is open, affording a vista of hills and ridges not unlike those of the Blue Ridge.

In the jungle are plants and woods that the Indians use for medicinal purposes, but which are practically unknown outside this country. One wood will stop hemorrhages, another furnishes an antidote for snake poison, and there is a plant the juice of which is said to be one of the strongest of emetics. On the Pacific side of the Isthmus live the Chucunaques, and on the Atlantic side the San Blas Indians. The territory of the latter begins about fifty miles east of Colón, from where it extends to the boundary of Colombia, and although they live so near to where the first white settlements were founded in America, they have resisted to this day practically all efforts to turn them from their primitive life. They are a very small race, averaging less than five feet in height, but they have a remarkable chest and shoulder development, and are expert swimmers and canoeists. In their fifteen-foot dugout boats they navigate successfully the heavy seas off the Atlantic coast, and bring fish and fruit to the markets of Colón. They do not allow intermarriage with the whites, and usually refuse to let an outsider see any of their women. They will permit white

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUCCANEERS

traders to visit their villages during the day, treating them with courtesy in the meantime, but when night falls the whites are ordered to leave and find shelter elsewhere.

Other Indians live off the west coast of Panama on the Pearl Islands, which lie about fifty miles from the port of Balboa, and many of the inhabitants of which are engaged in pearl diving. The shells of the pearl oysters are sold to make buttons, knife handles, and other things in which mother-of-pearl is used; their total value is, I am told, about as great as that of the pearls found, and they provide an assured profit from the industry. The divers may work for days without finding a pearl, but the shells can always be sold.

Pearl fishing has been carried on from these islands for more than three hundred years. The first white man to learn of the gems found here was Balboa, who was given one pearl that weighed twenty-five carats and which later sold for nine thousand dollars. In his writings, Balboa said pearls were so plentiful that some of the Indians had their canoe oars studded with them. The black pearls of the Gulf of Lower California have been exported since the days of Cortés, and in the year 1715 more than one thousand ounces of them were shipped to Spain. Some of these are now in the Spanish crown, and in the cathedrals of Seville and Toledo are strings and clusters of pearls that the early explorers took from the Indians. Of recent years few pearls of great value have been discovered here, although in 1909 one the shape of a partridge egg was brought up by a diver. It weighed forty-two carats, and was coloured a greenish black at the base, shading to a steel-gray at the smaller end. That pearl was sold in Paris for five thousand dollars.

## CHAPTER VII

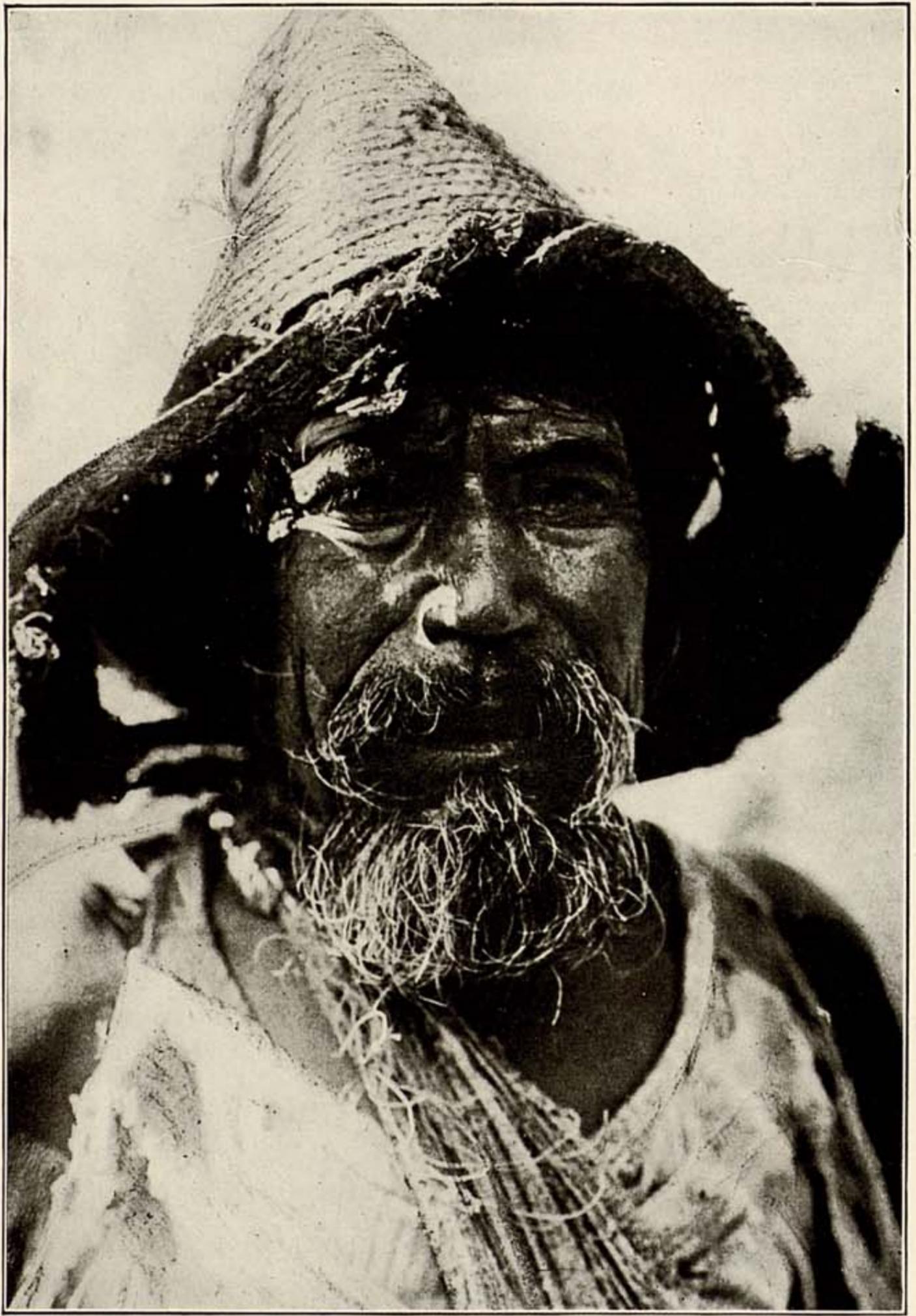
### UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

**R**ECROSSING the Isthmus of Panama, this time over the railway, I took ship at Colón and steamed northward through the Caribbean to Limón, the chief port of Costa Rica. Considering Panama as the hinge that joins the North and the South American continents, Costa Rica is the southernmost country of our grand division. It borders on Panama at the south and Nicaragua at the north, and, all told, contains a little more than eighteen thousand square miles. It is just half the size of Pennsylvania, and with the exception of Salvador is the smallest republic on the Continent. Within its boundaries, however, it has three distinct regions, climatically and topographically. Along the Caribbean is a strip of tropical lowlands which has a heavy rainfall and a correspondingly heavy growth of vegetation. Bordering the Pacific is another lowland district, but drier and more thinly forested than that on the Caribbean. Between these two coastal strips, and comprising the greater part of the country, is a mountainous region, which, in spite of its smoking volcanoes and devastating earthquakes, is one of the most beautiful parts of the face of old Mother Earth.

It is in the first of these zones that Limón is located. The city is the eastern terminus of the Northern Railway, on which we are to travel up the mountains to San José.



The banana plant dies when the single bunch of fruit it yields is cut off. After that the stalk is chopped down, but a new plant grows up from the old roots, and the same plantations keep bearing for years.



Some of the native employees of the biggest fruit company in Costa Rica began their connection with Yankee industry in 1871, when the railway line between the east coast and the capital was begun.

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

The contract for the construction of that railway was originally let to Henry Meiggs, the famous American engineer who built the Peruvian line from Lima to Oroya, the highest railway in the world. Later the contract was transferred to his twenty-three-year-old nephew, Minor C. Keith, who with his brother began the road in 1871. However, unhealthful climatic conditions and an insufficient working capital delayed its progress to such an extent that it was not completed for twenty years. It is said that at one period Mr. Keith succeeded in working his employees eleven months without a single pay day, the personality of the man being strong enough to hold his labourers on faith. The money was eventually forthcoming, and there are old men in Limón to-day who declare with pride that they are "'71 men," or "'72 men," as the case may be, referring to the date on which they entered Mr. Keith's service in the construction of the line.

The Northern Railway is leased by the United Fruit Company, of which Mr. Keith is now a director, and which owns a great part of the banana lands of this country. After leaving Limón, the track skirts the Atlantic for some miles, and from the car windows we can see the blue expanse of the ocean at our right. At our left are groves of coconuts, the trees so close to the cars that we momentarily expect the nuts to fall down and crack the heads of the brakemen. Then we come to the banana plantations. They line the railway for fifty miles from Limón, and at one of the little stations we decide to leave the train and see something of how this fruit is grown and harvested.

The plantation we visit is one of the largest on earth. It stretches away from the track for miles, and contains

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

thousands of acres. Almost as far as we can see there is nothing but a vista of waving green, broken here and there by some great tree that was too big for cutting when the jungle was cleared. Nevertheless, this is only one of many such vast estates. Costa Rica is one of the foremost banana-growing countries in the world, having about eighty thousand acres devoted to raising this fruit, and annually shipping from seven to ten million bunches of bananas to the United States and Europe. Almost half of this product comes from the lands owned by the United Fruit Company, which buys and ships also all of the fruit produced on the smaller plantations.

By climbing a near-by hill and looking through our field glasses at the plantation below us, we see that the green expanse all about is divided into great fields or farms, each of which contains a thousand acres or so. From the main line of railway a number of branches extend through the plantations, and from these branches jut out smaller spurs, the whole forming a transportation system that penetrates every part of this region.

But let us go down and take a ride through this plantation. As we have a special car, we can stop where we please. We pass for miles through a dense forest of wide-leaved rustling green plants so close to the track that we can almost reach up and pull the fruit from the stems. I suppose it makes your mouth water to think of eating a banana fresh from the tree. As a matter of fact, such an act would surely give you indigestion, for on no trees in these thousand acres do we see a single yellow banana. Every bit of the fruit is cut green.

Now we have left the cars and are walking through the plantation. How dark it is! The leaves are so thick and

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

so many that they keep out the sun. All we can see is banana plants, which nowhere in the world grow more luxuriantly than here. Although they are stalks rather than trees, they rise sometimes to the height of a two-story house. They have broad, ribbon-like leaves eight or nine inches wide, which sprout from the base of the plant to form a short trunk and then curve gracefully outward, bending over so that their ends rustle and wave in the breeze. At the very top, like the tassel of a corn-stalk, is a stem that grows upward and then curves downward in the shape of an inverted letter U, and on the end of this is a bunch of bananas, the fruit growing the reverse of the way we see the bunches hung in our stores. The bunches are divided into small sections known as hands, each containing ten or twelve bananas, and the individual bananas are called fingers. In many places a bunch of eight or nine hands is a fairly good yield, but here the average is ten or eleven, and some of the bunches have as many as fifteen hands.

The banana plant yields only one bunch of fruit to a crop, and only one crop during its life. As soon as the bunch is cut off, the stalk is chopped down and other plants sprout up from the roots. There is no such thing as planting bananas from seed, and if there ever were seeds in the fruit they have long since disappeared from lack of use. All the plants now come from suckers, as the sprouts are called, and these grow so quickly and easily that a plantation will yield a continuous harvest from one year to another. In some places banana trees have reproduced their kind for fifty years without re-planting, but this is exceptional. On this plantation some of the worn-out banana land is being planted with

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

cacao trees, new banana orchards being set out on fresh soil reclaimed from the jungle.

Let us stop and watch the workers gathering the fruit. This requires great skill. The bunches must not fall on the ground, for the slightest bruise makes them unfit for shipping. The men use long lances with sharp steel blades, with which they cut halfway through the stem at one stroke. This causes the stalk to bend slowly, and the cutter catches the bunch as it gently drops down. With another slash of his knife he now severs the rest of the stem, and the bunch is carried to the nearest railway spur.

In a few moments a train comes along and the bananas are carefully loaded upon it. Each bunch is lifted as tenderly as though it were a baby and laid softly down on the car, which has been lined with leaves to prevent bruising the fruit when the train is in motion. The men know just how many bunches will fit into a car, and how many carloads it will take to fill the steamer that is to carry them away. Indeed, the industry is so highly organized that not a moment is wasted from the time the bunch leaves the tree until it reaches its market. The workers know just where the bananas are to be sold and how long they will be en route, and so they cut them at a stage of maturity that will insure their not ripening too quickly. The bunches are transported to Limón in the cool of the night, and loaded at once on a waiting ship by means of endless belt conveyors. In the boats they are kept cool by a refrigerating and ventilating system, and when landed at our Gulf or Atlantic ports they are immediately transferred to special trains in which they are kept at a certain temperature.

Practically all of the bananas from here formerly went

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

to the United States, the European market having been supplied largely by Jamaica. However, in the last few years, more than a million and a half bunches annually have been going to England. Americans are said to be the greatest banana eaters in the world, consuming ten times as many as the Latin-American countries. We do not, however, use them in as many ways as do the people of the tropics. Here in Central America as much of the fruit is eaten baked or fried as it is raw, the variety known as the plantain always being cooked. The bananas are also dried and ground into banana flour, and fermented into vinegar and cordials. In Jamaica the people make banana sugar, and in British Guiana a banana coffee is in use. In Mexico the fibre of the plant is employed in weaving hammocks, and in the Philippines hemp comes from one species of it.

Nearly every tropical country on the globe claims to be the first home of the banana, although scientists now believe that it originated in India at the foot of the Himalayas. One old legend goes so far as to state that the banana plant grew in the Garden of Eden. Another says that the sages of the ancient world were wont to rest in its shade and eat of its fruit. Both of these legends are borne out by the botanical names of two varieties, which mean Fruit of Paradise and Fruit of Knowledge.

Although the banana is now one of the cheapest fruits we have and may be found in the most remote country store in the United States, a half century ago it was a rarity, and only thirty-five years ago it was still considered a luxury. The first bananas known in this country were brought here from Cuba in 1804 by a trading schooner. In 1866 some were shipped to New York from Colón,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

but importation in any quantity did not start until the '70's, when Minor C. Keith and a Boston capitalist began setting out banana plants and shipping the fruit over their infant railway. By 1899 we were importing twelve million bunches annually, and in that year the industry was organized on a large scale by the formation and incorporation of the United Fruit Company.

To-day, this company is the greatest single factor in the commercial development of Costa Rica. It has made many public improvements in the port of Limón, and it keeps that city clean. It has large offices there, also wireless stations, telephone systems, light and power plants, a hospital, schools, and villages for its employees. In addition, it pays the government an export tax of one cent upon each bunch of bananas sent out of Costa Rica.

The activities of the company are by no means confined to Costa Rica. All together, it has more than a million acres of land in this country, Colombia, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Canary Islands. It has its own fleet of freight and passenger steamers operating between the United States and the lands of the Caribbean, and it has railway lines, wharves, warehouses, and stores at various points in this part of the world. It owns ranches where it raises the oxen, horses, and mules used on its plantations, and it has dairy and vegetable farms to supply its workers.

Many people think that there is but little labour necessary in raising bananas. There was never a more mistaken idea. When the United Fruit Company took up these thousands of acres, the land was covered with a jungle as dense as that on the slopes of the Himalaya Mountains. All this jungle had to be cut down and the

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

land turned over. After that was done and the banana plants set out, they had to be kept clean of weeds, which is no easy matter in a country where Nature is so generous that if cleared land is neglected it will be jungle again at the end of six months. Also, some of the lands were swampy and had to be ditched. The banana is one of the thirstiest of plants, growing only where the rainfall is heavy, but it will not grow with its feet in the water.

Most of the labourers on the Costa Rican plantations are Jamaican Negroes, who seem to be about the only race able to work hard in this climate. They live in little villages scattered here and there along the railroad, and usually have a patch of ground on which they raise part of their food. The officials and foremen are whites, and the responsible positions are held mostly by Americans sent here from the United States.

This fruit is sold at such low prices that the profit on each banana is infinitesimal and the United Fruit Company cannot make money on a small crop. Often a plant disease will wipe out an entire plantation, and again a hurricane will cause heavy damage. Such things happen not infrequently, and so the company has eliminated the risk as much as possible by developing plantations in different countries—putting its eggs into several baskets, as it were. If one of them shows a partial or complete loss, the deficit is made up by the profits from other plantations. Every estate keeps cost accounts like those of a large manufacturing establishment and can tell to the tenth of a cent the sum spent on each bunch of bananas. It is only by such methods that bananas can be sold in the States at prices lower than those of our home-grown apples and still yield a profit.

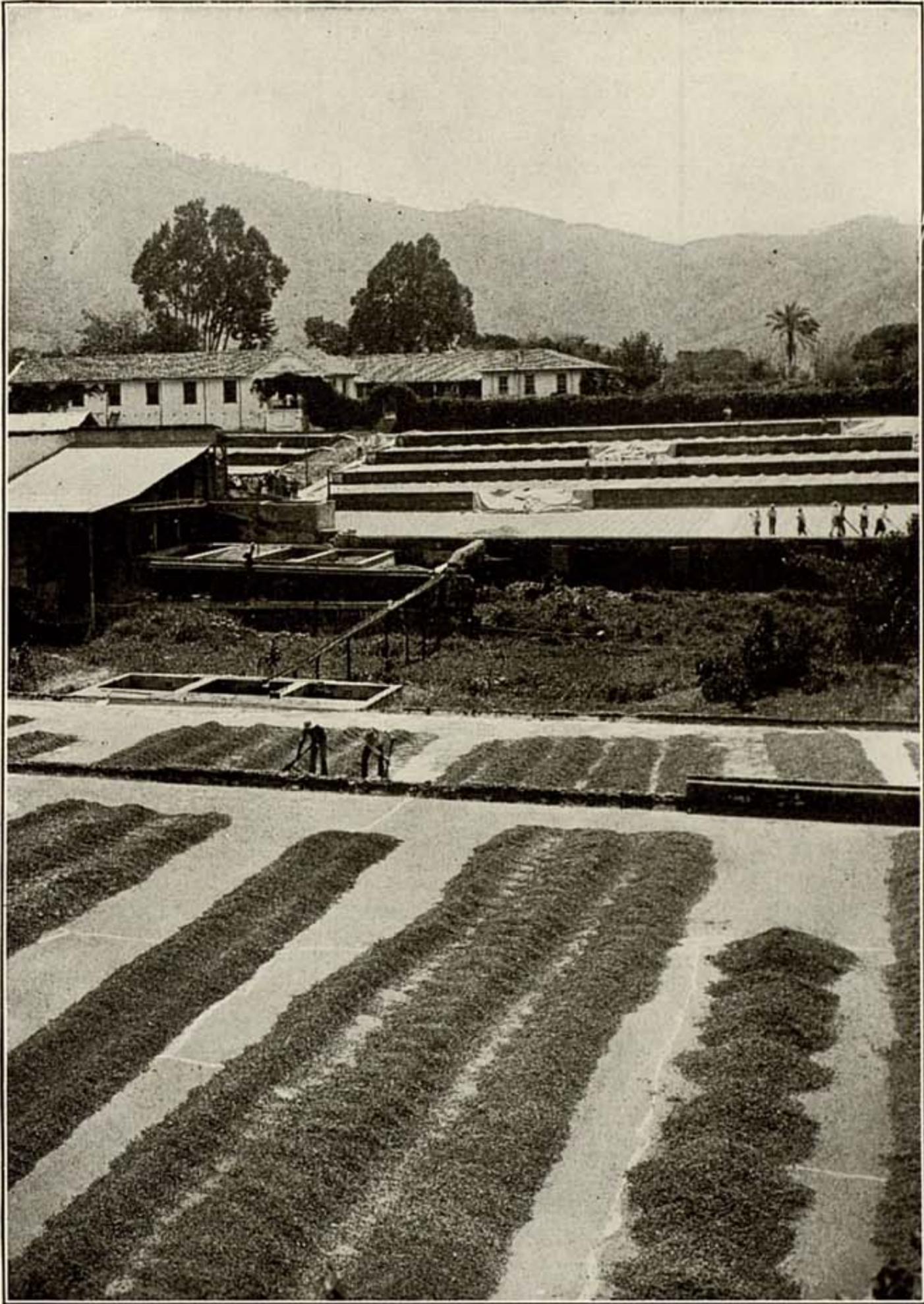
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The banana lands end at the foothills of the mountains, and from a little beyond where they stop to an altitude of between three and four thousand feet the chief crop is coffee. The plantations climb the steepest hills, some so precipitous that it would seem impossible to cultivate them except with rope ladders. Nevertheless, the work pays, for Costa Rican coffee ranks in quality with the Mocha of Arabia, and in the markets of Europe always sells at the highest prices.

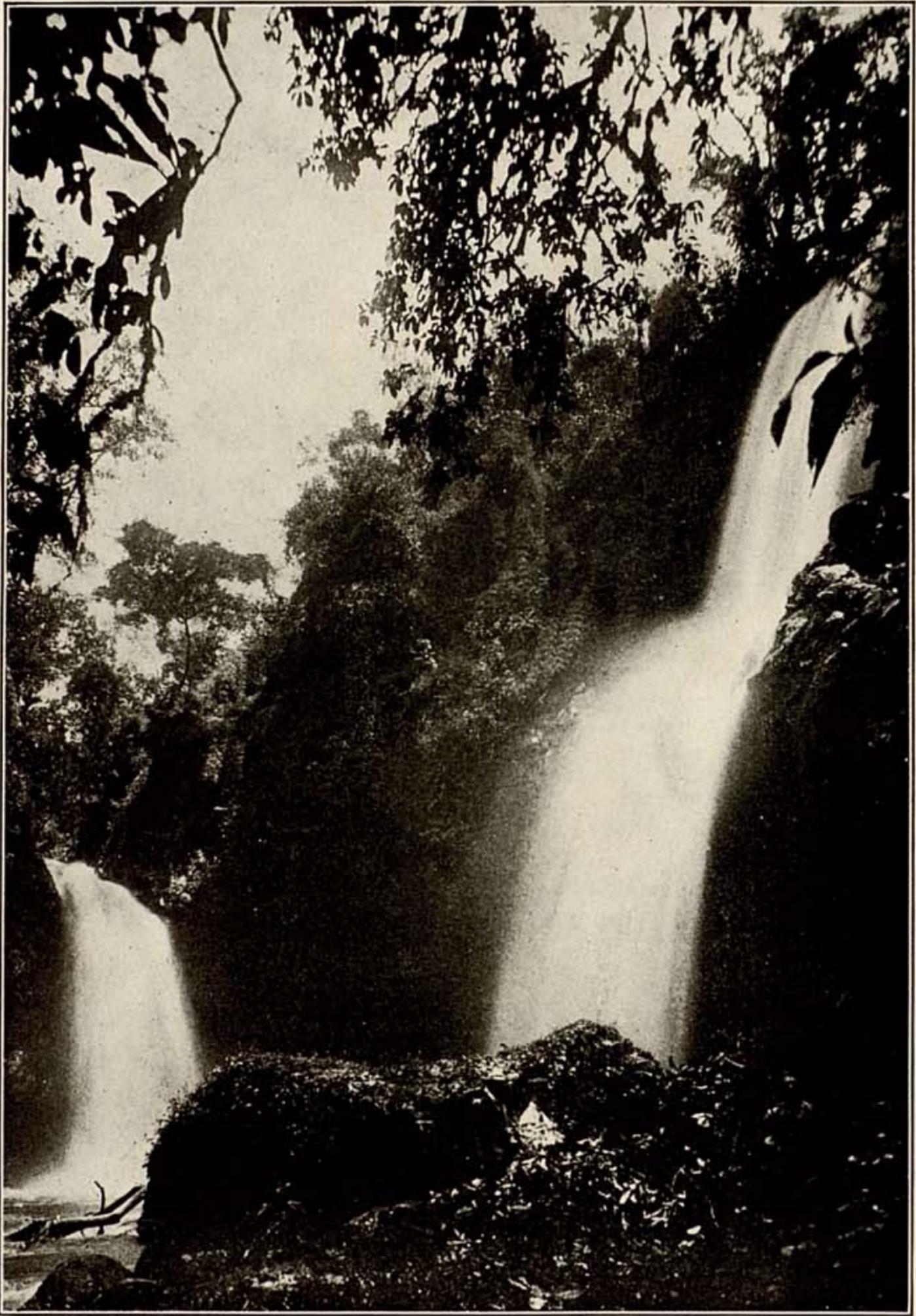
To the Costa Ricans, coffee is really the most important farm product in this country. Bananas bring in more money, but their profits go to Americans, and the failure of a banana crop makes little difference to Costa Rica. The failure of a coffee crop, on the other hand, affects practically every bank in the country and a large proportion of people, as many of the plantations are small and owned by the middle classes.

Nearly every man of wealth in San José has a country estate the main crop of which is coffee. After the Christmas holidays he leaves his home in the city and takes his family to the country for the months of January and February, when the crop is harvested. I find also many American coffee planters down here in Costa Rica, all of whom are introducing modern agricultural methods. The effect of this is shown in the increased size and better quality of their crops, and the native growers come from far and near to view the results.

As we go on up the mountains we pass but few towns. Most of the houses we see are shacks of one story, with overhanging roofs forming porches in front and in back. Aside from the porches the average home is not more than twelve feet square, and an entire family lives in one room.



The coffee grown in the highlands of Costa Rica is of especially fine quality, more of which goes to Europe than to the United States. The crop ranks next to bananas in providing revenue for the people.



The scenery of the eastern slopes of Costa Rica is as beautiful as any in Central America, combining high mountains, crystal streams, and plunging waterfalls with a luxuriant and colourful tropical vegetation.

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

The roads and the means of transportation are as primitive as the dwellings, the people making their way to and from the stations on horseback or in ox-carts. The horses are small, but their gait is a single-foot, and they are easy to ride. Every traveller carries his saddle bag with him, and half the men we see at the stations have such receptacles slung across their shoulders.

Reaching the highlands, we often have an extensive view of a crazy quilt of small farms spread out in a valley below us. The soil in these valleys is composed of volcanic ash and mud, and is one of the richest upon earth. It produces fields of green sugar cane, groves of oranges, orchards of coffee, and beds of plantains or bananas. Some of the farms have cattle feeding upon them, and on others horses are pastured. One thing in particular that shows the extraordinary fertility of the Costa Rican soil is the fences. The mountain farms are surrounded by hedges of saplings set close together and interwoven with barbed wire, but which nevertheless grow luxuriantly. At the top they shoot out long branches, which in time are cut off and used as fuel. Indeed, there is a wood lot surrounding every field, and all the cooking in the poorer homes is done with fuel supplied by the fences.

As we go on, the land continues to rise. The railroad track climbs right over the mountains, ascending almost five thousand feet in the ninety miles between the Atlantic and the top of the pass. The road then descends about two thousand feet to San José, which is three quarters of a mile above sea level. Throughout all this distance the scenery is wonderfully beautiful. We have hardly left the lowlands before we reach the Reventazón River, an emerald-green stream the valley of which we follow for

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

much of the journey. This river winds in and out, cutting through many gorges, to the precipitous green walls of which clings the railway. In some places we may look down to the river, fifteen hundred feet below, and up to the mountain peaks, as far above the road as the stream is beneath it.

The windings of the track are almost as many as those of the river. This line has not yet been discovered by the tourists who go off every summer to Europe to see the Swiss Alps, but in many respects it is fully as interesting as are the railways of Switzerland. It goes over high trestles, through deep cuts, and around horseshoe curves sharper than those of the Pennsylvania system. There are places where it is as circuitous as the trail of a snake. The engine may often be seen from the car window as the train twists up the grades, and frequently the track doubles back upon itself.

Climbing higher and higher, the mountains seem to roll over one another in all sorts of shapes, now in great gorges, and again in hollows or nests of comparatively level land covered with farms. Some of the peaks are more than two miles in height, and from the top of one of them, Mount Irazú, a person can see both the Atlantic and the Pacific, each about seventy-five miles distant. The average height of the mountains, however, is only that of the tallest peaks of the Alleghanies, and they can be cultivated almost to their tops.

Although it was so hot at Limón, here the elevation makes the climate that of perpetual spring, and the splendour of the vegetation corresponds with the climate. I have travelled along the Andes from Panama to the Strait of Magellan, but nowhere have I found more re-

## UP THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN JOSÉ

freshing scenery. The slopes of the west coast from Ecuador to Valparaiso are ragged and rocky, and as bare as the most arid parts of the Sierra Nevadas. They are bordered by the great desert, which, beginning at the north end of Peru, skirts the western coast of the South American continent for two thousand miles. In striking contrast, the highlands of Costa Rica are green all the year round.

Our journey up the mountains is through a natural botanical garden more gorgeous in places than the famous ones of Java or Ceylon. There are palms of untold varieties, one of the strangest being the *pejibaye*, which grows as high as a five-story building and has a trunk covered with bristling black spines as big as a darning needle. It bears a fruit that is rich in starch and oil, and which is as important a staple food to the natives as are dates to the Arabs or bananas to the West Indian Negroes.

Farther on we find tropical giants of other arboreal varieties, some between one and two hundred feet high. They are mostly hardwoods, knotted and gnarled, with limbs twisting about in every direction. The air is so moist that the trunks are often covered with moss of bright green an inch or so thick. The branches of other trees are draped with vines, and their trunks wrapped around with long lianas or vegetable ropes that extend to the ground and root themselves in the earth. There are ferns of a hundred varieties, some as fine as the maiden-hair, and others tree ferns, each with a single stalk as big around as a man's arm, rising to a height of fifteen or twenty feet and bursting out into lacy green fronds at the top. There are gorgeous flowers the names of which

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

I do not know. Many grow higher than my head and send out the most delicious fragrance.

Hundreds of the trees are almost hidden by orchids, and tens of thousands of these aristocrats of the flower world are here to be had for the taking. There are other air plants of every description, and, in short, such a dense mass of strange, luxuriant, and beautiful vegetation, including flowers, trees, and vines, that it is impossible for the pen adequately to describe it.

The mist adds to the beauty of the woods, and the perpetual dripping from the trees reminds me of the wonderful rain forest of the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi, the African Niagara. Where the sun breaks through in the more open places it paints little rainbows, some of them seeming to be not more than two hundred feet long.

The animal life of this region is much the same as in Panama. The forests abound especially with wild hogs, which roam about in small herds, and which occasionally may be seen migrating to fresh feeding grounds in huge droves of as many as five hundred or more. The northern part of Costa Rica along the Caribbean coast is noted for its turtles, which lay their eggs on the beach. One species, the green turtle, is caught and shipped to New York and Key West for the making of soup, and its eggs are greatly relished by the natives. Another species caught here, the hawksbill, furnishes part of the real tortoise shell of commerce.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PICTURESQUE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

**O**NE of the most interesting little cities in Latin America is San José, the capital of Costa Rica. Lying in a natural amphitheatre in the mountains, it is surrounded by peaks that are green to their tops, although their heads are lost in the clouds. The sky above it is bright blue, the air is so clear that one can see for miles, and the semi-tropical sunshine throws into bold relief the gay-coloured buildings of bright yellow, sky-blue, and grass-green, all roofed with red tiles.

San José is a city of one- and two-story buildings, with many Catholic churches, a good-sized cathedral, a great theatre, and other public structures. There are a half-dozen parks scattered through it. The narrow streets cross one another at right angles, the main thoroughfare being the Avenida Central, which begins at the park near the Northern Railway station and ends at the grassy polo grounds on the opposite side of the town. Along the streets are narrow flagstone sidewalks, and the pavement between is a combination of earth and rough cobbles, over which heavy ox-carts move with a sound like that of a traction engine on a corduroy road. They wake me at five o'clock every morning, and when I want to write during the day I have to close the windows and doors to shut out their creaking.

The houses are mostly of Spanish type. They have wide doors and windows facing the street, and overhanging

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

roofs, from which drain pipes connect with the open concrete gutters that line the sides of the roadways. The rooms of the more pretentious structures face upon patios or little courts filled with palms and tropical plants. The poorer dwellings sometimes have a garden at the back, but more often they consist merely of one or two rooms facing the street, with no back outlet whatsoever.

The finest edifice in San José is the National Theatre, which cost more than two million dollars, and this in a city of only forty thousand people. Like many other buildings, it was damaged considerably during the earthquakes of March, 1924, but has now been almost entirely rebuilt. It stands directly opposite some low one-story government buildings, dwarfing its surroundings and making all the neighbouring structures look insignificant indeed. It is entered through a wide lobby upheld by pillars of marble with capitals and bases of bronze. The ceiling of this hall is covered with beautiful frescoes, and the walls are of Italian marble. Near the entrance are beautiful sculptures, and at the right and left are restaurants where ices and drinks are served.

Passing through this lobby, wide marble stairs lead to the foyer or great salon, where the people stroll about between acts. This room is almost as long as the East Room of the White House, and is gorgeous beyond description. The decorations were all done in Italy and shipped here to be put in place by Italian craftsmen. The most beautiful marbles were employed, and the walls and ceilings are covered with huge paintings done by Italian artists and then transported across the Atlantic. Drama, tragedy, and comedy are depicted in the carvings on the marble columns that uphold the roof, and the frescoes are either

## THE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

allegorical or indicative of the beauties of Costa Rica. The furniture, gilded and upholstered in silks, is equally magnificent, and upon the walls are mirrors mounted in frames made in Florence.

The three tiers of boxes are entered from this foyer, and the orchestra seats from the first floor. The latter are so made that they can be removed and the floor raised to the level of the stage, turning the whole into a magnificent hall for dances and receptions. It was here that a great dinner and a ball were given in honour of Philander C. Knox, when he visited Central America as our Secretary of State.

It was for the rich and well-to-do of San José that this theatre was erected. Not one tenth of the population of the country live in the capital, and of these not more than one tenth can afford to go to the theatre. There are no railroad facilities to make it possible for Costa Ricans from other towns to come into San José for an evening, and even if there were, the cost of bringing theatrical troupes here is almost prohibitive. Sometimes the theatre is closed for a whole year, but nevertheless it is supported by a government subsidy, the funds for which come from a tax upon all commodities imported into Costa Rica. Being an indirect tax, everyone has had to pay this, peasants as well as people of wealth.

Another handsome building of San José is, incongruously enough, the insane asylum. It looks like the palace of some prince, and is well equipped with all modern appliances for the treatment of the mentally afflicted. While going through it, I thought of the story told of an American tourist, who said:

"I can easily understand why the Costa Ricans need

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

an insane asylum. It should be to contain the men who persuaded the people to build the theatre.”

A national institution of which the country is especially proud is the museum. It houses an extensive collection of articles depicting the natural history and archæology of Costa Rica, and showing some of its resources and industrial features as well. I saw here axes and hatchets made out of the hardest of flint, and rude stone knives polished like mirrors. Among the stuffed animals are monkeys of all sizes, armadillos with their coats like mail, iguanas as big as cats, sloths, deer, leopards, cougars, and hundreds of varieties of birds. There is no end of objects representing the civilization that existed here at the time Columbus discovered America, and the collection of pottery probably antedates that period by some hundreds of years.

From the museum we make our way through the streets, with their traffic of foot passengers, automobiles, milkmen upon horseback, and scores of ox-carts. Throughout the interior the ox-carts are still the chief means of transportation, carrying practically all the freight not hauled over the railroad. They are said to be the only vehicles that can get through the country roads during the rainy season, when the mud is usually axle deep. Such a cart has enormous wheels and a tongue almost as thick as a telegraph pole. The yoke, which must weigh at least twenty pounds, rests on the necks of the oxen, just back of their horns, to which it is bound by wide straps in such a way that the animals cannot move their heads from side to side. The driver walks in front carrying a goad which ends in a point of steel a foot long. With this he gives the great beasts a jab when they do not obey.



Standing in the midst of unpretentious one-story shops and dwellings, and facing a rough cobbled street where the creaking ox-cart is still the most common vehicle, is the elaborate two-million-dollar National Theatre of San José.



Nearly every Costa Rican woman in San José wears a voluminous shawl. Even among the lower classes this wrap is often richly embroidered, although the wearer of it may be so poor that she has to go barefoot.

## THE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

The stores of San José are scattered all over the town, with the best not far from the post-office in the heart of the city. There are several large establishments among them. The capital is the commercial centre of all Costa Rica, and most of the wholesale and retail business is done here. There are some stores with plate-glass windows that would be a credit to any city in the United States of four times this size, and the goods within them, the best of their kind, have come from all over the world. Among the merchants, in addition to the Costa Ricans, are many Germans, as well as some Frenchmen and Spaniards.

We can see the native business of this country best in San José's market. Every town in Costa Rica has its large market building filled with stalls and shops of all kinds, and it is there that the common people go to buy and to sell. These places are much like the bazaars of the Orient, or those that were so common in Europe in the Middle Ages.

The market at San José covers a full city block. It is surrounded by rows of wide stores forming the outer wall, with other rows of stores and shops extending along narrow aisles through the court within. The stores in the outer wall are about thirty feet deep, and those within much smaller. They sell everything under the sun. One section is devoted to shoe shops, another to tailor shops, and a third to leather wares, including the saddle bags that every Costa Rican peasant carries when he rides abroad. The sewing machines of the tailors often stand right out on the sidewalk, and a customer being fitted with a new suit of clothes is exposed to the gaze of all who pass.

Going on, we pass a locksmith's establishment, next

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

door see a girl selling pottery, and beyond come to a section where the merchants are dealing in nothing but sugar. The sugar is put up in coarse brown loaves about the size of an Edam cheese, wrapped with palm leaves, and tied with a palm string. It is made from cane and looks not unlike dirty maple sugar. Farther on are grain merchants and in another street are women selling dresses, lace, and notions of one kind or other.

Let us stop a moment and look at the throng buying and selling. Mingling in it are residents of the capital and farmers who have come in from the country. Most of the crowd is composed of the poorer people, the wealthy doing their marketing in the stores or sending their servants here. This little republic has its well-defined social classes, some of which are quite as aristocratic as our Four Hundred at home.

How well dressed the people are! Everyone seems to wear fairly good clothes. The merchants are natty in comparison with the Panamanians, and even the peasants are clean. Here come two policemen. They have uniforms of light blue, each carries a black club, and I can see revolvers in holsters on their hips. They are nice little fellows, and far more polite than the police of the Panama republic. As we talk to them, some boys come along selling lottery tickets, an occupation followed by scores of men, women, and children in this city.

Many of the women we see are bareheaded and wear their hair in long braids down their backs. It is black as the wings of the vultures outside the market, and in most cases it hangs to the waist or below. Over her dress nearly every girl has a brilliant-hued shawl, which, like the obi or wide silk sash worn by the Japanese woman, is often the most

## THE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

expensive part of the costume. These shawls are of silk, with fringe a foot long, and are covered with as much embroidery as the purse of the owner can stand. A girl may be barefooted and wearing a waist and skirt that cost next to nothing, but her shawl is always gorgeous to an extreme.

The men of the better classes wear the same kind of clothes as we do. The climate here is perpetual spring, and the white ducks and linens of Panama are too cool for comfort. It is only the peasants and farmers who dress in cottons. They have on short jackets like roundabouts, which reach a little below the waist, and their trousers fit tightly around their thin shanks. Few of the men are fat, and many look not overfed. One striking thing about them is the lack of evidence of the use of a razor. The masses do not shave, and most of the masculine faces in the market are covered with thin scraggly beards.

The Costa Ricans, as a whole, show almost no admixture of Negro or Indian blood. Down on the coast the bulk of the population is composed of the blacks from Jamaica, but here the people are the descendants of some of the best of the Spaniards. Their ancestors came from the Galician and Basque provinces of the northern part of Spain, and were superior to the types that settled most other parts of Central America. They are independent, and have had fewer revolutions and political disturbances than have any of the neighbouring countries.

One reason why Costa Rica is so little troubled by revolutions is that the lands here are quite evenly distributed. There is a large proportion of property owners, and nearly every countryman has his own little farm with a patch of bananas, a garden of fruit, fields of vegetables

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

or grain, and a little coffee plantation. The people will not leave these possessions to go out to fight, as it pays them far better to remain at home than to take up arms against the government.

Indeed, I find this republic inhabited by what are probably the most up-to-date and progressive people in all Central America. It is paying off its national debt, and it has a good school system, with colleges in the chief cities, and primary and secondary schools throughout the country. Education is compulsory, and to support it the government is spending each year about a dollar and a half for every person in the republic.

There are a large number of wealthy Costa Ricans who send their children abroad to be educated. Most of this class speak several languages, including English. Many of the young men go to the United States for their education rather than to Europe, but the girls are sent largely to the colleges and convents of France.

One can see something of the literary tastes of the Costa Ricans by a look at the bookstores of San José. There are a number of excellent ones, and in some I have found a good supply of English, French, and German literature, including our best magazines and the New Orleans and New York newspapers. Costa Rica itself publishes a half-dozen daily papers, but they look like postage stamps in comparison with the blanket-like sheets of our journals. In Limón are newspapers published in both English and Spanish, and here at the capital is one printed for the most part in red. The paper used is poor, and the illustrations are atrocious.

The success of the United States in cleaning up the Canal Zone had a far-reaching effect that extended even to

## THE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

Costa Rica. This country has taken a new interest in sanitation methods and has improved the water and sewerage systems of San José. It is taking steps also to eradicate disease. Hookworm is common, both among the Negroes on the banana plantations and the whites here in the highlands, and undoubtedly is to a large extent responsible for the weak, anæmic, and rather undernourished appearance of the peasant classes. The men, I venture, will not average five feet four inches in height. I am only five feet eight, but even so am a head taller than many of them.

The Costa Ricans as a race delight in social life and entertainments, and I am told that some men will mortgage their crops in order that their wives and daughters may make a "splurge" during the season. At the time of a recent fiesta held in San José a certain milliner here sold two hundred hats for that occasion at a price of seventy dollars apiece. Many of them were bought on instalments and were out of style before they were paid for. This fiesta was held in the Central Park, which had been fenced off so that the common people stood on the outside and the more fashionable crowd within. One of the favourite amusements among certain classes of the men and boys seemed to be throwing confetti and squirting water at one another and at the girls. The greatest of license prevailed, and they were no respecters of persons, showering everyone alike. Some of the young men, not satisfied with water, filled their receptacles with a sticky red mixture called kola juice, and squirted this indiscriminately on friend and stranger. At the same time, confetti by the bushel was thrown everywhere. The mixture made a nasty mess, and destroyed many beautiful hats and gowns. Nevertheless, the people seemed to think it was fun.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The pride of the Costa Ricans often runs in advance of their pocketbooks. Take, for instance, one of their entertainments for a delegation from a sister republic. Had the delegates gone to Washington on a similar mission they would probably have been received by the President, and that would have sufficed. Here they were made the guests of the nation, and thirty-five thousand dollars was spent on their entertainment.

In contrast with such lavish spending, there are, of course, many poor in Costa Rica. Here in San José beggars roost on the steps of the cathedral, they hang about the market, and we find one or more of them on every block in the business parts of the city. Going to the bank this morning to get some money on my letter of credit, I was surprised to see a huge pile of boxes of matches of the safety variety lying on the counter inside the cashier's window. While I waited, an old man hobbled in and held out his hand. The cashier gave him three boxes, whereupon he bowed low and went away. A moment later a woman with a child in her arms trotted in and was handed three boxes also. Then came a lame man and then a woman with a cigar in her mouth. Each carried away three boxes of matches, and the procession continued until fully a dozen poorly clad of these lame, halt, and blind had been supplied. I asked the cashier what all this meant.

"Tuesday is beggars' day," he said. "It is the one day during the week when the beggars have the right to march from bank to bank and from store to store and ask for alms. Every establishment prepares for them, and the custom is to give from one to five cents. Just now there is a scarcity of small coins, however, and we give out boxes

## THE CAPITAL OF COSTA RICA

of matches instead. The people can sell these for about two cents apiece."

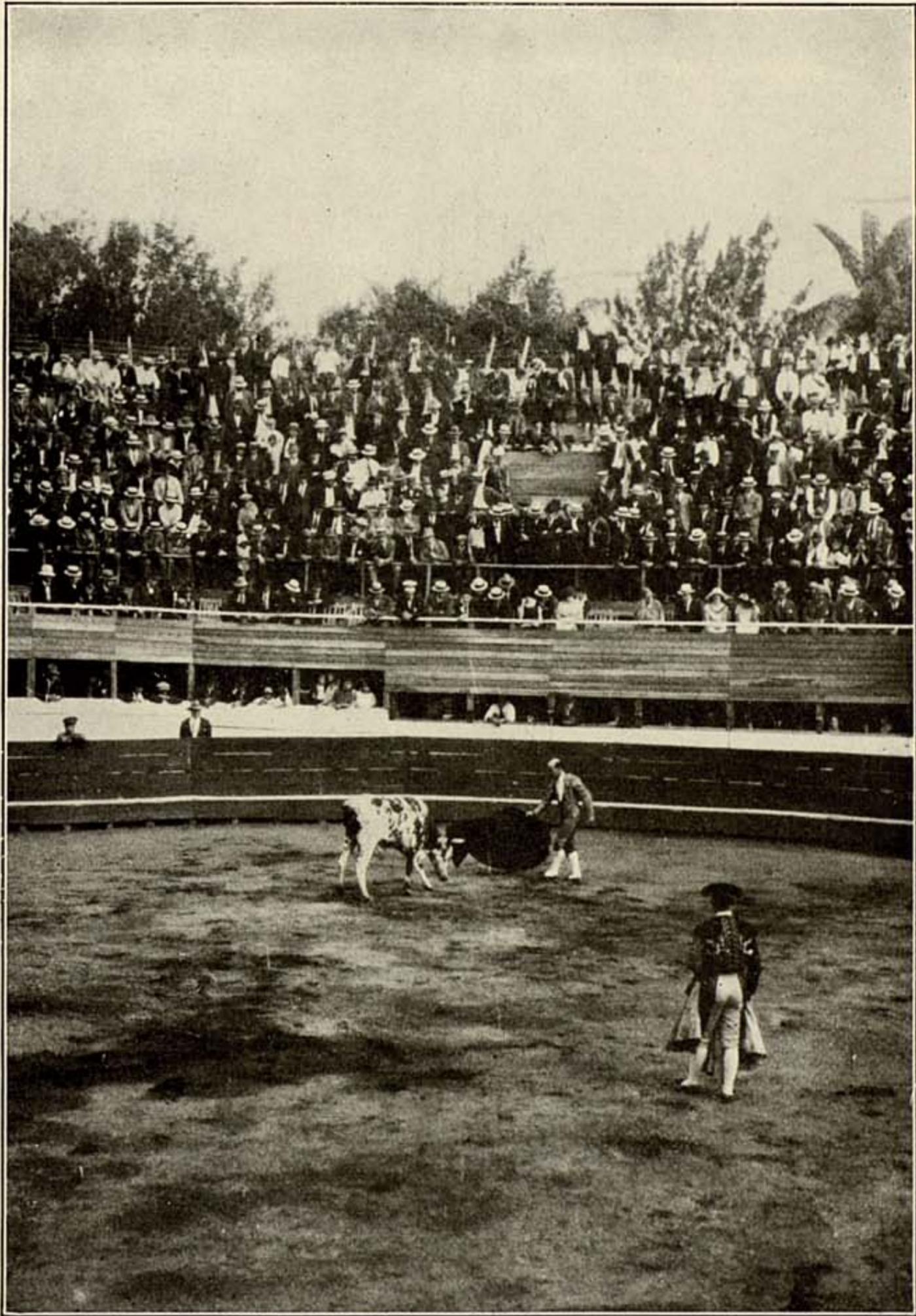
This custom seemed interesting to me, and, upon leaving the bank, I went around to other places of business to see what was happening. In one store the merchant was giving each beggar three cigarettes, in another they were supplied with a candle or so, and a third and more thrifty man, a green grocer, was giving out apples that were too decayed for sale.

## CHAPTER IX

### AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

**M**Y TRAVELS during the last few days have included a visit to the crater of Mount Poas. As a boy, before the cog railroad was built to the top of Vesuvius, I climbed up through the lava ash of that great volcano and came within a hair's breadth of being killed when a change in the wind began hurling in my direction some of the red-hot stones from the crater. I know the volcanic mountains of the Hawaiian Islands, and have climbed up the famous Tengger, the largest volcano in Java, inside the enormous crater of which the Bromo, a smaller peak, has been formed. I have seen Stromboli and Etna in eruption and have made something of a study of seismic conditions in the earthquake land of Japan. None of these experiences, however, can be compared to the climb up Poas, which included a ride of more than fifteen hours on a Costa Rican pony, over what I believe is one of the wildest and hardest mountain trails in the world.

I doubt if many of you have ever heard of old Poas. Nevertheless, it is one of the most famous volcanoes of North America. It belongs to the volcanic belt of Costa Rica, which includes Turrialba, more than two miles high, Orosí, at the extreme northern end of the country, and Irazú, which has had a half-dozen eruptions, accompanied by earthquakes that have been felt as far away as Panama City.



As a people, the Costa Ricans delight in entertainments and festivals. Although bull fights are held more and more infrequently, they are always well attended by both rich and poor.



The chief modes of travel in interior Costa Rica are by ox-cart and on horseback. The farmer who has ridden into town from the country invariably carries with him his leather saddle bags.

## AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

The horseback trip to Poas began at the city of Alajuela, which is about twenty miles west of San José, on the railway that descends to the Pacific. My party consisted of myself and my secretary, an interpreter, and a guide. We were equipped with raincoats, blankets, and sleeping bags, for we were expecting to spend the night in the open. We wore heavy clothing and had on our pajamas over our underwear and chamois jackets inside our coats. After my stay in tropical Panama, I intended to run no risk of being chilled on the top of Poas.

Fortunately, we were able to dispense with our sleeping bags by staying at a little inn at San Pedro, about two hours' ride from Alajuela, and starting from there at two o'clock the next morning. I shall not soon forget that night at San Pedro. After becoming accustomed to the comfortable beds that Uncle Sam provides in his hotels at Panama, all I had at San Pedro was a hard bench with a board doing duty as both springs and mattress. There was no light except that of a flickering candle, and so we lay down at about eight o'clock—but not to sleep. I counted the hours rung by the church bell from then until midnight, when, in weary desperation, I put all my covers between me and the board and managed to doze off.

It was just two o'clock in the morning when the guide called us, and half an hour later we had had a cup of hot coffee and were on our way up the mountain. The stars were out and we could see the Great Bear, turned upside down as it seems to be here, and also the Southern Cross, at the other end of the heavens. The Milky Way shone brighter than at home, and the whole vault of the sky, with its myriad points of diamond light, seemed to fit close down over the mountains. Indeed, the night was so

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

beautiful that it reminded me of that line in Marlowe's "Tragedy of Doctor Faustus":

Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air,  
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

Had Marlowe been on Poas, he could have said a million instead of a thousand, and without exaggeration.

For the first few miles after leaving San Pedro, the road was fairly good. We passed through sugar and coffee plantations, and went by rude factories where the workers were already grinding cane by the light of lamps and candles. They start at one o'clock in the morning and by eight have enough juice to keep them busy for the rest of the day boiling it down to sugar.

So far all was peaceful enough, and as we rode rapidly along on our Costa Rican ponies, I mentally scoffed at the remark of the British consul at San José, who had told me the trip was a hard one. I was soon to think differently. The interpreter and the guide agreed that we had best take a short cut over the hills. This we did, and came at once into a series of ravines and gorges so dark that we could not see our horses' heads in front of us. In the meantime, the clouds had obscured the stars, a mist had risen, and we seemed to be walled in by cliffs. We forded several streams, and I was warned to put only my toes in the stirrups, so that if my horse lost its footing I should fall clear of him. Climbing up hill and down, we finally crawled out into the open, where a stiff wind was blowing. The region was wild and rough, and seamed with cracks and gullies, down the steep sides of which our mounts slid almost on their haunches, and up which they climbed like the ponies of the Alps.

## AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

All this time it was growing darker and darker. The way was full of stumps and fallen timber, and the guide, who was scrambling along in his bare feet, stumbled again and again. I could follow him only by keeping my eyes on his white straw hat, but at last even that became invisible. Then, in what seemed the darkest spot of all, the man stopped and told us he had lost his way. He advised us to wait there until daylight, as some of the cracks made by the earthquakes were exceedingly dangerous. He said, however, that the path could not be far off, and so I insisted on our trying to find it. Getting off my horse, I attempted to make my way through the gullies and over the fallen trees and stumps, but I was more often on my face than on my feet. I was soon out of breath and concluded that I preferred to die on the back of a horse rather than on foot. So I mounted again, only to have the saddle girth break. My secretary helped me fix it, but while doing so his horse wandered off into the darkness and had to be found before we could proceed. We finally reached a path on the edge of the woods, and as the wind had died away the guide was able to light a candle and bring us back to the road at a point perhaps two hours' ride from the crater.

I am accustomed to the saddle and usually average ten or fifteen miles a day over the bridle paths about Washington or in the mountains of Virginia. They are the smoothest of polo grounds compared to our scramble up this volcano. The ride by daylight was even worse than that in the dark, for then we could see the dangers before us, and the trail seemed much rougher. The greater part of it consisted of steps cut out of the precipitous hills, so slippery and muddy that the ponies at times put their

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

feet together and slid down them. No American horse would have risked it, but these Costa Rican ponies are like goats, and could climb a rope ladder, I verily believe. My secretary, who had never ridden before, says that after this he feels confident he could ride his horse up the stairs inside the Washington Monument, and I doubt not he could. In some places, the steps up this mountainside equalled the height of a table.

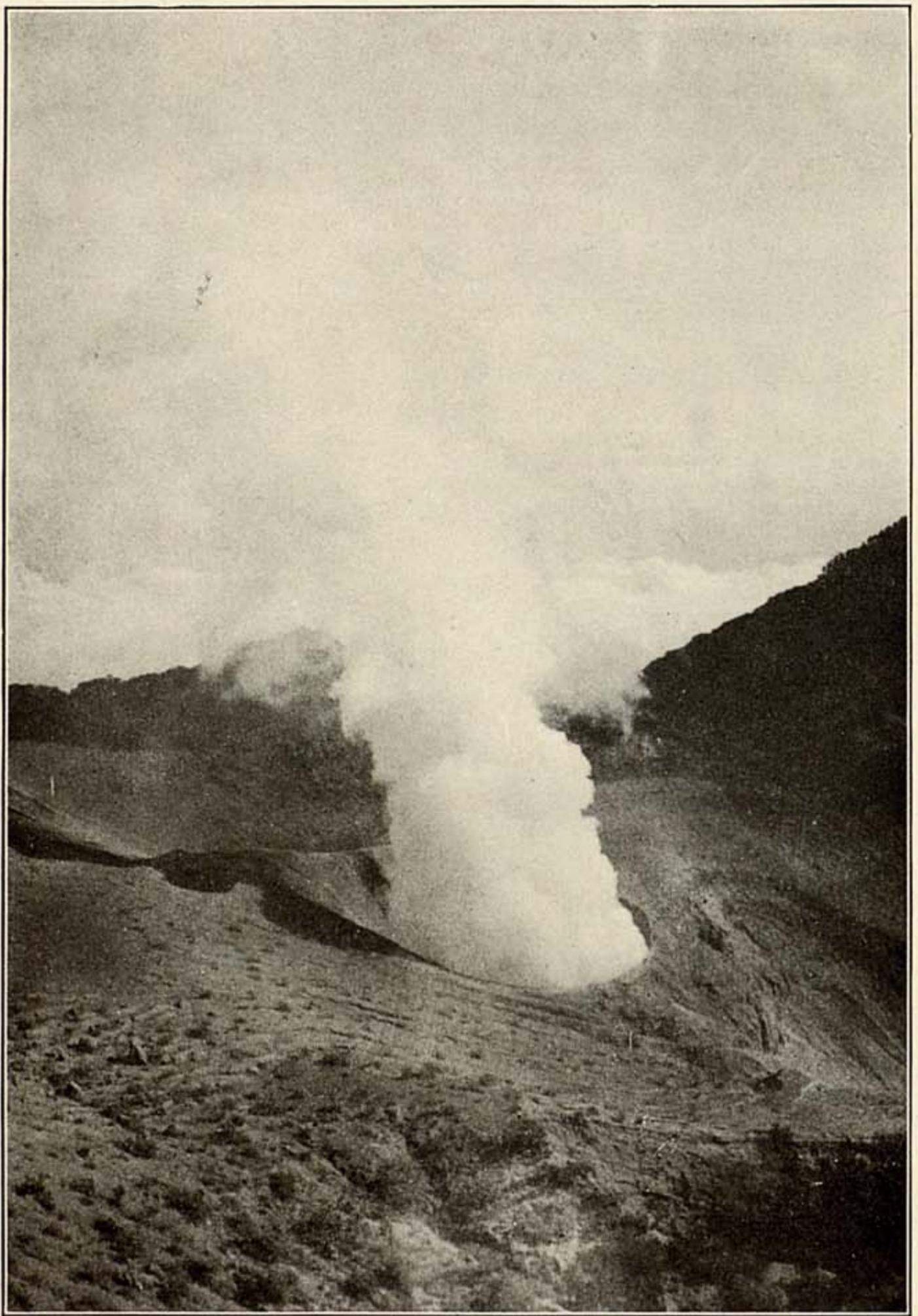
The only time the horses held back was as we neared the crater. The air there was full of brimstone, and the animals objected to the sulphurous fumes. Many people do not ride near the crater for that reason, but we kept on the edge of the abyss and made our way along it over a path covered with white volcanic ash. At the same time a strong wind was blowing from the lake of sulphur below, sending the brimstone into our faces and spattering our raincoats.

The crater of Poas is about one thousand feet in depth. When we arrived, it was obscured by clouds, which afterward lifted, revealing its steep, ragged walls and the lake lying below. This lake is covered by a yellowish green scum and its waters are said to have a decided vinegary taste. There is always some steam rising from its surface, and in an eruption the whole lake seems to shoot into the air. On fine days one can climb down the crater to its edge, but this was not possible during our stay.

Leaving this lake, we made our way a thousand feet farther up the volcano to a second crater, the latter filled with icy water as green as that from a glacier. There we ate our lunch of jam, crackers, canned tongue, and biscuits, and then began our ride back down the mountain. After several hours we stopped at a place known as the Lechería,



“My experience in visiting the crater of Poas included a fifteen-hour ride on ponyback through the forests of Costa Rica over one of the wildest mountain trails I have ever followed.”



Some of the frequent eruptions of the volcano of Irazú have been accompanied by destructive earthquakes that have made themselves felt all over Costa Rica and as far south as Panama City.

## AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

where we had expected to spend the night, but a single look at it made us change our minds. The rooms were filled with cows, and the floors were unspeakable. A suckling calf was tied on the porch of the shed, and near it a razor-backed hog investigated the contents of a garbage can as we sipped some coffee.

We made our way down to San Pedro before dark, and were fortunate enough to arrive there in time for dinner. The meal consisted only of a soup made of cheese, macaroni, rice, and eggs all mixed together, and an omelet that was somewhat flat and a bit leathery, but the food was sauced with hunger after the long day in the saddle, and our voracious appetites left no room for criticism. We slept there that night, the hard boards being transformed by the fatigue of the ride into comfortable beds. In the early morning we rode back to Alajuela.

My visit to Poas was made the more interesting by the fact that on my way from Limón to San José I had stopped off at Cartago, the city that only a decade and a half ago was laid in ruins by an earthquake, accompanying an eruption of Poas. Cartago is the old capital of the country, and was the seat of government under Spanish rule. When Costa Rica declared its independence, a faction in that city refused to join the republicans, who thereupon moved the capital to San José, then only a small mountain town. Nevertheless, Cartago remained for years a favourite place of residence for the wealthier Costa Ricans, as well as a shrine for pilgrims, who came here to seek cures at the spring under the Church of Our Lady of the Angels. It was also a noted health resort because of its hot springs and its altitude of almost a mile above sea level. It is only ten degrees from the Equator, but the temperature

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

seldom is higher than seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit, and illness is rare. While the Canal was building, this city was one of the few places where our employees were allowed to spend their vacations. They came here by the hundreds, staying at the hotel, then run by an American, and in numerous boarding houses throughout the city.

At that time Cartago was a quaint little city of stone and mud buildings bordering well-made streets, with narrow sidewalks of flag-stone. The houses were all of one story, with the rooms usually facing upon delightful patios in which were orange and lemon trees and tropical flowers. The doors and windows were large, and the mountain breezes blew through from all sides. The roofs were of red tiles, laid on the rafters, and the walls were several feet thick; indeed, the town seemed so substantially built that no one would have believed a single great shock could reduce it to ruins.

Cartago lies on the slope of the active volcano of Irazú, a huge sprawling mountain with a number of worn-out craters, but it was Poas that heralded its great disaster. That mighty peak had thrown up a geyser of steam to a height of more than two and a half miles, and this had spread out in a mushroom of light gray that shrouded the valley of San José. At the same time a rain of volcanic ash fell upon the capital city, covering the trees and shrubs for miles around as though with snow. The ashes were even carried as far as Puntarenas on the Pacific, and near the volcano stones more than a foot in diameter were showered upon the land.

Several months later, in April, 1910, an earthquake was felt throughout this whole central plateau. At Cartago

## AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

all the church bells began to ring violently about midnight, and the ground rose and fell. The tremblings of the earth continued until morning, and there were more than a score of shocks before eight o'clock, but they grew weaker and weaker, and everyone thought the trouble was over. There was another severe shock shortly after midday, and on the following day a dozen or more were recorded, but none of them seemed alarming. Then the earth remained quiet for almost three weeks, and the tourists spoke of the earthquakes as a delightful experience and planned the exciting stories they would tell when they got back to Panama.

This was the situation on May 4th, when the great earthquake occurred. There had been a slight tremor about noon of that day, but it was not until darkness was falling, at a time when most of the people were in their homes, that a mighty shock converted the surface of this city into a waving sea. Within a few seconds the whole town was reduced to ruins. A Canadian coffee planter, who lived here at that time, told me about his own experiences in the disaster.

"My family and I were uninjured," he said, "but the shock was a terrible one and we had a narrow escape. My house had walls more than three feet thick and was so built that only the interior of it was destroyed. When the quake came we were at dinner and had just turned on the lights. We had been talking about earthquakes, one of my guests saying she had felt a slight tremor that afternoon. We had barely finished telling her there was little danger, when the floors rose and the inside walls began to fall in. Everyone was thrown from his chair, the table was overturned, and the lights went out. Every

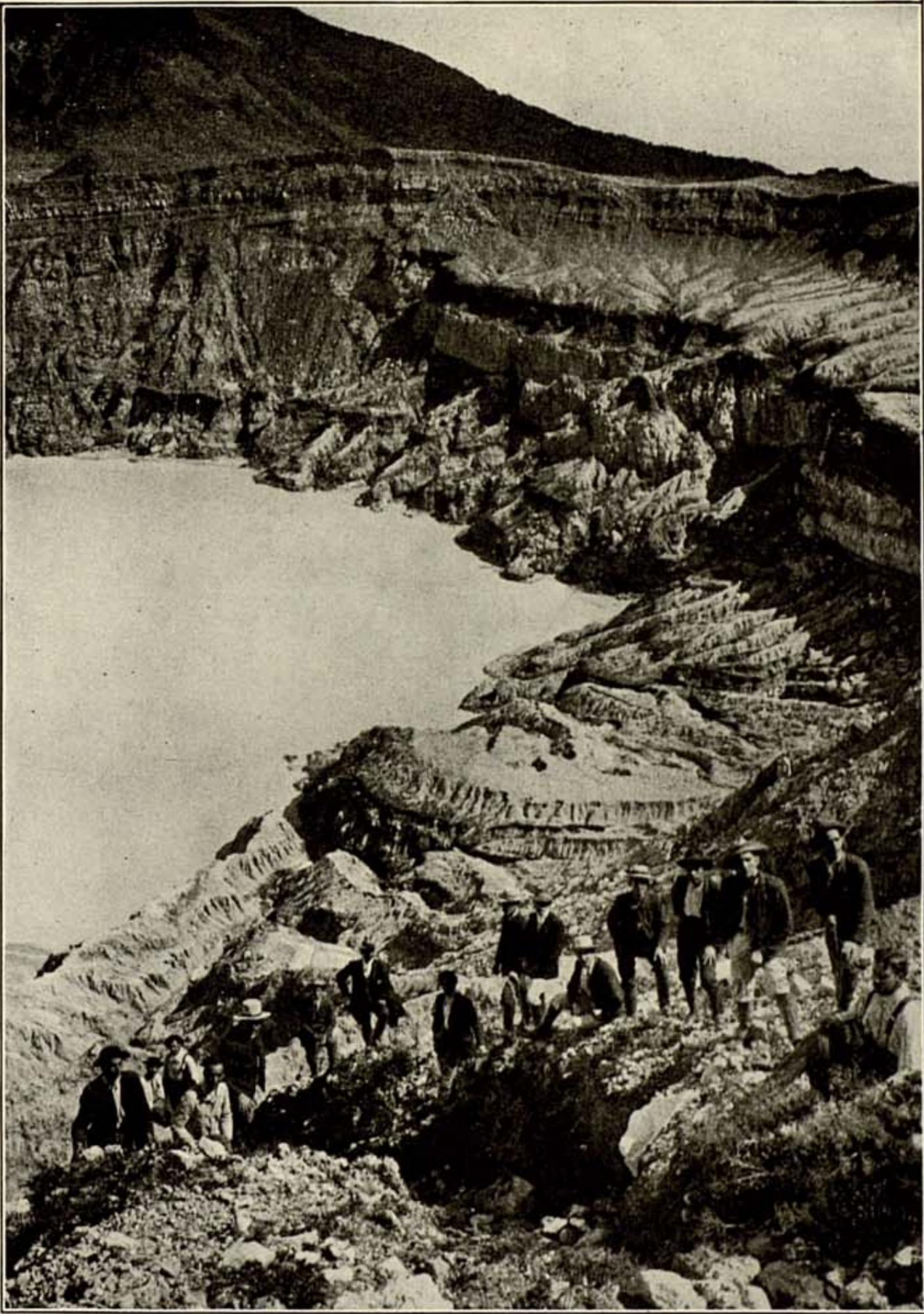
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

time we tried to rise we were again brought to our knees, and it was several moments before we could walk. Two of my children were in the care of a nurse, and a third was in bed with a fever, but none of them was hurt, and we were able to carry them out of the house.

“The scenes outside were appalling,” the planter went on. “Walls were falling everywhere, and the noise was like cannonading. People were shrieking and crying, or on their knees praying, and the air was filled with dust and ashes, making breathing difficult. All this went on in pitch darkness, as the quake had thrown off the switch at the light plant. It was fortunate that this had happened, as the electric wires had all been knocked to the ground. One caught me across the neck just as I ran out of the door, and had the current been on I should have been killed.”

Fully a thousand people, or almost one tenth of the population, perished in the ruins of Cartago. The shock came so suddenly that many were crushed before they could get out of their houses, and even outside, the streets rose and fell so that people running along them were thrown against the buildings and killed. As in the destruction of Pompeii, many lost their lives while at work, and were thus found when the ruins were later excavated. In one house a shoemaker sat with a shoe on his knee and his hammer raised in the act of striking the sole. The bodies of women were discovered sitting at sewing machines, their hands still holding the cloth and their heads bowed over their work. The wife of one Central American diplomat was giving her baby a bath when the house fell and crushed both her and the child.

In all, nearly one hundred squares of buildings were re-



The volcano of Poas has two craters—one containing a hot, sulphurous lake, and the other, higher up, filled with water as cold and green as that from melting glaciers.



Hundreds of the coffee plantations of Costa Rica, which are scattered throughout the highlands, are small holdings where all the work of cultivating and picking the berries is done by the owner and his family.

## AMID VOLCANOES AND EARTHQUAKES

duced to débris. The market was laid low, a large seminary for girls became dust and stones, and the American hotel, which then had more than two hundred guests, was totally destroyed. The Church of Our Lady of the Angels had its towers cracked and its walls ruined, and the tower of El Carmen was hurled many rods and dropped right across the railroad tracks.

Visiting Cartago not long after this catastrophe, I spent hours wandering through its almost deserted streets and tramping over the ruins of the homes of the past. By that time many of the inhabitants had erected temporary structures to take the places of the substantial houses that had been destroyed. Everywhere were shacks made of pieces of galvanized iron roofing, boards from dry-goods boxes, and scraps of old lumber. Walking down the street beside a stream of mountain water that flowed through a gutter, I came to the site of the great building that had been erected by Andrew Carnegie as a peace palace. The scenes about it were peaceful enough, but it was the peace of desolation. The structure lay where it had been stricken down by the stony hand of old Mother Earth. The walls and the roof were reduced to a pile of stones, and only the foundations remained to show what a splendid structure the palace had once been.

I next visited the cemetery, about three blocks away, and formerly the pride of Cartago. It covered six or eight acres, and was filled with monuments, elaborate vaults, and semi-tropical trees. Shutting it off from the street was a wall of catacombs, in the centre of which was the entrance. This wall was about ten feet thick, twenty-five feet high, and more than four hundred feet long. From each end of it shorter walls of catacombs extended back

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

into the cemetery. The whole formed a great set of pigeonholes, containing fully a thousand coffins of dead at the time the earthquake occurred.

This wall was broken in two about ten feet from the ground, and the upper portion moved inward several inches. At one end it was reduced to a débris of bricks, mortar, broken wood, and bones and flesh. In the central part it was tilted over so that many of the coffins were thrown out, and skulls and bones rolled about everywhere.

To-day there are still signs of Cartago's destruction, but as a whole the city has been almost entirely rebuilt. Like San Francisco, it has risen from its ruins—rather, it has utilized them to make a new city by crushing much of the débris and paving the streets with it. New houses of plastered adobe now stand on the sites of their ill-fated predecessors, and many business buildings have been erected. The churches have been restored and a new market has been built. The hot springs are as popular a resort as ever, and the people seem not to be frightened by the possibility of a repetition of the disaster that overtook them. Indeed, to wander about Cartago on a summer evening, watching the festive crowds, listening to a band concert on the plaza, or dropping in to see a moving picture at one of its theatres, one can hardly realize the shattered city it once was.

## CHAPTER X

### AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT

**T**HE Atlantic and the Pacific coasts of the American continent are now connected by transcontinental railway lines from Canada almost to the Strait of Magellan. The longest and most northerly is the Canadian National system, which runs its trains from Nova Scotia to Prince Rupert, in British Columbia; the shortest is the Panama Railway, over which I rode only a few weeks ago. I have now come down the mountains from Alajuela to the Gulf of Nicoya on the Pacific, thus completing another transcontinental journey.

Although the Costa Rican line between the two oceans is only a little more than one hundred and eighty miles long, it is one of the finest scenic routes of the world. I have already described the tropical beauties of the Atlantic slope between Limón and San José. In the higher regions of the western slope the land is almost as arid as are the Rockies. The fields are parched and brown, and the railway winds about over dry gorges and skirts thirsty cañons, some of them a thousand feet deep. Toward the Pacific, the rainfall increases, and the land is covered with jungle growth. This part of Costa Rica is heavily forested with cedar, cocobola, mahogany, and other hardwoods. The trees are magnificent in their great height. Some of the giant mahoganies are being cut for

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

our furniture market, and on my way over the railroad I passed many little sawmills turning them into lumber.

I passed also the road to the Albangarez gold mines, which are located some distance from the railway. Those mines belong to an American company, which is taking out several thousand dollars' worth of gold every year. Practically all the mining operations in Costa Rica are now on the Pacific slope, although there are known to be deposits of gold high up in the Aguacate Mountains. Those deposits were first worked in 1815, and in twenty years had produced seven million dollars' worth of gold. That was before there were any railroads in Costa Rica, and the ore had to be sent to the Pacific coast in ox-carts, and then shipped around the Horn in the sailing vessels that carried it to Europe for smelting. As soon as the highest-grade ores were taken out the mines were abandoned, but it is known that there is plenty of low-grade ore left, and it is only a question of time and transportation as to when the deposits will be further developed.

The western portion of Costa Rica's transcontinental railway belongs to the government and until recently was operated at a considerable loss. Since 1923, however, this road has been showing a profit, which, although small, is encouraging. The equipment has been improved, and the trains make better speed than formerly, but even so my train was five or six hours in making the sixty-nine miles between San José and the Pacific.

Indeed, the transportation facilities all over Costa Rica are still undeveloped. The most common mode of travel is on horseback, and much of the merchandise is carried over the country on pack-trains or in the ox-carts I have already mentioned. In the dry season the roads

## AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT

are filled with clouds of dust, and during the rains they are rivers of mud. They are much like the highways of some parts of northern China, which are ditches cut by the wheels of the vehicles to a depth of fifteen or twenty feet, with walls of dry, soft earth on both sides.

The western terminus of the railway across Costa Rica, and the republic's chief port on the Pacific, is Puntarenas, which has a population of about five thousand. It is a town of unpaved, sandy streets, some lined with coconut palms, and all bordered by wooden structures. The buildings are usually roofed with red tiles ending in a gutter, which has a pipe extending over the sidewalk. When it rains, the water from the roofs pours down through these pipes upon the middle of the pavement, making it necessary for the poor pedestrian to watch his step if he would avoid an unexpected shower bath.

The stores and business buildings of Puntarenas are scattered throughout the town. The merchants, most of whom are Costa Ricans, frequently carry large stocks of goods. This port is the business centre of Pacific Costa Rica, and merchandise is taken from here up the rivers and to the settlements along the coast.

The harbour of Puntarenas is excellent, although there are insufficient wharfage facilities, and steamers have to anchor off shore. The town is built on a sandy spit of land that extends out into the Bay of Nicoya, and is bordered on one side by an estuary nine miles long, up which one can go into the interior of the country.

Puntarenas has been called the Atlantic City of Central America, but I have yet to find any reason for this comparison. It has, it is true, a promenade walk with concrete seats on each side and a bandstand at the end, but this is

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## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

only one fiftieth as long as the boardwalk at Atlantic City. Our great resort has a beach of white sand that is comparatively clean. The sand of Puntarenas is as black as my hat and mixed with débris and rubbish. The bathing is good at Atlantic City, although now and then the water is too cold for comfort. The sea here is as warm as boarding-house soup, and so infested with sharks that one is lucky not to lose an arm or a leg while swimming. Indeed, there is only one place safe for bathers. This is within an enclosure just off shore surrounded by a woven-wire fence. Inside the fence is a public bathhouse with steps leading down into the water. The bathhouse rents bathing suits at a few cents a swim, but these are so poorly knitted that if the wearer is unfortunate enough to catch a strand of one of them on the fence he takes a chance of being unravelled to nudity before he can reach cover. Moreover, the dark sand discolours the water, and when the tide comes in swimming in it is somewhat like taking a mud bath.

The Europa Hotel, at which I am stopping, is about the best in the town. One of the few two-story structures here, it is a wooden building with a roof of galvanized iron. Last night we had a slight earthquake, which made the wood creak and the roof rumble like stage thunder, but otherwise no damage was done. The walls and ceiling consist of plain boards nailed to studding about four feet apart, so there was no plaster to fall. Although my room faces the Pacific, there are no windows to offer a view, the ventilation being provided by an open transom and by a lattice work that extends around the room just under the ceiling. The only furniture I have is an iron bed, a washstand, and two rickety chairs. Upon the

## AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT

washstand is a solitary towel. I have a right to a fresh one every day if I so demand, but no change is made unless I specifically request it. My water pitcher is of about the size of a large beer schooner, but even so is not always kept filled.

The food served here is distinguished chiefly by the fact that it is about the worst I have yet found in Central America. The regular breakfast, which I take at seven o'clock, consists of a cup of coffee and hot milk, with some dry bread. Butter is furnished, but it is so unspeakably bad that I do not try to eat it. Eggs are extra and I pay twelve cents for each one I order. They are of the scrambling variety. I am allowed a fresh napkin every week, but, like the towels, it is supplied only upon request. There seems to be a constant mix-up of napkins, and I am now protecting myself by writing a great C on the knot in which mine is tied after each meal.

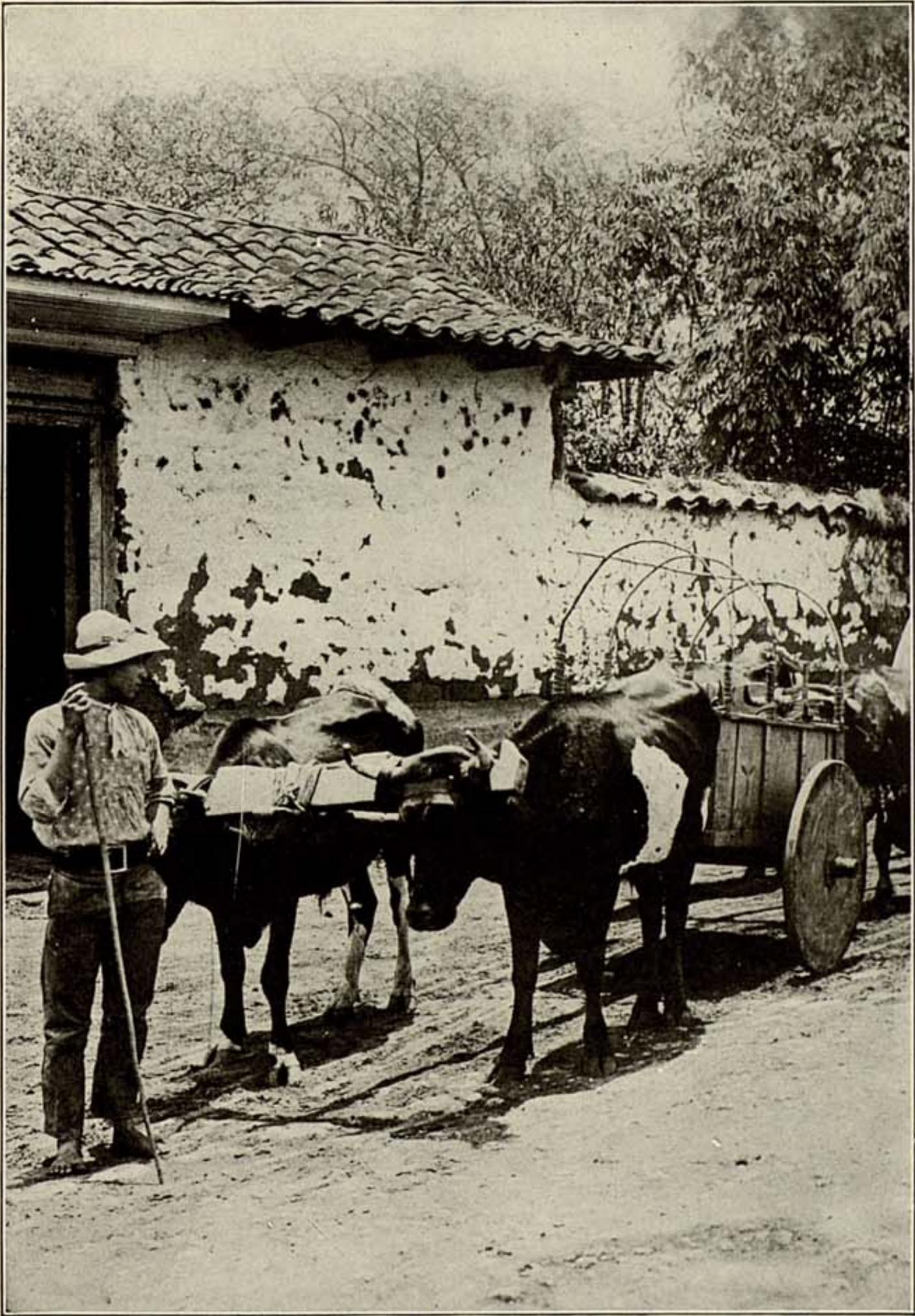
La Europa serves luncheon between eleven and twelve and dinner at six in the evening. Both these meals usually consist of a soup, fish, meat, and vegetables, and a dessert. The dessert is nearly always preserves. The country is full of ripe bananas, pineapples, and oranges, but no fresh fruit is included in the menu except upon order, and I usually buy some in the market and bring it to the table with me.

Clustering about the hotel in flocks are the ubiquitous buzzards, the scavengers of Costa Rica. I verily believe there are as many buzzards here as there are people. The great birds are protected by law, as they take the place of garbage collectors. I saw them first in San José, where one walked into my room at the hotel and pecked at the sofa. I have seen them everywhere else, and here on the

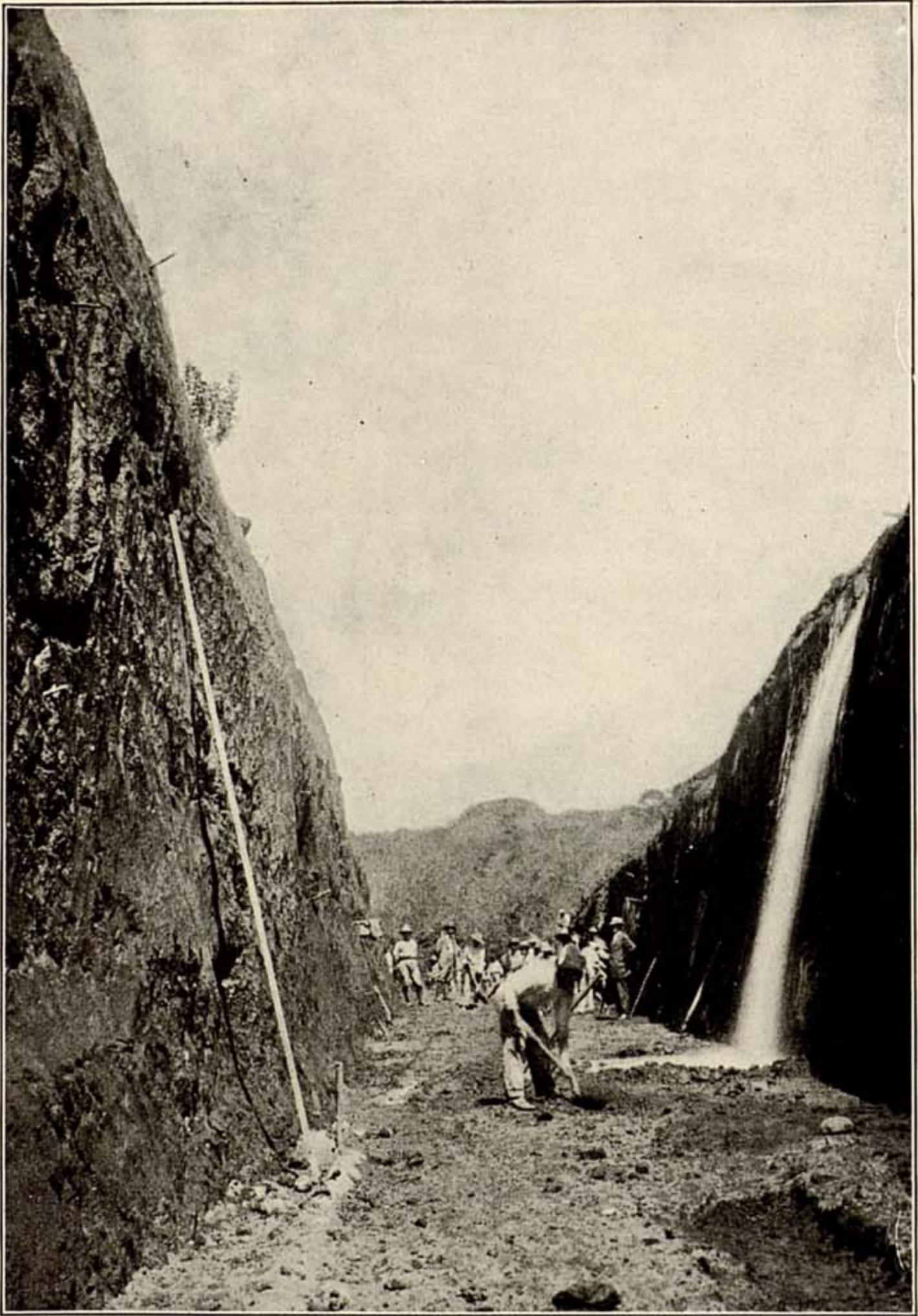
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

coast their number is legion. I can see forty of them roosting on the roofs near by as I write. They sit on the fence as I eat my breakfast, and their sleepy eyes seem to be weighing the meat on my bones and wondering how it would taste if served in true buzzard fashion, a trifle high. They carry me back to Bombay, and the great white Towers of Silence, upon which the Parsees lay out their dead for these birds to pick the bones clean.

While idling about Puntarenas waiting for a steamer to Nicaragua, I happened across many of the gold images taken from the old grave mounds of Central America. No one knows who buried them, and they date back for hundreds and perhaps even thousands of years. I saw a quart of these images in a bank in Panama City, and I am told that Minor C. Keith has a collection of them worth several hundred thousand dollars. The ones I saw in Panama were of all sizes, from that of my thumbnail to the palm of my hand. The gold in each of the heavier ones must have been worth several hundred dollars. Some represented frogs, some birds, and others women, with what looked like the hawk head of Hathor. Among them were many solid gold breastplates ranging in diameter from two to six inches, and a bracelet four inches wide and large enough to fit around the biceps of a prize fighter. This also was solid gold and, like the others, was of beautiful workmanship. Many of the images had an Egyptian cast and reminded me of the treasures found in the Pyramids. Most of them came from the Chiriquí province in the northern part of Panama, and a few from Costa Rica. At San José there is a jeweller who had some of them for sale, and down here at Puntarenas I have been offered two fine ones for thirty and forty dollars



The only railway in Costa Rica is the transcontinental line from Limón to Puntarenas, passing through San José. In other parts of the republic the ox-cart is still the principal freight carrier.



The construction of good roads in Costa Rica is still in its beginning, and most of the country highways are trails that turn into almost impassable rivers of mud during the rainy season.

## AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT

apiece. I should judge that this equals just about half the value of the gold in them.

I have also heard many stories from the "old timers" of Puntarenas about one of the fabled treasure islands of the world. This is Cocos, which lies some four hundred miles southwest of here. It is claimed that on that island is buried treasure beyond the dreams of avarice. One of the hoards is said to contain between fifty and one hundred million dollars' worth of silver, gold, and jewels. Among the objects buried there is a life-size statue of the Virgin Mary, made of solid gold, and smaller golden statues of several of the saints. These were carried to the island in 1720 at the time of a revolution in Peru. The citizens of Callao, fleeing with their plate, bullion, and valuables, chartered a little Newfoundland vessel named the *Mary Dyer*, which was lying at the wharf. They were chased by a Peruvian man-of-war, but escaped, and finally landed at Cocos Island, where eleven boatloads of treasure were taken ashore and buried. The vessel then started back to Peru, but was met by one of the Peruvian gunboats and bombarded. Every person on board was killed with the exception of two men, named Keating and Thompson.

I do not know what became of Thompson, but Keating returned to Newfoundland and organized an expedition to go to Cocos Island and secure the treasure. He is said to have landed there and to have taken some away, but on a trip back to Panama to get tools for additional excavation, his vessel was wrecked and he lost all the gold, except about eight thousand dollars' worth. This he carried with him to Newfoundland, where he organized another expedition. On his second journey, however, Keating and his crew were arrested at Panama and

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

barely escaped execution. Returning to Newfoundland, he died not long afterward, but he left his charts to his descendants, and some years ago they were said to be in the hands of a woman living in Boston.

Another treasure buried on Cocos is supposed to have been left there by William Dampier, who blockaded Panama in 1684 and the year following captured a treasure ship coming north from Peru. Dampier, it is alleged, buried six boatloads of silver on Cocos at one time and afterward made several trips there with similar freight.

A third story tells that during the revolution of 1821, when the Central American colonies broke away from Spain, the Spaniards living here in Costa Rica loaded a schooner with gold, gems, and silver plate and sent it to Cocos to be kept there until the political troubles were over. They gave the treasure into the hands of six men, each of whom had a chart showing the exact place where the hoard was buried. One of these men was killed during the revolution and two others died from natural causes before it was over. When peace was restored, the remaining three started for Cocos to bring back the wealth, but their boat was driven on the rocks of the island and all on board perished.

All these stories about Cocos Island have long been current in this part of the world, and many people believe that the treasures are still buried there. The government of Costa Rica has issued a number of permits to hunt for them. One group of treasure-seekers arrived from England during a former visit I made to Panama. That expedition was headed by Earl Fitzwilliam, who was said to have had an income of a million dollars a year. He had come here with Admiral Palliser, who at one time was

## AT A COSTA RICAN RESORT

the commander of the British fleet in the Pacific, and who had been sent to Cocos some years before to investigate the claims of an Englishman who had a concession from Costa Rica to hunt for this treasure. Palliser was confident that the treasure existed, and had persuaded the earl to purchase a yacht and the necessary digging equipment. The expedition came around through the Strait of Magellan and reached the island without mishap. However, the men had barely started their search when both the earl and the admiral were so badly injured by falling rocks while blasting with dynamite that they gave up their quest and went back to England, leaving their ship at Panama to be sold.

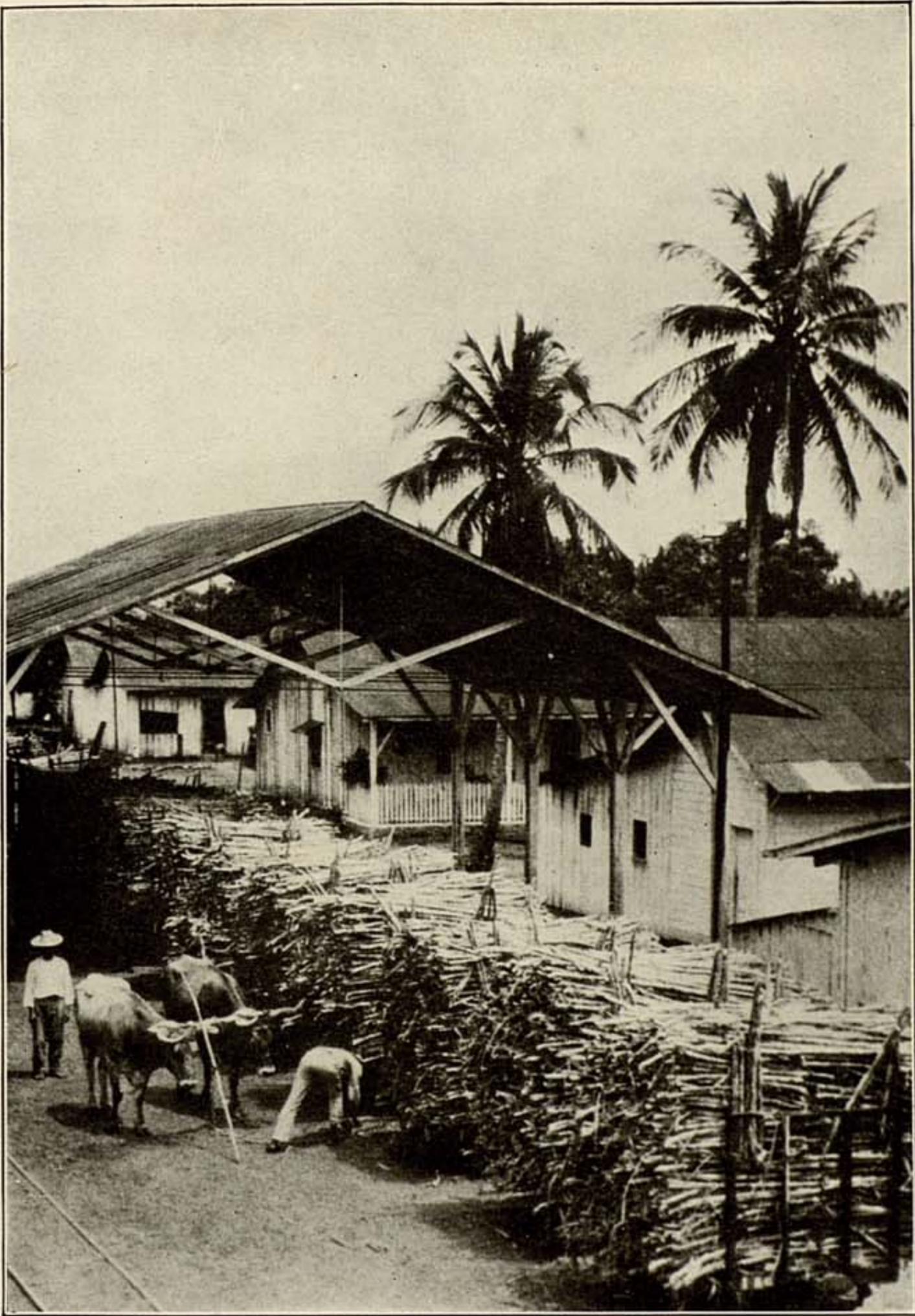
Another party that started out to look for this treasure found Cocos Island inhabited by a castaway dressed in skins of beasts. He said he and some others had had a concession from Costa Rica to hunt for treasure, but that his companions had become disgusted and left. He did not know how long he had been on the island, but when the schooner arrived he was almost insane. That expedition, also, failed to locate the treasure, and in the meantime the golden Madonna still sleeps in Cocos Island, like the princess in the fairy tale, awaiting the venturesome youth who shall make his way to her and kiss her to life.

## CHAPTER XI

### NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

I AM on my way to Nicaragua and Honduras, two of the least developed and most politically unstable countries in the Western Hemisphere. Nicaragua, which borders Costa Rica at the north, and which got its name from the Niquiraos, an Indian tribe found here in the sixteenth century, has about the same area as our state of New York, and is the largest of the half-dozen republics that occupy this neck of land between Mexico and the continent of South America. Like Costa Rica, it extends from ocean to ocean, but the majority of the Nicaraguans live in the western third of the country, most of the cities and towns being less than a hundred miles from the Pacific. The densest population is in the basin between the mountains in the central part of the republic and the extinct volcanic range that rises almost from the Pacific. On the Caribbean slope there are few white men, and no towns of importance except one or two ports from which bananas are shipped.

Until the last decade or so, Nicaragua had never known a long period of peace, its political eruptions and disruptions having caused even more trouble than its volcanic disturbances. For almost a half century after it declared its independence in 1821, it was involved in internal struggles or in warfare with outside nations. After that there ensued a period of peace, but it proved to



Although but little developed, the republic of Nicaragua is rich in natural resources. Sugar cane is raised in many of its hot, well-watered valleys, and forms one of the chief products of the country.



The inadequacy of the present school system of their country and the consequent large percentage of illiteracy do not prevent these young Nicaraguans from displaying their latent artistic talents.

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

be only the peace before the storm. In 1893 the presidency was seized by the famous, and, I might say, infamous, Zelaya, who remained the dictator of the country until 1909. During that time Nicaragua had a revolution nearly every year. To oppose those rebellions successfully, Zelaya maintained an army of sixteen thousand men—this in a republic having a population of less than six hundred thousand inhabitants—which drained the resources of the country and bred a class of soldiers privileged to raid, rob, and despoil, to ravage homes, and to murder those who protested. What Zelaya and his crew did not take, the revolutionist forces did, leaving the peacefully inclined farmer nothing at all. When finally defeated by the rebellion of 1909 and exiled from Nicaragua, Zelaya took with him not less than twelve million dollars in gold, obtained partly from taxes upon the people and partly from the sale of concessions of all kinds to foreign nations. His immediate underlings likewise emerged from the revolution with comfortable fortunes, but the mass of the people had hardly more than the ragged clothes upon their backs, and the government was heavily in debt. Its currency was worth so little that financial conditions were much like those I found in Paraguay during my first visit to South America. The story is told that an American traveller, ignorant of money values in that republic, was about to pay a porter for carrying his trunk to the hotel.

“How much?” he asked the native.

“Three hundred dollars,” was the calm reply.

Indignantly determined that he would not be the victim of such a hold-up, the American took out a United States silver dollar and, with an air of finality that he hoped

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

would impress the porter, handed it over. The native took it, looked at it, pocketed it, and then handed back—seven hundred dollars in change.

Even after the overthrow of the Zelaya government, revolutions and wars followed one another so rapidly that finally, in 1912, the United States landed our marines here to protect American lives and property, and in a short time put an end to the fighting. That being accomplished, most of our men were withdrawn, leaving, however, a force of one hundred as a legation guard. This number of marines was maintained on Nicaraguan soil until 1925. While not enough to resist the Nicaraguan or any other Central American army, they proved to be successful in preserving order, principally as a constant reminder to potential revolutionists that Uncle Sam had thousands more of their kind always available.

In the meantime, two New York banking firms had advanced large sums of money to the government, secured by fifty-one per cent. of the stock both of the national bank of Nicaragua and of the national railway. To safeguard these loans, various departments of the government were reorganized and taken charge of by Americans. A former official of the Philippine customs service was appointed collector-in-chief of the customs, which he found thoroughly upset as a result of Zelaya's operations. Another American undertook to reform the taxation system, and two more were appointed to reorganize the general finances of Nicaragua. A former special investigator of our Department of Justice was put in charge of the Nicaraguan police, and a United States district judge from Porto Rico was made president of the Mixed Claims Commission, founded to investigate the numerous claims

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

of persons who had been granted government concessions by Zelaya.

The Nicaraguan government has now bought back the control of both the national bank and the railway, and Americans who live here have faith in the ability of this country to make good, given peaceful conditions and the opportunity to develop its rich natural resources. On the east coast, bananas are the principal crop, furnishing, next to coffee, the chief export of the country. In that region are heavy forests containing tropical trees of all kinds. There are said to be fifty-four different varieties of hardwood timber trees, forty varieties that yield industrial or medicinal gums, fibres, oils, extracts, food, or spices, and seventy-four that bear fruit. Mahogany and cedar are cut for export, and some light railways have been built to carry the lumber to the coast.

Gold and silver mines are being worked in the eastern region, and in other sections of the country are grown sugar, rubber, and cacao. Much of the highlands is suitable for grazing. Corn and beans are raised in all the settled parts of the republic and form the staple food of the people. The leading crop, however, is coffee, which, like that of Costa Rica, finds its chief market in England. It is shipped from the Pacific port of Corinto to the Panama Canal, and thence carried across the Atlantic.

Although Corinto is the principal port of Nicaragua, it is merely a straggling, palm-shaded town of only fifteen hundred people. As at all these coastal towns of Central America, the arrival of a boat is always an exciting event, and most of the population, it seems, flocks to the wharf as our steamer docks. Among them are many natives selling macaws and parrots, skins, hats, and hammocks.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

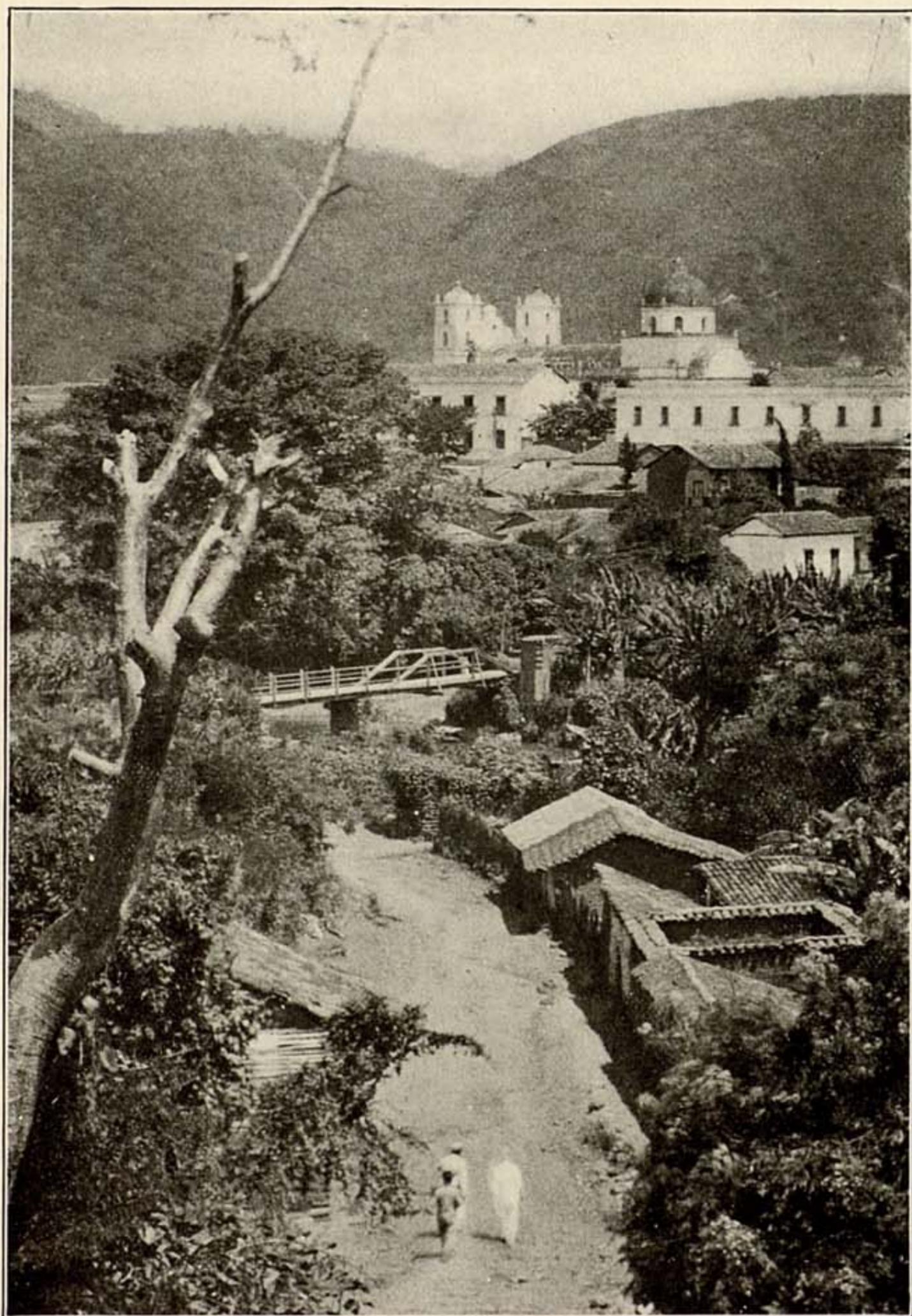
Corinto is the western terminus of the railway to Managua, the Nicaraguan capital. Outside of a few miles of privately owned track, this railroad of less than one hundred and fifty miles is the only one in the republic. From the Pacific it goes inland for a short distance and then turns southward, skirting the peaks of the Cordilleras and passing the smoking volcano of Momotombo. Thirty-five miles from Corinto it reaches León, formerly the largest city and capital of the country, and then goes on south to Managua, on the south shore of the lake of the same name. That city, with its plaza, its narrow cobbled streets, and its flat, one-story buildings, is a typical Central American metropolis. It was made the capital of Nicaragua as a compromise selection when the two older cities of León and Granada were fighting for that distinction. It has a population of about forty thousand, or ten thousand more than León.

Near the end of the railway is Granada, the oldest city in the republic. It lies on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, the largest inland body of water on our continent between the Great Lakes and Lake Titicaca in the mountains of Bolivia. This lake, which is only eleven miles from the Pacific, is more than a hundred miles long, and together with the San Juan River, through which it drains into the Caribbean, it provides a waterway from the Atlantic coast almost across the continent. During the gold rush to California, before the Panama Railroad was constructed, Commodore Vanderbilt ran steamers up the San Juan River and across the lake to a low place in the mountains, from where stagecoaches carried the gold seekers the remaining few miles to the Pacific.

It was this natural feature of the country that caused



Nearly every holiday and saint's day in the city of León is celebrated by processions in which images of the Christ and the Virgin are carried from the cathedral through the streets.



With the exception of Bogotá, in Colombia, Tegucigalpa is the only capital on the American continent not accessible by railway. The inland terminus of the one railroad in the country is five days distant by muleback and motor-car.

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

Nicaragua to be considered in competition with Panama as a site for a canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Although such a waterway at this point would have been more than three times as long as the present one at Panama, it offered the advantage of having been already carved out by Nature for most of its length, leaving but thirty miles for man to dig. The only excavation necessary would have been the distance between the lake and the Pacific, together with a stretch to the east where the San Juan River could not be utilized.

The project for a canal through Nicaragua was discussed as far back as 1826, when Henry Clay directed that an investigation be made as to its feasibility. The subject was revived from time to time until 1849, when the Nicaraguan government granted an American company the right to construct a ship canal across this territory. This concession not being fulfilled, a treaty for a right of way was negotiated with Nicaragua by a representative of the United States government, but was never ratified by us. From then until the Panama route was chosen, Nicaragua was generally believed to be the country across which the canal would pass, and even after excavations were started on the Isthmus by the French, a private company obtained a concession and began work on a second canal here. It spent more than two million dollars, and then ceased operations in 1893 for lack of funds. Eight years later, when the French had failed and the United States had decided to dig a canal of its own, our government surveyors for the second time recommended Nicaragua as the best site. We took advantage, instead, of the opportunity to buy out the reorganized company at Panama, and so once more the Nicaragua project was dropped. It was not

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

neglected for long, however, for when the present Canal was completed, the United States removed the risk of a rival waterway being built here by paying Nicaragua three million dollars for the exclusive right to cut a canal through this country at any future time, together with the privilege of establishing a naval base at the Caribbean terminal and another in Fonseca Bay on the Pacific.

Steaming northward from Corinto, we are but a few hours in reaching Amapala, the only Pacific port of the republic of Honduras. That country, although having an Atlantic coast as long as the distance from New York to Pittsburgh, borders on the Pacific for only seventy miles. Slightly larger than Pennsylvania, it is a land of hills and valleys and mountains, of many revolutions, and a staggering national debt, and of primitive facilities for commerce and transportation. Its people, comparatively few of whom are pure white, obtain a living so easily from its rich tropical soil that they have little incentive toward national or racial development. The balmy climate makes few clothes necessary, and a small patch of ground yields plenty of black beans and corn, the staple foods of the country. Even if the land were made to produce larger crops, there would be no market for them until railways and roads were built, and so the people take life easy, their single commandment being, according to one of my fellow travellers: "Six days shalt thou do nothing, and on the seventh go to a bullfight."

The port of Amapala, which has one of the best natural harbours in Central America, has not even wharfage facilities to allow steamers to dock, and passengers and freight are carried to the shore in small boats. The town

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

is built at the foot of a conical mountain on Tigre Island, which lies twenty-four miles out in the Gulf of Fonseca. A launch takes one to the town of San Lorenzo on the mainland, from where a motor road leads to the capital city of Tegucigalpa, about a hundred miles away. This road, one of the few good highways in Honduras, ascends to five thousand feet above sea level and then drops two thousand feet into the central valley, where the capital is located.

With the exception of Bogotá in Colombia, Tegucigalpa is the only capital city in the Western Hemisphere that cannot be reached by railroad. Until about twenty years ago the sole way of getting to it was by horseback or muleback. When Philander C. Knox made his trip through Central America in 1912, this was the only capital he did not visit, although the officials had planned to take him from Amapala over the mountains by stage. For that occasion they sent to Guatemala for the best rubber-tired carriage procurable, together with a team of horses. The President of Guatemala, who was requested to select the equipage, bought horses and vehicle at a cost of four thousand dollars in gold, and sent them to San José, the Pacific port of Guatemala, from where they were to be shipped to Honduras. The arrangements were such that the turnout would have reached here in time, but in loading the carriage upon the ship the two rear wheels were overlooked and left behind. The next steamer did not arrive until more than a week later. In the meantime, Secretary Knox had decided not to visit Tegucigalpa anyway, but had he done so, the four-thousand-dollar conveyance would have been useless.

Motor cars and trucks now carry passengers, mails, and

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

freight between San Lorenzo and Tegucigalpa, and offer probably the most satisfactory transportation service in the entire republic. Other motor roads are building, and indeed, some people here believe that the railroad era will be passed over completely by Honduras, and that its transportation problems of the future will be solved by automobiles and trucks. The one railway, besides those lines owned by the fruit companies, extends toward Tegucigalpa from the Caribbean port of Puerto Cortés, two hundred and fifty miles away. It goes only as far as the town of Portrerillos, sixty miles inland, and to reach it from the capital one must journey five hours by motor car and four days on muleback over the roughest of mountain trails. There are no inns on the route, and the traveller must carry his own provisions and find shelter in the rude huts of the people.

This railway, which was planned to be a transcontinental line ending at the Gulf of Fonseca, was begun in 1868 by an English company, which was given a grant of ten square miles of land for every mile of track it laid, and also other concessions. When this sixty-mile stretch had been finished, it was found that the government and the people had been defrauded by over-issues of stocks and bonds, and Honduras emerged from the deal saddled by one of the greatest per capita national debts in history.

Puerto Cortés, the port of this railway, is a squalid town of wooden buildings lying in a hot swampy region, and is interesting more for its history than anything else. Its natural deep-water harbour was long a haven for pirates and smugglers, and the town itself was once said to have been the destination of every defaulting bank cashier in the United States. Here were the last headquarters of

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

the old Louisiana Lottery when it was driven out of the United States; here Richard Harding Davis obtained the material for some of his best stories about these republics; and here, in the more or less pretentious house abandoned by the lottery, lived General Lee Christmas, the American soldier of fortune who took an active part in some of the many revolutions of Honduras.

Another American soldier of fortune whose exploits are still related in Honduras was William Walker, probably the most notorious filibuster in Central American history. In his youth he studied medicine in Edinburgh and Heidelberg, and later worked on newspapers in New Orleans and San Francisco. In 1853 he organized an expedition for the conquest of the Mexican state of Sonora, but while marching inland in that country he had an encounter with Mexican soldiers from which he barely escaped with his life.

Not in the least daunted by this disastrous venture into Latin-American affairs, Walker went to Nicaragua two years later. Joining forces with one of the factions in the civil war taking place at that time, he captured the city of Granada and persuaded the president to appoint him secretary of war and commander-in-chief of the army. Not long afterward, Walker had the president shot for conspiracy, and after a brief war with Costa Rica he proclaimed himself president of Nicaragua. His rule led to an insurrection by the people, and to save himself he surrendered to the commander of a United States naval vessel and was taken to New Orleans. Nevertheless, he came back to Nicaragua in 1857 with a large following, but was again driven out, and so the next year transferred his activities to Honduras.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

During his first attempt to invade Honduras, Walker was shipwrecked, but two years later he was successful in taking the city of Trujillo. He did not hold it long, however, and was subsequently captured by a British warship and handed over to the Honduran government, which condemned him by court martial to the firing squad. Although fifty years have elapsed since his spectacular career came to an end, it is said his name is still used as a "bogey man" to frighten naughty little Hondurans into good behaviour.

The chief product of the Puerto Cortés region of the Caribbean coast, and, indeed, of the whole republic of Honduras, is bananas. The amount of this fruit produced here annually has doubled in the last ten years, and to-day Honduras stands in the position of the leading banana grower in the world. Forging ahead of Costa Rica and Jamaica, it now raises about fourteen million bunches a year, the majority of which are exported to the United States.

The growth of the banana industry has been responsible for making this coast the most developed part of Honduras. Privately owned railways have been built to carry the fruit, and modern towns have sprung up. The centre of the industry is Tela, which, with its telephones, ice and electric plants, modern cottages, hospital, wireless station, and even a baseball diamond, is one of the most up-to-date places in the republic. On an average, five ships loaded with bananas leave there every week. Another banana port is La Ceiba, which in twenty-five years has grown from a settlement of three hundred people to a city with a population numbering eight thousand. As much of it was burned to the ground in 1914, many of its build-

## NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS

ings are new and made of reinforced concrete instead of wood.

As to the other resources of Honduras, it has deposits of gold, silver, copper, zinc, and iron, although only gold and silver are mined, most of the former being washed from the rivers. There are known to be also deposits of fine marble, but the mineral wealth has never been prospected thoroughly and is far from yielding anything like a maximum output. It is the same with the valuable mahogany lands of this country, which have been barely tapped for their timber. Two sugar mills are operating in the cane country, and a small amount of coffee is exported from Amapala.

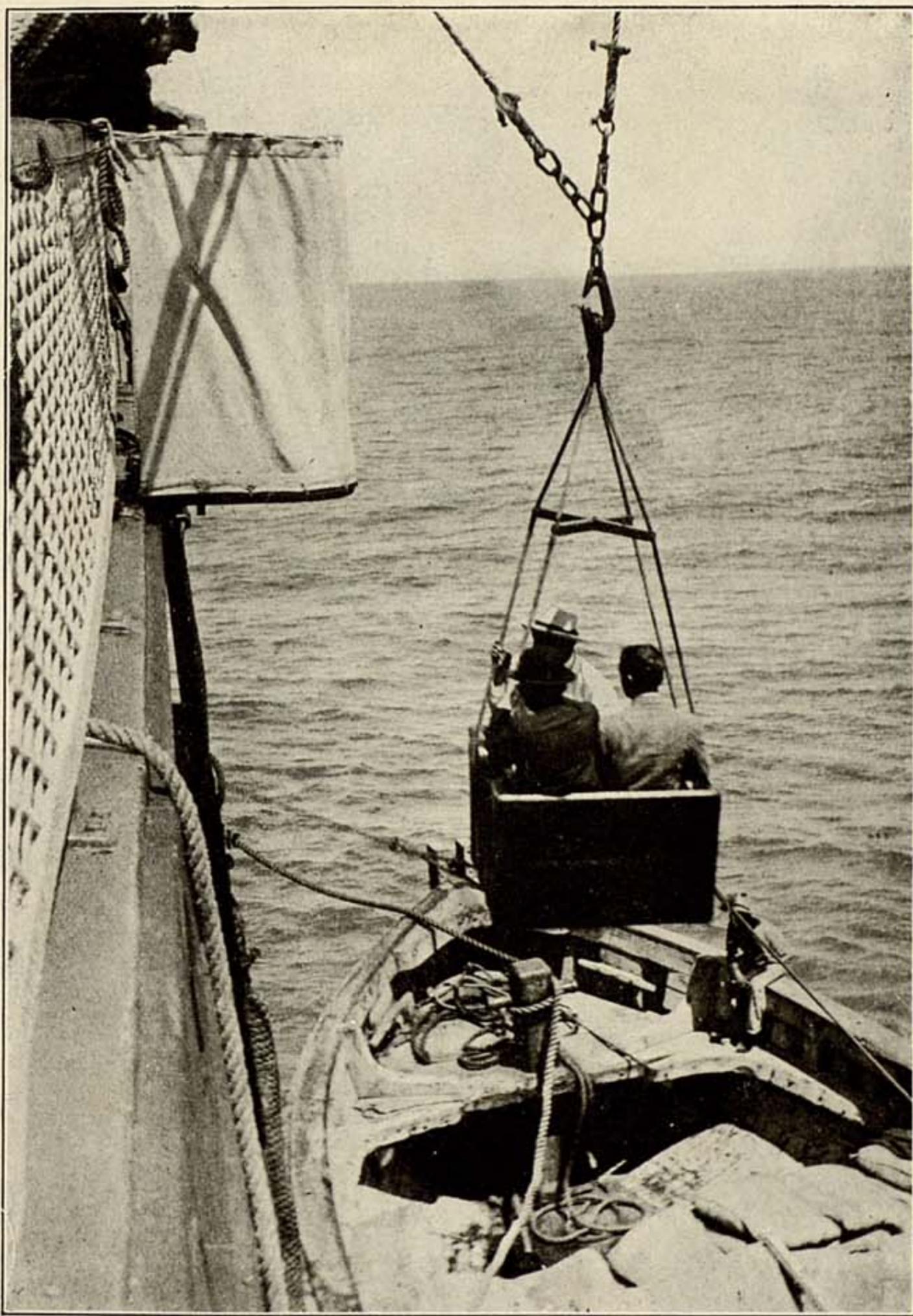
Commonly thought of as a part of this country is British Honduras, which, however, is a colony of Great Britain, and entirely separated from the republic of the same name. It is a territory about as large as Massachusetts bordering on the Caribbean at the east and Guatemala and Yucatan at the west. Not more than forty-five thousand people live in the entire colony, and of these only a few hundred are white. The one town of importance is Belize, the capital, and the chief products are mahogany and chicle, which is used as a base in the manufacture of chewing gum.

## CHAPTER XII

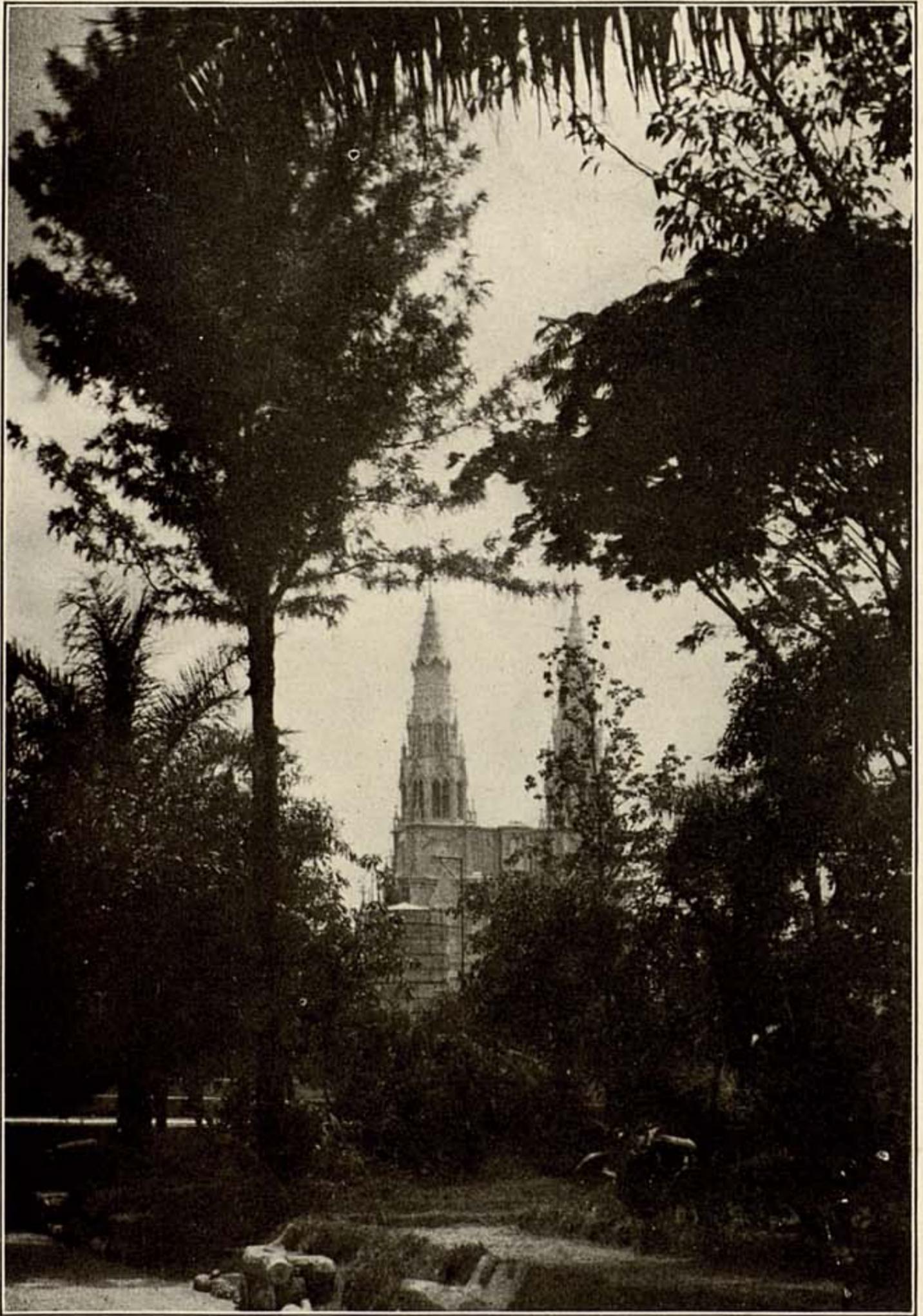
### AMERICA'S TINIEST REPUBLIC

**T**HE smallest country, not only in Central America, but on the whole North American continent, is little Salvador, whence I have come from Honduras. It is the only Central American republic, and, in fact, the only country between Canada and Colombia that does not have an Atlantic seaboard. Its coastline is not more than one hundred and forty miles long, and its territory extends inland from the Pacific less than half that distance; nevertheless, Salvador has the second largest population in Central America, and is one of the most densely settled lands in the New World. With an area not much larger than that of Vermont, it has more than five times as many people. If the United States were as thickly populated, we should have three times as many people as now.

Approaching Salvador from the ocean, I could see almost a dozen volcanic peaks rearing their heads against the eastern sky. One of them, Mount Izalco, is so often in eruption that sailors call it the "Lighthouse of Salvador." At night the glare from its fiery crater can be seen far out on the Pacific, and even as I looked I could see smoke and steam vomiting from its conical summit. Salvador has so many volcanoes that they might be said to be the national emblem; at any rate, they appear as such on the postage stamps of the country. Earthquakes and erup-



At Acajutla, one of the chief ports of Salvador, there is no sheltered harbour, and steamers must anchor far off shore, where passengers are transferred to small boats in a box swung from a crane.



One of the most up-to-date and delightfully situated cities in Central America is San Salvador, the capital of the republic of Salvador, and the national centre of society, culture, and industry.

## AMERICA'S TINIEST REPUBLIC

tions are common occurrences and have caused a vast amount of damage. One of the severest volcanic disturbances in recent years was in 1917, when property to the amount of fifteen million dollars was destroyed, and so much of the railway from the port of Acajutla to the capital of San Salvador was swept away that six months' work was needed to replace it.

At Acajutla large steamers have to anchor a mile out in the open roadstead, and when I arrived, I had to be taken ashore in a launch. Even at that, the sea was so rough that passengers could not step from the boat to the dock, and I was landed in a basket suspended from a crane. I have been put on shore in this manner many times during my travels along the east coast of Africa, and also at some of the smaller ports of Peru.

By far the best harbour in the country is that of La Unión, a city of seven thousand people, situated on an inlet of the Gulf of Fonseca. It has excellent docking facilities, and is now connected by railway with San Salvador, the capital.

San Salvador is six hours by rail from Acajutla, and is one of the beautifully located cities of Central America. It lies in the foothills of the mountains, right under a magnificent volcano, and about two thousand feet above the level of the Pacific. In some respects its location is comparable to that of Mexico City. During its existence, it has been destroyed by earthquakes again and again, but its people refuse to desert it, and each time it has been rebuilt. To-day, although it has some large government buildings of reinforced concrete, most of its structures are of adobe, or wood, and only one story high, so as to withstand the earthquakes as well as possible. There

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

are many fine homes surrounding beautiful patios, the houses painted in bright colours with roofs of gay tiles. The streets are broad and straight, and the sidewalks are paved with rock from near-by quarries. One sees more motor-cars among the traffic than in any other Central American city except Panama.

Outside of the Canal Zone, San Salvador is about the most modern and progressive city I have visited on this trip. It has theatres and moving-picture houses, a free circulating and reference library, and many clubs. It is the social and cultural centre of the republic, and has imposed upon its distinctly Spanish-American foundation most of the conveniences of life in the North. Its society is cosmopolitan. Besides a colony of residents from the other Latin-American countries, there is a fairly large American, British, and German element. The city is also the home of a great many of the wealthy families of Salvador, most of whom have travelled extensively and who send their children to the United States to be educated. The women take a deep interest in national affairs and have their own clubs and athletic activities. Many of them speak several languages and follow American styles in dress and modes of living. The tastes of all the upper classes have been cultivated along much the same lines as those of Americans, and their purchasing standards are equal to those of persons in good circumstances in the United States.

During my stay in the capital I have learned something of the activities of the government of Salvador. It is up-to-date and progressive and doing everything it can to better conditions throughout the republic, which has not been burdened with revolutions and dictatorships as has

## AMERICA'S TINIEST REPUBLIC

its neighbour, Honduras. In case of war, military service is compulsory, and the country can put into the field on short notice something like eighty thousand men, but during normal times its army numbers less than one fifth of that strength.

Some of the finest buildings of Salvador are its hospitals. That of Rosales, here at the capital, has an endowment of more than four million dollars. Not far from San Salvador is an open-air tuberculosis sanitarium, and in the chief cities of the country are other hospitals of modern type. In almost every town is an agent appointed by the government to look after the health of the people, and as a result the sanitary conditions in Salvador are better than in most tropical countries. Smallpox and yellow fever have disappeared, and a campaign is now being carried on to eliminate hookworm.

From San Salvador I have made many trips out into the surrounding country. About ten miles away is Lake Ilopango, a beautiful green sheet of water with a shore line of perhaps thirty miles. All the region thereabouts is volcanic. This lake formerly had islands that some years ago dropped out of sight at the time of an earthquake, and another island five hundred feet in diameter rose above the surface to a height of one hundred and fifty feet. At the same time, the water became intensely hot, although ordinarily it is cold. There are now villages and hotels about Ilopango, and it is the favourite resort of the people of San Salvador.

Not far from the capital are many other pretty cities and villages. The largest is Santa Ana, the second city of the republic, which is an important agricultural centre. It lies in a region of coffee and sugar plantations, and is

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

also near valuable deposits of iron, copper, and silver. Santa Tecla, a city of about twenty-five thousand people, is only ten miles away, and San Miguel, somewhat larger, is about one hundred miles to the southward. All these places are reached by railway or good motor roads.

This country at present has only about two hundred and fifty miles of railroads, but it is expected that within a few years it will be so connected with the Guatemalan and Mexican systems that one will be able to go from San Salvador to New York by rail. In the meantime, the government maintains excellent roads between the chief cities, and is building new ones every year. On these highways much of the traffic is by motor, but off in the by-ways ox-carts are still the principal means of transportation. Each part of the country is said to have its own particular style of vehicle. Some are equipped with solid wheels, some have bamboo and some cane sides, and others differ from the rest by being lined with hides.

As a result of the density of population, the greater part of the arable land of Salvador, including the sides of the volcanoes and mountains, is under cultivation. The country is one big farm, with all its people at work, and no land wasted. Practically every man owns a little piece of property, or else has a good home upon one of the many large plantations. Even the poorest people have something to lose in case of a revolution, and hence all are peacefully inclined.

The chief crop is coffee, which was introduced here in 1840 by a Brazilian school teacher. To-day, the descendants of the coffee tree he planted in his garden number one hundred million, and furnish annually fourteen million dollars' worth of coffee beans for export. Sugar, cotton,

## AMERICA'S TINIEST REPUBLIC

sisal, tobacco, and cacao are raised; the forests abound with valuable hardwoods, and the two ranges of mountains that cross the country are rich in minerals, although only gold and silver have been developed.

The government is doing all it can to encourage farming, and has established a school of agriculture with a farm situated on the mountainsides not far from Acajutla. Experiments are being made there in coffee, cotton, and sugar planting, and also in cattle breeding and dairying. The school sends out bulletins of information somewhat like those of our Department of Agriculture, although on a much smaller scale, and it distributes seeds and slips free of charge.

Probably the most interesting product of Salvador, and the one for which the country gets the least credit, is Peruvian balsam, which is used largely in the manufacture of perfumery and medicines. The name of this balsam comes from the fact that in Colonial days, when it was first shipped to Europe via Panama, people took it for granted that everything from the Isthmus was from Peru. It is sometimes called cocoa balsam, because it was once shipped in coconuts. It really comes from a tropical tree, which when full grown is more than a yard thick and from eighty to one hundred feet high. These trees occur in the forests of Salvador, and the balsam is collected almost entirely by Indians. To obtain it they scrape off the bark in little patches, heat these scraped places with burning torches, and then cover them with scraps of old cotton cloth. The cloth sticks to the tree and in a day or two is saturated with sap. The rags are then gathered up and boiled in big iron pots, and afterward pressed to extract the balsam. The juice, when refined for the mar-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ket, is a grayish-red mass that smells like vanilla. It is said to be especially valuable as a remedy for skin diseases and as an antiseptic.

Another product of Salvador is indigo, which grows almost everywhere in the country and once was its chief export. It is produced from a plant that flourishes upon nearly all kinds of soils. The seed is scattered broadcast and the plants soon grow to the height of one's head. They are then cut and the indigo obtained by soaking them in vats of water. It takes about one hundred pounds of the green plants to produce five or six ounces of indigo. The business is not so profitable as it was in the past, when as much as eighteen hundred thousand pounds, worth about three million dollars, were produced in one year. The output to-day is much less, since indigo dye has been largely driven out of use by aniline colours.

## CHAPTER XIII

### IN GUATEMALA CITY

I AM in Guatemala City, the seat of government of the republic of the same name, and the largest of the Central American capitals. It was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1918, but like Cartago and San Salvador has now been practically rebuilt. It contains more than a hundred thousand people, and covers enough ground to afford room for a million. Situated as it is on the backbone of the mountain range that extends from Alaska to the Strait of Magellan, and a thousand feet higher than the tops of the Alleghanies, it might well be called the Denver of Central America. It has the same clear air, the same bright skies, and about the same altitude as our metropolis of the Rockies. The mighty natural amphitheatre in which it lies is seventy-five miles from the Pacific; it is surrounded by gorges and ravines, and frowned upon by towering volcanoes.

The present city of Guatemala was founded, after Antigua, the former capital, had been destroyed by earthquakes, at just about the time that the American colonies issued their Declaration of Independence. It was planned along the lines of the old city, with many plazas and with streets and avenues crossing one another at right angles and bordered by substantial houses. In the centre of the city is the Parque Central, where a gaily uniformed band plays every evening, and upon which

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

face the city hall, the congressional palace, many fine stores, and one of the largest cathedrals on the American continent. The cathedral, patterned after the one in Mexico City, is in the form of a great Latin cross. It was begun in 1782, and although originally planned to be built for but three hundred thousand dollars, it cost finally many times that amount. When I saw it first, it was one of the most gorgeous structures in Central America.

In addition to the cathedral, Guatemala City had fine churches in almost every block, many of which have by now been restored or repaired. In one of them, the Church of Santo Domingo, the stones are said to have been laid in a mortar mixed with milk and sugar-cane juice. Another church, that of San Francisco, which was begun in 1800, is said to have had its mortar mixed with the whites of eggs, but just how many eggs were needed for that purpose I do not attempt to calculate. This church at first had a convent connected with it, and at one time was used for the burial of the distinguished dead. It was later taken over by the government, and the convent building converted into a post-office. Other churches here are famous as shrines, and to some of them come pilgrims from all over Guatemala. One of the most popular is that of La Merced, which contains a statue, known as the Black Virgin, consecrated in 1717.

But you must not think that Guatemala is all churches. It has bull rings and cock pits, where fights are held from time to time, and it formerly had a fine theatre, which was destroyed by the earthquake. To-day it has several moving-picture houses, in which the most popular American films are shown.

Skyscrapers, of course, are unknown in Central America,



Like every other Central American metropolis, the capital of Guatemala is a city of low buildings covered with white or rainbow-hued stucco glaring in the heat of the tropical sunshine.



Farm produce of every kind is brought to the Guatemalan market on the backs of native porters, many of whom walk for miles to sell merchandise that yields them a profit of only a few cents.

## IN GUATEMALA CITY

and the churches are the only buildings in Guatemala City more than fifty feet high. Nevertheless, some of the new buildings of reinforced concrete are as handsome as one could find anywhere. Among these are the homes of the Guatemala Club and the American Club, the office of an American-owned electric light and power company, and the Palace Hotel. This hotel is one of the best I have found since leaving Panama.

The houses and stores are seldom of more than one story, and the skyline is usually on the same level from one end of a street to the other. Most of the structures are Spanish in architecture, and are built of brick or stone covered with stucco. The homes of the people, as is common in these Latin-American cities, consist of large rooms surrounding a central patio, the windows facing upon the streets being invariably protected by iron bars. Most of the roofs are flat and made of red tiles, ending at the fronts of the buildings in walls decorated with metal knobs or ornamental stucco work.

The quaint features of some of these Guatemalan houses were a constant source of delight to me the first time I saw them. In the words of a young American girl I met here, "I was just crazy about the door knockers." Some of these are shaped like hands, and some like female heads, being made of brass or of iron, beautifully wrought. The doors themselves are often studded with iron or brass nails, and not infrequently are so large that a smaller door is cut through them. In that case the big door is opened only for the owner's carriage or motor car, which goes right through the house to reach the stable or garage at the back or side of the patio.

My first visit to Guatemala City was at the same time

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

as that of Secretary of State Knox, and at the order of the Guatemalan president the capital had been made to look as though it had just stepped from the proverbial bandbox. The houses were all newly painted, the metal work on the buildings glistened in the bright sunshine, and the streets were spick and span from one end to the other. The whole city was as clean and attractive as any place I had seen on my trip, and it was this Dolly Varden guise, so to speak, that I still remembered most vividly a few years afterward when Guatemala City, like its predecessor, was the victim of a series of the most violent earthquakes in the history of Central America.

When the Guatemalans moved their capital to its present site they were so certain the new location was safe from earthquakes that they made no attempt to erect quake-proof buildings. Even though slight shocks were felt at different times, no serious damage had ever been done, and the great cataclysm that was to reduce this city to dust and débris burst upon them with the unexpected violence of a thunderbolt from a calm summer sky.

The series of earthquakes that brought about the ruin of Guatemala City began on November 17, 1917, and continued in varying degrees of intensity for three weeks. Then they stopped until Christmas Eve, when a few minor tremblings occurred, as though the earth were stirring itself in preparation for its mighty convulsion of the following day. It was on Christmas night, just as most of the people were going to bed, that the first violent quake took place. The earth rocked like the waves of the ocean, and in less than a minute pandemonium had broken loose throughout the city. With the electric

## IN GUATEMALA CITY

lights out of order, the dark streets were a chaos of falling walls, flying tiles, and frantic people, clad only in their night clothes, rushing blindly hither and thither. In a half hour came another shock, even worse than the preceding one, and the walls which had been merely cracked by the first quake now crashed to the ground.

The trembling of the earth continued all night, and I can only imagine the scenes of devastation upon which the rising sun looked down next morning. The massive façade of the St. Francis Church was torn and cracked, the roof of St. Claire's had collapsed entirely, and the cupolas of the Church of the Recollection and of the cathedral had fallen to the ground. Other churches all over the city were cracked and broken, the post-office was shattered, and one wall of the railway station was gone. The British Legation and the custom house lay in utter ruin, and streets everywhere were cluttered with tiles, stones, overturned walls, and broken furniture.

Even all this, however, had failed to satisfy the rapacious appetite of the God of Earthquakes, and the people had barely begun to recover from their fright when two more shocks occurred, one on the 27th of December and one on the afternoon of the 28th. Then came a lull, and the dazed inhabitants of Guatemala City began to collect their wits and their belongings and to take stock of the situation. Not more than a dozen families were courageous enough to return to the houses left standing, and the remainder of the population put up tents and shacks made of all kinds of débris covered with carpets, bedding, or canvas.

New Year came and went, and the tremblings of the earth had so subsided that the people were regaining a

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

feeling of safety when, without any warning, during the night of January 3d, came the most terrific disaster of all. Accompanied by roarings as though a titanic cannonading were taking place far underground, the very earth seemed to writhe and leap into the air like a gigantic monster straining at an invisible leash held by the gods. So violent was it that the preceding quakes seemed almost as nothing, and so disastrous were its results that hardly a building in the entire city remained standing. The two mighty towers of the cathedral crumbled, and both the fortress of San José and the thick walls of the Guatemalan prison were laid low, like a toy castle of blocks wrecked by the hand of a child. This and the final shock, which came on January 24th, reduced the entire city to a mass of wreckage. In all, nearly a thousand people lost their lives, and at least as much as thirty million dollars' worth of property was destroyed.

If Guatemala City had been an industrial or manufacturing centre, the losses caused by the earthquake would have been many times what they actually were. Fortunately, the wealth of this republic is in its country districts, and although public buildings and the homes of a hundred thousand people had been demolished, the earthquake had no effect whatever upon Guatemala's great plantations of sugar and coffee, its grain and fruit lands, its herds of cattle, and its vast timber resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that the country has recovered so soon from the disaster, and that a space of comparatively few years has found the city practically resurrected from its ruins.

But suppose we take a walk about Guatemala City to see something of the sights and the people. We must pick

## IN GUATEMALA CITY

our way carefully, for the streets are in poor condition and open gutters still do duty as sewers. During the wet season, when it rains every afternoon, the very heavens seem to fall, and at such times little wooden bridges have to be put across the streets for the pedestrians to walk on. Even these afford but little protection, as they are usually flimsy and shaky.

The crowds we see look much the same as those of other Central American capitals, except that there seem to be fewer whites here and more half-breeds and Indians. We pass water peddlers, native porters carrying enormous burdens on their backs, and now and then groups of girls. The latter are of all classes, with half-breeds and Indians in the majority. The pure whites dress much as Americans do, but many go bareheaded, with their masses of black hair coiled over their ears and piled high at the back. We see few women or girls in the company of men, but in front of one house we come upon a young man "playing the bear," to use a local expression. He is standing before a window feasting his eyes upon a girl sitting behind the bars. The young suitor stands on the sidewalk grasping the iron bars of the window, which are just about even with his head, and the pretty brown-eyed girl within looks languishingly at him as they converse in low tones.

The principal street in the city is the Boulevard de Reforma, on which are some of the homes of the richer Guatemalans. It is several hundred feet wide, and has four driveways divided by rows of trees and lawns. Under the trees are statues, with now and then a circle containing a larger monument. Two of the statues are life-size figures of fighting bulls, one in a defiant attitude,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

and the other having been struck in the shoulder with a banderilla. They are the only statues of the kind I have ever seen, except the one in the museum at Naples.

To-day is Saturday, and the country people from miles around have come in to do their buying and selling at the market. It lies just below the plaza, and is within a stone's throw of the cathedral. The market house consists of low buildings surrounding a court, the whole covering four or five acres and reminding me of the bazaars of Hindustan. It is divided into sections, and everything under the sun is sold in it. There are booths full of native shawls, silk handkerchiefs, and cloth of every description. Some sections are devoted to meats, fruits, and vegetables, others to iron and wooden ware, and still others to basket-work, hats, hammocks, and children's toys.

Perched all about the outside walls of the market are the ubiquitous buzzards of Central America, and squatting on the ground beneath are Indian merchants with their wares spread out upon mats before them. Here is a woman with pottery of quaint design; there is one who has fancy baskets, and farther on are others selling straw hats and sandals. Some of the hats are three feet wide and a foot high, ending in a peak at the top.

Everywhere are peddlers, and such peddlers! Here comes one smoking a cigar. She is an Indian woman with big dark eyes, black hair, and skin like copper. She is selling candies coloured in every shade of red, yellow, and bilious green, put up in boxes of tree bark. Next her is a peddler hawking cooked iguanas, the acquaintance of which as a table delicacy we have already made in Panama.

In all Guatemala there is no better place than the market to give one an idea of the richness of this country.

## IN GUATEMALA CITY

The fruits and vegetables are of every kind and description. Strolling about at random, we see alligator pears selling for a cent and a half each, ripe red tomatoes, and apples of all kinds, some bright yellow, and some so rosy that we think of Riley's poem about the apples and the sun:

And the winesaps blushed their reddest  
When he spanked the pippins ripe.

And then the pineapples! There are great baskets of them, and the very largest do not cost more than six cents apiece. There are melons and papayas, oranges, bananas, lemons, and other fruits the names of which I do not know.

From the vegetable booths we go on to the meat market, where a half acre of space is crowded with peddlers selling beef, pork, and mutton. The butchers are Indian women, bareheaded, dark-faced, and black-haired. Here is one bringing in a washtub filled with pork cut in long strips. She hangs them over the rack above her counter like clothes on a line, and sells them by the piece. Here we see also great baskets of snails wrapped in cabbage leaves, crabs sold by the string, and fish no longer than white-bait, which are sold by the pint.

Behind the meat market are the cook shops, each of which contains an oven or stove built up from the floor to the height of one's waist. On top of these the kettles and pans containing the food rest upon an iron framework over burning charcoal. On that stove fish is frying, over there macaroni is stewing, and at our left is a kettle of boiling tomatoes. There are great bowls of rice steaming away, and big iron jars of bean soup ready to serve. Some of the cooks are boiling eggs, some frying plantains, and others making fritters of various kinds. In front of the

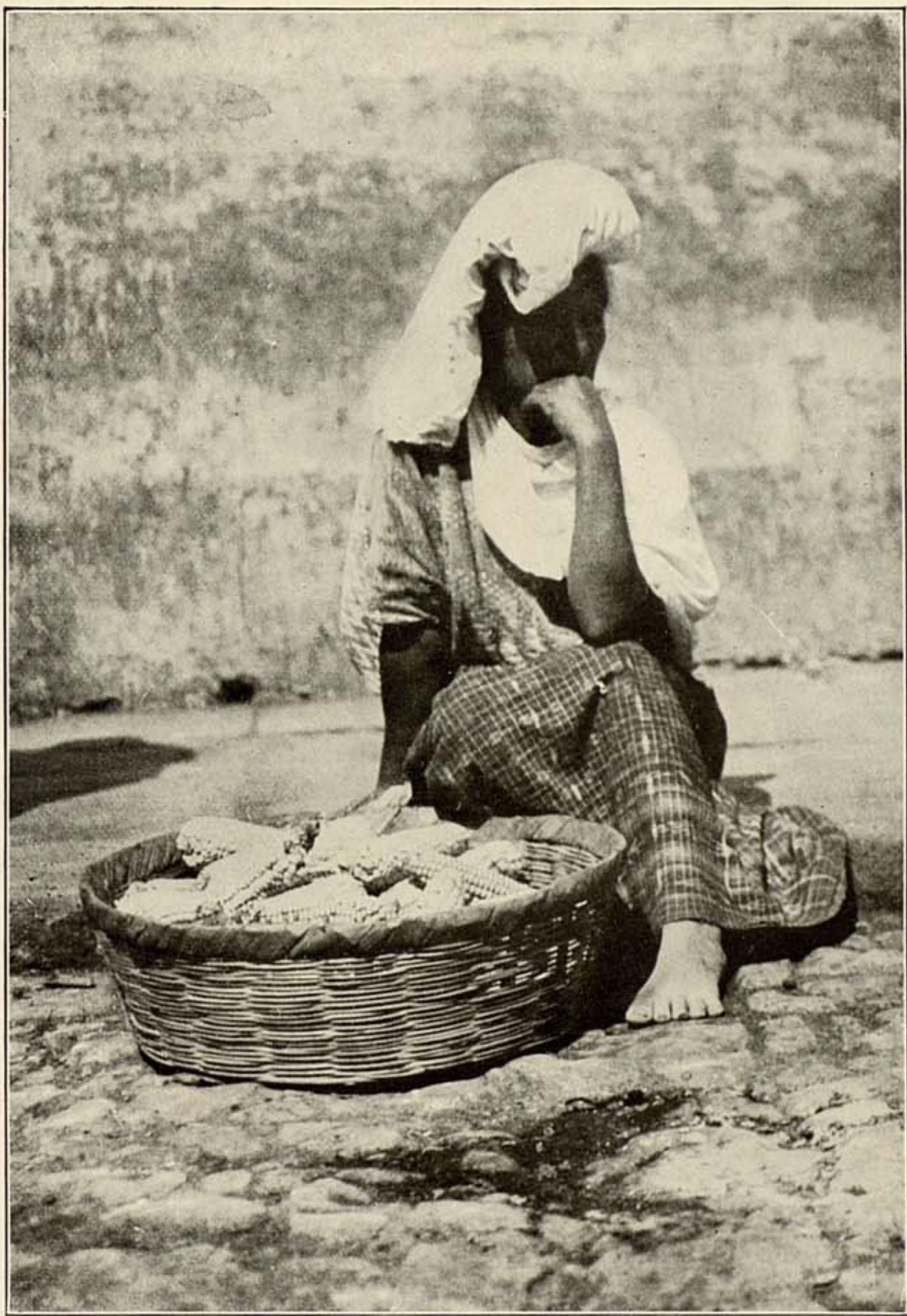
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

shop is a long counter that serves as a table for the patrons, most of whom are Indians, as the standards of cleanliness and neatness are somewhat too primitive for the whites.

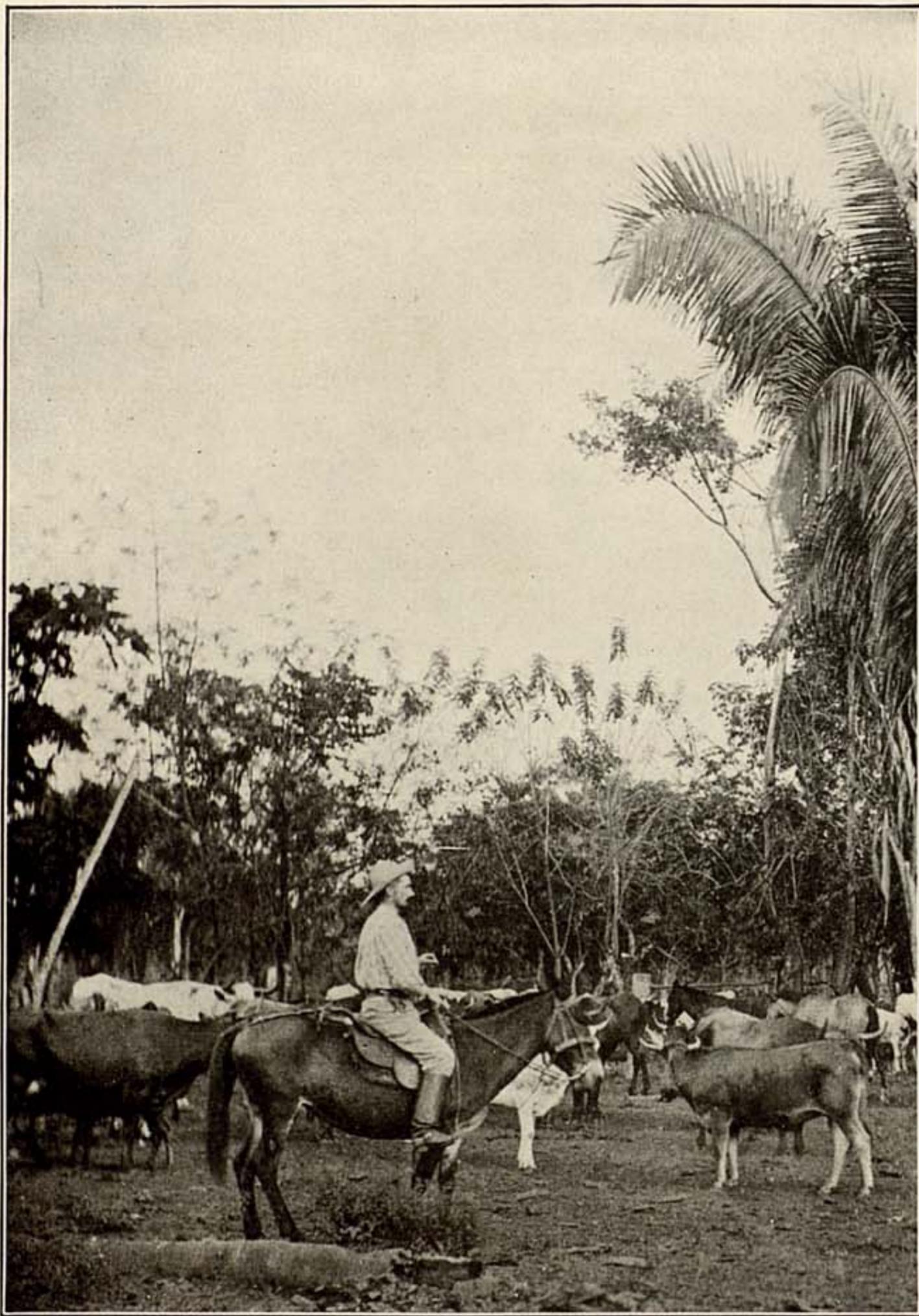
Most of the food in Guatemala comes to the table in Spanish style. The meats are usually fried, and the stews are so hot with peppers and chilies that they fairly take the skin off the roof of my mouth. Two dishes served at nearly every meal are boiled rice and black beans. The coffee is as black as ink, and is made by pouring into your cup some coffee essence from a bottle on the table and filling it up with hot water or hot milk. This essence is obtained by filtering water through the ground beans, and a teaspoonful of it will make a cup of strong coffee.

Indeed, I find many queer things in Guatemalan house-keeping. All the cooking is done with charcoal, so that the city is free from smoke and soot. It is only in the homes of the rich or the foreigners that stoves or grates are used. There are no chimneys, as charcoal makes little smoke, and the fumes must find a way out of the houses as best they can.

Leaving the market, we take a walk through the business section. The shops are nothing like our stores at home. Most of them have no glass windows, and some have no windows at all, the only light coming in through the door. The counter is at the back of the store instead of in the middle, and usually runs across the room facing the front. The merchandise is poorly displayed, and as a rule there are no fixed prices. Much of the buying is done by bargaining, and a smaller sum than that marked on the goods is usually accepted. And no wonder, for look at the marks! That cotton is two dollars a yard, and that bolt of silk eighteen dollars. Hats are marked at



On the cobblestone streets outside the market, barefooted Indian women sit all day long offering for sale wares that range from fruits and vegetables to pottery, baskets, and hats of their own manufacture.



Although Guatemala is generally known as a land of mountains and jungles, it has almost a million acres of grazing lands, which could support many times the number of cattle there now are in the republic.

## IN GUATEMALA CITY

five hundred dollars, and an ordinary umbrella is one third that much.

These prices are not so alarming when we learn that they are only in Guatemalan currency. The value of the national peso fluctuates from day to day. It is never more than a few cents, and often I can buy sixty Guatemalan dollars with one of Uncle Sam's. All bills are paid in paper, and the money is worth so little that it is a trouble to carry it. Even as I write, my pockets are bulging with it.

While I stood at the bank window this morning cashing a check on my letter of credit, a man came up to make a deposit. Under his arm he carried a package that looked like a bundle of laundry. As he laid it on the counter and took off the string a gust of wind swept in, and a shower of dirty bills was blown over the floor. When they were finally gathered together, it took twenty minutes to count them, although in gold they amounted to only a few hundred dollars.

Indeed, the currency here reminds me of that of our Confederacy at the close of the Civil War. The story is told that as a Southern general was riding along a Virginia road he met a man leading a very fine horse and said to him:

"That's a good animal you have. I'll give you five thousand dollars for him."

"Oh, will you?" was the other's retort. "Why, man alive, I just paid three thousand dollars to have him curried!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

**W**HEN I tell you that such a thing as a bird's-eye view of this country may actually be had by the everyday traveller, there may spring up in your mind, as there did in mine, a vision of an intrepid explorer standing upon the towering pinnacle of one of the mighty volcanoes that dominate almost every landscape here, and from that lofty elevation viewing the republic through a super-powerful telescope.

The picture is a fascinating one, but such an exploit is manifestly impossible, and unnecessary as well, for a view of the country as a whole may be obtained right here in Guatemala City. I refer to the huge relief map of the republic built inside the race track. It covers several acres, and by climbing upon the platform beside it one can see all Guatemala in miniature. The map is made of cement, plaster, and stone, and the turning of a crank causes real mountain water to flow through the rivers, fill the lakes, and form the oceans on each side.

In actuality, Guatemala is so large that its two coasts are more than two hundred and fifty miles apart; its Pacific seaboard measures about the same distance, and the Caribbean one third as much. Compared to our American states, it is small, being only about the size of North Carolina. Here, however, it is considered a vast

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

country. It is bigger than any other Central American republic except Nicaragua, and it contains, in fact, about one fourth of all the land between Panama and Mexico.

This giant relief map shows every physical characteristic of the republic. With the exception of the two strips of lowlands bordering the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, the country is all mountains and high valleys. It lies in the tropics, but its varying altitudes give it a half-dozen zones and as many kinds of climate. In the hot zone along the Caribbean it is so warm that Negroes have to be brought in to work on the plantations. Above one thousand feet the climate is cooler, and at an altitude of between two and five thousand the thermometer remains at from sixty-two to seventy-seven degrees the year round. In the whole republic there are only two seasons, the wet and the dry, and on the higher lands the wet season is not at all unpleasant.

The scenery of the highland region is equal to that of Switzerland, and, in addition, is green throughout the year. I have already mentioned the volcanoes. There are twenty-eight of them in Guatemala, ranging in height from that of the mountain ranges of the Alleghanies to that of the Rockies, and some are frequently in eruption. Most of them are perfect cones, many comparable to Fujiyama of Japan in their symmetry of outline. Looking at the map, I saw that one of the volcanoes was half blown away. That is Santa María, which burst forth in 1902, causing great damage to the city of Quezaltenango, destroying many villages, and covering vast areas of coffee lands several feet deep with volcanic ash. This ash was perceptible as far north as Mexico City and as far south as Colombia.

Guatemala is noted particularly for its lakes, and the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

relief map's miniature reproductions can give only a faint idea of their exquisite settings. The ones I have seen remind me of the gem-like bodies of water that dot the Canadian Rockies and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Nearest the Pacific is Lake Atitlán, which fills an extinct crater five thousand feet above the level of the sea, and which lies almost in the shadow of three other live volcanoes—the two Atitláns and San Pedro. It is twenty-five miles long, and so deep that its bottom has never been plumbed. Rising from its surface are eighteen green islands, and on its shores are eleven Indian villages, each named after one of the Apostles.

About eighteen miles south of Guatemala City is Lake Amatitlán, along the shores of which I rode on my journey up from the Pacific. Although not so large as Atitlán, it is more accessible from the capital, and overlooking it is a comfortable little hotel that is a favourite resort for the Guatemalans. Its water is beautifully clear, with hot springs that bubble up here and there and breathe forth steam from the surface. The springs are patronized by both rich and poor, the former coming here for the mineral baths, and the Indian women taking advantage of the warm water for their family washings. As I rode along on the train I saw dozens of them kneeling at the water's edge, flapping and pounding articles of clothing against the stones.

Another interesting lake is Yzabal, which is really an arm of the Caribbean. On its shores are the ruins of the old Spanish fort of San Felipe, built in 1525 by Hernando Cortés during his march from Mexico to Honduras. Surrounding it are enormous banana and rubber plantations, which cover hundreds of thousands of acres.

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

Lake Yzabal is reached from the Caribbean port of Livingston through the Rio Dulce, a river that in its beauty can be compared only with the unexcelled Saguenay in Quebec. Its mirror-like surface lies between towering walls five hundred feet high, covered with tropical vegetation and vines that hang down to the edge of the water like living green curtains. Aside from an occasional Indian bringing produce to market in his dugout canoe, there is no sign of human life, although the animal and bird life is varied and beautiful. If one is fortunate he may catch a glimpse of the gorgeously coloured quetzal, a small bird whose sweeping tail feathers are three feet in length. It is literally a bird of freedom, as it quickly dies in captivity. For this reason the quetzal has been adopted as the national emblem of liberty and made a part of the Guatemalan coat of arms.

In my bird's-eye view, I found another good-sized lake near the northern boundary. This is Petén, twenty-seven miles long, on one of whose islands have been found the ruins of a buried city built by a people who lived here before the dawn of history. And then there is a sulphur lake in the crater of the Tecuamburro volcano. Not only has it no fish, but not far from it is a little geyser called the Well of Death, which is said to kill birds, reptiles, or any animal that breathes its fumes. I heard of a similar geyser during my stay in Central Africa, and was shown photographs of deer which had been killed by it.

These are only a few of the many natural wonders of Guatemala. The country has great cañons, caverns, and caves, and one waterfall seven hundred feet high. About forty miles from Guatemala City is the Bridge of Slaves, which was built one hundred years after Columbus had

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

discovered America. It is ten feet wide and three hundred and seventy-five feet long, and there are many legends concerning its construction. One of these is that the devil put it up in a single night on a contract with the architect, who agreed to give the Evil One his soul as the price of the job. The devil had finished laying the stones in place and had about completed the work when the man who had made the contract repented and asked to be released, at the same time thrusting a crucifix in the face of the devil. His Satanic Majesty thereupon tried to kick over the bridge, but he succeeded in knocking out only one stone, which, I am told, is still lacking.

Guatemala has been endowed with rich natural resources as well as great beauty. It abounds in valuable deposits of gold, silver, copper, iron, and lead, and the republic is practically unprospected. It has some of the best coffee soil in the world; it will raise rubber, cotton, and sugar, and there is no country on earth that will produce more or better bananas per acre than the Motagua Valley. It has rich grazing lands and vast forests of timber, including mahogany, cedar, and dyewoods. Money is all the country needs to make it blossom like the rose and to bring into use its vast resources in lands, mines, and labour. Now that financial backing has put it on a gold basis, it may become one of the richest lands of this hemisphere, and that almost in the front dooryard of the United States. The eastern coast is within three days by steamer of New Orleans, and from Guatemala City one can now go to Ayutla on the Mexican border and thence all the way to New York by rail.

The only other public railway in Guatemala is the transcontinental line from San José on the Pacific to

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

Puerto Barrios on the Caribbean. It is marked on the relief map by a strip of steel, and is the road over which I came up the mountains to the capital. Its western terminus, San José, has an open roadstead for a harbour, and is important only as a point of entry. Its hotel facilities are so poor that I did not tarry there, but took a train for Guatemala City as soon as possible after being swung on shore in the basket which takes the place of a gangplank.

This railroad was the first one built in Guatemala. It was begun about 1877, when an American, William Nanna, who had been general manager of the Costa Rican railway, came here and laid the track from the Pacific as far as the town of Esquintla. That stretch was completed about 1880, and a little later Nanna received a concession to continue the line to the capital.

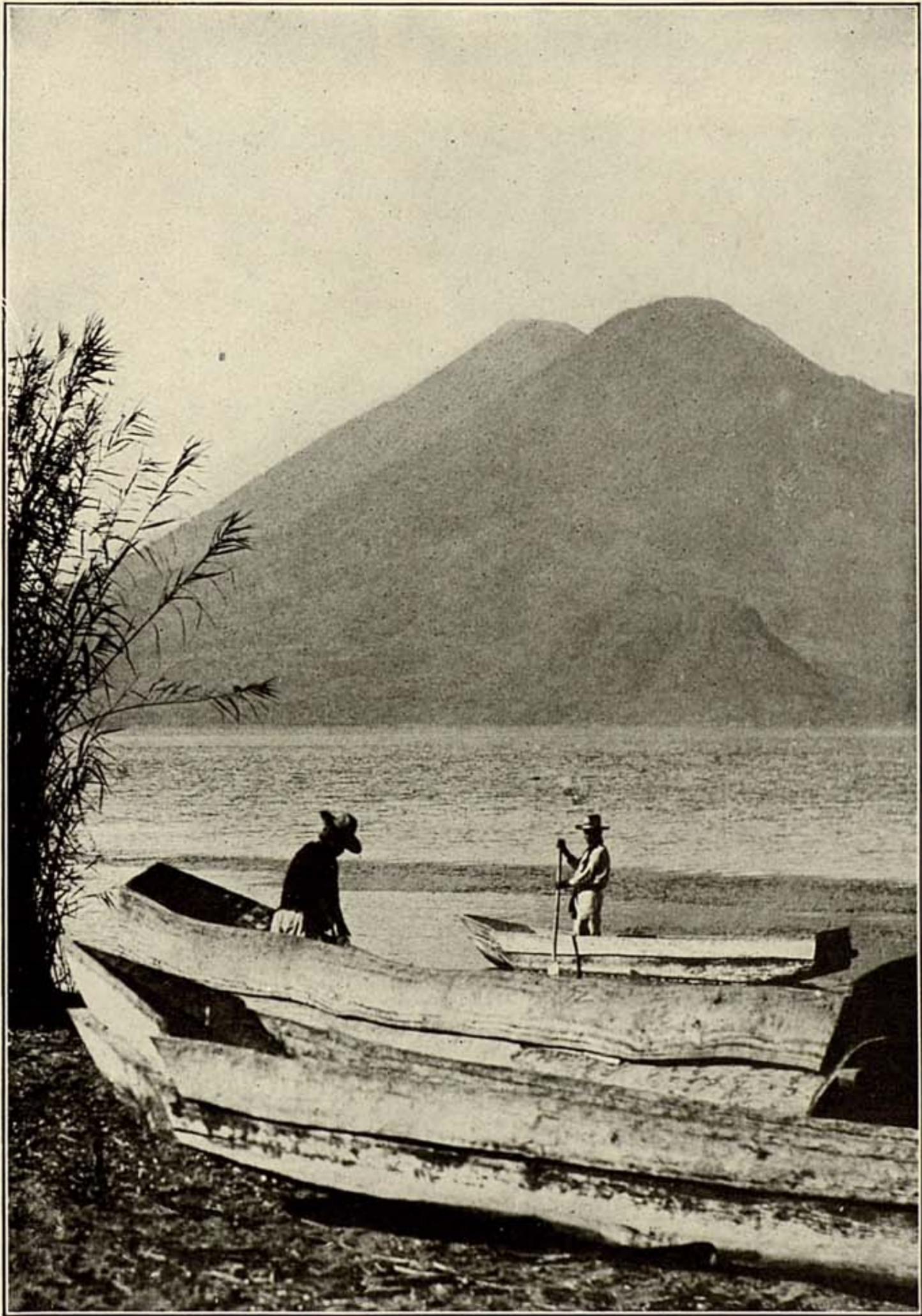
The ride from the coast is rich in fine scenery. There are numerous curves and loops, and, under the shadow of volcanic mountains, I passed through fields of sugar cane, climbed hills covered with grazing cattle, and now and then skirted vast coffee plantations. Guatemala is primarily an agricultural country, although four fifths of its twenty-five million acres are mountains, forests, or swamps, and only half the remainder is cultivated. Properly developed, it could produce many times its present agricultural output, and could grow every fruit and vegetable of the temperate and the torrid zones. Its principal crop is coffee, which in quality won the highest award at the San Francisco exposition, and which in quantity ranks next to the outputs of Brazil and Colombia. The production in a recent year amounted to one hundred million pounds, and of this nearly ninety-five per cent. was exported. The coffee tree grows best on the western

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

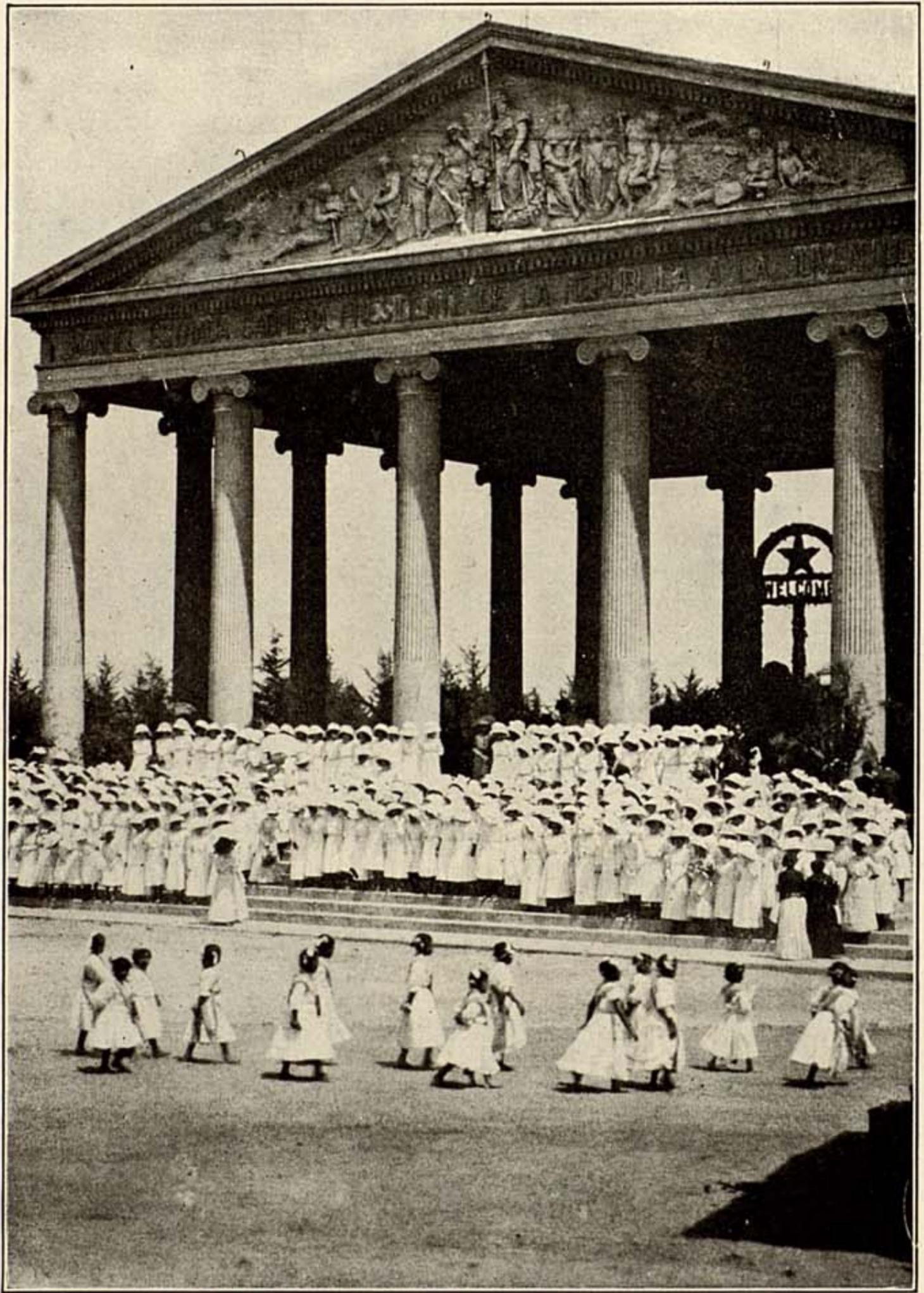
slopes of the country at altitudes between fifteen hundred and five thousand feet above sea level, where the plantations often cover the hillsides for miles.

More than fifty per cent. of the coffee plantations in Guatemala are owned by Germans, who have invested heavily in all kinds of enterprises here. They own sugar and cacao plantations, they have built hotels and inns throughout the country, and they operate steamers on some of the lakes. Before the World War they had the largest share also in the trade of Guatemala, which the United States had not been able to secure, through our failure to study the people and their language. I remember that when I was here some twelve years ago I asked the engineer of one of the little river steamers what sort of fuel he used. "We burn some coal and a little wood," he replied, "but the most of the fuel is composed of catalogues sent by American business firms, printed for the Guatemalan trade in a language the merchants cannot understand." This condition was entirely changed by the World War, and although Germany is again regaining part of its lost trade, the United States now takes all of the bananas and much of the coffee and sugar of Guatemala, and furnishes this country two thirds of its imports.

Coming away from the relief map of Guatemala, I stopped for a moment to have a look at the Temple of Minerva, which is dedicated to the cause of education in this republic. Covering about a quarter of an acre, it consists of a great platform with a roof upheld by twenty-four Ionic columns. On the front of the building are allegorical figures representing Civilization and Progress, and under them is an inscription saying that Manuel Estrada Cabrera, then president of the republic, erected



In their settings of towering mountains lie the gem-like lakes of Guatemala. The larger ones are now navigated by steamers as well as by the dugout canoes of the Indians.



The school children of Guatemala hold annual festivals at the temples of Minerva, which were erected in many towns of the country by the former dictator, Cabrera, and devoted to the cause of education.

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

this temple to the youth of the country. I have seen similar temples, though less pretentious in appearance, that have been dedicated to Minerva in other cities of Guatemala. In all of them are held annual festivals for the school children of the republic.

It is interesting to note that these temples to the cause of education are found in a country where there are only eighty thousand school children in a population of two million, and where two thirds of the people are full-blooded Indians. Remarking upon this fact, I learned that schools were the hobby of the aforementioned Cabrera, who passed a law making education compulsory, and who lost no opportunity to play the rôle of educator of the common people. At the time he came into power, practically all the schools in the republic were closed for lack of funds. Cabrera ordered them opened and also established some thousands of primary, normal, and industrial schools. The country has now a manual training school for women, a national conservatory of music, a school of art, institutes of law, medicine, and engineering, and in 1918 there was established the National University, which offers courses in law, literature, science, medicine, surgery, and engineering. Many of these schools were destroyed or damaged in the great earthquake of 1918, but they were the first institutions to be restored and rebuilt.

I understand, however, that the educational system of Guatemala has been always better in theory than in actual practice. Although large sums were spent in erecting school buildings, many of them remained without pupils because there was no money to pay the salaries of good teachers. With the value of the peso at times reduced almost to nothing, ordinary instructors had to sell

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

their services for the equivalent of a few cents a day. It has been the same with other government employees. A circuit judge, for instance, receives a salary equalling only twelve or fifteen dollars a month in United States money, and the only way he can live in proper style is by graft; as a result, justice is often for sale to the highest bidder.

Manuel Estrada Cabrera, the president who so delighted in acting as a patron of education, was one of the last of the famous Central American dictators to be ousted from office. He became president in 1898, following the assassination of his predecessor, Rufino Barrios. Cabrera was at that time vice-president, and when the news of the assassination reached the palace, he is reported to have drawn a pistol from his pocket, laid it on the table, and declared: "Gentlemen, I am president of Guatemala." He made good his statement, and for twenty-two years wielded an almost despotic power over the people of this republic.

During Cabrera's rule one could not enter the borders of Guatemala in any capacity without at once being made to feel the force of his personality and the effect of his system of government. His was practically a rule of terror, and within a few hours after I first came here I found myself unconsciously imitating the Guatemalans, and lowering my voice when speaking of the president or the government. In private conversation, I seldom heard him referred to except as "the old man" or "this fellow," although it was a striking fact that no government official in a public speech ever failed to end with praise of Manuel Estrada Cabrera. The president himself did everything imaginable to keep his name before the people, even going

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GUATEMALA

to the extent of having it inscribed on the bed linen and towels of the government hospital.

Cabrera was fully aware of the secret hatred the populace felt toward him, and knew that he lived in constant danger of assassination. I have heard it told that he always wore a coat of mail under his clothing and that for a long time his meals were prepared by his aged mother, who sent them to him in locked boxes to insure the food against the possibility of being poisoned. Whenever he left his palace he was closely guarded, and there were times when he was not seen in public for months at a stretch.

That these precautions were all warranted was shown by the many attempts made upon the life of Cabrera. One such occurrence was in 1907, not long after a revolt against his rule had been put down after intervention by the United States and Mexico. It was known that the president always drove through a certain street in going to visit one of his coffee plantations near the city, and under this street the conspirators made a tunnel, in the middle of which they secreted dynamite bombs connected with electric wires. The plotters then bribed Cabrera's coachman to drive slowly as he passed over this spot. They said they would explode the dynamite just as the president was directly over it, and promised the ignorant coachman that he would escape. However, the man at the other end of the electric wire touched off the bombs a moment too soon. The explosion killed only the horses and the coachman, leaving Cabrera entirely unharmed.

Another plot against the President was instigated a year later by the cadets of the military academy. At that time a number of the students had been chosen to act

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

as his guard of honour when our American minister came to present his credentials. The arrangements were such that Cabrera was to walk through a double file of the students as he came back to the palace, and the plot was that every boy was to shoot at him as he approached.

This plot failed for the same reason as the first. One of the boys shot an instant too soon, and before the others could fire, the President had thrown himself flat on his face on the street and his guards had overpowered the cadets. Every one present supposed that he had been killed when he fell to the ground, but in fact only his little finger had been hit.

The outcome of this plot was a terrible one for the cadets. Cabrera ordered them lined up and had every tenth boy shot, following which the dead were thrown on a cart and carried to the cemetery. This act created the most virulent indignation among the people, as the boys represented the best families of the country. Later, the fathers of many of the boys were imprisoned, and in one way or another, several hundred lives are said to have been sacrificed. The cadet captain was promised immunity if he would reveal the names of the others in the plot, but he refused and was shot.

So many unsuccessful attempts were made to assassinate Cabrera that it began to be said he bore a charmed life. Be that as it may, he escaped the plots of his enemies again and again, and kept his hold upon the reins of government until 1920, when he was finally overthrown by a revolution and put into prison. He died in September, 1924, and some of the more superstitious people tried to connect his death with the earthquakes that occurred that month.

## CHAPTER XV

### INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS

**O**N MY way by motor car from Guatemala City to Antigua, the former capital of Guatemala, I have stopped for a while at Mixco, which lies in the foothills of the mountains, commanding a beautiful view of the capital and the sparkling blue waters of Amatitlán. Mixco is a town of a few thousand inhabitants, almost all of them Indians, who live in low, one-story buildings of brick and stone, covered with stucco, and painted in the gay colours one sees everywhere in this part of the continent. In the centre is the usual plaza, about which are houses and stores, and also a church and the city hall. On the porch of the latter structure I can see piles of packs, which the native porters have left there for the night, and on the pavement of the plaza itself scores of Indians are squatting around little fires, cooking their suppers. Each man has a pot or pan resting over the coals, and when he finishes his cooking he joins one of the parties of his fellows who are eating as they sit on the stones. On the other side of the plaza I can see women cooking and eating by themselves, although some, I am told, are the wives of the men opposite.

These people belong to the class of Indian porters to be found everywhere in Guatemala, and of whom I met hundreds on my way up to Mixco. I wish you could see the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

country scenes along the road over which I came here. It was thronged with traffic moving onward in an endless maze of colour and quaintness. There were many carts drawn by oxen, their horns strapped to the yokes so tightly that the animals could not move their heads, and the flies on their sides remained unmolested. There were donkeys with huge packs on their backs, an occasional automobile, men riding mules, and a never-ending procession of Indians loaded with freight. Now and then I saw a group resting by the wayside; at nightfall one may catch glimpses of fires where parties are camping until daybreak.

These Indians are the chief freight carriers of Guatemala. Like the porters of Korea, they belong to a profession that descends from father to son. Longer than man can remember, they have carried baggage and produce from one part of the country to another, and I am told that it is not unusual for one to trot along as fast as the average mule. Indeed, I have gone over roads on muleback where, pushing ahead as rapidly as I could, I made no better time than many heavily laden porters.

These porters are of all ages, from little boys to gray-haired men and women. In coming here to Mixco I passed many with enormous loads of clay jars. A score of these were often piled up in a crate that rose high above the head of the bearer, who bent half double as he trotted along. Boys of six carried two or three such jars, and children not more than four years old trudged along over the road with smaller bundles. One Indian *cargador* whom I passed had tied to his shoulders an iron plate, two feet wide, four feet long, and two inches thick.

## INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS

It must have weighed more than one hundred and fifty pounds. It is said the Indians are obliged to carry loads for any one who will pay them for their services. The local officials supply them upon demand, but they can be forced to make only a two-day journey from home; they have also the right to refuse to carry more than one hundred pounds apiece.

The Guatemalan Indians are mostly of the Quiché race, which was descended from the Toltecs, the people driven out of Mexico by the Aztecs between the seventh and the twelfth centuries. They seem to be smaller and less robust than the native Indians of the United States. The average height of the men is under five feet, and there are many women here who could walk beneath my arm. Nevertheless, both men and women are straight, the women perhaps even more so than the men. This probably comes from their practice of carrying burdens upon their heads. The women do not bend their backs as they walk, their movements being almost altogether from the hips downward, although many of them swing their arms. They are a shade lighter in complexion than the Sioux or Choctaws, and some of the men have thin, straggly beards. All have an anæmic look, caused, I am told, by their custom of eating a kind of yellow earth mixed with sulphur. Images made of this earth are to be found at every shrine, and the pilgrims eat them, thinking thereby to ward off disease.

Both men and women delight in bright-coloured clothing. The men wear shirts, coats, and trousers. If they have sandals, these are merely a piece of leather covering the sole of the foot, with a strip of softer leather over the instep, the two being tied together with thongs. When

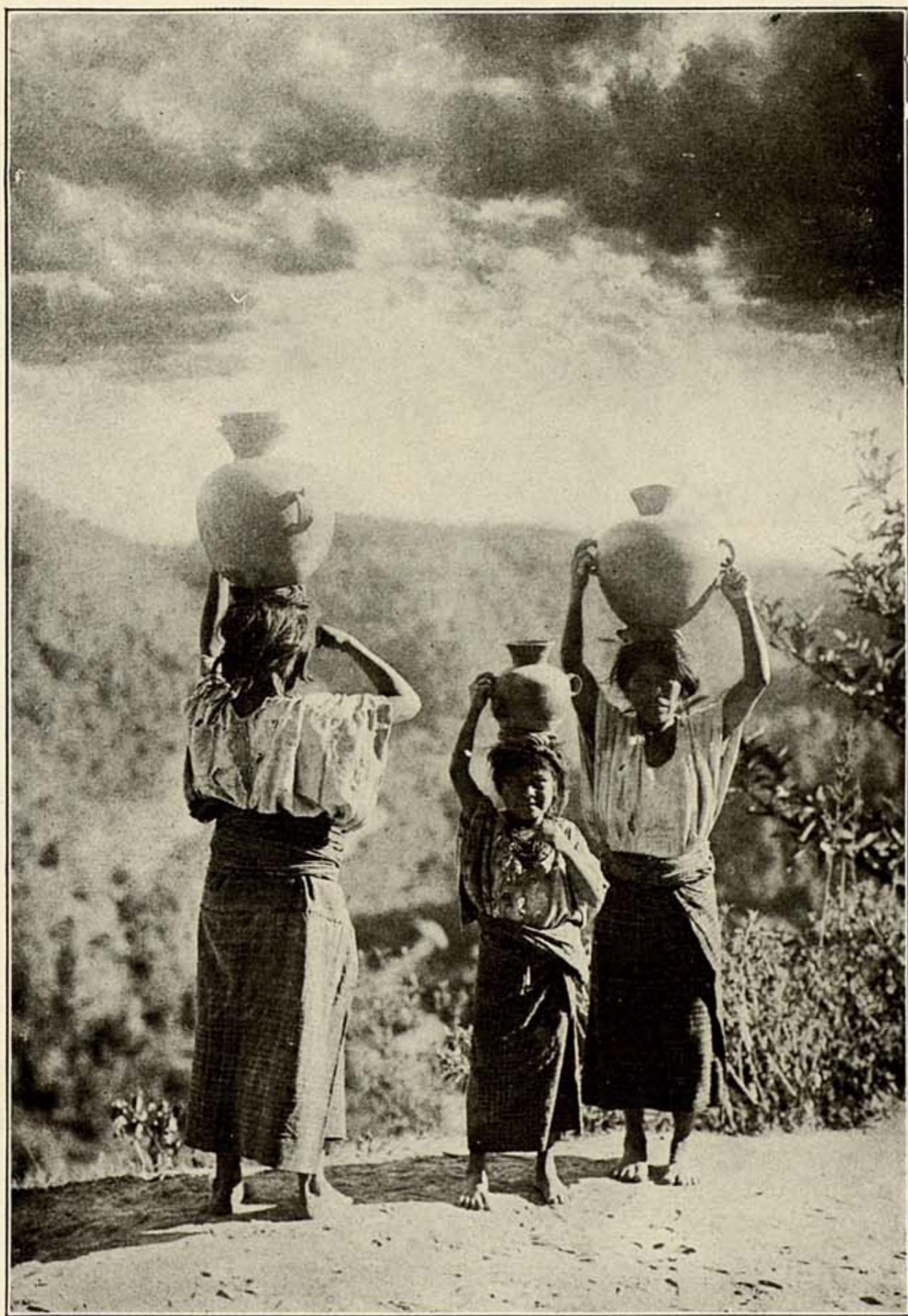
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

on the road they often wear a queer sort of overcoat with loose sleeves. This coat is slit up the sides, and under it is one apron that falls to the knees at the front and another that reaches to the calves at the back. Many Indians top this attire with a straw hat of a sugar-loaf shape, and as they trot along in groups they remind me of nothing so much as a chorus of comic-opera brigands.

The dress of a woman usually consists of three pieces. First she has a long cloth wound round her waist and legs as a skirt, and reaching to below her knees. Above this is a waist richly embroidered in as many colours as Joseph's coat. The waist comes down over the skirt, and a gaudy sash holds the two garments together. The fashion in hairdressing is for a woman's luxuriant tresses to be plaited in two long braids down her back, with a bit of scarlet ribbon added for adornment. In the northern part of the country the feminine members of certain tribes wear woven bands several yards long, wound round and round their heads and tied in a knot in front. These bands are made of brilliant silks and end in tassels or silver ornaments.

The women are fond of jewellery, and often carry all their savings in the form of the silver and gold ornaments with which they decorate their persons. Some have necklaces of silver coins, and others wear bits of gold and nuggets of silver. Coral beads are common, and many girls have heavy silver crosses. Upon trying to buy one of these crosses I discovered that its wearer would not sell it at any price.

These people constitute the greater part of the population of Guatemala. Indeed, in a total of two million persons, six out of every ten in this country are full-



Among the Indians, the vocation of freight carrier is handed down from father to son, and from mother to daughter as well. Little girls begin their tasks of burden bearing long before they enter their teens.



The Guatemalan women are particularly adept at handicraft such as weaving the cloth for their bright-coloured garments and making the fibre of the maguey hemp into ropes and hammocks.

## INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS

blooded Indians, and half-breeds make up most of the remainder. The proportion of pure whites is probably smaller than anywhere else in Central America. I am told that there are eighteen different tribes of Indians in the republic, and that there are at least six represented among the inhabitants of this town of Mixco.

There is one tribe in Guatemala like none other on our continent. I have not seen its people, as they live in the backwoods jungle of the tropical coast lands, but they are said to be almost black, and to look somewhat like the Papuans, with powerfully developed chests and arms. Both men and women go almost naked, and the children entirely so. The members of this tribe dwell in villages built in the tree tops. Selecting three or four palms close together, they make a platform extending from one to the other of them about thirty feet from the ground, roofing it with thatch. Such a shelter is reached only by climbing, which men, women, and children do with the greatest agility, their toes being abnormally developed by the practice. These Indians are still in a wholly savage state. They use bows and arrows and are shy, treacherous, and afraid of strangers.

In contrast to this tribe, the greater number of the Guatemalan Indians are civilized and very docile, and to-day are engaged in tilling the soil and in labouring for the whites. In the cities they live in the adobe houses so common here, and out in the country have huts made of poles set upright in the ground or of volcanic rocks and stones piled loosely on top of each other, both types of dwellings being topped with roofs of thatch. Every man has his little patch of corn and beans, and as the land is fertile and the climate mild, even the poorest classes never

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

suffer from cold and hunger as do, for instance, the Indians of the high Peruvian plateau. Many of the women are skilled in native handicraft, making toys, baskets, artificial flowers, and pottery, and manufacturing the fibre of the maguey plant into rope, twine, halters, and hammocks.

As a race, the condition of the Indians here is little better than it was four centuries ago when the Spaniards conquered the country. Pedro de Alvarado, who took possession of Guatemala for Spain between the years 1522 and 1524, tortured and enslaved the natives so cruelly that in the first fifteen years of Spanish domination more than four million died. At one time Alvarado wrote to Cortés: "I have killed and captured hosts of people, many of them captains and persons of rank," and at another time: "I am determined to burn the lords and their cities, in order that I may bring them to the service of His Majesty the King." Alvarado also had a pleasant way of branding his Indian prisoners on the cheeks and thighs and then selling them as slaves at public auction.

Although such practices have long been abolished, the majority of the Indians are still virtually in a state of slavery. Peonage is nominally prohibited in that a man cannot inherit a debt from his parents, nor can he be forced to work out debts contracted before he comes of age. On the other hand, if he gets into debt himself he is forced to stay on the plantation where the debt is contracted until he works it out. I have before me a contract between a planter and one of his Indian labourers. It provides that the Indian must work out personally and by daily wage any debt he contracts, and must stay on the plantation until it is paid unless his employer gives him

## INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS

written permission to leave. Another provision is that if he runs away he must add to his debt all the expenses necessary to bring him back. At the present time, an effort is being made to abolish these practices through new labour laws.

The pay of the Indians is only a few cents a day, varying according to the value of the peso, and I am told that the mayors and other officials can force the natives to give a certain amount of work to whomsoever they please. A planter who needs labour has only to cross the palm of the mayor with money, and the Indians are told that if they will not work they will be drafted into the army. As they are densely ignorant, they have no idea of what their rights are.

According to law a man need work only eleven months of the year. He has the privilege of celebrating the church and national holidays, and he may have a day off when there is a baptism, a birth, or a death in his family. He is also supposed to rest on the day of the saint after whom he is named. These Indians are intensely religious in their own fashion. They give more of their earnings to the priests than do the whites, and I find them in every church and see them kneeling at every shrine. Each town has its church, which is often larger than all the other houses combined, and among the worshippers there are invariably a half-dozen red men to every white. The Indians are particularly given to religious festivals and fiestas, even in remote villages, where, although there is always a church, there is often no priest. Intervals of several years frequently elapse between the visits of a clergyman, and for this reason it is not uncommon for marriages to be omitted entirely in the life of many of the

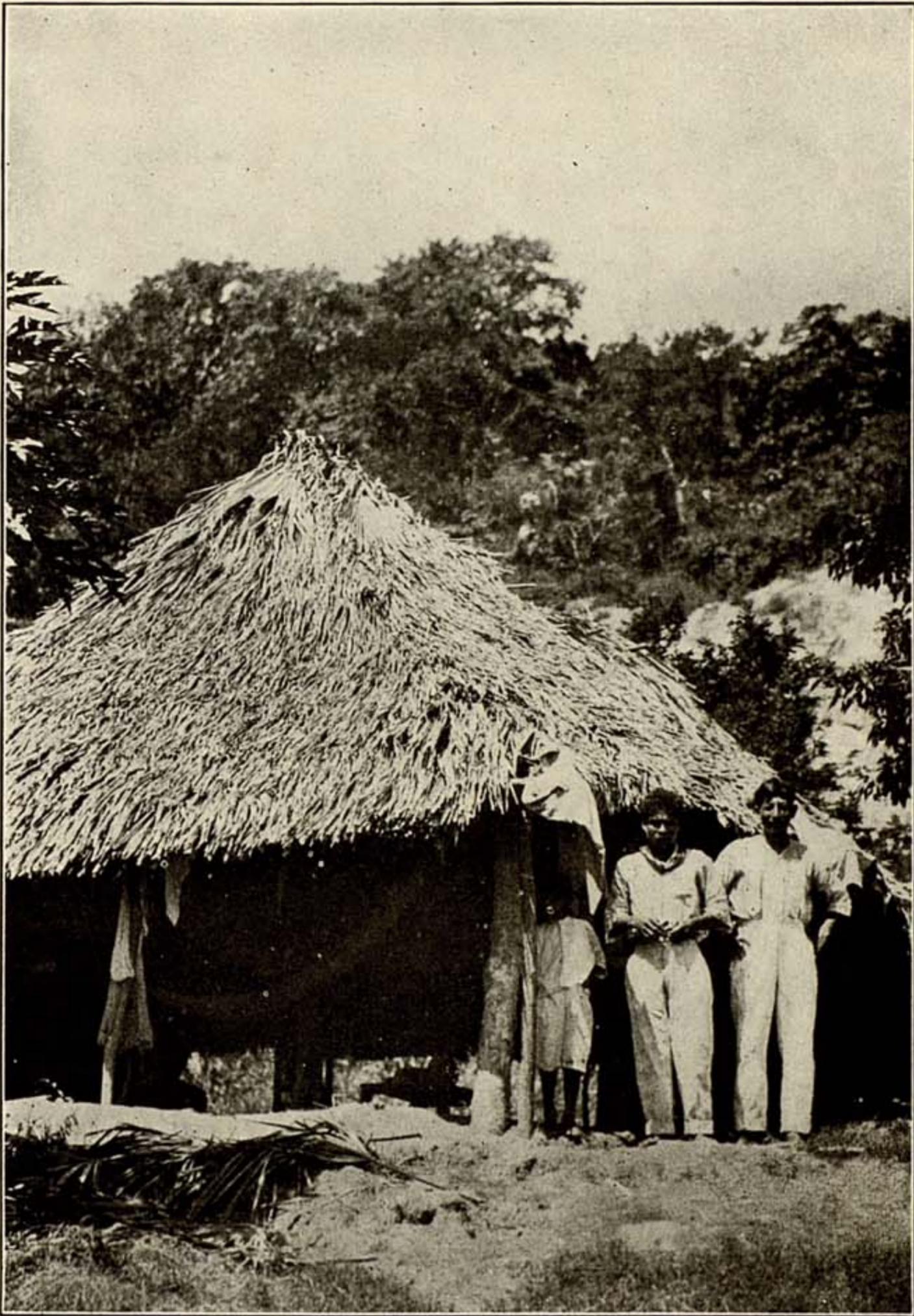
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

people. The proportion of illegitimate births is appallingly large. Whenever a priest or a bishop does visit such a village the people outdo themselves in celebrating the event. In every religious procession an image of the Virgin, often nothing but a large doll dressed in lace and tinsel, is carried about through the streets, firecrackers are shot off, and not infrequently large quantities of liquor are consumed.

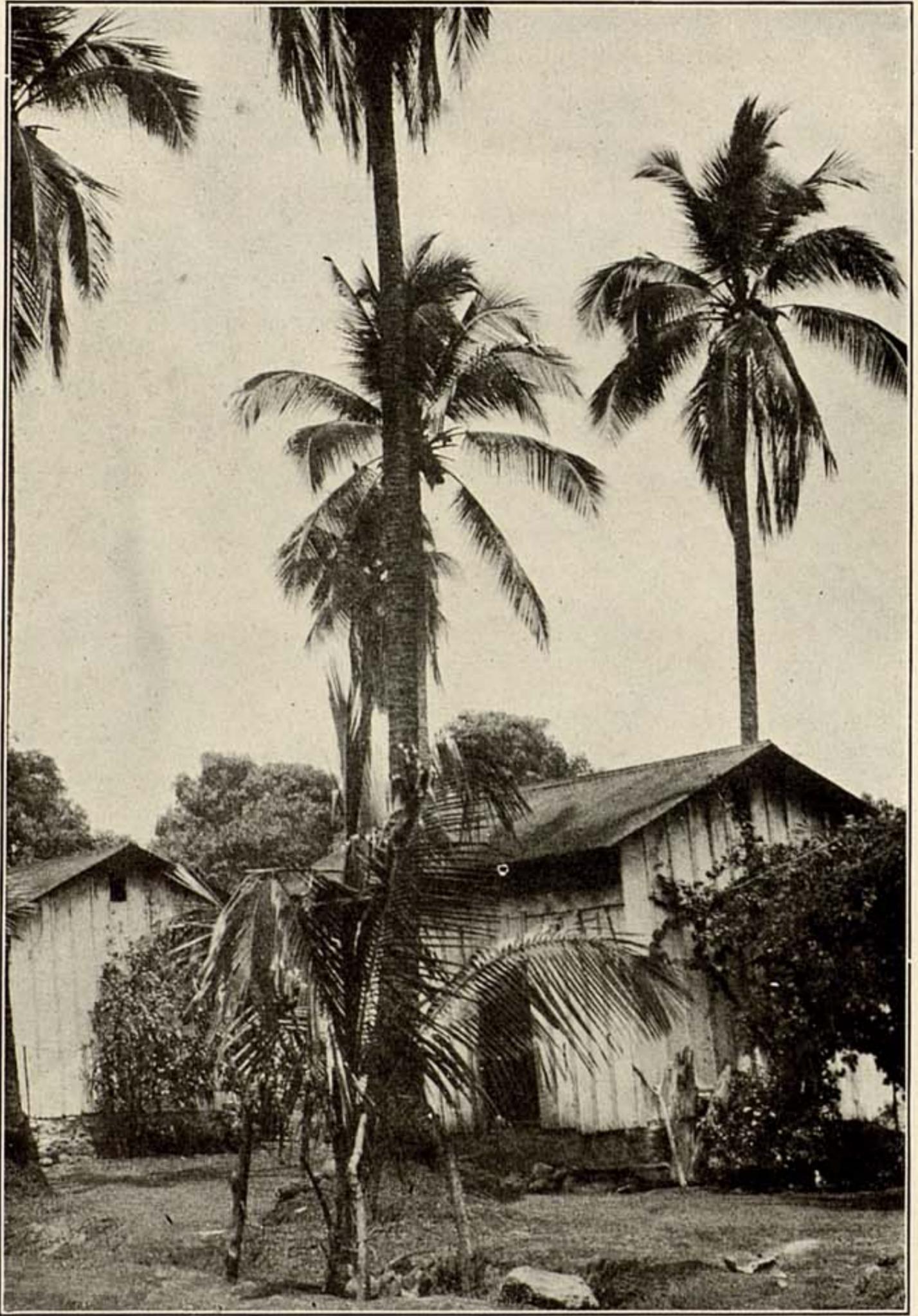
Drunkenness seems to be the greatest vice of the Indians. I have seen men reeling along the highways and lying drunk by the sides of the roads almost everywhere during my travels through the interior. At every mile or so there is a rude drinking place, and near the cities saloons may be found at every few hundred yards. The liquor most popular with this class is a native brandy made from sugar and known locally as "White Eye."

Mingled with the Catholic faith of the Indians are many superstitions handed down from their ancestors since before the days of the Spaniards. Some of them still believe in witch doctors, and when they contract any disease they do not understand, they straightway think themselves bewitched and get a medicine man to treat them. The latter mutters some mysterious words over the sick person, and by a little sleight-of-hand manages to find in the bed an image which he tells the patient is the cause of his illness.

Another superstition concerns the "roses of hell," which grow on a tree found on the slopes of the volcano of Agua. These look much like flowers, and have a blossom-like shape, but they are really formations of brown wood and bark. Some are as much as twelve inches wide. The Indians say these "roses of hell," if soaked in tea, will



Fully sixty per cent. of the population of Guatemala are pure-blooded Indians. Out in the country, most of the people live in huts that are little more than thatched roofs upheld by poles.



The larger coffee plantations on the west coast of Guatemala employ thousands of labourers, who live in little villages on the estates, occupying houses somewhat more substantial than the ordinary thatched huts of the country.

## INDIAN PEONS AND PORTERS

yield a most deadly poison. They hold the flower in fearful respect, and have a tradition that when the volcano once overflowed and buried a certain city, nothing was left alive except the trees on which appear these curious wood blossoms.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

**L**ESS than twenty-five miles from Guatemala City lie the ruins of Antigua, the ancient capital of this country. You may never have heard of it, and the inhabitants who live among its former grandeur to-day number less than ten thousand. Nevertheless, it was long one of the great cities of the North American continent. It was famous a hundred years before there was any settlement in the United States, and it had tens of thousands of people when the Dutch were buying Manhattan Island from the Indians. It had palaces, universities, and cathedrals when we had only log cabins, and its ruins show that for two hundred years or more after the continent was discovered it far surpassed any other city of North America.

Antigua is now connected with the capital by a fairly good automobile road. The route goes up hill and down, now running along the tops of mountain ridges and now dipping into little valleys. In places it is cut through earth where the strata of volcanic ash are as distinct as the layers of a cake, and often one sees mighty cracks where the ground has been split open by earthquakes. Most of this region, however, is fertile and is covered with luxuriant coffee and sugar plantations. Many of the former are in large estates beautifully laid out, intersected by wide avenues shaded by tall cryptomerias and surrounded by all the

## AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

gorgeous vegetation of the tropics. Beautiful flowers throw riotous blankets of colour far and wide, giant blossoming trees rise high into the air, and the climate is as sun-kissed and mild as a Garden of Eden. It is no wonder this valley was chosen as the site of the ancient capital.

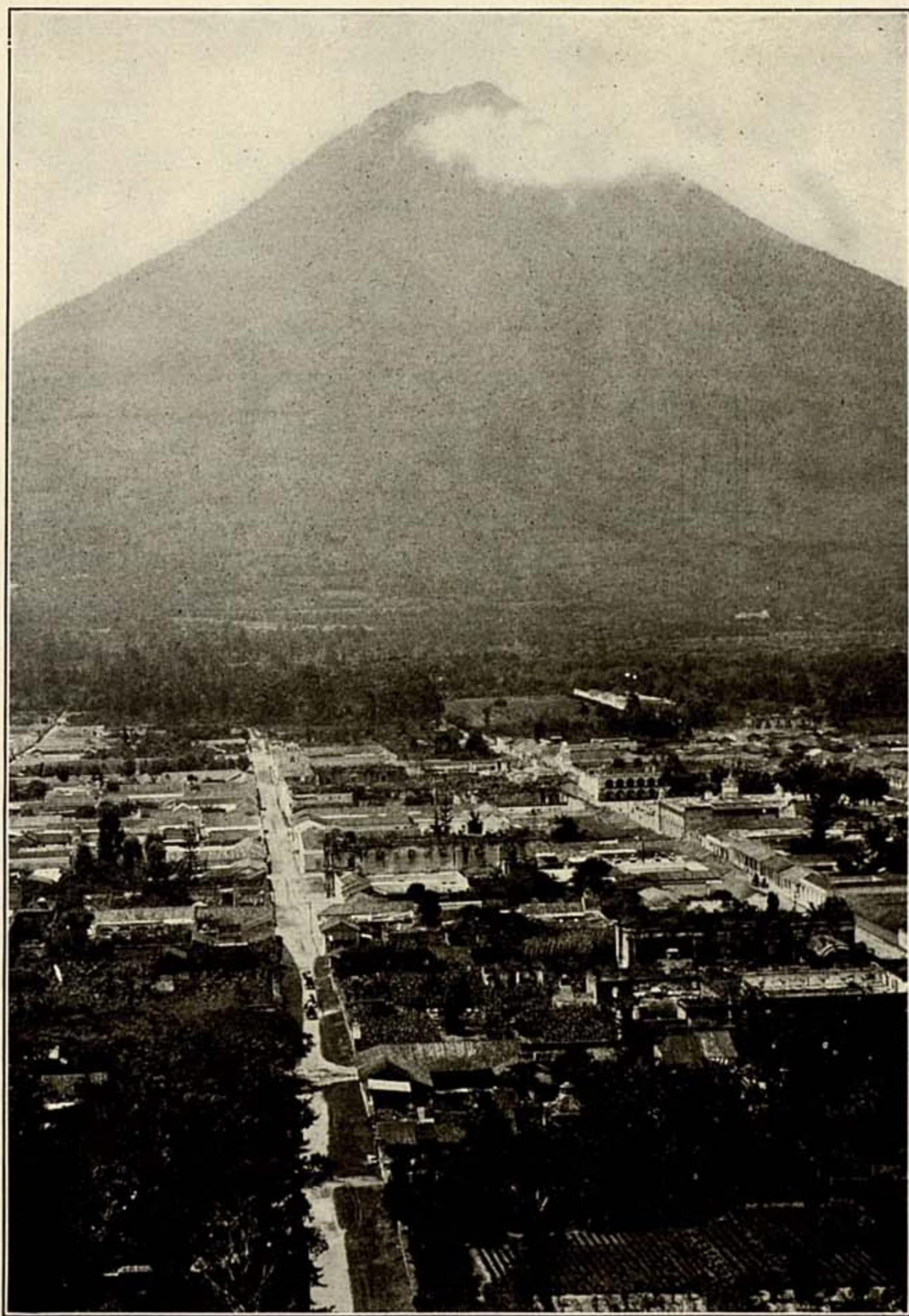
The ruins of Antigua, which are all that remain of a metropolis destroyed again and again by earthquakes and eruptions, lie at the foot of two mighty volcanoes, the names of which mean "fire" and "water." Behind the city, rising in one magnificent unbroken sweep to a height of thirteen thousand feet, is the Volcán de Agua, its slopes clothed in perpetual green, and not far away is its twin sentinel, the Volcán de Fuego.

The first capital of Guatemala was founded by Alvarado only thirty-two years after Columbus first crossed the Atlantic. Alvarado, having conquered tribe after tribe of Indians, selected this valley as the site of a city that he called Santiago de los Caballeros. The best architects, artisans, and craftsmen in Spain were brought here to design its great buildings, and the labour of thousands of Indians was recruited for its construction. That city, however, had been in existence only fourteen years when it was reduced to ruins by a devastating flood from old Agua. Some people think the deluge came from a lake in the volcano, the waters of which were let out through a crack caused by an earthquake, and others say that it came from torrential rains, which rolled down the mountains, bearing forests, rocks, and earth before them. At any rate, the city was completely destroyed, and to-day practically all that is left of it is a few crumbling walls and part of the old cathedral.

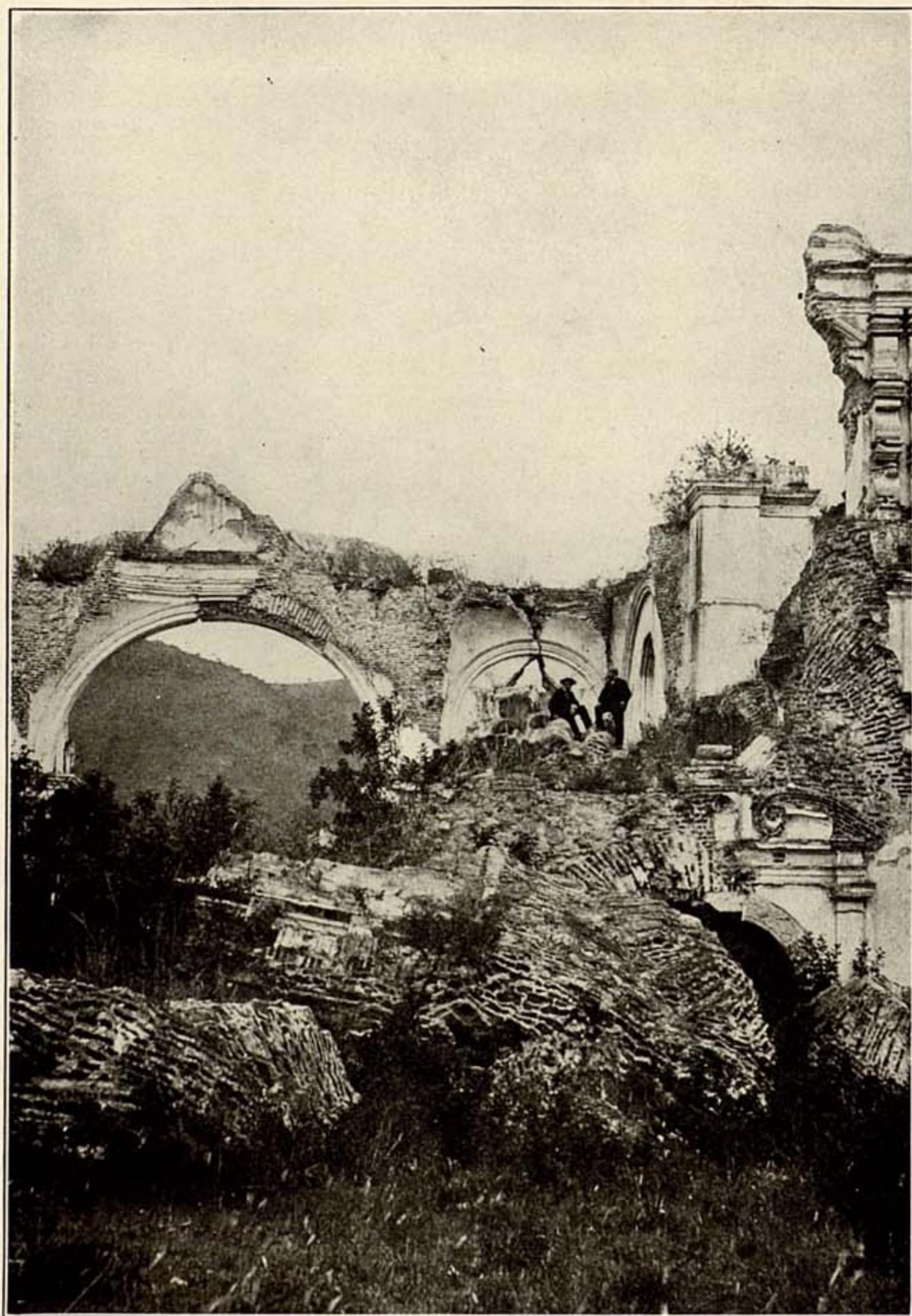
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

In rebuilding their city, the survivors of the flood chose a site about two miles away, and there erected the capital now known as Antigua. They planned it with the idea that it would be the metropolis of North America, and, indeed, for generations it was the centre of culture and learning in this part of the continent. It was a city of stone and stucco, of paved streets, great public buildings, and forty-nine churches. In its centre was a huge plaza, upon which faced the cathedral, a giant structure three hundred feet long, lighted by fifty windows. Over the altar was a dome seventy feet high, supported by sixteen columns of stone faced with tortoise shell and adorned with bronze medallions of exquisite beauty. The cathedral covered an acre, and it was attended by thousands of worshippers at a time when the only churches in our own country were rude structures of logs. Antigua had also eight monasteries, five convents, two big hospitals, and three massive jails. There were palaces galore, and outside the city were seventy Indian villages which surrounded it like the setting of a diamond. Its white inhabitants had thousands of slaves, and gold and silver were brought in from the mountains and sent from here to Spain by the shipload. The land about was covered with farms, and prosperity seemed to reign supreme.

Then came the disasters that were finally to bring ruin to this capital also. In 1558 the population was reduced by a plague, and in 1586 an earthquake destroyed a large part of the city. In 1601 there was another plague, and fifty years later the earth trembled again, and masses of rock rolled down the mountain slopes into the city. About a generation thereafter the plague came for a third time, and then, following a respite of thirty years, Agua had



The first city of Antigua was entirely destroyed by a flood that was thought to have been caused by a lake at the summit of the Volcán de Agua breaking through a crack in the crater.



All that is left to hint of the grandeur of the ruined buildings of Antigua is an occasional symmetrical archway or carved column that withstood the destructive earthquakes of a century and a half ago.

## AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

another eruption, during which the earth shook and the thick walls of the churches cracked like eggshells. The last series of earthquakes were those of 1773, when the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses like straws blown about in a gale of wind, the bells of the city were rung as though by unseen hands, the domes of the churches cracked and fell, and the roofs of the monasteries collapsed, burying many monks in the débris. The climax came when one earthquake, more severe than the others, destroyed so much of the city that the people fled in terror. This time they moved the site of their capital thirty-five miles farther away from the volcano, and built the present Guatemala City. It was laid out after the plans of its predecessor, but it has never reached the magnificence of Antigua, nor has its population equalled that of the old capital of one hundred and fifty years ago.

But come with me and let us have a look at the ruins. The old priest in charge of the church of La Merced has provided a guide for us in the person of a boy who speaks English. We go first to the plaza, and entering the cathedral, wind our way around and around up the narrow, dark steps, until we come out on the top of the tower. Back of us is the court, now in ruins, the walls and roof having been torn away and only the great columns with their carved capitals remaining intact. The view from the tower is magnificent, overlooking the circular valley in which lie the city and the coffee plantations on the surrounding slopes.

Adjoining the cathedral is the old university with its court surrounded by arcades. A part of the building is now used as a college once more, and in the court below

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

we see the students of to-day drilling on the ground where those of two hundred years ago were wont to stroll.

The next place we visit is the convent of San Francisco, the ruins of which still bear evidence of its former beauty. It was built in the shape of a cross, with two central halls. Of its three domes, each of which was as big as a large circus tent, only two are left. The central one was destroyed by the earthquake, and that part of the church which it covered is open to the sky except for the vines that have climbed up the walls and now hang down into the interior from the opening.

Passing through entrance gates flanked by statues of marble and surmounted by the coat-of-arms of Spain, we reach a courtyard and thence go on to the main part of the church. Although this is a mass of ruins, there are Indians living among the broken walls, some of them working in little carpenter and blacksmith shops where the monks of old once muttered their prayers. Over the arched door is a beautiful statue of the Madonna, and in the niches on the church front are fourteen statues of saints. The decorations within are wonderfully beautiful, but there are trees now growing in the central hall, and moss and brush cover the walls. Right in the main body of the building the Indians have erected an oven, where, on the site of the ancient confessionals, they cook their meals of corn and beans.

Only one part of this church is still intact. This is a little sacristy at the left of the main entrance, where mass is regularly held. This sacristy contains what I suppose were once the ornaments of the old church. Its walls are covered with carvings, oil paintings, and statues inlaid with gold. In front of the altar is a figure of the Christ,

## AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

robed in a purple shroud embroidered with gold and adorned with gold lace. At the right, protected by bars of iron, is a recess in the wall said to contain the body of a famous priest, whose friendship for the poor was such that if he found a sick man on the street he would pick him up and carry him to the hospital. In front of this recess are lighted candles, and hung to its grating are numerous wax images. Some are of the Virgin Mary, and others are of legs and arms sent in by cripples in the hope of being cured.

Among the oldest and largest ruins here are those of the College and Monastery of La Recolección, which cover several acres. The walls of this institution were from two to four feet thick, but, notwithstanding, the earthquakes reduced them to but a shattered semblance of their original forms. The ground about the ruins has been turned into a coffee plantation, and the monastery is now used as a candle factory and a place for drying hides. In the sacristy I found a mill, much like one of the old tanbark mills formerly common in the United States, and under the dome a lot of green hides were stretched. Near by was an oven for cooking tallow, and the smoke from the burning wood was discolouring the altar and the ancient walls.

The church of La Merced was only partially destroyed by the earthquake and has since been rebuilt on the ruins of the past. In my opinion it is one of the most beautiful churches in Central America. It has flat arches as remarkable as the famous one at Panama, and its roof is upheld by mighty pillars. During my visit it had been decorated by the Indians in honour of a saint's day. Using sand of different colours, they had drawn the design

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

of a rug in the centre of the floor. Around this, sweet-smelling grass was strewn, and palm leaves lay at the foot of the altar. As we looked on, Indian women came in and knelt before the Madonna.

Another building of old Antigua, now restored and in use, is the royal palace, which stands on the south side of the plaza, and which was formerly the home of the Spanish captains-general. Its central arch still bears the Castilian coat-of-arms and the name of Carlos III, under whose rule the palace was built. The structure is occupied to-day by various municipal and government offices.

The newer buildings of the city are mostly one-story houses of stucco, the homes of whites and Indians. Much of the building material was taken from the old city, and the windows of some houses have antiquated balconies extending out over the street, and barred with wrought iron torn from the ruins. Some of the old carved wood of Moorish design has been utilized in the new structures, and not a few of the doors are quaint and antique. Many of them have door knockers of iron, silver, and brass, and some have lattice work over the windows that reminds me of the houses of Tangier.

Other Indians have made their homes among the ruins, the broken walls of which, although ragged and torn, still seem firm enough to endure for centuries more. Some of these habitations are filthy and crude to an extreme. Women sit on the ground pounding corn for making tortillas in the midst of pigs, dogs, chickens, and children, all crowded indiscriminately into a small court or patio where hooded monks once counted their beads in hallowed silence. Amid such scenes of squalor one almost forgets

## AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

the dignity and wealth of Antigua at the height of its power, and it is only when we happen upon a symmetrical arch or a stately column exquisitely carved that we realize anew the grandeur of these structures of three hundred years ago.

## CHAPTER XVII

### QUIRIGUÁ, CITY OF THE MAYAS

**I**N MY lifetime of travelling over the globe I have visited nearly all the ruined cities of the world. I have tramped through the streets of Pompeii, and have seen the remains of Zimbabwe in Northern Rhodesia. In North Africa I have explored Timgad, the once buried capital on the edge of the Sahara, and have wandered about over the site of old Carthage. Not so many years ago I was in Baalbek, that ancient ruin in the mountains of Lebanon, and not long afterward spent several weeks among the remains of the temples and strongholds of the Incas in the Cuzco Valley of Peru. All these places are numbered among the greatest antiquities on earth; yet none of them holds more of interest than the ruins of ancient Quiriguá, which until about two decades ago were almost unknown.

But first let me tell you something of the location of these ruins. They lie in the Motagua Valley about sixty miles inland from the Atlantic and only a mile and a half from the railway between Guatemala City and the Caribbean port of Puerto Barrios. This valley was well adapted to be the home of a great people. If you remember your history, you will recall that the first civilizations in all countries have sprung up in valleys. Their soils are invariably rich, and the struggle for food is not so hard. The river offers an easy means of transportation, and the inhabitants of less fertile lands come there to buy food.

## QUIRIGUA, CITY OF THE MAYAS

As a result commerce is begun, and the people who do not have to exert every effort to wrest a living from the soil have leisure to cultivate the gentler arts. Thus the civilization of Egypt sprang up in the valley of the Nile, that of Babylon and Nineveh in the delta of the Euphrates, that of old India along the banks of the Ganges, and that of China in the basin of the great Yang-tse-Kiang.

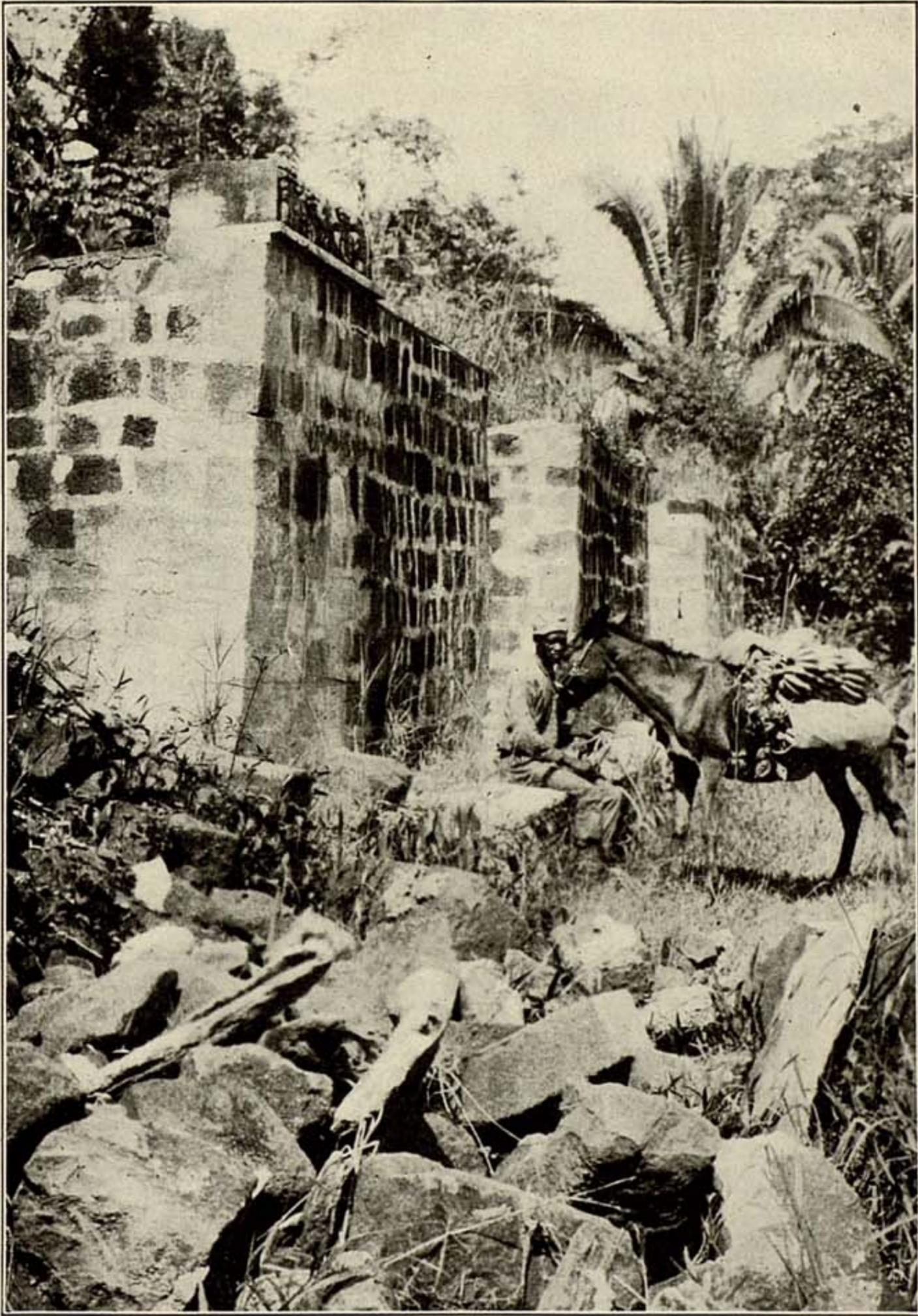
It was somewhat the same in Guatemala. The Motagua River flows out of the mountains through a valley about five miles wide extending down to the sea. The mountains are so situated that they catch the water-laden winds of the Caribbean and give the valley a heavy rainfall, at the same time sheltering it from storms. It is not strange, therefore, that this valley became one of the centres of the Mayan civilization, which flourished in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and northern Honduras during the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era. When in Mexico, I visited the great ruined temples and arches which these people built at their capital in the Yucatan Peninsula, and here in Central America their traces are still to be seen, outside of Quiriguá, in the ruins of Tikal, to the north, and at Cópán in Honduras, twelve miles from the Guatemalan boundary. This probably marks the eastern limit of their territory. The Quiriguá ruins are thought to have been abandoned about the sixth century A. D., but the reason for this is not known. We do know that the Mayas moved northward from here and established themselves in Yucatan, but whether driven out by hostile enemies or pestilence, or merely migrating to what they considered a more fruitful land, is a question that will probably remain unanswered until the end of time.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The ruins of the Mayan city at Quiriguá are scattered over an area of three thousand acres, yet for more than a thousand years they were hidden by the jungle and undiscovered by man. They were first brought to light in 1839, when John L. Stephens, an explorer making his way overland through this part of the country, happened upon them. This was before the days of photography, but travelling with Stephens was a man named Catherwood, who was skilled in drawing and sketching, and it was the illustrations made from his steel engravings, together with the writings of Stephens, which gave the world its first knowledge of this forgotten city.

We learned more about Quiriguá in 1883, when Alfred P. Maudsley made his way through this region and photographed some of the monuments and statues standing here. Later, when the railroad was being built between the coast and the highlands, the workers on it discovered other evidences of a bygone civilization. In laying the track, a grade was cut through a circular Indian mound as high as a four-story house, and for forty miles along the hills on one side of the valley were found graves with walls made of smooth round stones brought from the creeks and the rivers. Mounds of even greater height were found on the other side of the Motagua and from them were unearthed bits of pottery, clay whistles, stone utensils, lumps of jade, and pieces of obsidian, the hard volcanic rock so often employed by primitive peoples for making knives and arrowheads.

The real work of excavation, however, was begun after the tract of land on which the ruins lie was opened in 1910 by the United Fruit Company. This company has here an enormous banana plantation covering more than



The remains of an ancient civilization and the evidences of a great modern industry may be seen side by side at Quirigua, where the Mayan ruins lie in the midst of a thirteen-thousand-acre banana plantation.



The meaning of the hieroglyphics on the monuments at Quirigua is still unknown to the archaeologists who are trying to learn from them the story of the ancient Mayan race, which once peopled parts of Mexico and Central America.

## QUIRIGUÁ, CITY OF THE MAYAS

thirteen thousand acres, and entirely surrounding Quiriguá, so that these ruins, for so many centuries hidden and forgotten, are now almost within a stone's throw of the modern bungalows of the fruit company's officials and employees. In clearing the jungle, the company left untouched about seventy-five acres containing the most important parts of the ruined city, forming what is known as Quiriguá Park. All about it, however, the land is planted to bananas.

About fifteen acres of the park has been shorn of its dense growth to facilitate the excavations of the archæologists, but much of the remainder of the tract is still as good a specimen of tropical jungle as can be found on the face of the globe. In the woods are deer, monkeys, sloths, and ant-eaters; and birds of bright plumage fly about through the trees, some of which are giant mahoganies twenty feet in circumference. Palms of a hundred varieties wave their fan-like leaves overhead, and lianas bind the great trees together until the vegetation is almost impenetrable. The undergrowth is so dense that he is a good woodsman who can cut his way for two miles through the tangle inside of twelve hours. The soil and climate are such that the clearing of to-day becomes a forest within a few years, and palms shoot up to a height of a dozen or twenty feet in the course of six months.

At the same time, the decay of the vegetation is rapid. Cut down, it rots so quickly that within a few months the smaller trees have disappeared, and the larger ones withstand the onslaughts of the ants but a few years. For this reason, all the woodwork of that ancient civilization of the Mayas has long since passed away. The stonework remains, however, and it is this that the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

American archæologists have been uncovering, trying to learn from it the story of the people who lived here a thousand years ago.

They exposed to view ancient temples and courts, as well as monuments so gigantic that they remind me of the mighty statues of the Upper Nile.

Before I describe the city itself, let me tell you something about these monuments. Thirteen of them have been uncovered, and others are still sunk deep in the earth. They are gigantic monoliths, made of solid blocks of sandstone from twenty to thirty feet high, some of which must weigh many tons. Here, for instance, is a great stone column rising eight feet out of the earth and extending many feet below, which, notwithstanding its thirteen hundred years of age, is still beautiful. It is about ten feet wide and is entirely covered with carving. On one side is a woman's figure in high relief. With my tape measure I find that the face is about a foot thick. It is evidently that of a queen, for the head is surmounted by a crown, and in the lady's ears are plugs like those worn by the native women of Burma. Ear plugs made of jade have been found among the ruins, and in some of the grave mounds not far away the workmen have unearthed female skeletons with which had been buried necklaces and trinkets of this same precious green stone.

Walking a few rods along the path cut through the jungle, I come to a stone with a woman's face on one side and that of a monkey on the other. In this it is like some of the East Indian monuments, and might be an evidence that the ancestors of these people came from Asia. Still farther on is a monument supposed to be thirty-six feet in length. It rises twenty feet above the ground, and is

## QUIRIGUÁ, CITY OF THE MAYAS

said to extend at least twelve feet below it. To-day it leans like the Tower of Pisa, but it probably stood upright when it was erected. Near the top of it is a carved face of such wonderful workmanship that one almost expects the image to speak. The eyes are large and bulging, the nose has a distinctly Hebraic cast, the forehead is low, and the bearded chin is like those one sees on the statues of the Egyptian kings along the Nile. The features also are almost of an Assyrian or Egyptian type, and again the ears are half hidden by huge plugs.

Stranger than all these, however, is a monument that has been more recently exhumed. Upon it is carved a great round face that bears the smiling expression so often seen in the cartoons of Theodore Roosevelt. The lips are parted in a wide grin, and the display of teeth is so pronounced that everyone who sees it is immediately struck by the resemblance to our late president.

The faces on others of the monuments have Tartar features, and look not unlike the giants in stone that guard the Ming tomb at Nanking and those near the Nankow Pass through the Great Wall of China. Indeed, so many resemblances to the Chinese have been found in these carvings that some archæologists claim that the Mayas originally came from China, crossing the Pacific in the primitive craft of their times and bringing with them the ancient civilization of the Chinese. That such a migration was not impossible is proved by the fact that not so many years ago a small boat containing a few Chinese fishermen went adrift and was carried all the way to our Western coast by the Pacific trade winds. Another argument for this theory is the Mayas' evident deification of the turtle, which has always been the Chinese emblem of

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

longevity. One of the biggest monuments here, aside from the monoliths, is a stone turtle eight feet in height and weighing at least twenty tons. It is a mass of carving, being covered from end to end with hieroglyphics.

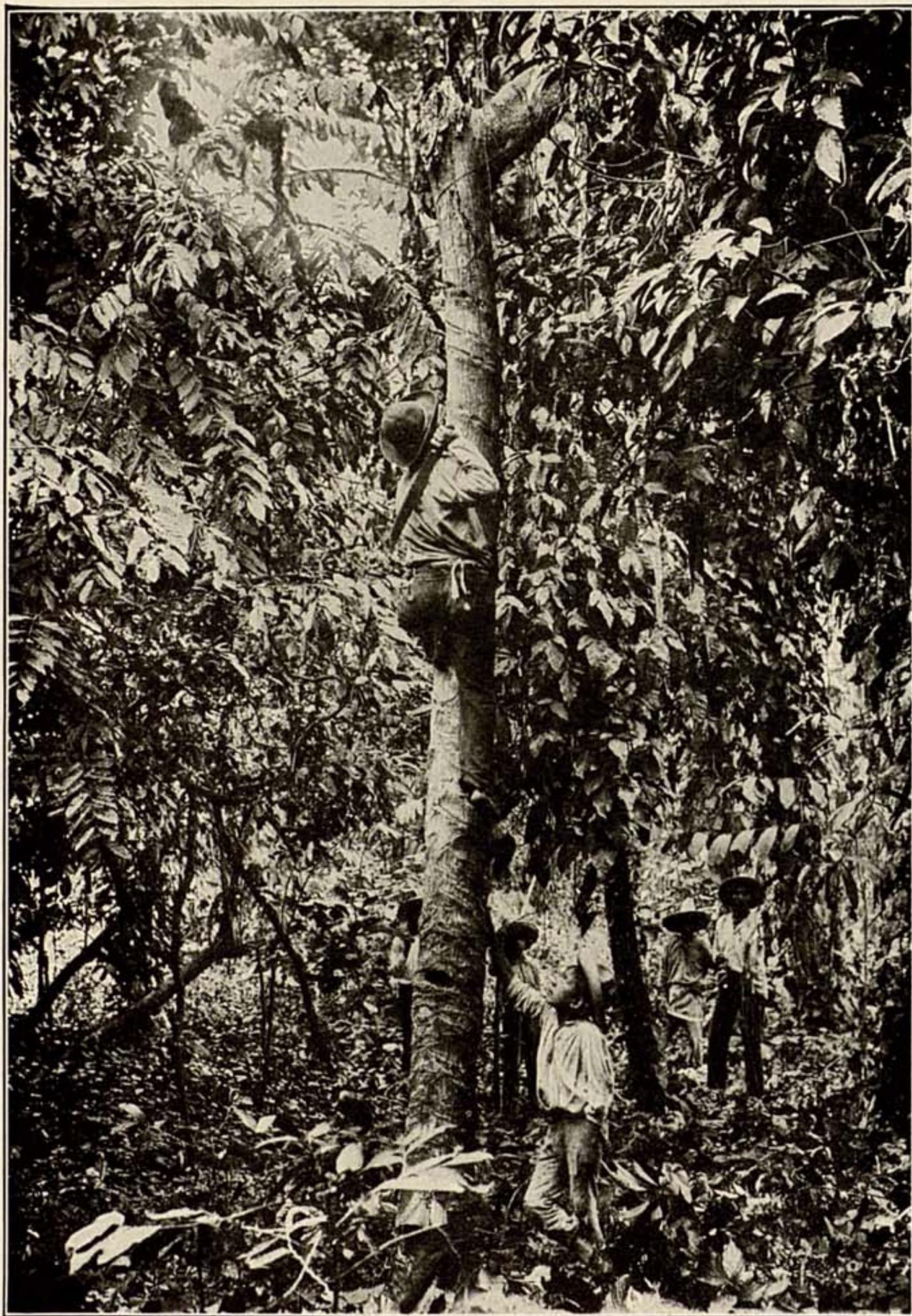
All the monoliths are rich in carvings, some of which the archæologists have succeeded in translating, although the majority of them are still as much of a mystery as is the Sphinx. It is difficult to reconstruct a civilization when one has nothing but stones to tell the story. So far, the archæologists have not gone much beyond the translation of the dates, and they are not absolutely sure of those. It is generally believed that the monuments are Mayan calendars, one of which was erected at the end of every period of eighteen hundred days, and that the hieroglyphics are a record of the happenings of that period.

The Mayan city itself at this place seems to have been laid out around a grand plaza or court, with an adjoining smaller court in which stood the temples and principal buildings. The latter had terraced walls from thirty to sixty feet high, and in some of them were rooms walled with square stones and doorways arched with flat stones. To the north of the plaza is a pyramid forty feet high and one hundred and fifty feet square at the base.

The temples of Quiriguá were found buried under mounds which dotted the lands after the jungle had been cleared away. On top of some of these mounds were trees many feet thick, and before the real excavation could begin the trees had to be cut and the stumps removed. All this necessitated the greatest of care, as a falling trunk or crashing branch was liable to break the smaller stones and destroy forever their inscriptions. After the earth was removed, many of the walls of the



Some of the monoliths at Quirigua are not unlike the monuments that exist along the Upper Nile in Egypt, and others resemble the carved images that guard the tombs of ancient emperors in China.



The lower Motagua Valley of eastern Guatemala is covered with a dense jungle growth of trees and creepers, among which are rubber trees that are tapped by the natives for their *latex*.

## QUIRIGUÁ, CITY OF THE MAYAS

old temples were relaid. One such is about thirty feet wide and one hundred feet long. The wall of this temple is nine feet thick, and the whole of the outside is covered with carvings of the faces of men and women, and also many unsolved characters. One piece of sandstone had a hole cut through it precisely like the slit in a letter box.

There is no doubt that all the stone used came from a considerable distance away. The nearest quarries are in the foothills two miles from here, and it is believed that the huge single pieces of stone in the monuments were floated down on rafts during floods when the Motagua River covered much of the valley.

My greatest wonder is how the people of those ancient times could have lifted such enormous weights even a few inches. We have no record that they had beasts of burden, and machinery was then not invented. They probably used levers, pulleys, and cables, rolling the stones into place upon inclined planes. The stone itself is such that it hardens with age, undoubtedly having been comparatively soft when it came from the quarry, and the carving may have been done with stone axes and stone chisels, aided by knives of obsidian.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PUERTO BARRIOS AND THE LAND OF MAHOGANY

**D**URING the last week I have made my way from Guatemala City down the eastern slope of the mountains to Puerto Barrios, a town of about two thousand inhabitants, and the chief port of this republic. Half of the exports of the entire country are shipped from here, and the city is the point of entry for more than that proportion of the commodities which Guatemala buys from abroad.

The railway on which I came here from the capital is a part of the International Railways of Central America, now owned by a group of American financiers, headed by Minor C. Keith. This consolidated system includes also the main line from Guatemala City to the Pacific, that running north to the Mexican boundary, in the neighbourhood of a hundred miles of track in Salvador, and several less important branches besides.

The first section of the line between the capital and the east coast was laid out by an American engineer named Miller. It was begun in 1884 as a government project, and every Guatemalan was supposed to pay four dollars a year to aid in its building. However, a war broke out soon after construction was started, and the funds for the railroad were used to help defray the upkeep of the army. The following year another contract was made, and along in 1892 the work was again under way. At that time ten

## THE LAND OF MAHOGANY

per cent. of the salaries of the public officials and five per cent. of all the town revenues were ordered set aside for the construction of the line. By 1897 five sections had been built, extending from the coast to one hundred and thirty miles inland. At that stage the work stopped again. The road was then neglected until 1904, when a new concession was secured and it was pushed on to completion. It was finished in January, 1908, and it is now one of the best lines in Central America. It is well built, and has more than three hundred steel bridges, one of which is 743 feet long.

The train on which I came here had an American engineer and a Guatemalan conductor. The passengers were nearly all Guatemalans, and travel was heavy in both the first and the second classes. I was surprised to see the number of Indians on the train. The conductor told me, by the way, that he has to watch them carefully to collect all the fares, as they try to cheat their way from station to station. Their favourite trick is to buy tickets short of the station where they expect to get off, trusting that the conductor will forget their destinations.

For an extra charge of four dollars in United States money I had a seat in a parlour car, but I found the scenes in the second-class cars much more interesting. The seats in them are like those in old-fashioned street cars, consisting of long benches extending lengthwise under the windows, with hooks overhead for hanging up baggage. Practically all the passengers in that class were Indians or Negroes. Both men and women were smoking cigars or cigarettes, and an Indian boy passed through the car from time to time, selling candy and beer. At one of the stations a company of soldiers came in. They were bare-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

footed, their uniforms were of calico, and their hats of straw. The gun each man carried was the only military thing about him. I am told that the privates in the army receive only ten or fifteen cents daily, and that the government is always behind in paying them. Most of the soldiers are Indians, who are forced into service without any choice in the matter.

The biggest city between the capital and the Caribbean is Zacapa, which lies about ninety-five miles inland, at the foot of the mountains, and at an altitude of only six hundred feet above the level of the sea. In reaching it from Guatemala City we descended more than four thousand feet in less than one hundred miles. Zacapa is of considerable importance as the starting place of the overland journey to Santa Ana, on the border of Salvador, from where a railway will extend to San Salvador. It will not be many years before the railway between the capitals of these two republics is completed, thus giving Salvador an outlet to the Atlantic. Puerto Barrios then would be the leading port of that republic as well as of Guatemala, and would be connected also with the Bay of Fonseca.

The ride between Guatemala City and Zacapa was for much of the way through a region as dry as our Western plateau, and the mountains made me think of the Rockies. They are bare, ragged, and torn by ravines and cañons. Now and then we passed a little valley with irrigated patches along the stream running through it, and dotted by the thatched huts of the Indians. Such valleys are but a few hundred feet wide and furnish a living to only a scanty population.

On the highlands there is but little rain, and outside of



The crowds that assemble at the Guatemalan railway stations to meet the trains include many an Indian woman with the youngest of her numerous brood tied to her back by a homespun shawl of gaudy colours.



The dense forests of eastern Guatemala, besides being one of the chief sources of the world's mahogany, contain dozens of other valuable hardwoods. Usually the felled trees are cut into logs and floated down the streams to a seaport.

## THE LAND OF MAHOGANY

the valleys the land is almost desert. Cacti abound, and the trees look silver-gray, the moisture apparently being insufficient to colour the leaves. Part of the route is within sight of the Motagua River, which in its upper course looks not unlike the Jordan, the vegetation there being no more luxuriant than that lining the famed river of Palestine.

As we reached the low coast lands the scenery suddenly changed. It was almost like going from the desert into the valley of the Nile. The lower Motagua Valley is covered with a rich sandy loam about fifteen feet deep, and the rainfall is abundant. Palm trees a hundred feet high were to be seen all about, and the vegetation became as heavy as any to be found in the tropics. After a few miles of such scenery, we entered the banana plantations, in the midst of which I stopped off to see the ruins of Quiriguá, of which I have already written.

In the course of my journey, the train descended from the coolness of Guatemala City, where in the early morning a light overcoat is necessary for comfort, to a low region where it is hot beyond words. The grandeur of the mountain scenery beggars description; there is nothing in the States to surpass it. On the other hand, the jungle of the east coast, near the end of the journey, has been pronounced the most beautiful in all Central and South America, and it is easy for me to believe this sweeping statement after my ride through it.

Between Quiriguá and the Caribbean the railway is lined for more than sixty miles with the immense banana estates of the United Fruit Company. Banana raising has been begun experimentally on irrigated lands on the west coast, but the bulk of this fruit, which, next to coffee, is

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Guatemala's most important product, is raised along the Caribbean. At least thirty-five thousand acres here have been cleared from the jungle and are now under cultivation furnishing bananas for our tables. Perhaps one fourth of this area is worked by independent growers, but the remainder belongs to the enormous land holdings which the United Fruit Company has in this part of the world. It is divided into thousand-acre farms, each of which in turn is sub-divided into sections of twenty acres. Almost every section is accessible by railway spurs and tram lines connecting with the main track, and as in eastern Costa Rica, I saw a constant stream of long trains of fruit moving out to the ocean.

Twenty years ago this part of Guatemala was nothing but jungle and swamp, and Puerto Barrios was quarantined for almost half of each year because of yellow fever. To-day the entire region has been transformed. Modern docks, concrete warehouses, ice plants, telephones, and screened buildings are only a few evidences of the presence of the American corporation. Many of the swamps have been drained, others have been coated with oil, and yellow fever has been practically exterminated. Along the line of the railway comfortable homes have been built amid beautiful surroundings for the officials of the company, and sanitary quarters are provided for the workmen.

In clearing this region of the jungle that once covered the land, the United Fruit Company cut down hundreds of mahogany trees. Puerto Barrios lies on the edge of the greatest mahogany land on earth, Guatemala and the adjoining colony of British Honduras being two of the world's chief sources of this wood. Indeed, I have been in mahogany country ever since I arrived at Panama. Valu-

## THE LAND OF MAHOGANY

able timber is being taken out of the forests of the northern part of that republic, and also from those of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Mahogany is found also in the lowlands along the east coast of Mexico, in Venezuela, and in the islands of the Caribbean. The mahogany of the West Indies, which is especially valuable because of its close, fine grain, has been exploited almost to the limit wherever transportation facilities permit, and the commercial demand of to-day is met principally by Central America.

A great deal of the best mahogany now used comes from British Honduras, being exported from Belize, not far from here. The large and little-developed department of Petén in Guatemala is another important source of almost unlimited quantities of mahogany, and along the Pacific coast there is a mahogany belt twenty-five miles wide, extending practically the entire length of the country. In the Petén district the timber is being cut and rafted down the rivers to a Mexican port, but on the west coast the lumbermen have taken out practically all the trees near enough to transportation facilities to be commercially available, and the industry there is at present inactive.

Contrary to the general belief, there is no such thing as a mahogany forest. The trees occur at wide distances apart. Often only two or three are found on an acre of land, but the wood is so valuable that two trees per acre are enough to yield a good profit. There is one variety, known as curly mahogany, which is prized so highly that a single log will sell for ten thousand dollars. One corporation recently took up a mahogany concession of about twenty-five thousand acres, obtaining from that area a total yield of only sixty trees, or less than two per square mile.

Mahogany lumbering is usually carried on by agents

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

financed by the exporting houses of these countries. The labour gangs are hired by the season, and generally receive six months' wages in advance, half in merchandise and half in cash. In the woods they live in camps of huts thatched with palm leaves, each camp including a larger building used as a store and as the residence of the overseer.

When the cutting is ready to begin, a man climbs the highest tree to be found near the camp and then picks out the widely scattered mahoganies by their bright-coloured leaves and their great size. Most of these trees are magnificent in their height, the ones that are cut being at least a hundred years old. I have seen some as tall as a ten-story building and so large around that five men, joining hands, could not encircle them. Not a few rise sixty feet above the ground before the branches begin.

After locating a mahogany, the tree hunter guides the cutters, the men hacking a road through the jungle to where the doomed giant stands. The mahogany is not easy to fell, and the bringing of a large tree to the ground is a day's task for two men. Because of the huge roots that project from the trunk, the cutting has to be done about ten feet from the ground, and so a platform or scaffold must be erected for the men to stand on. As soon as a tree is felled, its branches are cut off and the log made ready for hauling. As the trees grow in the lowlands the cutting and hauling can be done only in the dry season when the ground is hard.

In the meantime, a road is built leading out of the forest, and the logs that have been cut during the season are taken to the nearest stream. There they are kept until the rains come, when they are floated down to the coast. Im-

## THE LAND OF MAHOGANY

mediately upon reaching a port they are loaded aboard ship to prevent their being attacked by the toredo or other boring insects. The wood is so valuable that it is handled as carefully as a cargo of fruit.

The mahogany of this part of the world is unquestionably real. We have a so-called mahogany in the Philippines, and there are woods called mahoganies in Nigeria, Ceylon, Australia, Madeira, and California. The true mahogany, however, comes from these lands of the Caribbean. It was first utilized by Sir Walter Raleigh, who used it in repairing one of his ships, and it was employed by the Spaniards in building their ocean craft, but it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that its value as a cabinet wood began to be commercially exploited. Since then its hardness, durability, colour, and grain have been recognized as a combination of properties that, added to good workmanship, will produce the finest of furniture. It is extensively used also as a veneer for cheaper woods, a mahogany board one inch thick often being sawed into two hundred sheets of paper-like thinness.

The forests of Guatemala and British Honduras contain dozens of other valuable and rare hardwoods highly prized in the furniture markets of the world. There are rosewood, ebony, cocobola, and snakewood, all of which require but little finishing and which take a beautiful polish. The acoustic properties of rosewood are such that it is employed largely in the manufacture of xylophone bars, and cocobola, because of its resemblance to bone, is used for the handles of cutlery. Honduran walnut, another valuable wood, is so light and elastic that it makes excellent airplane propellers.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

**O**NCE more I am in Cuba, the island which Christopher Columbus described as being "the most beautiful land that eyes have ever seen," and which the Spanish adventurers who followed him called the "Pearl of the Antilles." I have seen this island at many stages of its history during the last four decades. I visited it first when it was under the tyrannical rule of Spain, with the people staggering under a heavy burden of taxes and mistreatment. It was then a land of filthy cities and towns, with primitive hotels and almost no civic improvements. Political brawls flourished in the face of an inadequate police force, and yellow fever and malaria collected annually a heavy toll in human lives. I came here the second time in 1897, when the last rebellion against Spanish misrule was sweeping over the island, and again eight years later when Cuba, at last an independent republic, was learning how to govern itself under the tutelage of the United States.

The sprouting signs of progress I saw on that visit have more than materialized. To-day Cuba is orderly, well-policed, and healthful. It has thousands of miles of railways and motor roads, its cities are modern and clean, and it leads the world in the quantity of its sugar output and the quality of its tobacco. In twenty-five years it has achieved a place among the foremost commercial

## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

nations of the earth, and has become one of the greatest winter resorts in the Western Hemisphere.

Cuba is the largest island of the West Indies, comparable in size with our state of Ohio. From east to west it measures more than seven hundred miles, or longer than the distance from New York to Indianapolis, and its width varies from twenty to one hundred and sixty miles. Most of it is a land of hills and valleys and low coastal plains, although there are mountains in the east and in the west. The loftiest peak reaches the second highest elevation of any land in the West Indies. Because of the narrowness of the island, it has no long rivers, and none navigable for more than a few miles. On the other hand, it is noted for its many deep, well-protected bays and inlets, providing natural harbours as fine as any in the world. Among these, on the north shore, is the beautiful bay on which lies Havana, the capital of Cuba, where I write these notes.

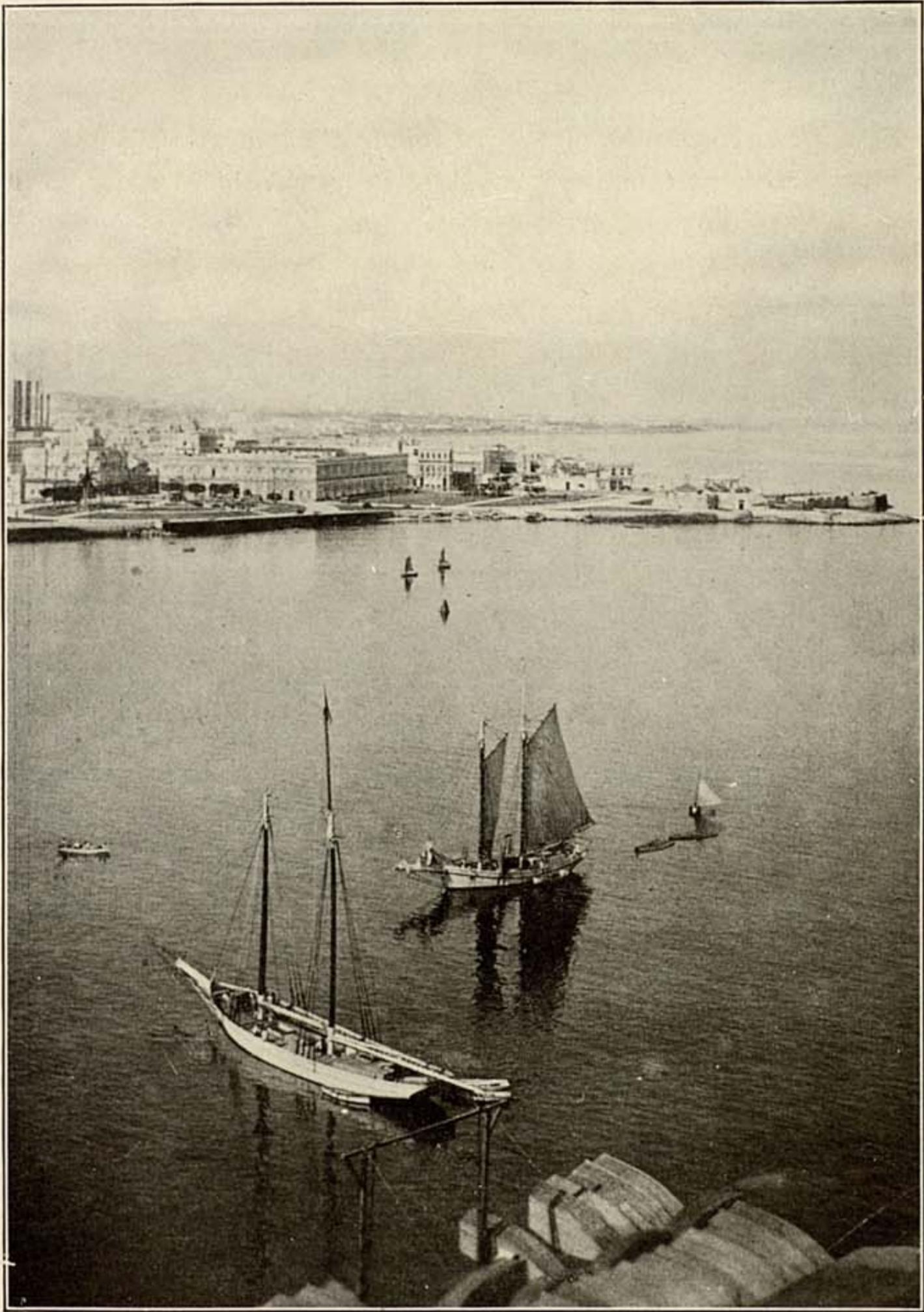
Except for a year when it was held by the British, Cuba was a Spanish possession for more than four hundred years, having been the last of the American colonies to break away from Spain. It was discovered by Columbus during his first voyage to the New World, barely a fortnight after he had set foot upon the little island of San Salvador. He landed here again in 1502, but still did not know that it was an island, and died believing it to be a part of Asia or else a new continent. It was not until 1508 that Cuba was circumnavigated, and the first permanent settlement was made three or four years later at Baracoa on the north coast. It was founded by a Spaniard named Diego Velázquez, who had been commissioned by Columbus's son to subjugate the natives and establish settlements on

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

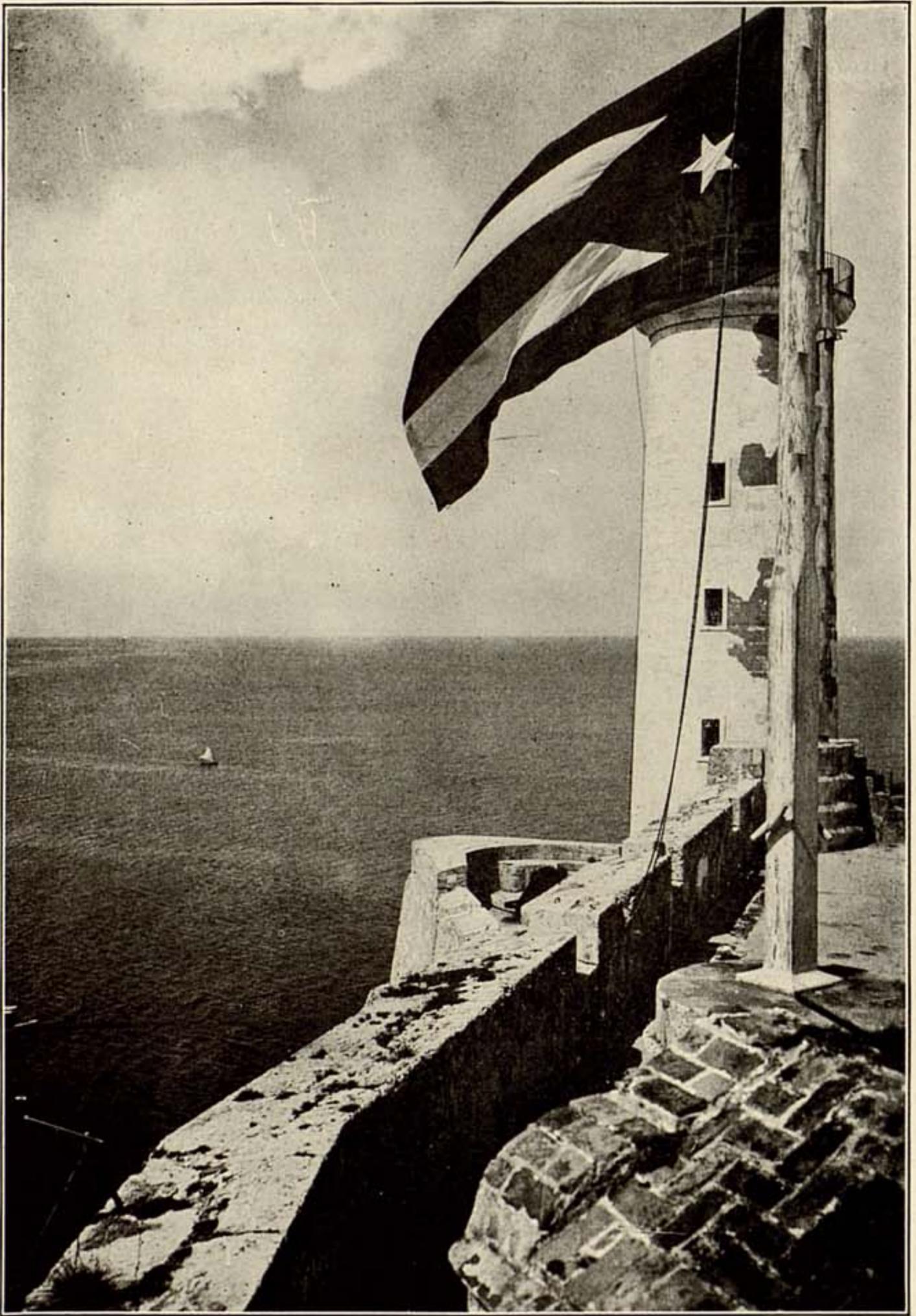
this island. Cruising about it with four ships and three hundred men, he founded several towns on the south coast also, finally making his headquarters at Santiago, which remained the capital of the island until 1608, when the seat of government was removed to Havana.

The Bay of Havana had been discovered on the circumnavigating trip around the island in 1508, but the first settlement on it did not occur until eleven years later, when all the inhabitants of Batabano, an unhealthy place on the south coast, moved here. The town they deserted still exists to-day as a dilapidated and swampy little village on stilts. Many of its people make their living by gathering the sponges found in the waters of the Caribbean. Batabano is also the port for the Isle of Pines, fifty miles away, which belongs to Cuba. This island, formerly a resort of pirates and smugglers, has many American colonists who came here after the Spanish-American War, and is noted chiefly for its exports of mineral water and fine grapefruit.

The new town of Havana grew rapidly, because of its land-locked harbour, protected from the sea by a narrow passage which could be easily defended from enemy attacks. "Key to the New World and Bulwark of the West Indies" was what it was officially named, and even to this day the Cuban coat of arms bears a symbolic key stretching across the entrance of Havana Bay. For more than a hundred years the city was the base for the Spaniards' campaigns of conquest in the New World. From its shelter expeditions set out to explore and conquer new lands, and in its harbour gold-laden galleons from all parts of the Caribbean met and then proceeded to Spain under the protection of warships. The city was looked upon as



Havana has a well-protected harbour, the entrance to which, however, is so narrow that one of our largest liners, turned cross-wise in it, would reach from shore to shore.



Frowning down upon the water gateway to Havana are the time-worn battlements of Morro Castle, built more than three hundred years ago to protect this city from enemy fleets and pirate hordes.

## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

a prize booty by English, Dutch, and French, and was attacked again and again. In 1538 it was destroyed by French pirates, who sacked it a second time in 1554, and in 1585 it was threatened by Sir Francis Drake and his British sailors. In 1628 the Dutch made an attack upon it, and in 1762 a British fleet under Lord Albemarle was successful in achieving its capture and in holding all Cuba until the following year, when the island was restored to Spain in exchange for Florida.

In the meantime, the settlement and cultivation of Cuba had been progressing, and in 1523 Negro slaves had begun to be imported to work on the sugar and tobacco plantations. The Indian natives of the island were practically exterminated within fifty years after its discovery, and today the descendants of the slaves constitute practically all the coloured population. They number almost a million people, or one third of the inhabitants of Cuba. The whites are mostly the descendants of the Spanish settlers, and their final revolt against their mother country was the result of centuries of oppression and cruelty, which became steadily worse as time went on.

In 1845 the United States offered to purchase Cuba for one hundred million dollars, and when that proposal was refused, the Cubans began openly to attempt to shake off the Spanish rule. In 1868 was begun a rebellion that lasted ten years, terminating only when Spain made a treaty improving the condition of the Cubans. This treaty was afterward repudiated, and in the early '90's fighting began once more, a state of guerrilla warfare existing throughout the island from then until 1898. It was in February of that year that our battleship *Maine*, which had been ordered to Havana as a refuge for American

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

citizens, was blown up and sunk in the harbour, presumably by the Spaniards, and almost three hundred of its crew killed. That act precipitated prompt intervention on the part of the United States, resulting in the Spanish-American War and the subsequent defeat of Spain, who thus lost the last of the American possessions which her *conquistadores* had won four centuries earlier.

With the downfall of Spanish rule, the infant Cuba was taken in hand by Uncle Sam and started on the road to self-government and peace. The first thing to be done was to establish sanitary conditions and abolish disease. This was begun by a commission of three United States army surgeons and one Cuban. It was this commission that first proved yellow fever to be spread by a mosquito, a discovery that was later of the utmost importance in cleaning up Panama and the other pestholes of this disease on the American continent. The work accomplished here at Havana by the then Major William C. Gorgas in eliminating mosquito breeding places, and his success in stamping out the dreaded fever, is so well known to Americans that I need not tell of it again. Suffice it to say that to-day Havana is one of the cleanest and most healthful cities of its size in the world, and that it has had no yellow fever cases in many years.

Our achievement in sanitation works was but one of the many projects engineered during the American occupation, and Havana to-day owes much of its up-to-dateness and beauty to that period of its history. The docks were rebuilt, streets were paved and a street-car system inaugurated, swamps were turned into parks, the first grass lawns were planted, and the beautiful drive known as the Maleçon was built along the sea. When Uncle Sam took hold

## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

of the city, the site of that avenue was nothing but a stone pile and garbage heap, and in its transformation the Cubans were taught incidentally that there are more approved methods of garbage disposal than dumping it indiscriminately on public thoroughfares.

The school system, too, was reorganized. Education was made free and compulsory, and public schools were established throughout the interior. Each province has now an institute for higher instruction, and there are travelling teachers who go from one primary school to another giving short courses in advanced work. The only university is the one founded in Havana in 1721. It has several thousand students, and has been recently enlarged and moved to a new site west of the city.

The United States terminated its occupancy of Cuba in 1902, when the control of the island was turned over to the newly organized republic and the first president was elected. In 1906, political disturbances necessitated our setting up a provisional government again for two years, but since 1909 Cuba has governed itself, succeeding as well as, if not better than, any of its older sister republics of Latin America. In the meantime, the United States stands as its protector in case of invasion by any other country, and we maintain here, at Guantanamo Bay, a coaling station and naval base for our warships.

It is to the interest of the United States as much as to Cuba for us to maintain amicable relations with this republic, and that from a commercial rather than a military standpoint. This island is our largest customer in all Latin America, and, in spite of its small size, ranks seventh among all the countries of the world that buy from us. In selling to us, it ranks fourth, due chiefly to our vast

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

purchases of Cuban sugar. Also, there is an enormous amount of United States capital invested in Cuba, and in the American Chamber of Commerce here are representatives of two hundred and fifty different American firms. Between sixty and seventy-five per cent. of the stocks of the sugar-mill companies are owned or controlled by American interests, and this, together with the money we have invested in Cuban railways, public utilities, banks, hotels, and other projects, amounts to a total of more than twelve hundred million dollars.



The most beautiful street in Havana is the Prado, extending from Central Park to the sea. It is lined with fine homes, clubs, and hotels, and is the favourite drive and promenade in the Cuban capital.



The homes of the wealthy Havanans are palatial structures invariably built around patios, which, with their statuary, fountains, and tropical plants, are often miniature parks in themselves.

## CHAPTER XX

### HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

**H**AVANA, the commercial, political, and social centre of Cuba, is one of the most fascinating cities in the New World. It is a more interesting combination of Spanish antiquity and American up-to-dateness than any South American capital, and there are few more picturesque towns in Europe north of the Alps. Its buildings rise almost straight up from the shore, their brilliant colours resplendent in the tropical sunshine, and their skyline of flat roofs broken by gray church towers, tall hotels and office buildings, and the smokestacks of factories. In front of them are the sparkling blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Bay of Havana, and at their back two conical hills rise seven hundred feet into the air. Extending along the waterfront at the right of the entrance to the harbour is the Maleçon drive, the spray dashing high against its sea wall, and over there at the left stands Morro Castle, more grim and forbidding than any *schloss* on the Rhine.

The distance across the harbour entrance from Morro Castle to the eastern end of the Maleçon is so short that one of our greatest ocean liners placed crosswise in the channel would just about reach from shore to shore. A little more than a mile from the ocean the channel broadens into the pouch-shaped Bay of Havana, which is three miles long and half as wide, and which offers anchorage for

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

a thousand ships. Before the Spanish-American War this bay, with its one narrow outlet, had received the sewage and refuse of Havana for almost four hundred years, and at the time of the American occupation it was little more than a giant cesspool for the city. It has now been dredged and cleaned to a considerable extent, and modern piers and dock works have been built along it. As the chief port of the island, Havana is the place of entry for half of all Cuba's imports, and its bay is always filled with shipping. As my steamer nosed its way up to the wharves I counted ocean liners from Europe and the United States, coastal vessels from all parts of the West Indies, freighters and lighters, chugging motor-boats and graceful private yachts, and swarms of little native rowboats, each with a bit of canopy over one end to keep off the sun.

Near the wharves is the spot where the battleship *Maine* lay at anchor when it was sunk. Seven years later, in 1905, I saw parts of the wreckage sticking up above the surface of the water. The bodies of those of its crew who lost their lives had been recovered and interred in Arlington National Cemetery at Washington, but the steel hulk itself lay here for fourteen years, only partially buried in its bed of mud, and a constant menace to navigation. At last, in 1912, it was raised to the surface, put in floating condition, and under a convoy of United States battleships towed out to the open sea and sunk to its permanent grave in the depths of the Atlantic.

Not far from the docks and the custom house is the Plaza de Armas, around which the first buildings of old Havana were erected near the original landing place of the founders of the city. This ancient section, now more than four centuries old, was enclosed in walls from 1740

## HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

until about the time of our Civil War. Those walls are now completely obliterated except for a watchtower or two, but to this day old inhabitants refer to different parts of the city as being inside the walls, or outside the walls.

On one side of the plaza is still standing the oldest fortification in Havana. This is La Fuerza, built less than forty years after the discovery of America, as a refuge from the pirates and buccaneers who once infested the Caribbean and the Spanish Main. Its walls are seventy-five feet high and surmounted by a tower, inside which is said to be the same bell that was used to warn the people when an enemy ship came near, and over which stands a figure of La Habana, the beautiful Indian maiden for whom the city was named.

La Fuerza was cleaned up and restored to its present condition by the Americans. It is now the headquarters of the commander-in-chief of the army, who directs the military activities of present-day Cuba from a place so steeped in historical interest that the very atmosphere seems charged with the tales of conquest of four hundred years ago. It was from near this site, in the same year Havana was founded, that Cortés sailed to conquer the land of Montezuma, and from here that Balboa and Pizarro left for Darien, the one to discover the Pacific and the other eventually to add the wealth of the Incas to the coffers of Spain. Here Ponce de Leon came back to die after his search for the fountain of youth, and from the portals of this ancient fort Hernando de Soto set forth with his followers upon the conquest of Florida. From that journey he never returned, and the young bride he left here looked in vain from the parapets of La Fuerza to see the sails of her husband's ship reappear over the horizon.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

When the survivors of his expedition came back four years later with the news of De Soto's death and his burial in the waters of the Mississippi, the great river he had discovered, she died of grief within a month.

Less than a hundred yards from La Fuerza is another ancient building, now occupied by a daily newspaper of Havana. In it a group of citizens were once besieged by pirates for three days, to be finally beheaded, one by one, by the cutlasses of the buccaneers. Near by is also the Columbus Cathedral, so called because the bones of the great discoverer were said to have been brought here from Santo Domingo in 1795 and to have remained until 1898, when they were taken to Spain. This claim, however, is generally disputed by the authorities, who say the bones were really those of his son Diego, and that the remains of the elder Columbus still lie in Santo Domingo.

But suppose we leave these scenes of Havana's early history and make our way through the city. Here in the older section the streets are narrow and crowded. Naked babies are playing about underfoot, and peddlers and hawkers jostle the pedestrians and crowd us against the walls. There are breadmen and milkmen riding horseback, fruit vendors with wagons covered with palm leaves, and Chinese porters carrying their burdens on poles across their shoulders. Many of the Chinese of Havana are descendants of the coolies once brought here as slaves; some of them own truck farms outside the city, and others are storekeepers and proprietors of chop suey restaurants.

Going on, we stroll about in the Calles Obispo and O'Reilly, the two chief shopping streets of Havana. They are so narrow that wheeled traffic can go only one way, and awnings can be stretched overhead from side to side to



For more than a century it was supposed that in the Columbus Cathedral of Havana were the bones of the discoverer of America, although later they were proved to be those of his son, Diego.



Since the tourist trade has become one of Havana's chief assets, the winter season finds the old Spanish cathedrals and forts of the city thronged with sight-seers from the United States.

## HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

keep out the hot midday sun. Since the sidewalks are often not more than a foot wide, pedestrians must walk along single file, hugging closely the fronts of the buildings. The scenes here, with the huge store signs hung across the streets, and the fascinating window displays, are as colourful as those of old Canton or Hangchow in China. Most of the shops bear fanciful titles instead of the names of their owners. Inside are sold articles of every description, with an especially large business carried on in mantillas, fans, and other things that the tourists take away as mementoes of Cuba.

On nearly every corner we see a café, and in one of them stop a moment to rest and to refresh ourselves with the native beverages for which Havana is noted. One of these is made of the fermented skins of pineapples, another is the milk of green coconuts, and a third is known as milk of almonds. Perhaps the most popular is that concocted from a dried mixture of sugar and white of egg dissolved in water. Many of the patrons order simply a glass of ice water, which is required by law to be supplied free in every café. Coffee is prepared here in native style, that is, made from beans burned to a crisp and served with a pot of hot milk, salted to keep it fresh. The Cubans consume also a great deal of wine, most of which comes from Spain. Although this island is admirably adapted to the cultivation of vineyards, grape growing was forbidden under the Spanish rule lest it should interfere with the industry of the mother country.

In the heart of Havana is Central Park, a bit of tropical beauty hemmed in by clubs, hotels, and theatres at which the leading dramatic and operatic stars of the world appear every season. Havana is noted for its clubs, which num-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ber as members more than one third of its entire population. Many of them were started as organizations known as *centros*, each composed of people from a certain district in Spain, just as our city of Washington has its societies representing every state in the Union. To-day there are also a club for Americans, two Chinese clubs, clubs for millionaires and for the poor, and athletic and sports clubs of all kinds.

The largest club in the city is the Centro Gallego, founded by Spaniards from Galicia. It is housed in a million-dollar structure that looks like the palace of a European ruler and has a membership of forty-five thousand. Another famous club was started by the clerks of this city more than forty years ago. To-day its twenty-five thousand members include merchants, professional men, and wealthy Havanans of many nationalities. In addition to all the advantages offered by any large social club, it conducts a free night school for members of limited education, kindergartens for their children, and grammar, high-school, and domestic-science courses. It has its own staff of surgeons, physicians, oculists, and dentists, a private hospital, and a sanitarium for consumptives. All these facilities for intellectual and physical benefits are free to any member who pays his dues of a dollar and a half a month.

The main thoroughfare leading out of Central Park is the Prado, the Champs-Élysées and the Fifth Avenue of Havana. This street, which is wider than Pennsylvania Avenue, is divided into two separate drives by a central parkway shaded by rows of magnificent trees and intersected by wide cement walks. It extends from the park northward to the eastern end of the Malecón at the Punta, the fortress just across the harbour entrance from the

## HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

Morro, and is the favourite drive and promenade of Havana. From late afternoon to midnight costly motor cars and swarms of taxis dash back and forth over its pavements, and its sidewalks are crowded with a gay, noisy throng that seemingly has not a care in the world. We look in vain for beautiful señoritas wearing mantillas and Spanish combs, for feminine Havana is as bobbed-haired and as modishly gowned as is her New York sister. Strolling along, we pass more clubs and hotels, and see farther over to the right the magnificent new palace of the president, which has recently replaced the former executive mansion on the Plaza de Armas.

All along the Prado are homes of the most palatial types. Rarely of more than two stories, they are built with lofty ceilings and tiled floors to offset the heat, and the only lawns or gardens are in the enclosed patios. At night the flat roofs serve as lounging places for the people. The doors, often of solid mahogany with massive bolts and hinges, are sometimes fifteen feet high, and not infrequently smaller wicket gates are cut through them for ordinary use. The windows have shutters instead of glass panes, and are invariably covered with ornamental grill work, a custom that is probably a survival of the time when every householder knew his home must be fortified against attacks. All the houses are flush with the street, and as we walk along we can look in through the open windows and catch glimpses of family life, and of sunlit patios and tinkling fountains beyond.

Nearing the end of the Prado, we again reach scenes that will always be commemorated in the history of Cuba. Here, on the edge of the water, are the remains of the fortress of La Punta, where Narciso López was killed in

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

1851 for heading an insurrection against Spain, and where, twenty years later, a group of forty students of the University of Havana, accused of defiling the grave of a Spaniard, were lined up and every fifth one shot.

From the Punta we have a splendid view of Morro Castle, the sentinel of Havana. It is surmounted by a lighthouse built in 1844, but the castle itself is more than three hundred years old, and was hewn partly from the solid rock. Although considered impregnable by the Spaniards, it was taken in 1762 by the British after a siege of six weeks. Forces from a fleet of two hundred ships under Lord Albemarle had captured land positions and established batteries back of the city, and fire from the British guns was directed at Morro from both land and sea. The castle was finally mined and a breach made in the wall, through which the enemy forced their way and took the fort, afterward turning its guns on La Punta across the channel. The Spanish commander, Velasco, who was killed in the fight, was so lauded for his bravery that the King of Spain decreed there should always be a ship in the royal navy bearing his name. The vessel so called at the time of the Spanish-American War, by the way, was one of those sunk by Admiral Dewey at the Battle of Manila. After the Spaniards once more regained possession, Morro was used as a prison, and to this day one may inspect the old torture room, and take a look at the chute down which Cuban prisoners were dropped into the shark-infested waters below.

To the right of Morro Castle is another much larger fortification. This is Cabañas, which was begun after Cuba had been restored to Spain by England. It cost fourteen million dollars to build, and was not completed

## HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

for almost a hundred years. All this outlay was futile, as Cabañas was never used in warfare, and its defenses are now obsolete. It is interesting to-day chiefly for its associations in connection with the time when it served as a Spanish prison. Like Morro, it has ancient dungeons and torture rooms, and in one place its walls still bear the marks of the bullets that killed many a martyr to the cause of Cuban liberty.

At La Punta we catch one of the ubiquitous taxis of Havana and go for a ride along the Maleçon and thence into the western outskirts of the city. On our way we stop for a moment to visit the vast Colón Cemetery, where there are numerous monuments to Cuban heroes and martyrs, and where the victims of the *Maine* disaster were buried before being finally removed to Arlington. A unique and gruesome feature of this cemetery is the fact that a large proportion of its graves are rented rather than sold. Ten dollars ordinarily pays for five years of occupancy by a corpse, and if an additional sum is not forthcoming, the bones of the deceased are then dug up and thrown into a great pit, there to find their last resting place among a miscellaneous and dreadful company of skeletons, fragments of coffins, and pieces of tombstones. The practice is a horrible one and a discredit to Havana. Sometimes, I am told, the poorest people even rent the coffins for their dead, a casket being used only for the funeral procession and later returned to the undertaker, the body being buried in a common trench.

Beyond the western end of the Maleçon is the suburb of Vedado, where live most of the American residents of Havana, and where the architecture is different from that of the city. Here the houses are built with wide, cool

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

porches that get the breezes from the sea, and are set in the midst of beautiful gardens filled with tropical trees and flowers. Some of the homes are almost hidden by flaming masses of bougainvilleas and royal poinciana trees, which when in blossom look like huge balls of vivid scarlet, while over the whole, tall royal palms wave their graceful fronds.

Ten miles out of Havana is the town of Marianao, a favourite resort of Cuban society. Here is the Havana Country Club, with its fine golf course and tennis courts, a famous bathing beach, a casino, a yacht club, and a race track. Racing is an exceedingly popular sport with the Cubans, and some of the best horses in the United States are brought here during the season, which lasts from November to March. Baseball also is almost as popular as in the States. The chief sport native to the island is the game of *jai-alai*, pronounced "high-a-ligh," which was introduced from Spain and is played somewhat like American handball.

As in all these republics of Latin America, playing the lottery must not be omitted from a list of the favourite pastimes of the people. The lottery that flourished during the Spanish rule was abolished when the republic was formed, but it was established again in 1909. Indeed, it is said that one of the recent presidents of Cuba helped win his campaign on his promise to favour this institution. To-day lottery tickets are sold all over Havana and also throughout the island, the lucky numbers being drawn three times a month. The annual sales amount to between seven and eight million dollars, seventy per cent. of which goes to the winners and thirty per cent. to the national treasury.

## HAVANA, OLD AND NEW

Americans as well as Cubans patronize the lottery, and nearly every visitor from the States takes at least one chance on winning a fortune. Considering the fact that estimates place the number of tourists coming here each winter from our country at nearly a quarter of a million, their contribution to the government finances is no small sum. Indeed, owing to the delightful winter climate and the excellent travel facilities from the United States, the tourist business has become one of the chief industries of Havana, especially, I might add, since the adoption of the eighteenth amendment to our Constitution. This island is directly south of Florida and only a hundred miles from Key West. That city is reached by the railway which goes over the Florida Keys for a distance of one hundred and fourteen miles, and from there the journey may be completed by steamer, car ferry, or hydroplane, the latter trip taking only a little more than an hour. During the winter there are, on the average, twenty steamers a week plying between Havana and United States ports.

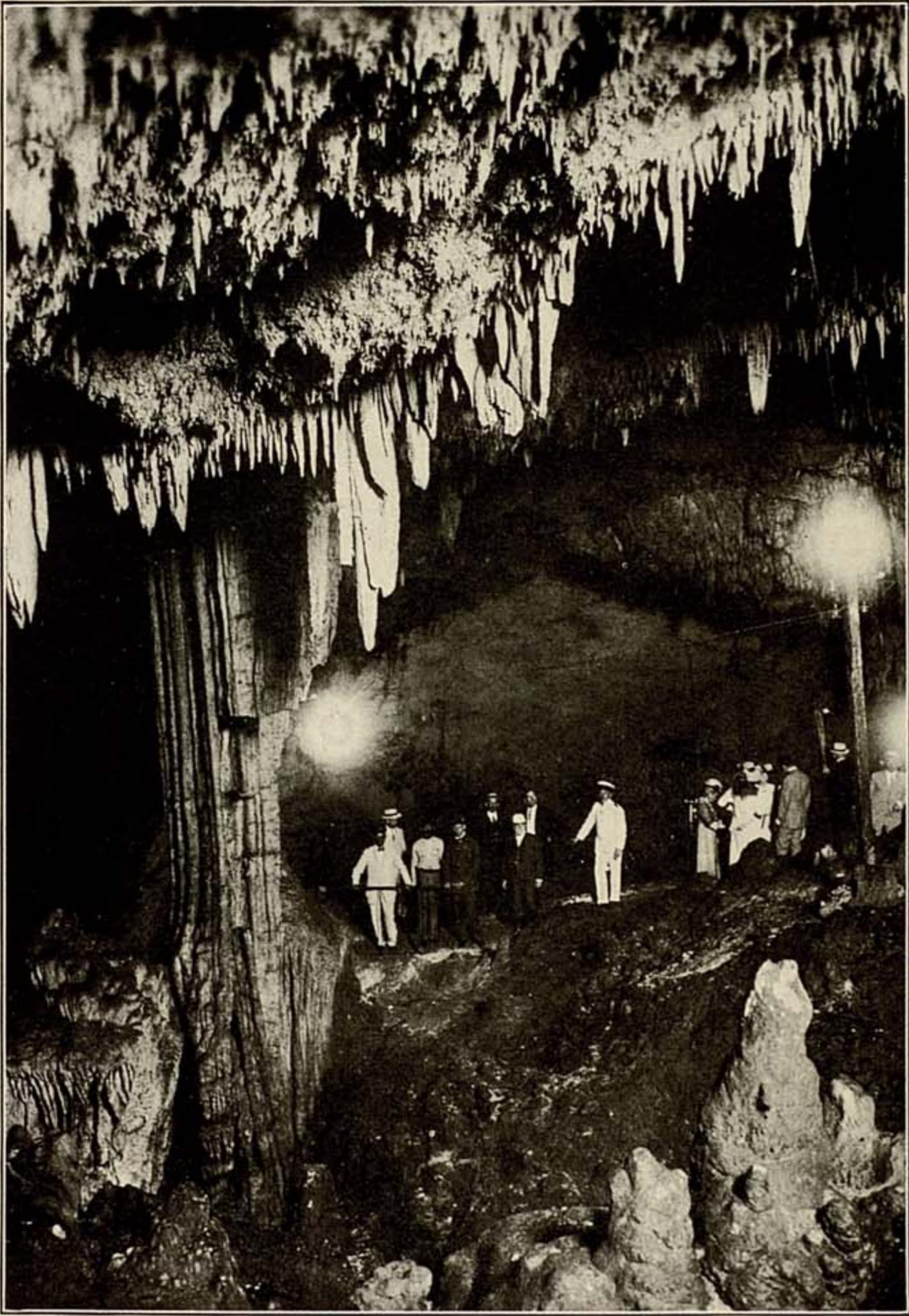
In going about the city we come upon evidences of the Americans at almost every step. The automobiles in the streets, for instance, include many with United States licenses, brought here by their owners for the season. United States money is accepted everywhere, and newspapers, church services, and even movie titles cater to the Americans by using the English as well as the Spanish language. As to the hotels, their number is legion, and while the rates are high, the best of the hostelries offer accommodations and conveniences that compare favourably with those of the finest hotels in New York City.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD

**H**AVE you ever heard of Matanzas? I doubt that many of you have; nevertheless, it is well worth a visit. It lies on the north coast of Cuba about sixty miles east of Havana, and is connected with the capital by a fine motor road as well as by railway. The trip by automobile is one of the many beautiful drives offered by the excellent system of highways about Havana, and tourists by the thousand come here each season.

The chief attraction of Matanzas is the famous caves of Bellamar, southeast of the town. They were discovered in 1861 by a Chinese labourer, who was digging in the ground with a crowbar when suddenly it slipped from his hands and disappeared through an opening in the earth. The caves are now entered by a stairway cut out of the solid rock, and have been explored for a distance of three miles. A walk through them is an ever-changing panorama of underground streams, natural bridges, tunnels, glittering stalactites and stalagmites, and great halls and passageways. The largest chamber is two hundred feet long and compares in richness and grandeur with the famous Gothic temple of the Kentucky Mammoth Cave. The caverns belong to the owners of the henequen plantations in this region, Matanzas being the headquarters for this industry on the island.



In the Caves of Bellamar, near the city of Matanzas, are stalactites and stalagmites, underground streams, and natural bridges that are comparable in size with those of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.



Towering high over every landscape in Cuba are the silvery trunks and feathery branches of the royal palm. A long avenue of these stately trees often marks the entrance to a great sugar estate.

## THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD

After visiting these caves I motored out to see the Yumurí Valley, which is noted all over Cuba for its exquisite setting and natural beauty. Enclosed in steep hills, it lies in a giant amphitheatre five or six miles wide, and, viewed from the heights above, seems to be one vast tropical garden. A silvery stream winds through it, escaping into the ocean by way of the only break in the amphitheatre, and hundreds of stately royal palms wave their feathery branches above its carpet of thick vegetation, both wild and cultivated. As I stood above it, I was almost ready to agree with Humboldt, the great German naturalist, who declared this valley to be the most beautiful spot in the world.

On my trip from Havana to Matanzas I rode most of the way through wide-spreading fields of sugar cane. The country seemed to be one immense plantation, the cane reminding me of the cornfields of Nebraska as it stretched away almost to the horizon. On every road lumbering teams of oxen were drawing loads of cane to the private railway lines that crisscross the plantations; at every station we passed were long trains piled high with these stalks of sweetness, and in every direction the landscape was dominated by the smokestacks of sugar mills, or *centrales*, as they are called here.

One fourth of the total amount of sugar consumed each year by all the nations of the world comes from this island lying almost at our door. It is fortunate, indeed, that Cuba is so near us, as Uncle Sam has the largest sweet tooth on earth, and buys from this republic all but about ten per cent. of its entire crop. The annual output of this one product amounts to between three and four million tons, or enough to give four pounds to every man, woman,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

and child in the world and still leave some to spare. Raw sugar alone comprises ninety per cent. of the total exports of Cuba, being the very backbone of the commerce of this island. Its price constitutes a barometer of the prosperity of the Cubans. I know of no other country on earth in which the life and wealth of the people centre so closely about a single product or industry.

Sugar has been grown in Cuba almost since the first cane introduced into the West Indies was brought to Santo Domingo by Christopher Columbus. It has been the leading crop of the island for the last century and a half, but it was not until the country obtained its independence from Spain that the industry began to assume its present proportions. During the first fifteen years of Cuba's national life the crop doubled and tripled in size, and since the beginning of the World War it has more than quadrupled in value, now bringing in annually in the neighbourhood of one thousand million dollars.

Sugar is produced in every province of Cuba. There are to-day between two and three million acres planted to cane, but this is only a fraction of the maximum area that could be adapted to its cultivation. The chief sugar region was formerly in the central portion of the country in the provinces of Camagüey, Santa Clara, and Matanzas, but in the last decade or two, with vast areas of new land turned into plantations in the Oriente, the easternmost part of the island, that province now leads all the others in its total production of sugar.

About eighty per cent. of the cane of Cuba is grown by planters who at the beginning of each season agree to sell their crops to the mills at a contract price, and who are often financed by the manufacturing interests. The re-

## THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD

mainder of the product is raised by the milling companies themselves. The biggest estates contain thousands of acres, and their operations are conducted on an enormous scale. One that I visited has two hundred miles of private railway, hundreds of cars, and twenty-five locomotives; and another uses in its work thousands of oxen, mules, and horses. A single estate is often large enough to support a factory, carrying on also so many other activities that it is a community in itself. It requires the labour of thousands of men, who live with their families in little settlements scattered over it. Every plantation has one or more stores, which not only sell their goods at prices as low as those in the neighbouring towns, but also extend credit freely, often to such an extent, I have heard, that the employees are always in debt. I have met many plantation owners who enjoy big incomes from their stores alone.

These stores have every variety of goods demanded by the Cuban workman and his family, ranging from face powder, ribbons, and gaudy millinery, through plain and fancy foodstuffs, to saddles, machetes, hardware, and farm implements. As long as the Cuban has money or credit he buys extravagantly, and on the tables in some of the rudest homes may be seen expensive imported delicacies such as mushrooms, boned chicken, caviar, fancy asparagus, and the like.

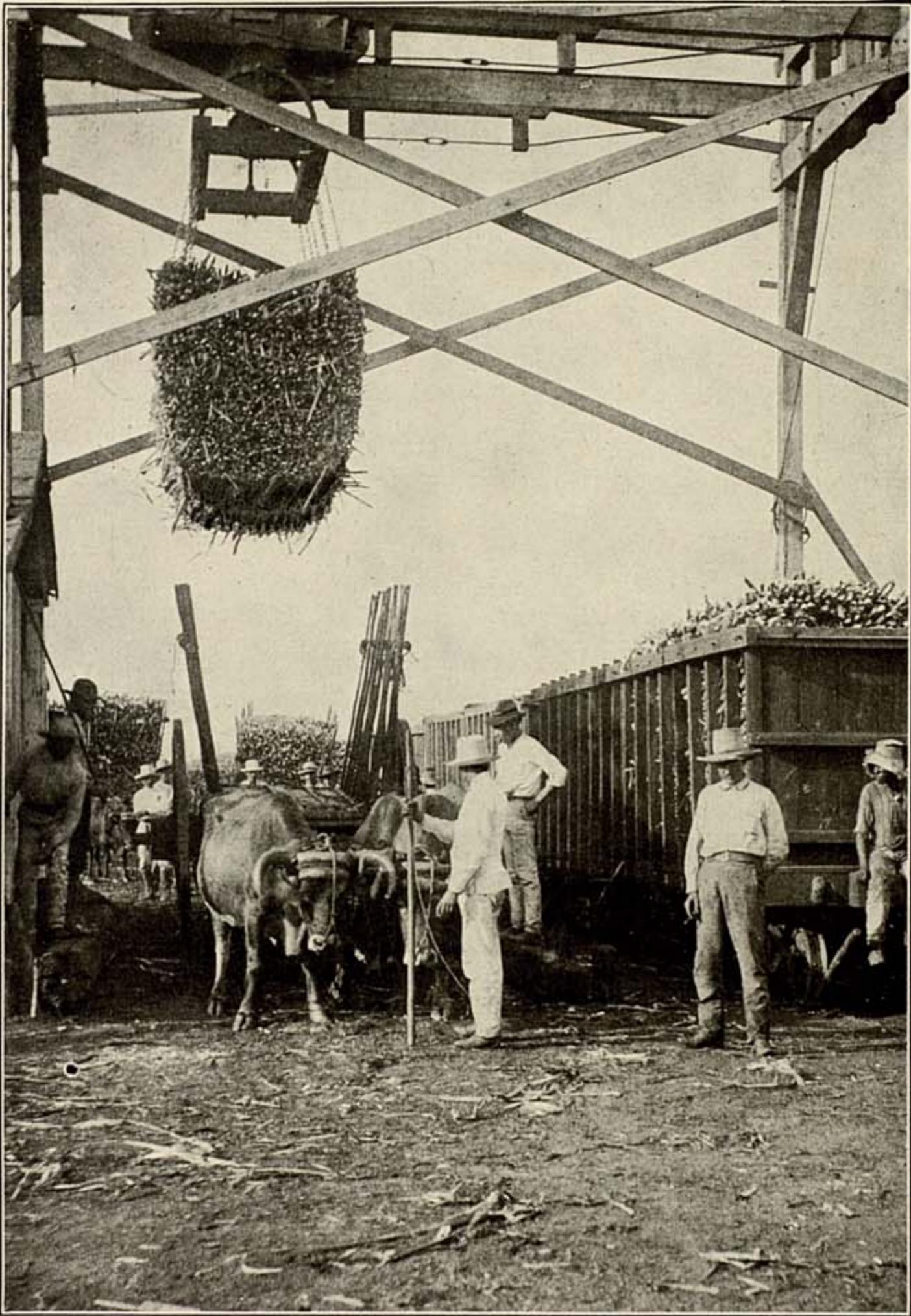
As a machine has not yet been perfected for this purpose, most of the cutting of the cane is done by hand, necessitating a vast army of workers on every plantation. The shortage of labour has always been one of the chief problems of the planters, even though thousands of men are brought in annually from outside. Many of them are Negroes from Jamaica and the other islands of the West

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Indies, who come for the cane-cutting season only, and others are emigrants from Spain and the Canary Islands, who settle here permanently. Since immigration into the United States has been restricted by our government, Cuba, it seems, has been utilized as a base for smuggling foreigners as well as liquor into our country. Many immigrants now come here to await an opportunity to enter the United States illicitly, and a "bootlegging" business in human beings is carried on in swift motor-boats that run from this island to Florida.

Cuba can produce sugar more cheaply than any other country, as an acre of good land will raise as much as twenty or thirty tons of cane, which will often yield two tons of sugar. The temperature, soil, and rainfall are such that replanting is necessary only once about every five years, the stalks sprouting up from the old roots. Some plantations in Cuba have produced good cane for twenty-five years after the original planting.

While on a few of the larger estates tractors are used for preparing new cane fields, the land is more often ploughed by hand after the trees have been burned off. The ground is then harrowed and little trenches dug, in which pieces of ripe cane, each containing one or more joints, are laid end to end and covered with soil. Within three weeks the cane begins to sprout at the joints, and a day or so later what look like blades of grass come up through the earth. A young cane field is cultivated much like corn to loosen the soil and keep down the weeds, and is ready for its first cutting in eighteen months, after which it is cut every year. When the crop has matured, the leaves are stripped off, the green tops trimmed, and the stalks cut near the ground. The cutting goes on from



One fourth of all the sugar consumed throughout the world is grown in Cuba. The plantations include many holdings of enormous extent, each owning hundreds of miles of private railways and thousands of oxen to haul the cane from the fields.



A "good Havana" smoke has its beginnings in the tobacco leaves gathered by Negro labourers on the plantations of Cuba. Enough cigars are exported each year to give a boxful to every man and boy in the United States.

## THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD

December until June, and sometimes even as late as September. The grinding season is the same, the cane being taken to the mills as fast as it is cut.

Sugar cane is carried to the railways on ox-carts, and transported to the mills on trains of special cars so built that they can be quickly unloaded, usually by electric cranes. At the mills the cane is first run through crushing machinery to extract the juice, which is then strained and put in what are known as liming tanks. The milk of lime which they contain causes the impurities to settle or to rise to the top as a scum, leaving the clear juice between. The next step in the making of sugar is to evaporate the water in the juice by boiling, and then to put the sugar through another process that separates the crystals. The product is now known as raw sugar, and it is in this form that it is bagged and sent to the refineries of the United States to be made into the white sugar we buy in our stores. The island of Cuba is so narrow that none of the mills is far from the ocean, and many of the companies have their own private railway lines extending all the way to the ports.

Second to the sugar industry in importance, but far below it in the value of the product and the number of people employed, is the tobacco industry of Cuba. The earliest Spanish explorers found tobacco growing here more than four hundred years ago, and to-day the island produces the finest quality of leaf in the world. The value of the crop ranges between forty and fifty millions of dollars, and the exports in a recent year amounted to thirty-seven millions, about two thirds of which went to the United States.

Most of the Cuban tobacco is raised in Pinar del Río, in the mountainous western part of the island. In that prov-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ince, on the southern slopes of the Organ Mountains, is the celebrated Vuelto Abajo, a tract of land thirty miles long and ten miles wide, where soil, sunshine, and climate have united to produce the best and highest-priced tobacco grown anywhere on earth. The product from this region has made the reputations and the fortunes of its growers and its manufacturers. The story is told that when a railway was about to be built through this part of Pinar del Río it was nearly impossible to buy enough land for a right of way. The owners were most averse to selling even a strip of their tobacco farms, and one of them agreed to let the road cross his property only upon the payment of a high price and the condition that he should be allowed to scrape the soil to the depth of one foot off the land taken by the road. This was agreed to, and done, the rich earth being spread over a less fertile area.

An acre of land in the Vuelta Abajo now sells for a thousand dollars or more, but often it will produce tobacco to that value in one season. The farms, which are known as *vegas*, range from three to twenty-five acres in size, and one of only twenty acres will require the attention of perhaps ten men, each worker devoting his entire time to two acres or so. The tobacco is cared for like a hothouse plant, being examined leaf by leaf for insects, and protected by cheesecloth when necessary to keep off the sun and rain. It is said that the texture and colour of the leaf are improved by raising the plants under cover, but that tobacco grown in the open has a better aroma when smoked.

Some of the greatest cigar factories in the world are located in Havana, although much of the Cuban tobacco intended for sale in the United States is manufactured in Tampa and Key West, our import duties being less on

## THE SUGAR BOWL OF THE WORLD

leaf tobacco than on the finished product. I visited one of the largest of the Havana factories during my stay in the capital, going from room to room until I saw the whole process of cigar making.

The tobacco leaves come to the factory in bales wrapped in palm leaves, and they must be dampened before they can be used. This is done by spreading them out in a court and sprinkling them with water, after which they are soft enough to be handled without cracking or breaking. At this stage they are a rich brown in colour and feel like the finest silk.

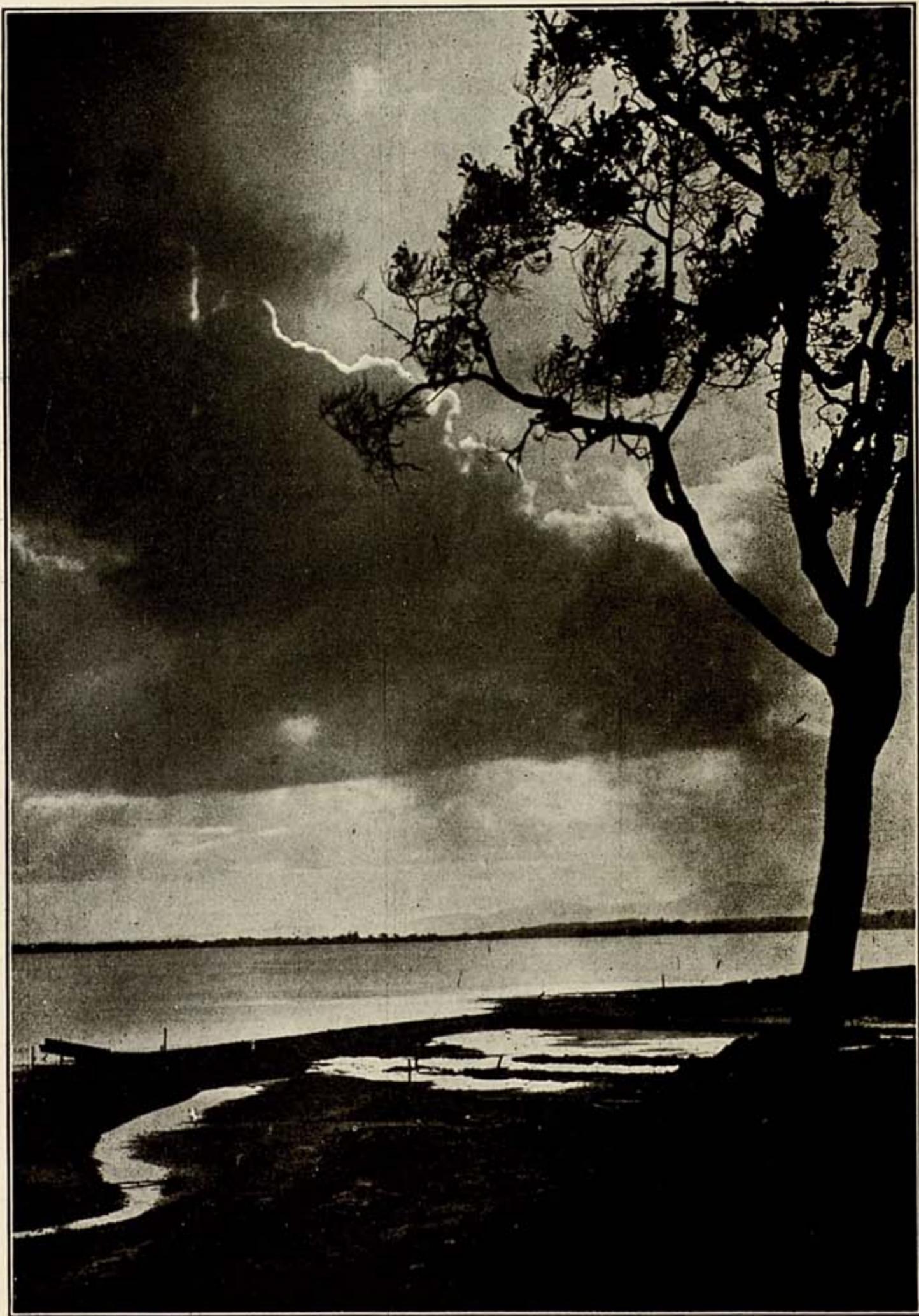
I visited the workrooms, where there were hundreds of women, each with her sleeves rolled above the elbow and her arms moving like lightning. They were tearing out the stems from the leaves, the process differing according to whether the tobacco was to be used as wrappers or as fillers. Other workers, both men and women, were rolling the cigars. Each person makes but one kind, and works on that kind year in and year out. The cigar-makers usually enter the factories when in their teens and keep at the trade all their lives, learning it so well that the motions become automatic, and they could almost roll cigars in the dark.

I spent some time in the rooms where the cigars are labelled, sorted, and packed for the market. Every lot is gone over again and again to make certain that all in one box are of the same colour and size. Some of the boxes exported from that factory retail for two hundred and fifty and even five hundred dollars. These contain a thousand cigars, and are put up in cabinets which, as pieces of furniture, would grace any room. The most expensive go to England.

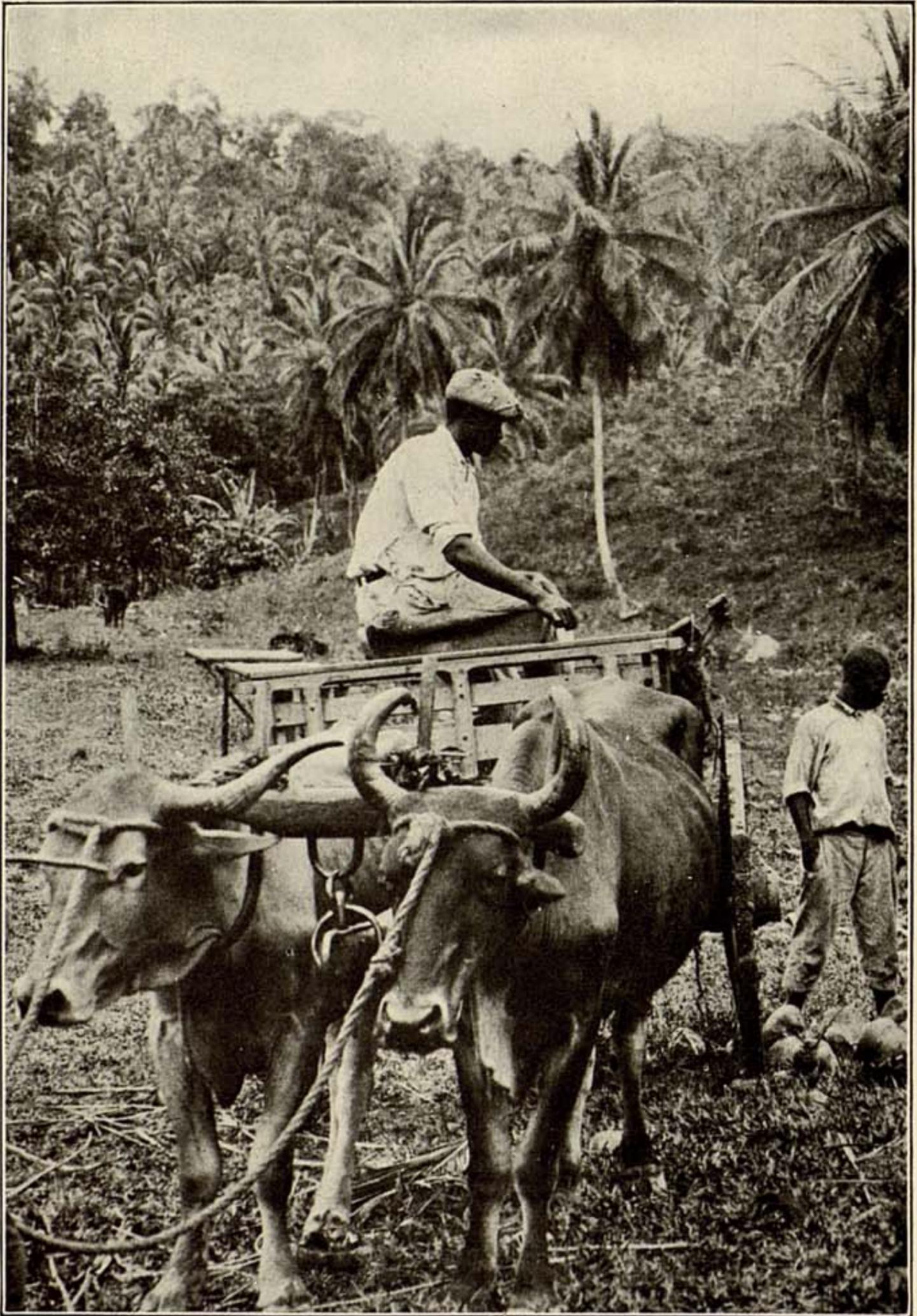
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

An unusual feature of all the large Havana cigar factories is the custom of having a man read to the workers from a little gallery above each room for several hours every day. This reader is paid by the employees, who also determine by their votes what he shall read. The time is divided about equally between fiction and newspapers, and I am told that some novels are reread again and again from year to year. "Don Quixote" in particular is a popular choice.

During my stay in the factory I asked some questions about the care of cigars and how to smoke them. They should be kept in the boxes until used, at a temperature, if possible, of about sixty-five degrees. A good Havana cigar is a delicate article, the leaves taking up moisture like a sponge and absorbing any bad odours. The moisture evaporates as quickly as it is absorbed, and if the box is left open and exposed to extremes of heat and cold, moisture and dryness, the contents are ruined. The experts tell me good cigars should be smoked slowly, or the delicate aroma will be lost. The man who puffs furiously at a Havana cigar, they say, is as unthinking as he who would gulp down a fine old wine or fail to sip slowly a choice Chinese tea.



In Nipe Bay, which promises some day to rank next to the Bay of Havana in commercial importance, is the largest and finest harbour in Cuba, and one of the best in all the lands of the Caribbean.



One of the new industries that has sprung up in eastern Cuba in the region of Nipe Bay is the growing of coconuts for export. These now rank among the chief products of the island.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

I AM starting to-day on a railway journey that will take me almost the whole length of Cuba. The main line of railroad on this narrow island extends eastward from Havana for five hundred miles along its backbone to the cities of Santiago and Guantánamo. From that railroad, branches as numerous as the legs of a centipede extend out on each side, so connecting the interior with the harbours along both coasts that to-day one can travel in modern trains to almost any part of the island.

The railways of Cuba are divided among several systems. The most important are the United Railways of Havana, a British-owned company whose lines are west of the city of Santa Clara, and the Cuba Railroad Company, which is American, with about seven hundred miles of track in the eastern part of the country. The latter road runs through the widest part of the island, and when it was built in 1902 it opened up about seventy per cent. of the whole republic, a region theretofore accessible only from the coasts.

The main line of the Cuba Railroad was constructed within less than two years, and that without a government concession, without a right of way, and without the asking of a dollar from the Cuban people. It was planned, financed, and built by Sir William Van Horne, who had

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

superintended the construction of the Canadian Pacific, and who, like Alexander, was looking about for other worlds to conquer. He had come to Cuba just after the Spanish-American War on his way to British Guiana, where he had interests in gold mines, and the railroad people here had taken him over their systems in a special car. Sir William was a shrewd observer, and as he rode through the central and western provinces he was impressed by the fertility of the soil, and realized the profits that could be made in sugar, tobacco, and fruits. In looking at a map of Cuba he saw that seven tenths of the country seemed to be undeveloped, and that the whole eastern half of the island had no railway system and practically no farms.

As soon as he was fully satisfied that a railway in that territory would eventually be a profitable undertaking, Sir William sailed for New York, and there financed the road in less than two days. This done, there next arose the question of right of way. Cuba was then being administered by the United States, and the Foraker Amendment forbade that any concession be granted during the military occupation. Sir William therefore took advantage of the common right of every man to build upon his own property, and decided to buy the lands on which the track was to be laid. He did this, but was then blocked where the route crossed the public roads, where he could have the right of way only by consent of the government. He knew, however, that the Cuban people wanted the railway, that the officials wanted it, and that our government wanted it, and also that no one was likely to object to what everyone wanted. He thereupon proceeded to build across the public roads without a

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

concession, and, as subsequent events proved, without any objection.

The building of roads is another enterprise in which Cuba has made tremendous strides in the last two decades. In 1906, when a good roads system was first outlined and begun, there were less than five hundred miles of improved highways in the entire republic. To-day there is three times that mileage. Excellent motor roads cover much of the island, radiating mainly from the cities of Havana in the west, Camagüey in the centre, and Santiago in the east. Gaps still remain between these systems, but it is only a matter of a short time before they will be bridged, thus making it possible to go from one end of the island to the other by motor.

As we leave Havana and make our way through the open country, we see many of these improved roads, and notice along them the little houses in which live the road workers, each of whom has a certain section of highway constantly under his supervision. Around some of the houses are grown young trees, which later will be transplanted to the roadsides. I notice many other changes significant of the seven-league strides this country has made since my last trip here. American windmills dot the landscape here and there, automobiles and trucks are whizzing over the highways, spring wagons appear where once only great lumbering ox-carts were to be seen, and neat cottages are beginning to replace the native thatched huts.

These changes are still in the minority, however, and I venture to say it will be a long time before twentieth-century progress destroys entirely the quaintness and picturesqueness of interior Cuba. See, for instance, that queer vehicle at this little station we are passing. It has

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

huge, high wheels, and the horse between the long shafts is guided by a boy riding another horse alongside. That is a *volanta*, once the universal carriage of Cuba, but to-day used only in rough regions where a lighter or smaller vehicle would be apt to tip over. Now look at the people on the roads, taking vegetables and fruits to the Havana markets. The produce is carried in carts or in panniers on the backs of horses and donkeys, which jog along in single file, each animal tied to the tail of the one before him, with a nondescript dog bringing up the rear.

The country between Havana and the city of Santa Clara is a flat and rather uninteresting region covered with pineapple and sugar-cane plantations. Santa Clara is an important sugar centre, and is less than fifty miles from the sugar-exporting city of Cienfuegos on the south coast. It is also the point where we transfer from the United Railways to the Cuba Railroad system. As we go onward, the scenery continues much the same, with rich farming land stretching along both sides of the track mile after mile.

Farther on, the road enters the forests, and we pass through a tangled jungle of great trees blooming with orchids and bound together with vines. There are mahogany, *lignum vitæ*, ebony, rosewood, and cedar, which is used largely for the manufacture of cigar boxes. From time to time we see sawmills where the lumber is stacked for shipment, and often go past a clearing where the trees have been cut and the ground burned over. Here, in the midst of half-burned logs and stumps as high as my waist, rows of sugar cane are sprouting and patches of bananas are shooting up. Until a few years ago practically all of eastern Cuba was one big jungle, and

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

even to-day there are perhaps eight million acres of almost primeval forest, most of it in the provinces of Camagüey and Oriente.

About halfway between Santa Clara and Camagüey we reach the town of Ciego de Ávila and pass over the route of the old *trocha*, built by the Spaniards during the Cuban insurrection. This was a barrier extending clear across the island at the narrowest point east of Havana, and was constructed in an effort to keep the Cubans in the two parts of the country from going back and forth or communicating with one another. It consisted of a cleared strip of land a half mile wide following the line of the railway that here connects the two coasts. Along the entire length of this, barbed-wire entanglements were laid and blockhouses built. There were more than two hundred of these blockhouses, each about twenty feet square. To-day their ruins stand in the midst of the little farms that now occupy this cleared strip.

More than twelve hours after leaving Havana, our train pulls into Camagüey, the oldest and most important city in interior Cuba, and among the most picturesque places in all Latin America. It was an Indian village when Columbus discovered the New World, and a Spanish town a hundred years before the *Mayflower* anchored off Plymouth Rock. Its earliest white inhabitants settled originally on the north coast, coming here later to escape the depredations of the pirates. Even so far inland as this, they were not safe, however, for in 1668 the town was sacked by Sir Henry Morgan, the destroyer of old Panama. After plundering Camagüey of everything of value and killing many of the inhabitants, Morgan and his pirate gang marched back overland to their waiting

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ships, driving before them five hundred head of cattle, which they had rounded up from the grazing lands about the town.

To-day Camgüey is a city of about a hundred thousand population, most of the white inhabitants of which are descended from twenty old Spanish families. This region has always been devoted to stock raising, which means that hardly any slaves were needed during the early days, and thus less race intermixture is evident here than in the coastal cities of Cuba.

Until the building of the Cuba Railroad, Camagüey was accessible by rail only from the port of Nuevitas on the north coast. Now, the city is the headquarters for the Cuba system, which operates here one of the largest hotels in the republic. This is the Hotel Camagüey, originally constructed in the '90's as a barracks for two thousand Spanish troops, but remodelled by Sir William Van Horne into a modern and comfortable establishment. It covers as much ground as a large city block, and encloses great patios that have been transformed into beautiful tropical gardens. Interior Cuba has few large cities, owing to the fact that the climate near the ocean is far more pleasant and also to the proximity of excellent ports to every part of the republic. Camagüey is thus the chief stopping place for travellers crossing the island, and this hotel is always well filled.

The most striking thing about Camagüey is its air of quaint antiquity. The houses, a jumble of brilliant colours, are flat roofed and thick walled, with enormous doors and heavy cornices. Many of the windows have bars that remind me of the lace-work patterns in the old buildings of India, and others are of wood carved like

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

those of the Moors. Indeed, the whole city has an Oriental appearance. At times I imagine myself in Granada or Madrid, and at others in Tunis or Morocco.

The skyline of this charming city is dominated by towers rising from picturesque and time-worn churches centuries old. That of La Merced was built in 1628 and is one of the structures in which the people were imprisoned by Morgan while that master buccaneer gathered together all the treasures he could find at the time he sacked Camagüey. La Merced contains a silver altar fashioned of forty thousand Spanish dollars melted together, and a silver image of the Christ that weighs five hundred pounds. This image is taken through the streets every year on Good Friday, the privilege of helping to carry it being considered a great honour.

Like the other cities of this part of the world, Camagüey has its plazas, one of which is named after Charles A. Dana, who, as editor of the *New York Sun*, strongly championed the cause of Cuban independence. The town has beautiful parks, electric street cars and lights, and artesian wells sunk by the Americans. The Americans were responsible also for the inauguration of sanitary conditions here, and to-day the crooked streets are fairly clean and odourless. This crookedness, by the way, is so pronounced that I doubt that there are two streets in the city that are parallel, or two that meet at right angles. Whether the town was intentionally laid out in this fashion is not known. Some people say the labyrinth of thoroughfares is a result of the haste and disorder in which Camagüey was settled, and others that the streets were planned this way with the idea of bewildering and confusing the pirates.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The sidewalks, also, are equally irregular. In front of one house they may be eighteen inches above the street level, while at the next they will drop to a foot, and farther on to six inches. At their widest they are only eighteen inches across, and where the windows are built out over them, they are narrowed to barely twelve inches. In walking along, one is continually going up and down steps, so that it is better to take to the roadways, roughly cobbled as they are.

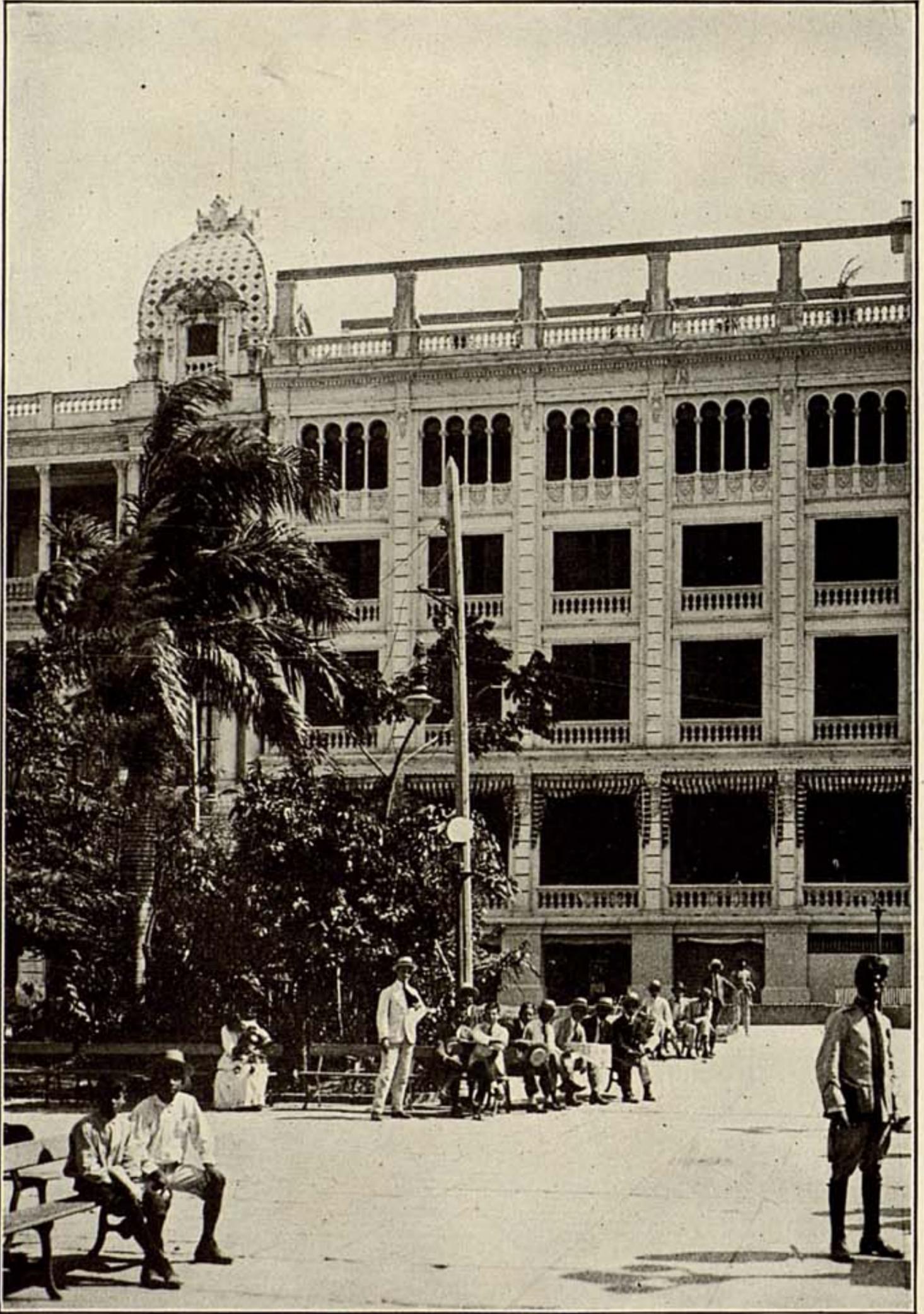
The people we meet are fully as interesting as their surroundings. Riding along on rugged ponies are men who look as though they might have come from the Argentine pampas. Each has a machete or cutlass at his belt, and all wear huge spurs. Great carts are drawn by oxen with swaying heads, yoked to enormous tongues, and goaded along by the drivers walking beside them. Peddlers' carts are common, and hay-wagons, bread-wagons, and milk-wagons, hauled by goats or ponies, are seen everywhere. Other peddlers, selling vegetables or fruit, carry their wares in panniers slung over the backs of horses.

There is a great deal of business done in the stores also. Like the residences, these are Oriental in style, many resembling the shops of Eastern bazaars. They usually open out on the street, being separated from it by doors that are taken away in the daytime. The dry-goods stores have walls shelved from top to bottom. The ceilings are high, and fancy patterns of cloth are hung down from above to catch the eyes of the passers-by.

Walking along the Camagüey streets, one can see something of the home life of the Cubans through the windows and doors. Everything is open, and the people go on with their work or play oblivious of the passing



Throughout most of Cuba milk is still peddled from house to house in cans slung across the backs of donkeys. These animals are also the most common fruit and vegetable wagons in the island.



The heart of the old city of Santiago is the plaza, upon which faces the large modern hotel built and operated by the company that owns the principal railway lines of eastern Cuba.

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

crowds. Here, a family is chatting or reading. There, some girls are sewing, while farther on the children are playing about on the floor. Everyone here knows all about the houses of his neighbours. If Señora López for instance, has a new suite of furniture, Señora Martínez next door is bound to see it, and if Señora Martínez gives a party, all her friends know about it, and have only to keep their eyes open while walking along the street in order to count the guests and see what they wear.

From the streets one can now and then catch a glimpse of a patio, and there can frequently see a *tinajón*, a great jar once generally used to catch rain water. Camagüey now has cisterns, and has had for years, but these jars are still to be seen in nearly every patio. They are often six feet in diameter and can hold as much as two hundred gallons of water. It is probably because of a similar capacity for storing away liquid that a heavy drinker in this region is designated by the same name as these enormous jugs.

The rolling plains on which Camagüey is built have long been important for their rich pasture lands, and are to-day the chief cattle regions on the island. In the past this city had a large trade in furnishing jerked beef to other parts of Cuba, and in exporting bone black for sugar refining; it was important also as a source of supply for the bulls used in the fights held in Havana, and even in Barcelona and Madrid. Although practically all the cattle of Cuba were killed during the insurrection and the Spanish-American War, stock raising has now been revived centring here at Camagüey, and ranking next to sugar and tobacco growing among the national industries.

Some distance east of Camagüey the forests begin again,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

and as we resume our journey, we once more see logging camps and sawmills. Rising high over all the other trees is the royal palm, which dominates the landscape all along our route. It has a trunk like frosted silver, topped by a gigantic tassel of bright green fern-like leaves that quiver in the breeze. These palms occur singly and in groves, often lining the road to some great hacienda, or marking the boundaries of an estate. They may be seen among the sugar fields, looking like columns of silver rising out of a plain of emeralds; and again waving over the dark green of the tobacco plants or above the reddish bronze of a pineapple plantation. They stand like sentinels upon the newly ploughed fields of rich chocolate soil, and they mirror themselves in every stream and lake. There are tens of thousands, yes, tens of millions, of them on this island.

East of Camagüey there are no large cities along the Cuba Railroad except Santiago, the terminus of the main line on the south coast. Before visiting that famous old place, however, we should see something of Nipe Bay and the new port of Antilla on the north coast. Therefore, when we reach the town of Alto Cedro, about fifty miles from Santiago, we change to the branch line to the north. Antilla is some twenty-five miles from Alto Cedro, and for most of that distance the track runs through forest and jungle, except where plantations have been cut out of the woods. Situated on the north coast, less than one hundred miles from the eastern end of the island, Nipe Bay is the largest and finest harbour in Cuba and one of the best in all the West Indies. Entered from the ocean by a narrow channel two hundred feet deep, it broadens out into a great land-locked body of water, twelve or fifteen

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

miles long and half as wide, and bigger than the harbours of Havana and Santiago put together. A comparatively few years ago it was known only to smugglers, pirates, and fishermen, but now, with the railway built from the main line by Sir William Van Horne, it bids fair some day to rank next to Havana in commercial importance.

Nipe Bay is surrounded by hills and low mountains, which, together with its delightful climate, remind me of the Bay of Naples or the waters about the isles of Greece. On its western shore, at the end of the railway, is the town of Antilla, which has been laid out on a site of fifty thousand acres, with a water frontage six miles long. Although founded only about two decades ago, Antilla already has huge warehouses, extensive wharves and docks, a modern hotel operated by the Cuba Railroad, and dwellings and stores that are increasing greatly in number year by year. The city has a regular fortnightly steamship service to New York, and is also a port of call for many other vessels plying between the West Indies and the United States.

In Camagüey we saw the Cuba of yesterday, where we could imagine ourselves in the land of three hundred years ago, its picturesqueness and quaintness being but little changed. Here at Nipe Bay is the Cuba of tomorrow, still in an early stage of development, and giving promise of being a veritable El Dorado of natural riches. The cleared jungle lands are being transformed into agricultural gardens of Eden, and all about the bay and extending for miles back into the interior are new orange and grapefruit groves, vast sugar, pineapple, banana, and cacao plantations, orchards of coffee trees, great fields of tobacco, cattle ranches, and truck farms.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Vegetables grow here all the year round, and as Antilla is a day nearer New York than Havana, eastern Cuba will no doubt eventually be a great winter garden for the New York markets.

Hundreds of thousands of acres of land about Nipe Bay are owned by the United Fruit Company, most of it in sugar plantations. Here this company has built the *central* called Boston, with a hospital, a school, a post-office, and stores and dwellings, and has erected one of the largest and best-equipped sugar mills in the world. It employs thousands of workers, owns vast numbers of live stock, and has built nearly two hundred miles of private railway branching out from the bay. Another enormous sugar estate owned by the United Fruit Company is at Preston, and on the island of Sætia it has one of the largest fruit plantations in the republic.

Since gaining her independence, Cuba has made great strides in the scientific cultivation of fruit, and to-day the finest varieties can be produced in almost any part of the island. Everywhere I have gone I have seen the more familiar fruits, such as bananas, oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit, pineapples, melons, and figs. There are also plantains, pomegranates, mangoes, aguacate pears, and dozens of other varieties, the names of which I do not know. The island is noted also for its coconuts, and has a steadily growing honey industry.

Another new town on Nipe Bay is Felton, the shipping point for the iron mines of this part of the island. Although no thorough geological survey has ever been made of Cuba's mineral resources, it is estimated that there are two thousand million tons of iron ore in this province of Oriente alone, to say nothing of the deposits in other

## ACROSS CUBA TO NIPE BAY

parts of the island. Iron-mining operations are going on in several places, and in the neighbourhood of fifty thousand tons of ore are shipped monthly to the smelters of the United States. Since much of the ore lies on the surface, it is scooped up in steam shovels at little expense. The Oriente province has also copper mines that have yielded millions of dollars' worth of this metal in past years, and newer copper mines are now being worked in Pinar del Río in western Cuba. Other minerals known to exist here are silver, manganese, and gold. A few oil wells have been sunk, and the asphalt deposits have been exploited more or less continuously since the days when the earliest Spanish explorers stopped here to pitch the seams of their vessels.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SANTIAGO AND THE SAN JUAN BATTLEFIELDS

**I** WRITE from Santiago, the metropolis of eastern Cuba and the first capital of the island. Founded by Velázquez in 1515, it was given the name of Santiago de Cuba to distinguish it from Santiago de Compostella in Spain. To-day, although foreigners know it as Santiago, it is invariably designated simply as Cuba by the people of this country.

Like Havana, Santiago lies on a land-locked bay entered by a narrow channel, and, like the present capital, this city is guarded by a castle known as the Morro, which stands on a bare rocky promontory two hundred feet high. The Morro of Santiago is older than that of Havana, and it, too, has seen the city it guards besieged many times by enemy forces. During the sixteenth century, Santiago was attacked again and again by pirate ships, and in 1553 was taken and held for a month by four hundred French buccaneers, who departed only when paid eighty thousand dollars for its ransom. A little more than a hundred years later, the city was thoroughly sacked by the British, who carried away everything they could move, from church bells to slaves. During that attack, El Morro was almost destroyed, but was rebuilt the following year. To-day, as viewed from the sea, it looks as though it would stand forever, although a closer inspection shows a dilapidated condition and a crumbling of the great stone terraces that once bristled with cannon.

## SANTIAGO AND SAN JUAN

Back of old Morro, on both sides of the harbour entrance, are other batteries, all of which were silenced forever when Admiral Sampson blockaded this harbour during the Spanish-American War, after our Lieutenant Hobson had sunk the U. S. S. *Merrimac* here in an unsuccessful attempt to close the narrow entrance. Within, where Sampson dared not enter for fear of sunken mines, lay the Spanish fleet of Admiral Cervera. It finally slipped out on Sunday morning, July 3, 1898, but the United States battleships gave chase, and in four hours had destroyed or driven ashore every one of the Spanish vessels.

Santiago is beautifully located. It lies on a bay larger than that of Havana. In the lower part of the city, fronting the water, are warehouses and wholesale establishments, and farther back, reminding me of a city of the Orient, are the pink and red roofs of the houses and stores, the towers of the cathedral rising above them. The buildings of Santiago are even more Spanish than those of Havana, and their colours brighter, if possible, than the brilliant hues of Camagüey. They are seldom more than two stories high, but their walls are three or four feet thick, and their great windows and doors are barred with iron. Many of the floors are of red brick or marble. There are no chimneys to be seen anywhere, as charcoal is used for cooking, and the weather is so warm that any sort of heating arrangement is unnecessary.

Like Havana, Santiago was much improved during the American occupation, and to-day has fairly clean, well-paved streets, although its facilities for sewage disposal and its water system still leave much to be desired. About the plaza, in the centre of the city, are the muni-

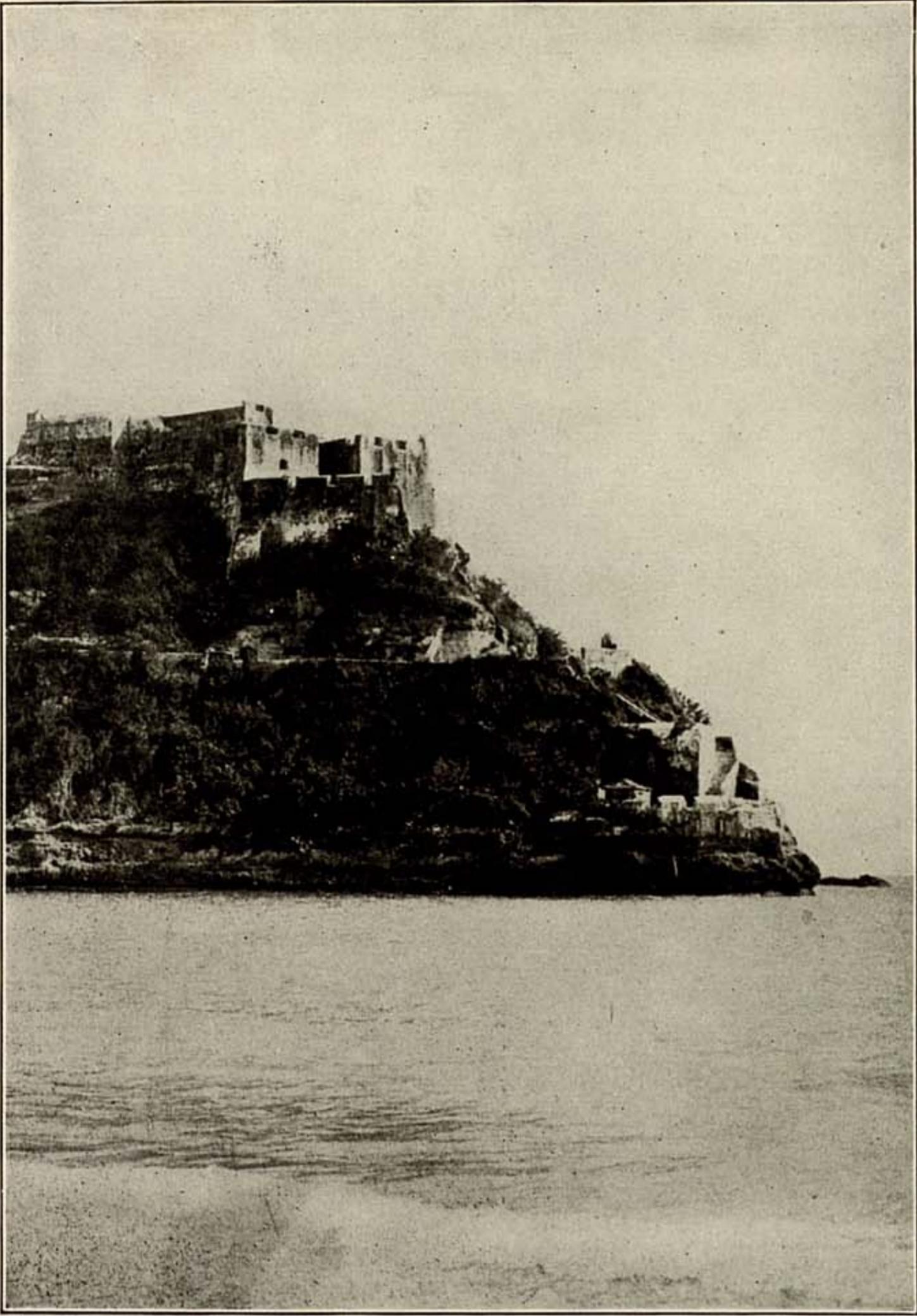
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

cipal building, the San Carlos Club, a modern hotel built by the Cuba Railroad, and the cathedral. This cathedral, said to be the largest in Cuba, is the third one to stand on this site. The first church built here, in which was buried Diego Velázquez, the founder of the city, was destroyed by fire, and the second was reduced to ruins by an earthquake.

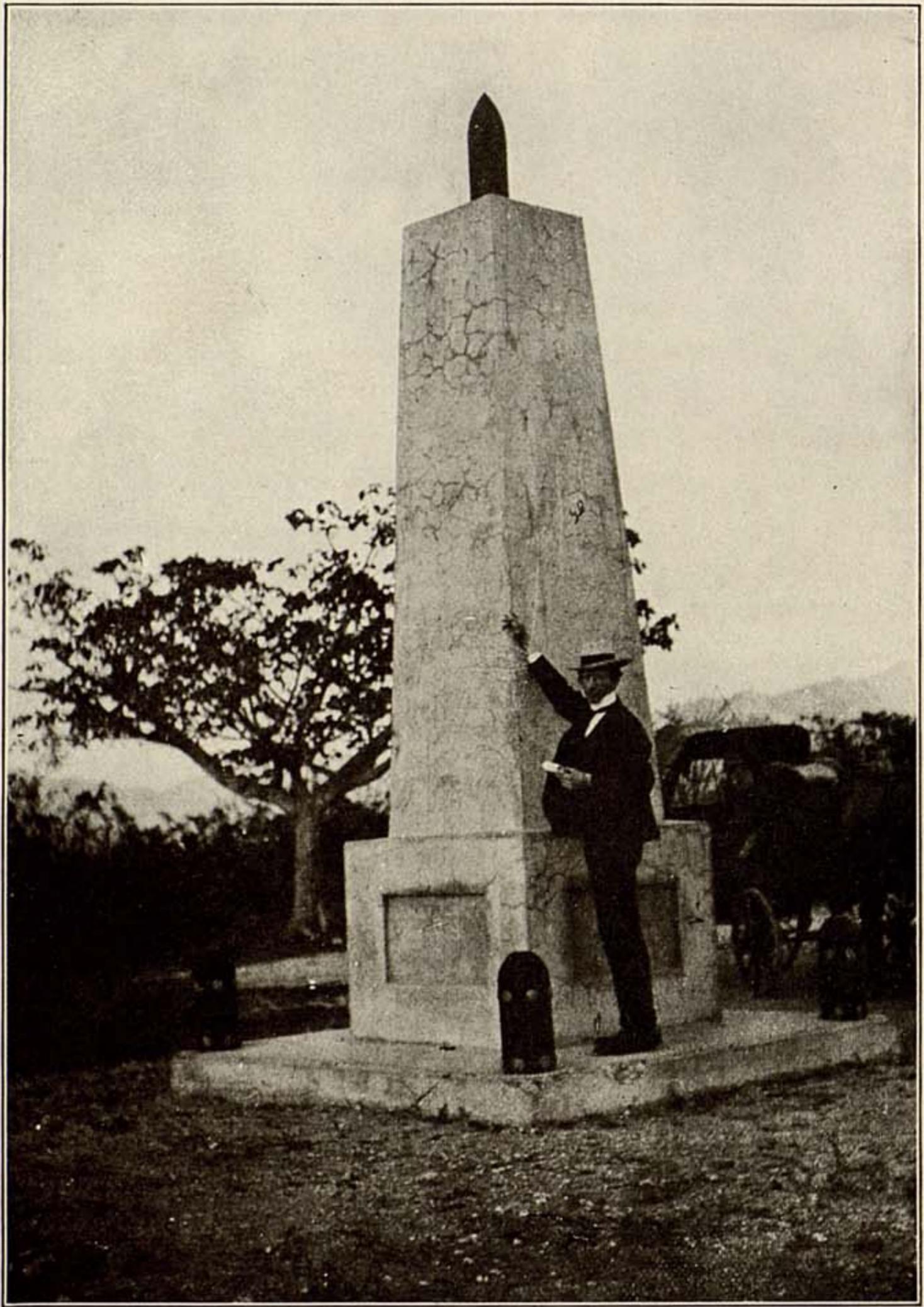
Leading out from the plaza are shopping and residential streets, and scattered over the city are many buildings and statues of more than ordinary interest and associations. One of them is the house in which lived Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, and another is the Filarmonia Theatre, in which the immortal Patti made her début at the age of fourteen.

Down near the waterfront we visit a tablet erected to the memory of the crew of the American steamer *Virginus*, which the Spaniards captured off Jamaica in 1873 and took to Santiago. The captain and sailors were accused of filibustering and without further trial were stood up in groups against the wall of the slaughter house here and some of them shot. That this butchery was interrupted and the lives of part of the members of the crew saved was due to Sir Lambton Loraine, who, as the commander of a British ship then in this part of the world, sent a message to the Governor of Santiago ordering him to stop his wholesale butchery or take the consequences. The occurrence was smoothed over by the Spanish and American governments at the time, and a diplomatic rupture averted, but with the sinking of the *Maine*, the wave of popular indignation regarding it was once more revived, and ran high until we declared war against Spain.

On a hill overlooking Santiago, we visit the model



Within the land-locked harbour of Santiago, the entrance of which is guarded by its ancient fort, the fleet of Admiral Cervera was penned up by Admiral Sampson during the Spanish-American War.



The San Juan Monument marks the site of the hardest fighting in the Spanish-American War, when the combined American and Cuban forces made their successful attack on the Spanish positions behind Santiago.

## SANTIAGO AND SAN JUAN

schoolhouse erected while General Leonard Wood was governor of Cuba, and later go for a drive over the road built by General Wood from Santiago to the tops of the mountains behind the city. For part of its length, this road follows the line of the railway, crossing the tracks five times before it reaches the hills. It then winds up the mountains to an altitude of a thousand feet above sea level, where one can get a magnificent view of the city and the harbour, and where on clear days one can even see the faint outlines of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica across the Caribbean.

Some parts of this highway cost as much as thirty-five thousand dollars a mile to build. There are cement drains at every few feet, here and there along it are stone bridges as fine as those in Rock Creek Park in Washington, and bordering much of it on both sides are stone walls two feet high. This road is considered by many a piece of extravagance, and has been nicknamed "Wood's Folly." It was built to give work to the Cubans, and on this ground its construction may have been warranted. It would seem, however, that the money might have been spent in building highways where they were more needed than here.

From Santiago we drive out also to visit the battlefields of San Juan and El Caney, where some of the hardest-fought engagements of the Spanish-American War took place. While Sampson was blockading Santiago, United States soldiers under General W. R. Shafter, aided by the Cubans under the famous Garcia, had begun a land attack on the Spanish positions to the rear of the city. After a few days of fighting, a truce was declared, existing from the 3d to the 10th of July. The attack was then resumed until July 16th, when the Spanish

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

commander, his forces greatly depleted, was obliged to surrender Santiago to the Americans.

The chief areas of the San Juan battlefields are now preserved as a public park. As we stand upon one of the heights, the greater part of the ground fought over is in plain sight, although, except for the trenches and the monuments erected to our soldiers, there is no sign of the scenes of warfare of a quarter century ago. Away off to the left are El Caney and the ruins of the old fort which the Americans took with such a tremendous loss of life. Over there on Kettle Hill, up which Colonel Theodore Roosevelt marched with his Rough Riders in the face of shot and shell, a flock of white goats is feeding. Down on the slope of San Juan, where our infantry made one of its fiercest charges, a dozen red cows lie chewing their cuds, and farther over in the midst of the plain is a white horse, the grass about him breast deep. Looking beyond the horse, we can see the San Juan River, still lined with bushes at Bloody Bend, as it was when our soldiers were there under the fire of the Spanish guns. They were in sight for more than a mile as they crossed that plain, and were under fire until they reached the foot of this hill, which is so steep that the Spanish soldiers who lay in the trenches could not see them. Our men swarmed up the hill, grappling with the Spaniards as they climbed, and fighting their way to the top.

Crossing the fields, we stop awhile under the Surrender Tree, beneath which General Shafter received from General Toral the surrender of Santiago, the first step toward the eventual defeat of Spain and Cuba's independence. The tree now has a barbed-wire fence around it to keep vandals from cutting their names in its bark or chipping

## SANTIAGO AND SAN JUAN

it for mementoes. It is a magnificent ceiba, rising about forty feet from the ground before its branches begin. It is now in full leaf, with orchids hanging from its limbs and nestling against the trunk.

Another trip we make from Santiago is to visit the shrine of the famous Virgin of Cobre, which is as highly venerated here as is that of Saint Anne de Beaupré in Canada, or the spring blessed by the Virgin at Lourdes in France. The name "Cobre" means "copper," and the town is in a rich copper region. The mines are not worked now, but in the early days the metal from here was used in making ammunition for the Spanish galleons, and even as late as the Spanish-American War was shot from some of the American guns that bombarded Santiago.

The Virgin of Cobre is a wooden figure about fifteen inches high, mounted on tortoise shell inlaid with ivory and gold, and clad in gorgeous silk robes adorned with emeralds, diamonds, and other precious stones. There is said to be about forty thousand dollars' worth of jewels upon it now, even though thieves broke into the chapel at one time and carried away treasures worth almost that much.

The chapel of the Virgin is right on top of a mountain, perhaps a quarter of a mile above the village of Cobre. Leading to it from the town are flights of steps, up which the lame, the halt, and the blind go on their knees to ask the Virgin to cure them. When the prayers of the afflicted have been answered, it is the custom to give to the church a model of the diseased member or organ that has been made well. In the glass cases back of the altar we see hundreds of little silver legs donated by the once lame, gold and silver eyes given by the blind who have regained

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

their sight, scores of silver and gold hands, and even golden images of lungs and livers. Piled up at the chapel are also a cord or so of crutches, which have been left here, we are told, by pilgrims who needed them no longer.

The story of this image of the Virgin dates back to the days of Columbus. It is supposed to be the relic always carried by the cavalier, Alonzo de Ojeda, until he gave it to an Indian chief in return for his life. For a long time after that the image was worshipped by the natives, and was believed to have the power of aiding the Indians in their battles with neighbouring tribes. Then one day the Virgin disappeared and was not seen again until early in the seventeenth century, when two fishermen discovered her floating upon a board in the waters of Nipe Bay. The winds were strong, but the sea did not wet the garments of the Virgin or overturn the board, upon which had been engraved the words: "I am the Virgin of Charity."

Legend says the fishermen took the image to the village of Hato, where it was installed in a chapel and worshipped by the people. One night it disappeared, and after a long search was discovered where the chapel of Cobre now stands. It was carried back to Hato, but again disappeared and was later found on this same spot. The people then realized that this was the chosen home of the Virgin, and so erected a church for her on the site. That shrine was destroyed when a copper mine underneath it caved in, and was succeeded by the chapel in which the Virgin is kept to-day.

From Cobre we go back to Santiago, but our travels in Cuba do not stop there. It seems peculiarly fitting that a

## SANTIAGO AND SAN JUAN

journey through the republic that we helped to free from Spain should end on United States soil, and so, before going on to Jamaica, we take a train for our naval station on the Bay of Guantanamo. Passing eastward through plantations of coffee, cacao, rubber, and sugar, a ride of forty miles brings us to the town of Guantanamo, which is ten miles from the bay and about twice as far from our naval base. From there we go on to the little village of Caimanera, the port for Guantanamo, and thence by launch to the American headquarters.

The Bay of Guantanamo forms a magnificent harbour seventeen miles long, protected from rough seas and sheltered from hurricanes by the hills. Like Nipe Bay, it was once a rendezvous for buccaneers, who lay in wait here for the ships going to and from Santiago. In 1741 it was used as a base by the British Admiral Vernon in his unsuccessful attack on that city. It is interesting to know that it was this admiral for whom Mount Vernon was named. One of the men under Vernon during that attack was Lawrence Washington, whose admiration for his commander was so great that when he built the mansion on his estate on the Potomac he named it for the Englishman.

In 1898, six hundred American marines were landed at Guantanamo to drive out the Spaniards, and it was not long afterward that the advantages of this place as a naval base were first pointed out by Admiral Sampson. One of these advantages is the width of the harbour entrance. When Cervera was bottled up in Santiago, his ships had to go out to sea in single file. Here at Guantanamo the gateway to the bay is more than a mile from side to side. It is so wide that a half-dozen great battle-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ships could steam out of it at full speed at one time and fire their broadsides at the vessels of an enemy.

Lying as it does just off the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti, the chief sea route between the North Atlantic and the Caribbean, Guantanamo occupies an especially strategic position in the West Indies. About equally distant from New York and Panama, it is excellently located as a dry-docking and coaling station, and is large enough to hold all the ships in our battle fleet, if need be. In fact, nearly every year scores of our fighting craft, from dreadnaughts and cruisers to submarines and airplanes, assemble here for several weeks and engage in war games and manoeuvres.

Should any European power attempt to make the Caribbean Sea a battleground, its vessels would have more than a week's steaming before they could reach it. Our ships, on the other hand, would be in familiar waters and at any point in the Caribbean would be only a day or so from a base of supplies.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

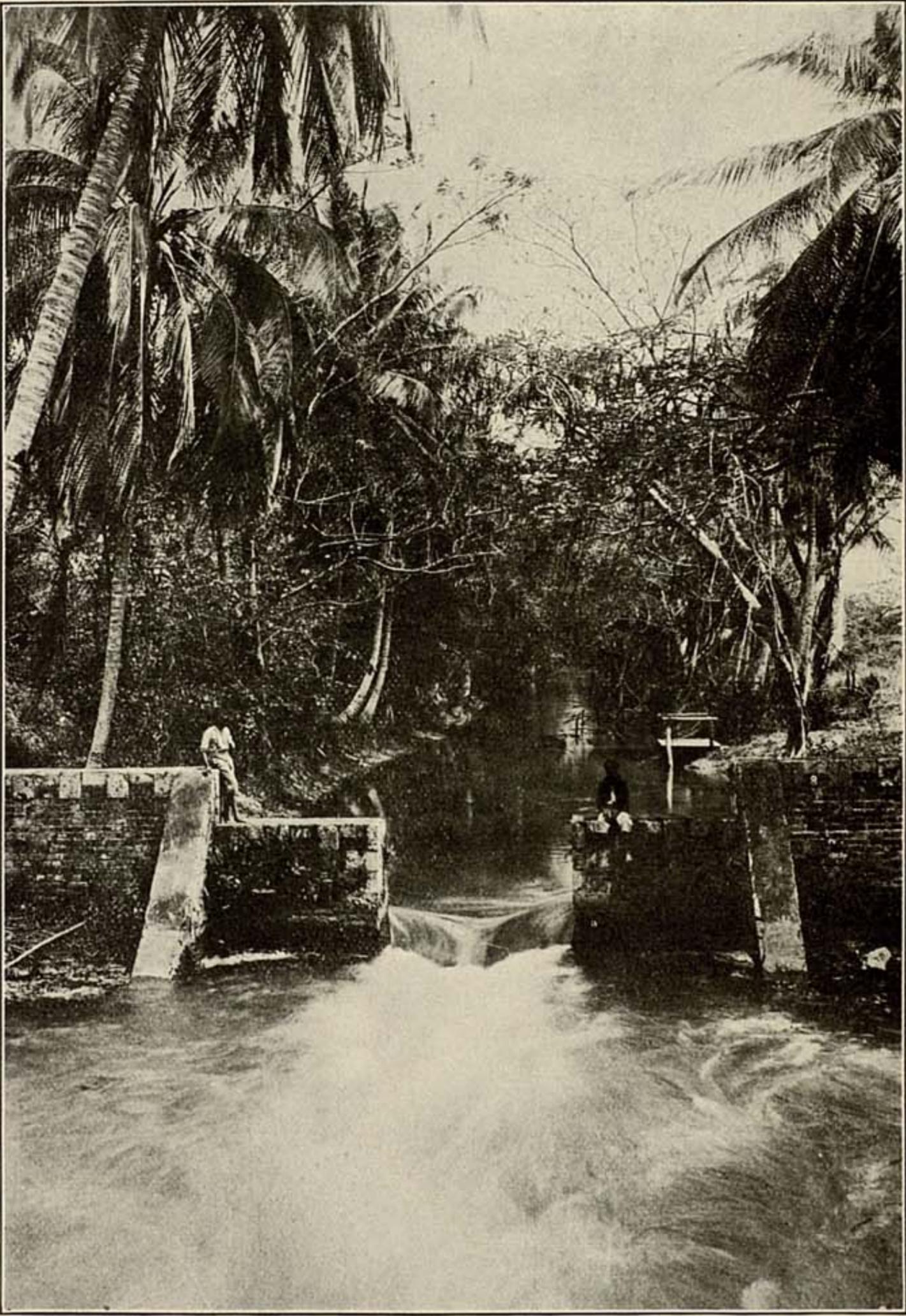
**I**N 1494, when Christopher Columbus was sailing southward from Cuba on his second visit to the New World, he spied on the horizon ahead of him a misty line of blue mountains rising from the waters of the Caribbean. Sailing onward, he came to a beautiful island and went ashore for a brief exploring trip. A few years later, during his last voyage to America, Columbus landed on this island again, but that time out of necessity. His rotting, worm-eaten caravels had become so water-logged that he dared not continue farther, and so, running them aground off a cove on the north coast, he brought his men ashore and established a little settlement. It was a whole year before a relief expedition from Haiti finally found him here, and in the meantime he explored the adjacent country and made friends with the natives, who furnished his men food as long as they remained.

Thus was discovered Jamaica, the third largest island in the West Indies, and to-day the most important British possession in the Caribbean. It has belonged to Great Britain for almost three hundred years, having been held by Spain for only a century and a half after its discovery. Offering no promise of gold or treasure to the Spanish adventurers who came to the New World during the sixteenth century, it was claimed by them only be-

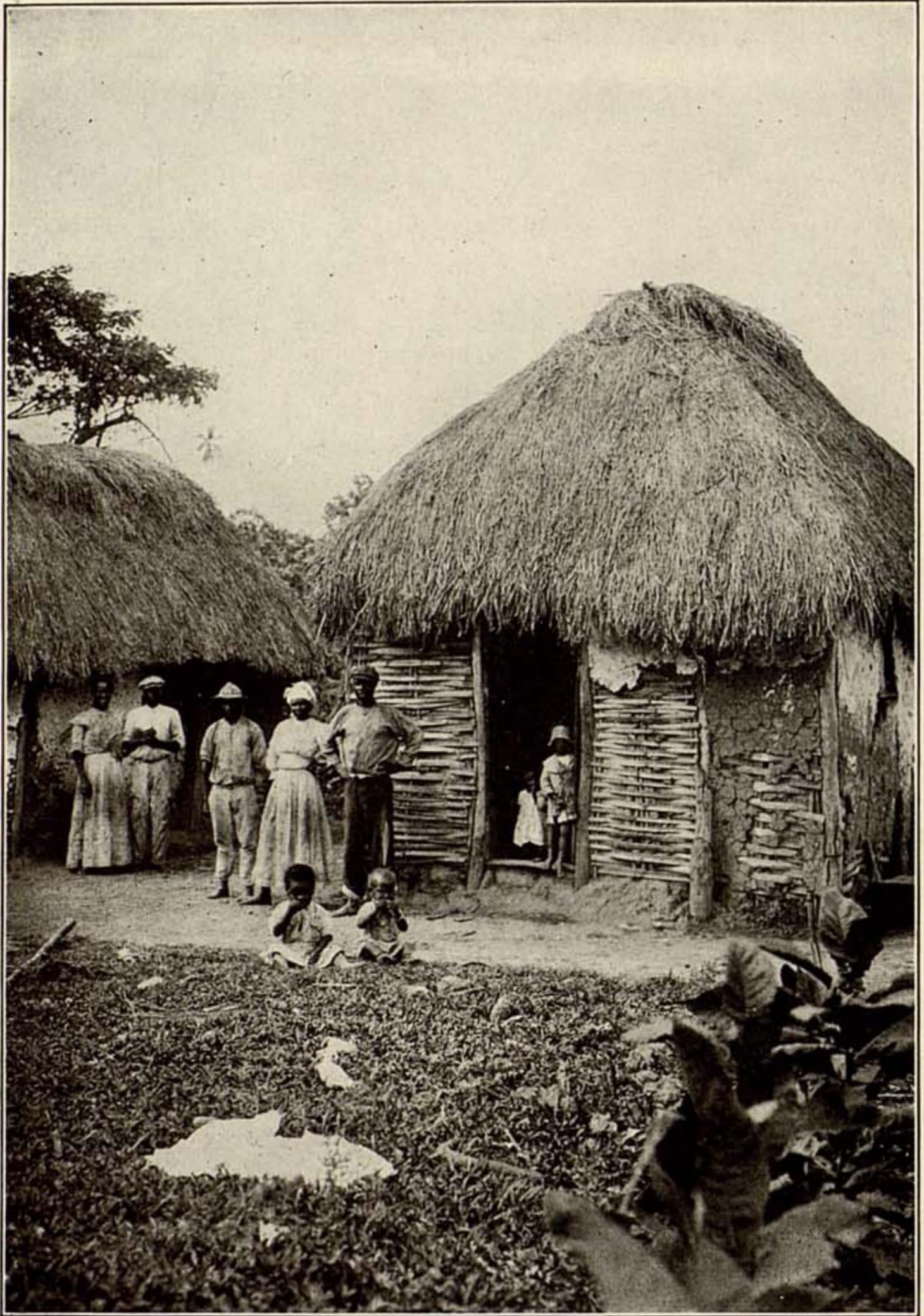
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

cause Spain did not want any other nation to obtain a foothold upon it. One settlement was founded on the north coast not far from Don Christopher's Cove, where Columbus had spent his tedious twelve months of waiting, and others near the south coast on the sites of what are now known as Old Harbour and Spanish Town. Plantations were founded near the settlements. They were stocked with animals brought here from Spain, and planted with fruit trees and coconut palms from the American mainland. The natives of the island were enslaved and made to cultivate the land, and when they died as a result of cruel treatment Negroes were imported from Africa to take their places.

In 1655, an expedition of thirty-eight ships and eight thousand troops was sent out by Cromwell under General Venables and Admiral Penn, the father of the founder of Pennsylvania, to drive the Spaniards from Jamaica. This was easily accomplished, and Jamaica passed from the domination of Spain to that of John Bull. As time went on, many British came here and founded great estates, building palatial homes on them, and living the life of typical country squires. More and more Negro slaves were brought in to work on the plantations, and the island became famous for its allspice, ginger, sugar, and rum. Then, in 1838, when its development was at its height, the slaves were emancipated, and most of the largest plantations fell into ruin for lack of labour. The freed blacks would work only enough to earn the barest essentials of living, which, in a climate that makes food plentiful and clothing almost unnecessary, entailed little effort on their part. East Indian coolies were brought here later in an attempt to relieve the labour situation,



During the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, many great country estates were established in Jamaica, on which slave labour was used to set out vast sugar plantations and to build irrigation canals through them.



Only fourteen thousand of Jamaica's population of almost a million are white. Most of the people are blacks or mulattoes descended from the hundreds of thousands of African slaves brought here to work on the plantations.

## BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

but with small success. So the land holdings were divided just as were the great plantations of our South after the Civil War.

In the meantime, the British had established their capital at the Spanish settlement of St. Jago de la Vega. That name, however, proved a difficult mouthful for the English sailors, who called the place simply Spanish Town, and Spanish Town it is to this day. The city was the capital of Jamaica until 1870, when the seat of government was moved to Kingston. To-day it is merely a quiet, pretty town, with only the former residence of the governor and the cathedral, built on the foundations of an old Spanish church, to indicate its one-time importance.

Although Spanish Town was the capital, the most famous, or, I should say, notorious, city of Jamaica during the early days of English occupancy was Port Royal, located at the tip of the long sand spit that protects what is now the harbour of Kingston. As the island was settled by the British, the location of Port Royal made it an excellent base for privateering operations against Spain, and as time went on it became the rendezvous of pirates and buccaneers from all over the Caribbean, who came here to divide their booty and to celebrate the success of their nefarious expeditions. Toward the end of the seventeenth century the city had the reputation of being the richest and wickedest spot in the West Indies. Its wide quays were always piled high with boxes and bales containing supplies of all kinds taken from the holds of captured ships, and its treasure houses were packed with "pieces of eight," guarded by fearless pirates armed with cutlasses.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Half the houses of Port Royal were dens of iniquity in which both money and liquor flowed like water. As one governor of that time wrote: "The Spaniards wondered much of the sickness of our people, until they knew the strength of our drinks, but then they wondered more that they were not all dead." In this connection, it is told that Admiral Vernon, appalled at the amount of rum consumed here, ordered his men to dilute it with water. This they did, but unwillingly, expressing their disapproval of the mixture by calling it "grog," which was Vernon's nickname, and thereby adding that word to the English sailor's vocabulary.

The most famous of the buccaneers who made their headquarters at Port Royal was none other than Henry Morgan, the plunderer of old Panama. Morgan was said to have been kidnapped in England when a boy, and sold as a servant in Barbadoes, from where he worked his way to Jamaica and joined the buccaneers. In 1663 he had risen to the position of commander of his own force, and as such he set out from Port Royal for his attacks upon Camagüey, Puerto Bello, and Maracaibo on the north coast of South America. The success of those expeditions was so great that he was made "commander-in-chief of all the ships of war in Jamaica." Later, he perpetrated his famous attack upon old Panama, for which he was officially reprovved by the British government. However, the gold added to the British coffers by that exploit procured for him a knighthood and the appointment as lieutenant-governor of Jamaica. He twice served as acting governor of the island, in which capacity, as I have said, he executed many of his former comrades who made the mistake of carrying on their

## BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

operations without his consent. These came to a hapless end at Gallows Point, the little peninsula jutting out from Port Royal. It was a common sight to see there the bodies of several "gentlemen of the sea" swinging in the breeze until the gallows and ropes should be needed for the next victims.

In 1692, at the height of its ill-gotten prosperity, Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake. Hundreds of buildings on the edge of the sea completely disappeared under the water, and nearly all those that remained unsubmerged were left in utter ruin. The survivors of the disaster, many of them doubtless thinking it an act of judgment because of their sins, moved across the bay and founded the city of Kingston, or took up land and settled down to farming. To-day the only town on the old site is a desolate little fishing village, with not a trace of the Port Royal of the past except the remains of an ancient fort built in 1662. That fort, history says, numbered among its commanders Admiral Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, who was stationed here when he was only twenty-one years old.

Kingston, the successor of Port Royal, was likewise destined to be laid in ruins by an earthquake. This city, the present capital of Jamaica, whither I have come from Cuba, and where I write these notes, was totally destroyed in 1907, less than a year after the great catastrophe at San Francisco. Previous to that time, the city had suffered repeatedly from hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes, but those occurrences were as nothing compared to the final calamity. The tremors of the earth continued for a week, and at the end of that time the business section was entirely destroyed, and only a few dwellings were left

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

intact. The shocks were followed by fire, and more than a thousand people lost their lives.

In the two decades that have passed since then Kingston has been largely rebuilt, although a trip through the city discloses many vacant sites. The main streets are now wider and cleaner than before, and many of the new structures are of reinforced concrete in mission style. The government offices, which were formerly scattered over the city, have been assembled in handsome public buildings occupying two city blocks and the hotel operated by the United Fruit Company has been rebuilt and improved. Generally speaking, the city has practically recovered from the effects of the earthquake, and has regained its old standing as the chief commercial port and tourist resort of Jamaica.

Kingston has a population about half that of Norfolk, Virginia, but only two per cent. of its people are pure whites. Most of these, of course, are English. The British governor-general of the island lives in King's House, a beautiful mansion four miles out from the city. Besides the various government officials there are many Englishmen in business here. The social life of the whites is delightful, and sports of all kinds are popular. Kingston has polo and cricket clubs, tennis courts, golf links, and a famous race course. The yacht club holds an annual regatta in the harbour.

Of Jamaica's total population of between eight and nine hundred thousand, more than three fourths are descended from the hundreds of thousands of Negro slaves brought here during the Spanish and early English eras, and only about fourteen thousand are white. The blacks and mulattoes are so numerous in Kingston that I am

## BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

reminded of the English towns of East Africa, except that the Negroes here dress in ragged shirts and trousers. The language they speak is supposed to be English, but its nasal twang and colloquially mispronounced words usually make it about as intelligible as Sanskrit to any one not accustomed to it.

From an historical standpoint, the most interesting places in Kingston are the old parish church, which escaped complete destruction in the earthquake and has now been restored, and the Institute of Jamaica. The latter building contains a large library, portraits of the former governors of the island, a museum collection of Jamaica's plant and animal life, and many curiosities and relics of its early history. Visiting it, we see the old iron gibbet on which criminals were once swung up in the air and left to die, and we take a look at the repository of the famous "shark papers," with their Jonah-like history. These were the papers of the *Nancy*, an American vessel captured in the Caribbean in 1799 by a British cutter. Its officers were brought here to be tried on a charge of carrying contraband goods. Before reaching port, however, they had thrown the ship's papers overboard and had managed to secure or manufacture forged ones, which apparently proved them guiltless of the charges against them. In the meantime, the original papers had made a meagre mouthful for a hungry shark, which purely by chance had been harpooned by the sailors of another British vessel, and the papers were found. They were brought here at once and presented at the trial just as the officers of the *Nancy* were about to be discharged for lack of evidence.

This institute contains also the bell which once hung in

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

the old church in Port Royal, and which before that was in one of the churches built by the Spaniards. This bell is one of the rare remaining relics of the Spanish occupation of Jamaica, of which to-day there are few more evidences than of the aboriginal Indians. Some gold and silver coins dug up where they were buried during the British attack, Spanish names of places and rivers, and the crumbling ruins of an old fort or two—these are all that are left of a century and a half of Spanish rule in Jamaica.

But suppose we leave Kingston and take a trip out into the country to see something of the natural beauty for which this island is famous. In the language of the aborigines, "Jamaica" means "Land of springs and streams." The island is also a land of high mountains and lovely valleys, of bright sunshine and delightful climate, and of such charming scenery that a trip through any part of it is a constantly changing panorama of tropical beauty. Scattered over the island are countless limestone caves, hot mineral springs, and hundreds of short rivers and tumultuous streams that tumble down the hills and mountains in cascades and waterfalls. At Ocho Ríos, on the north coast, eight streams plunge into a single bay. One of them, Roaring River, has falls one hundred and fifty feet high and two hundred feet wide, divided into thousands of tiny cascades. In the eastern part of the island are the Blue Mountains, which rise more than a mile above sea level, and which are clothed in tropical verdure the year round.

Every part of Jamaica may now be reached by the government railways or by motor car. Both of the main lines of railway cross the island from Kingston to the north

## BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

coast, one swinging west to Spanish Town and then making a loop eastward to the city of Port Antonio, and the other continuing from Spanish Town to Old Harbour and thence to Montego Bay, near the western end of the island. The name of the latter city is said to be a corruption of the Spanish word "manteca," meaning lard, a commodity largely exported from there during the Spanish occupation.

As to its motor roads, Jamaica has one of the finest highway systems in the West Indies. There is a belt line running all the way around the coast, with connecting roads gridironing almost every part of the island. Twenty-three hundred miles of them are suitable for automobiles, and it is by this mode of transportation that we make a run across country to Port Antonio. The route goes right through the mountains, climbing hill after hill, descending into one deep green valley after another, crossing foaming rivers, and passing many farms, which are here known as "pens."

Nineteen miles north of Kingston we stop to spend a few hours at Castleton Gardens, a government experimental farm and botanical garden containing specimens of nearly every tree, flower, and plant that grows in Jamaica. As we stroll through it, we are astonished at the diversity of plant life that is revealed. The island produces practically all the tropical fruits we saw in Cuba; it raises sugar, cacao, coffee, tobacco, and coconuts, and it is the world's chief source of allspice. More surprising, however, is the fact that many fruits and vegetables of the temperate zone, such as strawberries, potatoes, carrots, and cabbages, thrive in the high, cool mountain regions.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

The chief crop of Jamaica to-day is bananas, and the centre of the industry is at Port Antonio, which, like so many cities of the Caribbean, owes its growth and prosperity to the United Fruit Company. It is built about a fine harbour, divided by a peninsula on which stand the modern hotel, operated by this company, and the newer buildings of the town. Port Antonio was greatly damaged by a hurricane in 1903, but it escaped the earthquake that almost destroyed the capital. To-day, although much smaller than Kingston, it rivals that city as a commercial centre and tourist resort.

The banana industry of Jamaica began when Captain L. D. Baker of Boston took a small cargo of this fruit from here to the United States in 1868. From that experiment has grown the tremendous banana trade of the present, when fifteen million bunches are shipped every year. They constitute the chief export of the island, having long since exceeded in value the output of sugar and rum. More than sixty thousand acres are planted to this one fruit, and, as in Central America and Cuba, a fleet of vessels is kept busy carrying the output to the United States markets.

Not far from Port Antonio is Mooretown, the site of a settlement of the Maroons, which was the name given to several thousand Negro slaves who escaped into the remote mountain regions when the Spaniards were driven out of Jamaica by the English. There they reverted almost to a state of savagery, and for nearly a century and a half maintained a constant warfare with the British colonists. Unable to conquer them, the whites offered to recognize their freedom and give them twenty-five hundred acres of land in western Jamaica. This quieted the Maroons



The road across Jamaica from Kingston on the south coast to Port Antonio on the north reveals a constantly changing panorama of mountain ranges, deep green valleys, and rich tropical vegetation.



At the fruit-shipping ports on the north coast of Jamaica hundreds of thousands of bunches of bananas are transferred from train to steamer on the heads of an endless procession of turbaned Negro women.

## BEAUTIFUL JAMAICA

for about fifty years, but in 1795 they declared war on the whites and were subdued only after a year of fighting, during which bloodhounds were employed to track them down. Six hundred of the rebels were deported to Nova Scotia, but there they caused so much trouble that most of them were sent to Sierra Leone on the West African coast, whence their ancestors had been brought three hundred years before. The Maroons who remained in Jamaica consider themselves much superior to the ordinary blacks, and in 1865 even assisted the English in putting down a Negro insurrection.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE BLACK REPUBLIC OF THE CARIBBEAN

I AM in Haiti, the Black Republic of the Caribbean, where more than ninety-nine per cent. of the people are of Negro blood, and even the president and all the government officials are descendants of African slaves. It is a land where both upper classes and peasants are blacks and mulattoes, and the only country in America in which the highest social stratum is not white. Indeed, until within the last decade no whites of any nationality were even allowed to own property here.

Haiti and Santo Domingo are the only two republics of the West Indies besides Cuba. They are both situated on the island called by Columbus Hispaniola, and later known as Haiti, an Indian word meaning "high land." It is the second largest of the Greater Antilles. To Santo Domingo belongs the eastern two thirds of the island. Haiti, in the western end, across the Windward Passage from Cuba, is shaped like a letter U tipped over on one side, its two arms partially enclosing the Gulf of Gonaives. It is a land of high mountains and deep valleys, so jumbled together that I can well believe the tale of how one of the early explorers described its appearance to the King of Spain. The Spaniard, it is said, crushed a sheet of paper into a ball in his hand, pulled it apart, and threw it down, all wrinkled and crumpled, saying:

## THE BLACK REPUBLIC

“Your Majesty, Hispaniola looks like that.”

The story of Haiti is unique. The island was first trodden by the feet of white men when the *Santa María*, the flagship of Columbus during his first voyage, was wrecked on a reef off the north shore and the crew forced to land near what is now the site of the town of Cape Haitien. There, as the guest of an Indian chief, Columbus spent his first Christmas in the New World, and there, before he sailed onward, he built a fort and left forty of his men to establish the first white settlement on the island.

A year later, when Columbus came here for the second time, he found the fort in ashes, his men massacred, and the former friendliness of the Indians utterly destroyed by the cruelties and outrages of the Spaniards. He thereupon selected a new location on the north shore and built another fort, naming it Ysabel for the Queen of Spain. Later he sailed around the island and founded the city of Santo Domingo.

Hispaniola, like Cuba and Jamaica, was coveted by the sea rovers of England, Holland, and France, many of whom made their headquarters on the little island of Tortuga, off the northwest coast. From there they raided the Spanish plantations on the larger island, carrying off crops and cattle for their own use and also to sell to passing ships that put in at Tortuga for provisions. The meat thus obtained was dried in buildings known as *boucans*, literally the French name for smokehouses, and from this occupation the raiders came to be known as buccaneers. Later, becoming more and more imbued with the increasing lawlessness of the Caribbean, most of them took to the sea, preying upon the same ships with

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

which they had formerly dealt. As time went on, the name of "buccaneers" gradually was applied to all the "brethren of the sea" of the seventeenth century.

Others of the habitués of Tortuga, chiefly Frenchmen, had managed to make permanent settlements in western Haiti. These became steadily larger and stronger, until finally, in 1697, the land they held was formally ceded to France by Spain. The remainder of the island, now Santo Domingo, passed into the hands of the French in 1795, but later was reoccupied by Spain. The Spaniards held possession until the people revolted and formed an independent republic, but in 1820 Santo Domingo was again ruled by Haiti, and did not gain its final independence until 1844.

In the meantime, shipload after shipload of Negro slaves were brought here to work the land, and the end of the eighteenth century found Haiti divided into huge plantations owned by a handful of French, but populated largely by blacks. That was the situation in 1793, when, during a war between France and England, British troops invaded Haiti. The French, fearing to lose their colony, offered freedom to all the slaves who would take up arms against the English, and in the same year issued a general decree of emancipation.

With that decree began the era of insurrection and bloodshed out of which has evolved the Haitian republic of to-day. The blacks were no sooner given their freedom than they started a campaign to obtain their independence from France. This campaign culminated in a general massacre of the whites, which caused Napoleon to send here sixty thousand troops, but to little avail. Although not acknowledged by France until 1838, Haitian independ-

## THE BLACK REPUBLIC

ence was actually declared in 1804, and a Negro president put at the head of the government.

The history of Haiti from then until 1915 is a record of political disturbances, revolutions, bloodshed, and presidential assassinations or abdications. One administration after another was overthrown, only one president serving peacefully to the end of his term. At two different times Haiti was proclaimed a kingdom. The black ruler of this "kingdom," Henri I, made his wife a queen and his children "princes of the blood," creating also a dusky nobility including eight dukes, twenty counts, thirty-seven barons, and eleven chevaliers. He established a court as gorgeous as that of the most extravagant comic opera, and on the heights above Cape Haitien he erected for himself the fantastic castle of Sans Souci, the remains of which still exist.

During all this time, public offices in Haiti were offered to the highest bidder, and were always at a premium because of the excellent opportunities they afforded for what the Chinese so expressively designate as "squeeze." Political graft probably reached a higher state of development here than in any other spot in the West Indies. One instance of the many that might be cited in this connection concerns the erection of the best hotel in Port au Prince. It is said to have been built of material ostensibly bought for the National Cathedral, and its labour costs also were charged to the latter structure. When the hotel was completed, the story goes, the builder sold it to former President Simon for twenty thousand dollars in cash, a proceeding that well may be called "playing both ends against the middle."

In 1914 conditions in Haiti had become so bad that

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

France, England, and Germany had all landed troops here to protect their interests, the United States later doing likewise. Events came to a crisis the following year, when a mob of natives dragged the president from the French legation, where he had taken refuge, and murdered him, later parading the streets carrying aloft portions of his dismembered body. Before that time, the United States had been trying to reach an agreement with Haiti whereby we should help it to emerge from the chaos into which it had fallen, but upon the perpetration of this last outrage Uncle Sam, without further ado, landed a large force of marines here and proclaimed martial law throughout the republic.

Haiti, at the time of the American intervention, was a deplorable and almost unbelievable mixture of barbaric customs and African traditions, the whole disguised under a veneer of republican institutions. Out of a population of two and a half million people, fully ninety-five per cent. could neither read nor write, and had no idea whatsoever of law and order. Conditions to-day are but little better, and a very small proportion of the population belong to the so-called upper class—people who live in modern style, go to France to be educated, speak the French language intelligibly, and have acquired a certain degree of culture. Few of this class are full-blooded Negroes, for, in spite of laws regarding property holding and other edicts restricting the whites, an admixture of white blood is regarded as a claim to social distinction. Another requisite for admission to the upper stratum is money, and a current saying here is: "Black man with money, mulatto; mulatto with money, white man; white man always white man."

## THE BLACK REPUBLIC

The mass of the Haitian people are pitiably ignorant, speaking a version of French more debased than Jamaican English, and living in the most primitive manner. The homes in the interior are cabins of split palm boards or huts of poles plastered with mud. The usual roof is of thatch, but some corrugated iron is now used for this purpose. I am told that iron roofs are greatly admired, and that when a country dweller acquires one, he feels he has reached the height of affluence. In the poorer houses, which means the great majority, there is almost no furniture, and the staple foods are red beans and rice.

Even in the cities, the Americans found unspeakable sanitary conditions, and diseases were prevalent all over the republic. Most of the people are so superstitious that modern medical treatment has had to be forced upon them, and the practices of local medicine men and witch doctors combated. The religion of most of the natives is largely a survival of African superstitions and the voodooism of the Gold Coast jungles. Some travellers claim that in the most isolated regions of the republic human sacrifices are still made, and that cannibalism has not yet been entirely abolished.

Although the state of existence of the Haitians as a people is improving but slowly, the country has nevertheless made remarkable progress in the last decade under our military occupation. With order established, the United States, with the coöperation of the Haitian government, has taken charge of the customs, appointed financial advisers, and supervised public works and sanitation. The detachments of the United States Marine Corps we keep here have wiped out the lawless bands that once terrorized the interior, and are now in command of

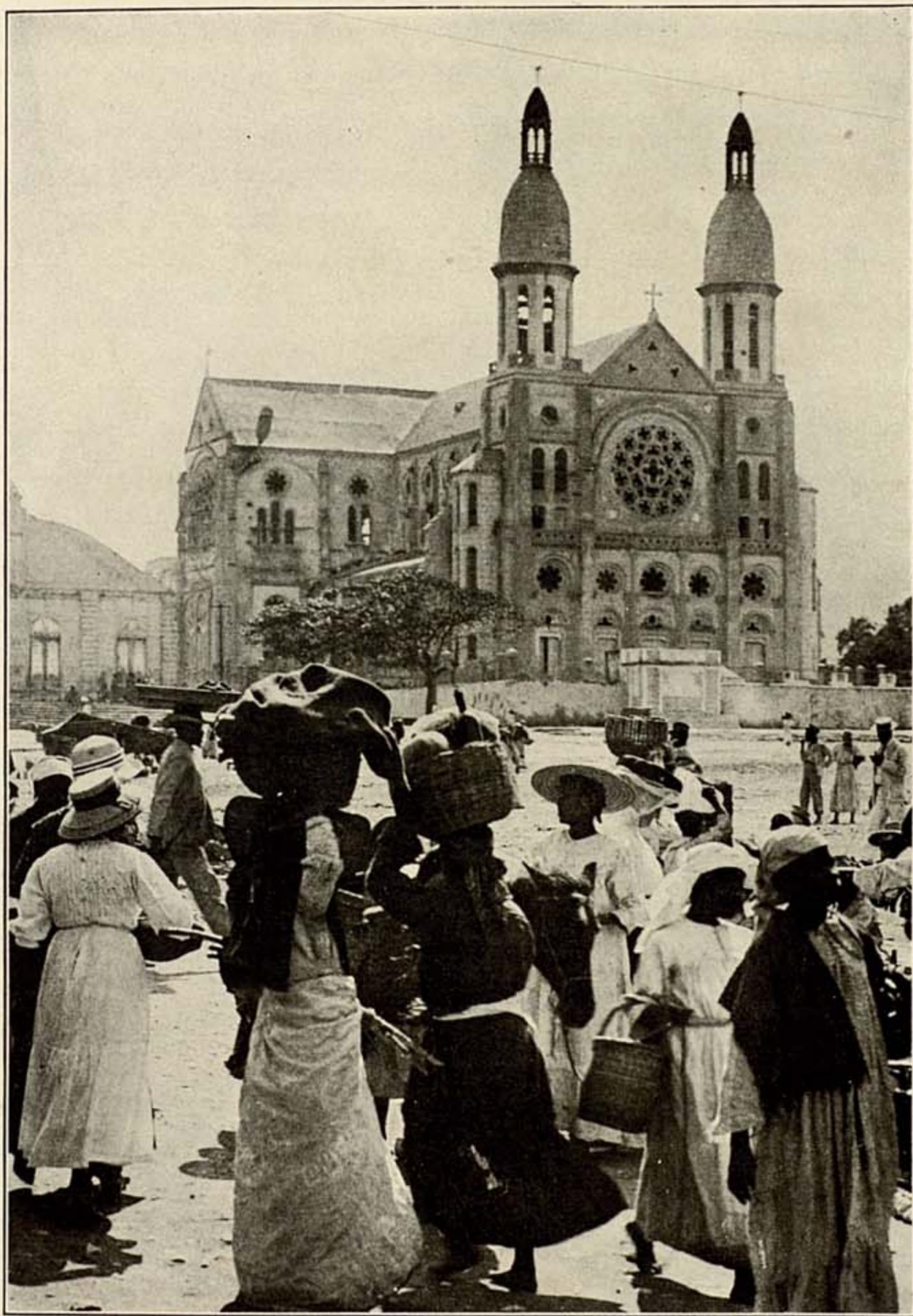
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

the Haitian constabulary forces. The Haitians have been instructed in public-health work, mosquito-breeding places have been eliminated, the markets are supervised, foodstuffs inspected, and campaigns carried on against rats, mice, and stray dogs. Telegraph lines have been extended, telephone systems installed in ten cities, and a good roads system begun.

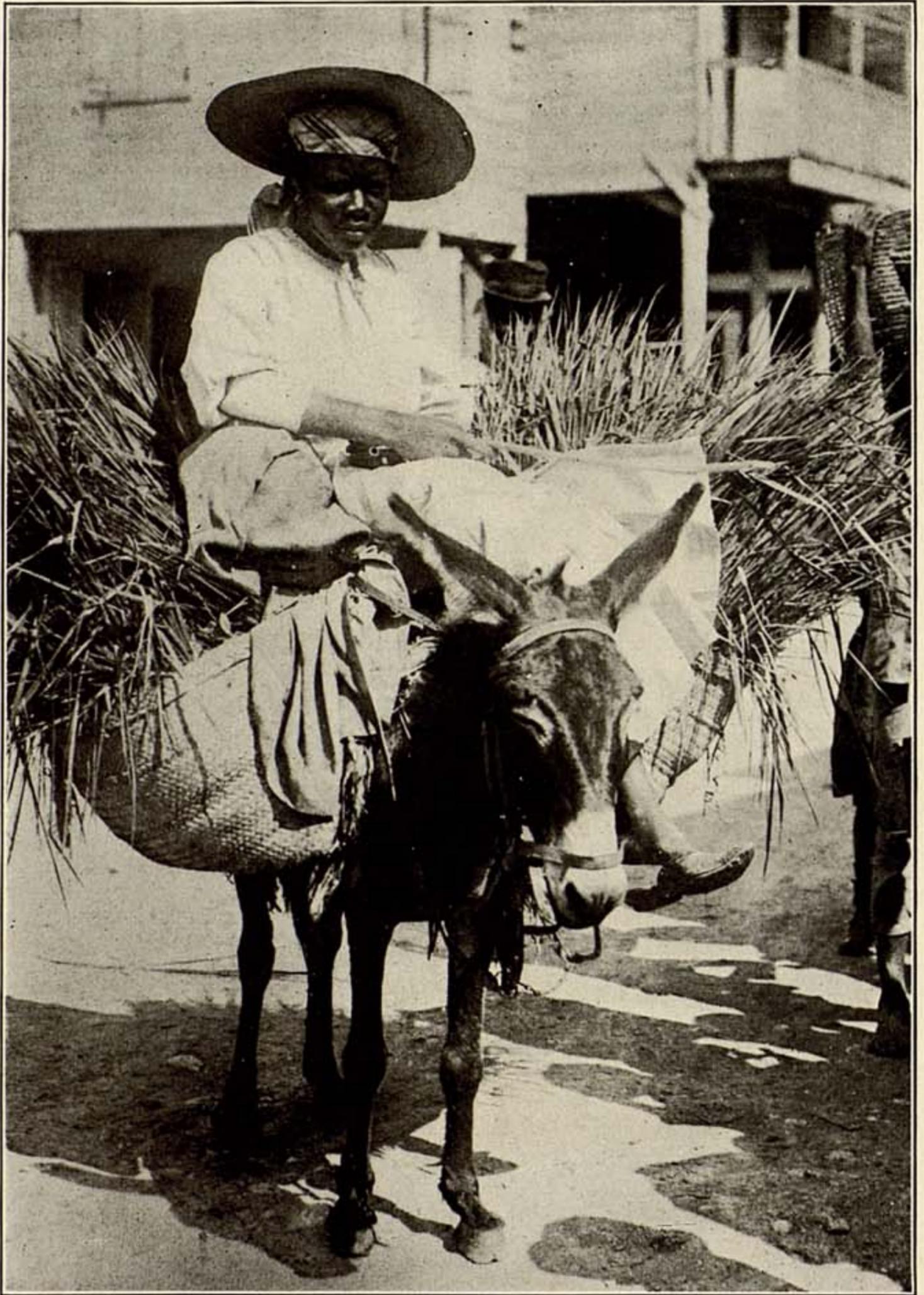
During French rule in this country, many excellent highways were built, but these had been allowed to fall into such disrepair that when the Americans took charge there was not a real road in Haiti outside the towns. What had once been fine roads had become little more than trails, and what few bridges remained were in such a state that travellers were warned: "Never go over a bridge in Haiti if you can possibly go around it." The railroads numbered only one or two short lines, and travel through the interior was most difficult.

One of the first things the Americans did was to revive an old Haitian law requiring every man to contribute a certain amount of time to road work. Eventually that law caused so much opposition that it was repealed, but in the meantime two hundred miles of old roads had been improved and new ones built totalling more than twice that length. These included a highway between Port au Prince, the capital, and Cape Haitien, the second city of the country. To-day, hundreds of motor cars are in use, whereas in 1915 there were less than a half dozen in the entire republic.

In Port au Prince, the headquarters of the Americans, the improvements made are particularly noticeable. Although there are twelve ports in the republic, this city, with its fine harbour on the Gulf of Gonaives, is the only



Before the market of Port-au-Prince rises the national cathedral, the building of which was attended by so much graft that out of the funds appropriated for it the contractors were able to construct also the best hotel in the city.



Country produce is invariably brought to market by the Haitian woman—a survival of the times when the men feared to enter a town lest they be seized and made to serve in the army.

## THE BLACK REPUBLIC

one that boasts a wharf, and so handles more trade than any other. It now has paved streets, an underground sewerage system, and a street railway; and the dirt and filth of a decade ago have been largely eliminated. The streets are wide, the wooden buildings are a little less dilapidated than formerly, and the stores display evidences of increasing prosperity. Many of the small merchants are Syrians and Germans, and I notice also that a few Americans are in business here.

The Americans and the wealthier native residents of Port au Prince live in a suburb of the capital lying on a hill twelve hundred feet above sea level. Here, too, are the chief hotels of the city. They may now be reached in motor cars, although the old means of transportation—native cabs—are still in use. The horses drawing these cabs are small and thin. Few of them are strong enough to pull a moderate load all the way up the hill, and a passenger setting out in one of these vehicles for the upper town is apt to be obliged to abandon his coach midway and walk.

The real beast of burden of Haiti is the burro, which may be seen in great numbers ridden by Negro women bringing their produce into town. Often a woman will ride fifteen or twenty miles to sell fifty cents' worth of merchandise in the market of Port au Prince. The women, I notice, are generally the traders for their families—a custom that is probably a survival of the times when the men feared to enter the towns lest they be seized and made to serve in the army.

Haiti is as fertile a land as there is in the West Indies, and needs only development to become as productive as Porto Rico or Cuba. The valleys and uplands are

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

capable of producing the finest of coffee, cotton, and sugar, as well as cacao and tobacco, and many of the mountainsides are covered with heavy growths of valuable hardwoods. None of these natural resources has been given much attention, the cotton crop being picked largely from wild bushes, and the coffee from trees almost uncared for. Coffee is the chief product of the country, the exports in one year amounting to ten million dollars or more. Practically all of it comes from little farms less than ten acres in extent. The first modern farm machinery was not brought in until 1917, and the machete is still the chief, and often the only, implement of cultivation.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

**T**HE steamer I boarded at Port au Prince is approaching the ancient city of Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, and the oldest existing settlement founded by white men in the Western Hemisphere. It was begun by Bartholomew Columbus, the brother of the Admiral, in 1496, only four years after the discovery of the New World, and it witnessed more events connected with the life of Columbus than any other spot in America. In the early days of its existence it was his headquarters for other expeditions; a few years afterward it was the scene of his bitterest hours when he was thrown into prison and then carried to Spain in chains, and now its great cathedral is claimed to be the repository of his remains.

As we enter the mouth of the Ozama River, on the west bank of which lies the city, we are in the midst of scenes steeped in historical associations. It was on these shores that Sir John Hawkins, bringing a shipload of Negroes from Sierra Leone, traded his human cargo for gold, spices, sugar, and hides—England's first slave traffic in the West Indies. To the west is the beach upon which Sir Francis Drake, coming here a few years after his memorable voyage around the world, landed his men to make an attack upon the stronghold of the Spaniards. Farther up the river is the very ceiba tree to which, so the Dominicans

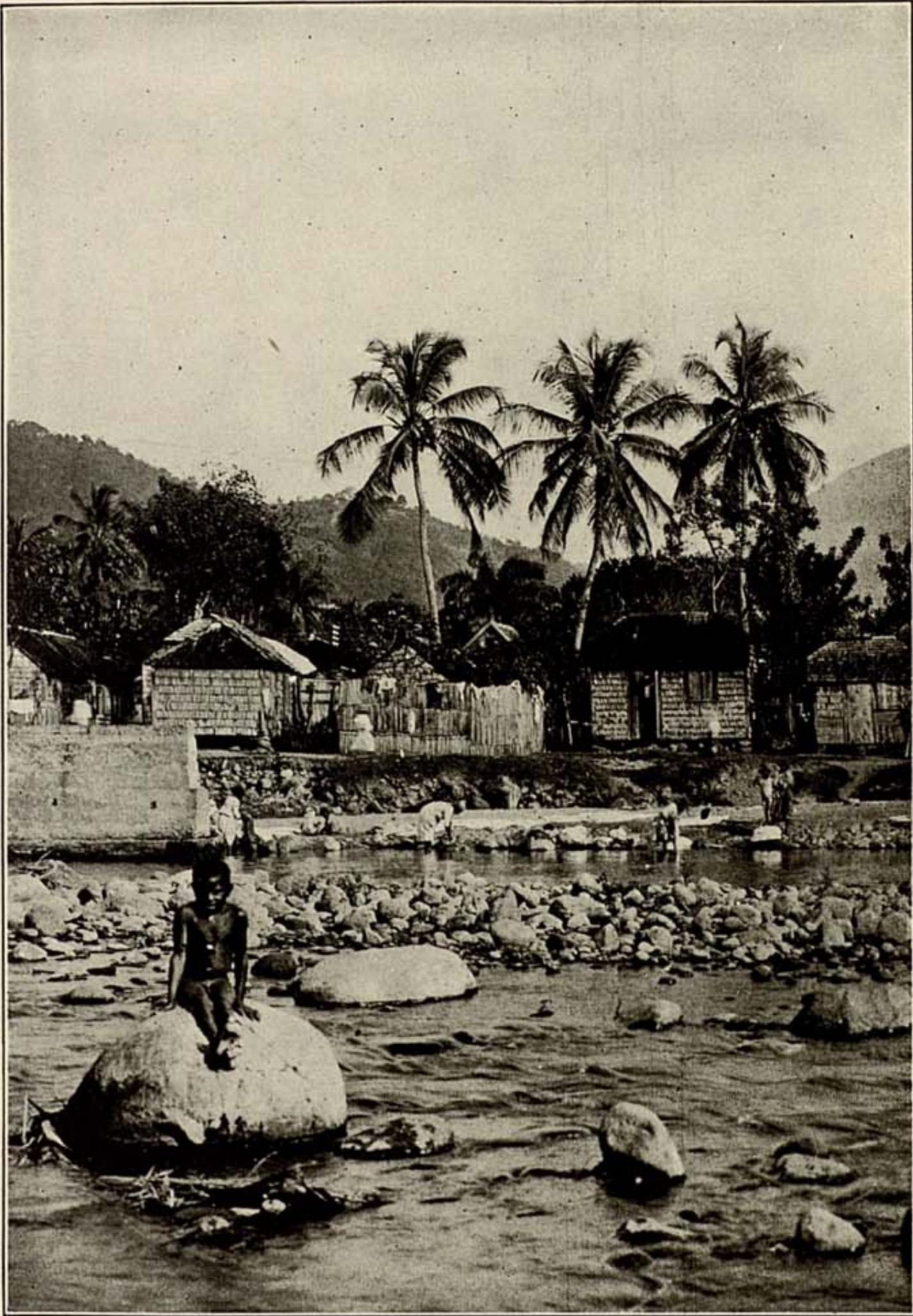
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

claim, Columbus tied his caravels when he first came to this spot.

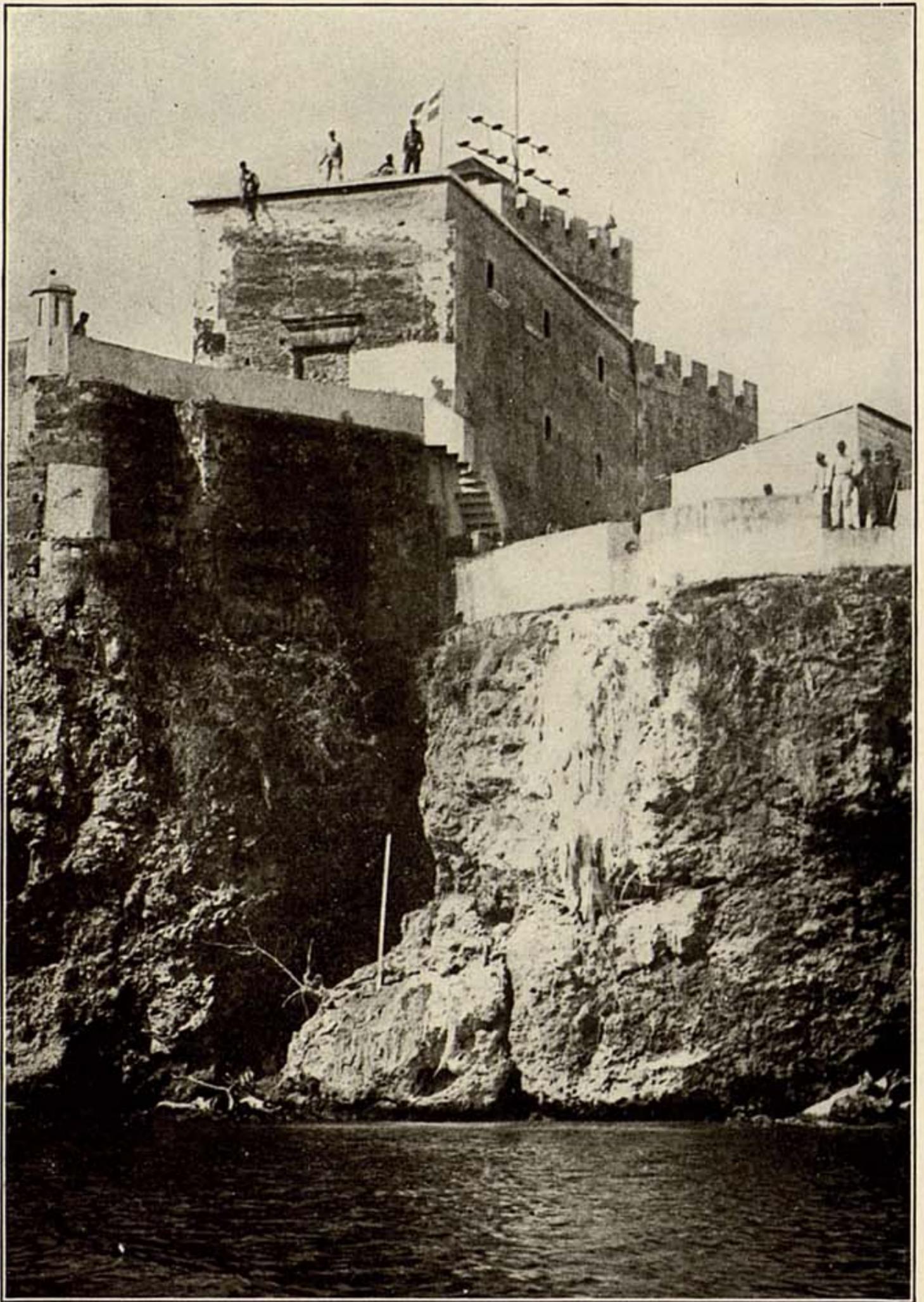
Towering high above the bluff where the Ozama empties into the sea is the citadel built at the command of Columbus's son, Diego. It is the oldest fort to be found in America to-day, antedating the Morros of Havana and Santiago de Cuba by several years. Four centuries ago its frowning walls witnessed the departure from Santo Domingo of such adventurers as Velázquez, Ponce de León, Cortés, and Pizarro, as they set forth to explore and conquer the rest of the West Indies and the mainland of America. The fort is now used as a prison, and one of its cells is pointed out by guides as the place where Columbus was incarcerated. However, as the city at that time was located on the opposite bank of the river, this story can safely be said to have been originated purely for the benefit of credulous tourists.

In front of us is Santo Domingo itself, surrounded by its ancient wall. This wall, although broken through in many places, and in others covered with vegetation, still encloses the city as it did in the past. Above it, silhouetted against the bright blue of the tropical sky, are the time-worn towers of once magnificent buildings. That huge, roofless, windowless ruin we see rising high over the wall is all that remains of the massive Casa de Colón, the residence built by Diego Columbus when he came here as governor of Santo Domingo in 1509. In the days when it was presided over by the Spanish noblewoman whom Diego had married, it was the most handsome building of the city, but it has long since fallen into decay and is now used as a stable for donkeys, goats, and pigs.

Santo Domingo was originally founded on the east bank



The homes of the vast majority of the Haitians are thatched huts with little or no furniture. A corrugated iron roof on a dwelling is looked upon as evidence of the height of affluence.



The citadel that guards the approach to the ancient city of Santo Domingo is the oldest fort in the western hemisphere, having been built by Diego Columbus only a few years after America was discovered.

## THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

of the Ozama, and grew rapidly in size and importance. As time went on the Spaniards associated with Columbus became jealous of him and sent back to Spain reports accusing him of arrogance and injustice. The Spanish sovereigns were already disappointed because the fabulous wealth they had expected from the New World was not yet forthcoming, and were willing enough to send a committee to America to investigate these charges. This was headed by one Bobadilla, who, overstepping his authority, caused the discoverer of America and his brother to be confined in the fort and then sent back to Spain as prisoners. This outrage, however, incensed Ferdinand and Isabella. They ordered Columbus's immediate release, restored to him his property and honours, and sent out another governor to replace Bobadilla.

In June, 1502, Columbus came back to Santo Domingo on his fourth voyage, putting into a near-by cove for shelter during a storm. The hurricane that followed almost completely destroyed the settlement, and soon afterward its inhabitants moved to the opposite shore of the river and began a new city.

The glory of Santo Domingo proved to be short lived. With the discovery of the wealth of Mexico and Peru, the covetous eyes of Spain were turned to the mainland, and the importance of this city rapidly declined. In the years between the middle of the sixteenth century and the end of the eighteenth it played little part in the development of the New World. The chief event of that period in the island's history seems to have been the attack on the city made by Sir Francis Drake, which took place on the last day of the year 1585. That venturesome British navigator had come to the West Indies with twenty-five

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

ships and twenty-three hundred men, the largest fleet that had ever crossed the Atlantic. He landed about half of his men in the dead of night, and next morning, while the Spaniards were preparing for an attack by sea, the British marched upon and captured Santo Domingo from the rear.

Drake held Santo Domingo for four weeks. He looted it of everything of value he could find and then proceeded to burn it because an additional large ransom was not paid. One writer of that day relates that each morning at day-break two hundred men were sent forth to set fire to the buildings of the city, continuing at this work until the heat of the day drove them indoors. However, the stone structures were so hard to destroy that only a third of the city was demolished. Drake eventually tired of his incendiary occupation, accepted the twenty-five thousand ducats that the citizens agreed to pay him, relieved the city of its eighty cannon, and sailed onward to new adventures about the Caribbean, finally returning to England by way of Florida and Virginia.

Seventy years later an unsuccessful attempt to capture Santo Domingo was made by Admiral Penn while he was on his way to attack Jamaica. Not long afterward the city was further damaged by earthquakes and hurricanes, and from that time on its importance continued to diminish. In 1737 Father Valverde wrote that it had only five hundred people and that "more than half of the buildings of the capital were entirely ruined; of those still standing two thirds were uninhabitable or closed, and the other third was more than enough for the population."

Leaving this picture of the rise and fall of the Santo Domingo of the past, let us go ashore and see something

## THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

of the city of to-day. It now has a population of thirty thousand, and in appearance it is a curious mixture of crumbling grandeur and modern ugliness. Its streets are wider than those of old Havana and have been more or less improved. Its buildings, likewise, are mostly of the modern type found throughout much of the West Indies, and as we walk along we see picture theatres, newspaper offices, and well-stocked stores kept largely by Syrians, Spaniards, and Porto Ricans. In the afternoons, when the band plays in the plaza, well-dressed Dominicans mingle with the poorer natives in the crowds on the streets.

Everywhere we turn, however, we are confronted with remains of the Santo Domingo of four hundred years ago. Here the ruins of a massive stone mansion tower above the straw-thatched roofs of a humble native home, and there a great carved doorway, a fine old balcony, or a grilled window hints of ancient splendours. Stores, stables, and lumberyards occupy the remains of stone buildings Moorish in design, and rubbish, reeking garbage, and lines of drying clothes now clutter once-spacious courtyards and patios. Nearly every old building has its legends and half-forgotten tales of secret passages, underground vaults, and buried treasure hidden by the Spaniards during revolutions or enemy attacks.

One of these crumbling walls of Santo Domingo marks the site of the first university founded in this hemisphere. Las Casas, the friend of Columbus and historian of his time, is said to have taught there once. Another ancient ruin is all that remains of San Nicolas, the oldest Christian church in America. It was built early in the sixteenth century by Governor Ovando, probably as a conscience

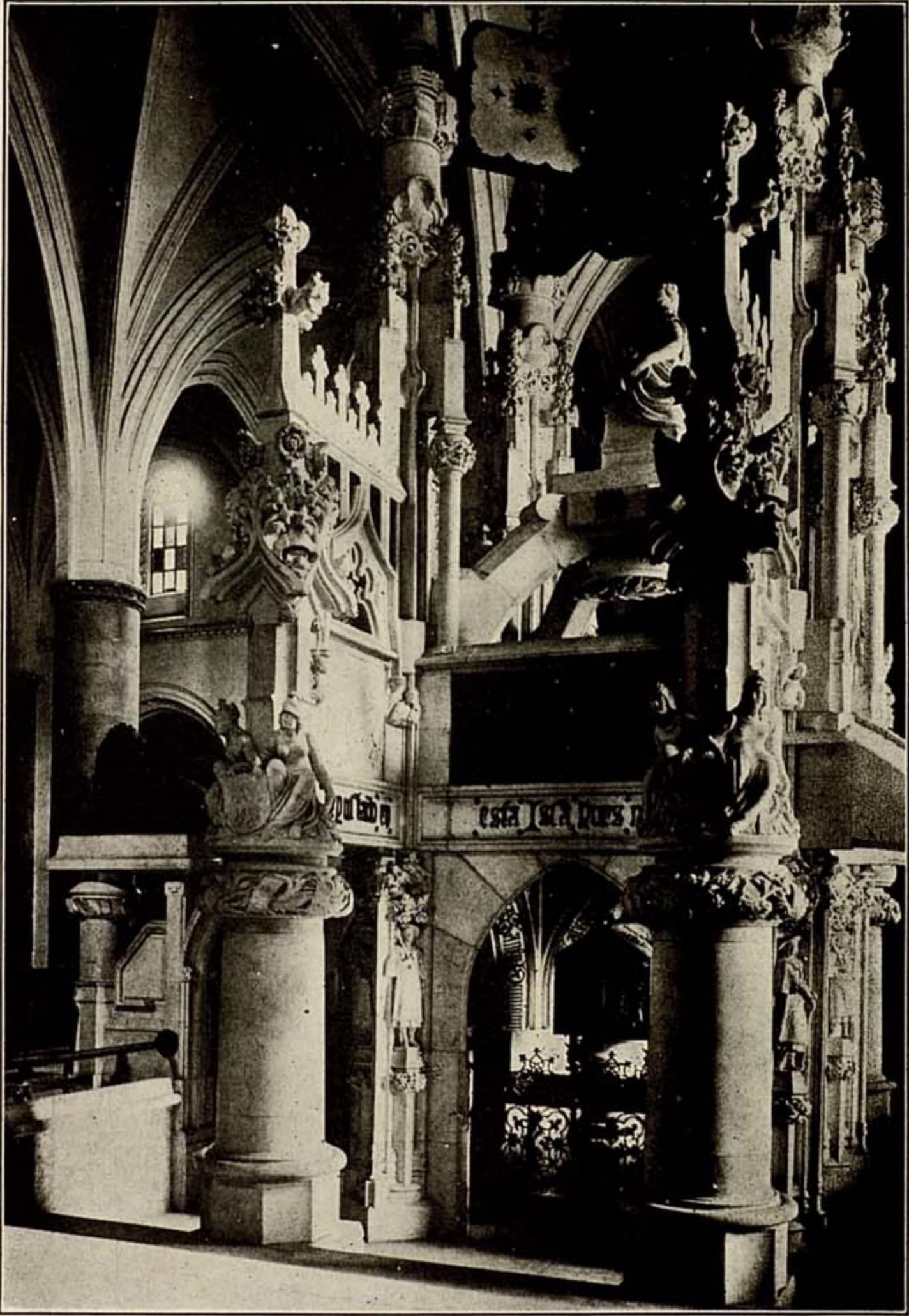
## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

offering because of his massacres of the Indians. Under the oppression of this governor, tens of thousands of natives were killed or driven to suicide. One of his atrocities was to send out a detachment of three hundred men under Diego Velázquez, the future conqueror of Cuba, to massacre the subjects of Queen Anacaona, one of the last two native rulers left on the island. The queen herself was brought to Santo Domingo and executed because, so her captors said, she was not sincere in professing the Catholic religion.

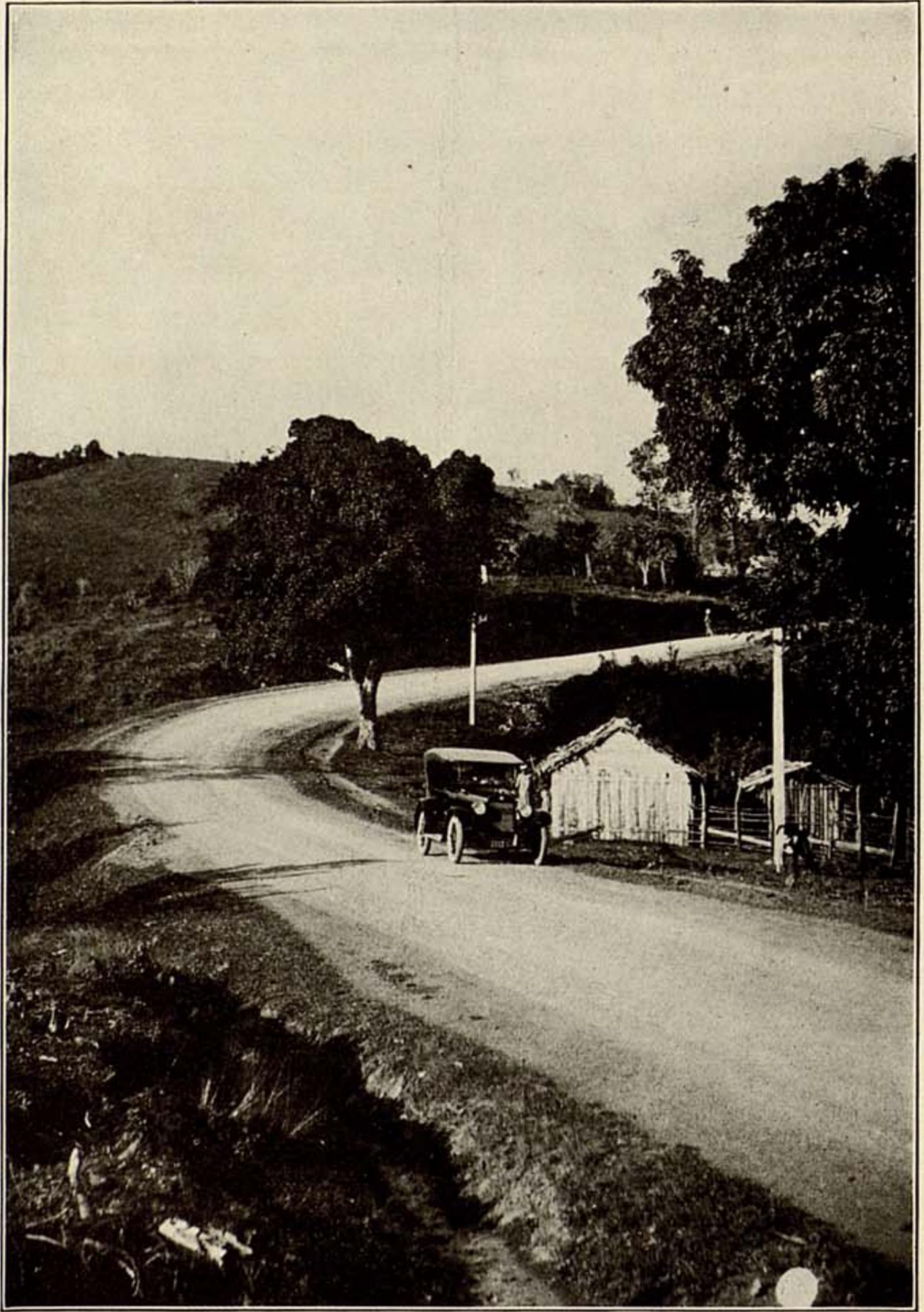
North of the city is the ruin of the monastery of San Francisco, erected by the Franciscan monks about 1504, and said to have been the burial place of Bartholomew Columbus. It was badly damaged by an earthquake in 1824. At one time it was used as a Methodist church by Negro immigrants from the United States, and to-day a part of it has been rebuilt as an asylum for the insane.

The most famous church in Santo Domingo is, of course, the cathedral containing the remains of Columbus. Built between 1512 and 1540, it originally covered an area as large as two city blocks and was once the richest shrine in the New World. It faces the park in which the British soldiers encamped when Drake plundered the city, and in its roof is embedded a cannon ball that some claim is a memento of the visit of that dashing Englishman. It is more likely, however, that it came from the guns of the British forces who tried to take the city from the French in 1809.

The cathedral has withstood the shaking of earthquakes, the bombardments of enemy fleets, and the battering of pirate hordes. To-day it bears the marks of all those



In the cathedral at Santo Domingo City lie what are believed to be the bones of Columbus, possession of which was for a long time claimed by Havana. The casket containing the dust of the discoverer is opened only on rare occasions.



Among the benefits Santo Domingo derived from the American occupation is a modern highway system joining the chief cities of the republic and connecting with the road to Port-au-Prince in Haiti.

## THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

vicissitudes, and makes little claim to architectural beauty. The interior is more attractive. The nave is flanked by lofty columns supporting a groined ceiling, and the altar is faced with plates of silver taken from native mines, with a background of wood richly gilded. On each side are chapels and shrines containing sacred relics. What are believed to be the remains of Columbus are enshrined in a mausoleum of marble and bronze, its entrance guarded by two bronze lions.

The claim that this cathedral contains the bones of Columbus probably will be always in dispute, although most impartial historians entertain no doubt of it. Columbus died, you will remember, in Spain, his body being interred first in Valladolid and then in Seville. In his will he had expressed a desire to be buried in Santo Domingo, and his remains were finally brought to this cathedral in 1540, together with those of his son Diego, who had died in 1526. Unfortunately, if there were any official records of the transfer, they were lost or destroyed, and two centuries later there was only tradition to tell where Columbus was buried.

In 1795, when Spain ceded Santo Domingo to France, it was decided to remove the bones of the great discoverer from under a foreign flag and take them to Havana. At that time, no one thought that the casket moved was other than that of Columbus. The first intimation that a mistake might have been made came eighty-two years later, when workmen making repairs in the Santo Domingo cathedral discovered a leaden casket with the initials of Columbus on the outside. Inside, among the dust and crumbling bones, were an inscription bearing his name, and a bullet, supposedly the one that it was known

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

he had carried in his leg to the time of his death. When the discovery was investigated by members of the Spanish Academy, they still maintained that the remains taken to Havana had been those of Columbus, and not of his son Diego, as claimed by the Dominicans. Nevertheless, the Dominicans were so certain that the casket found here was the right one that they erected for it the magnificent mausoleum in which it now reposes.

To see something of the land Columbus loved so well, we must take a motor car from Santo Domingo City. One cannot go inland by rail, as the only two railroads, aside from the private sugar lines, are on the north coast. In its natural aspects, we find the eastern part of the island much like Haiti, with even higher mountains. One of its peaks, Monte Tina, rises almost two miles above the level of the sea and is the loftiest in all the West Indies. The chief mountain range, densely wooded, runs east and west through the centre of the country, with lower coastal ranges, between which are fertile valleys.

Sugar, the principal crop of the country, is grown mainly in the south, where several large plantations have been established in recent years. Cacao, tobacco, and coffee are produced on a large scale, and together with sugar form the only important exports from the country, although practically all the fruits and vegetables of the other islands of the West Indies are grown here. There are large areas of grazing land that furnish pasture for herds of cattle and goats, and there are known to be extensive mineral deposits, including gold, iron, coal, copper, petroleum, and salt. Probably the first gold the Spaniards obtained in the New World came from here, and in the early years the island yielded many a fortune

## THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

in this metal, washed from the gravel of the mountain streams by Indian slaves under the lash of Spanish taskmasters.

In language and customs, Santo Domingo and Haiti are as dissimilar as Spain and France. The population here is only one fourth as dense as in the western end of the island, but most of the people are landowners, more progressive and prosperous than the Haitians. The country homes are larger and neater than those of Haiti, and the methods of farming more up-to-date. Modern agricultural implements have been introduced on the larger plantations.

The Dominican people themselves are of a type superior to the average in Haiti. Although the majority of the population are of mixed Spanish, African, and Indian blood, there is a small element of pure whites, consisting of descendants of the early colonial families, and of immigrants who have come here more recently. The people like to be considered white, and they bitterly resented the former practice of the United States in sending coloured men here as ministers and consuls. Among the better classes the girls are strictly chaperoned until they marry, although in recent years many of them have begun to work in offices as clerks and stenographers. As in Haiti, there is practically no middle class. The great mass of the people are poor and uneducated, but the voodooism and barbarous practices found in the adjoining republic do not exist here.

The political history of Santo Domingo has been turbulent, but not so bloody as that of Haiti. Between 1844, when it became independent of Spain, and 1914, nineteen constitutions were promulgated and fifty-three

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

presidents were put out of office. In 1904, the government was unable to pay the interest on its foreign loans. In accordance with the provisions of one of these loans, the United States thereupon took over the collection of the customs at the port of Puerto Plata. Three years later a general receivership of all the Dominican customs was provided for in a convention between Santo Domingo and the United States. At the same time our government arranged for a refunding loan, through American bankers, with which to pay off the European obligations of Santo Domingo and give the country a fresh start.

Within eight years after taking charge of the Dominican customs receipts, the United States had reduced the national debt from thirty-two to twenty-one million dollars and had started the republic on the road to financial stability. In spite of this, a faction of the government remained hostile to what they called our interference. As a result, political disturbances followed, to suppress which the Dominicans incurred new debts without Washington's approval. Affairs came to a crisis in 1916, when United States marines were landed to put down an insurrection, and in November of that year we set up here a military government, an officer of the United States Navy assuming the duties of the Dominican president.

That administration lasted eight years, functioning most of the time in the face of much adverse criticism on the part of Americans as well as Dominicans, but nevertheless bringing about a vast improvement in the condition of the country. The military government was replaced on July 12, 1924, by a native president and vice-president, and on the afternoon of the same day the United States flag was lowered from the fort and the withdrawal of the

## THE LAND OF COLUMBUS

American troops begun. The customs receivership, however, still remains in force.

As in Haiti, much of the present industrial and economic development of Santo Domingo took place in the years of the American occupation. During that time the customs revenues increased from seven hundred thousand to almost four million dollars a year, the first census of the country was taken, a property tax was inaugurated, many old land titles were cleared, and import duties were lowered on agricultural and other machinery. Banditry was put down in the isolated regions, and mounted marines of our navy patrolled the railways and trails to safeguard communications.

In 1915 the Dominican Republic did not own a single school building, the few schools it supported being housed in rented quarters. Ninety per cent. of the people were wholly illiterate, and the private schools that existed were without modern educational standards or methods. The children of well-to-do parents were educated in Europe, or, if their complexions were light enough to enable them to pass for whites, in the United States. To-day, the rural schools number ten times as many as there were a decade ago, advanced schools have been established, teachers' salaries have been increased, and the enrollment of children has been increased from eighteen thousand to one hundred thousand pupils.

An improved road system is another thing that Santo Domingo acquired during the American occupation. A modern highway built from Santo Domingo to Santiago de los Caballeros has brought the latter city, the second largest in the republic, within four hours of the capital by automobile. This road ends at the port of Monte

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Cristi, on the north coast, where it joins the Haitian road passing through Cape Haitien to Port au Prince. The motor trip between the capitals of the two republics can be made in less than two and a half days. Another road has been built westward from Santo Domingo, and will eventually reach Port au Prince by a route more than a day shorter. At the same time, improvements have been made in the harbour works of the cities reached by these new roads. The port of Macoris has a modern concrete pier more than six hundred feet long, La Romana has a new wharf, and Santo Domingo itself has had its docks and wharves largely rebuilt.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO

**C**OME with me this morning for a motor ride across Porto Rico, Uncle Sam's garden island of the West Indies. Lying at the eastern end of the Greater Antilles, it is washed on the north by the Atlantic and on the south by the blue waters of the Caribbean. Forty-five miles to the west, across the Mona Passage, is Santo Domingo, whence I have come, and less than that distance to the eastward are the Virgin Islands, which, like Porto Rico, belong to the United States.

Before we begin our trip across the island, let me give you a bird's-eye view of Porto Rico. It is rectangular in shape, and with the exception of a fringe of low land bordering the coast, it is all mountains and narrow V-shaped valleys. The highest mountain range extends through the centre of the island from west to east, branching out near the eastern end in two spurs. This ridge resembles a pitchfork with two great tines and a long handle. The handle of the fork stretches from the western end of the island sixty miles to the eastward, and each of the tines is about forty miles long. Not far from where they join is El Yunque, or the "Anvil," one of the highest points in Porto Rico. It is thirty-six hundred feet above the level of the sea, and can be seen from far out on the ocean. A tract of sixty-five thousand acres

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

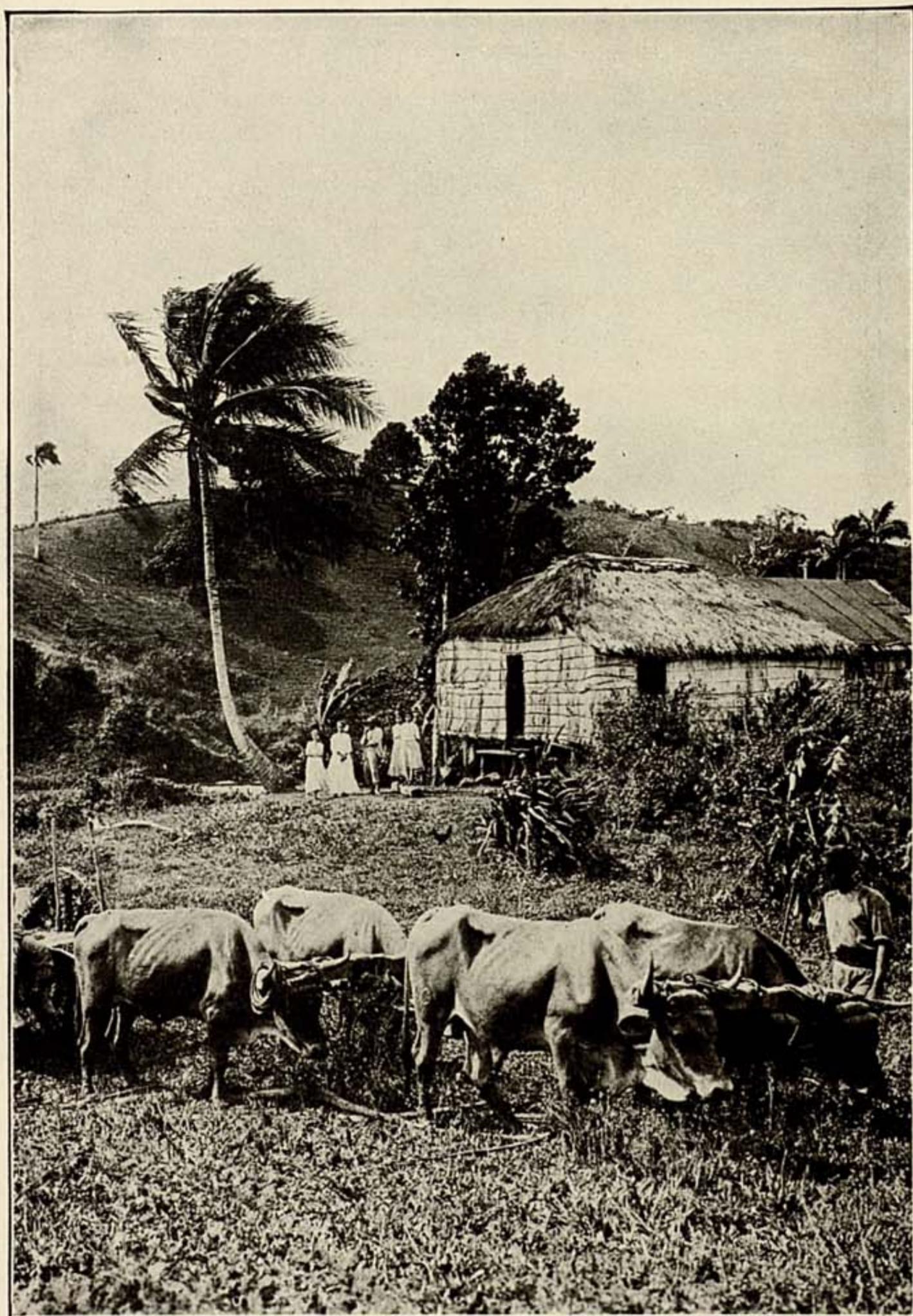
of forest surrounding it has been set aside as a forest reserve and will some day probably be converted into a tropical park.

As to climate, I doubt whether Porto Rico ever gets as hot in summer as do some parts of Ohio and Indiana, and certainly not as hot as Washington often is during July and August. The average temperature here the year round is about eighty degrees, and for twenty years the thermometer has never registered more than ninety-two. It is true that the humidity is high, but it is always offset by the breezes from the Atlantic, which are so full of ozone that they are as stimulating as a cocktail.

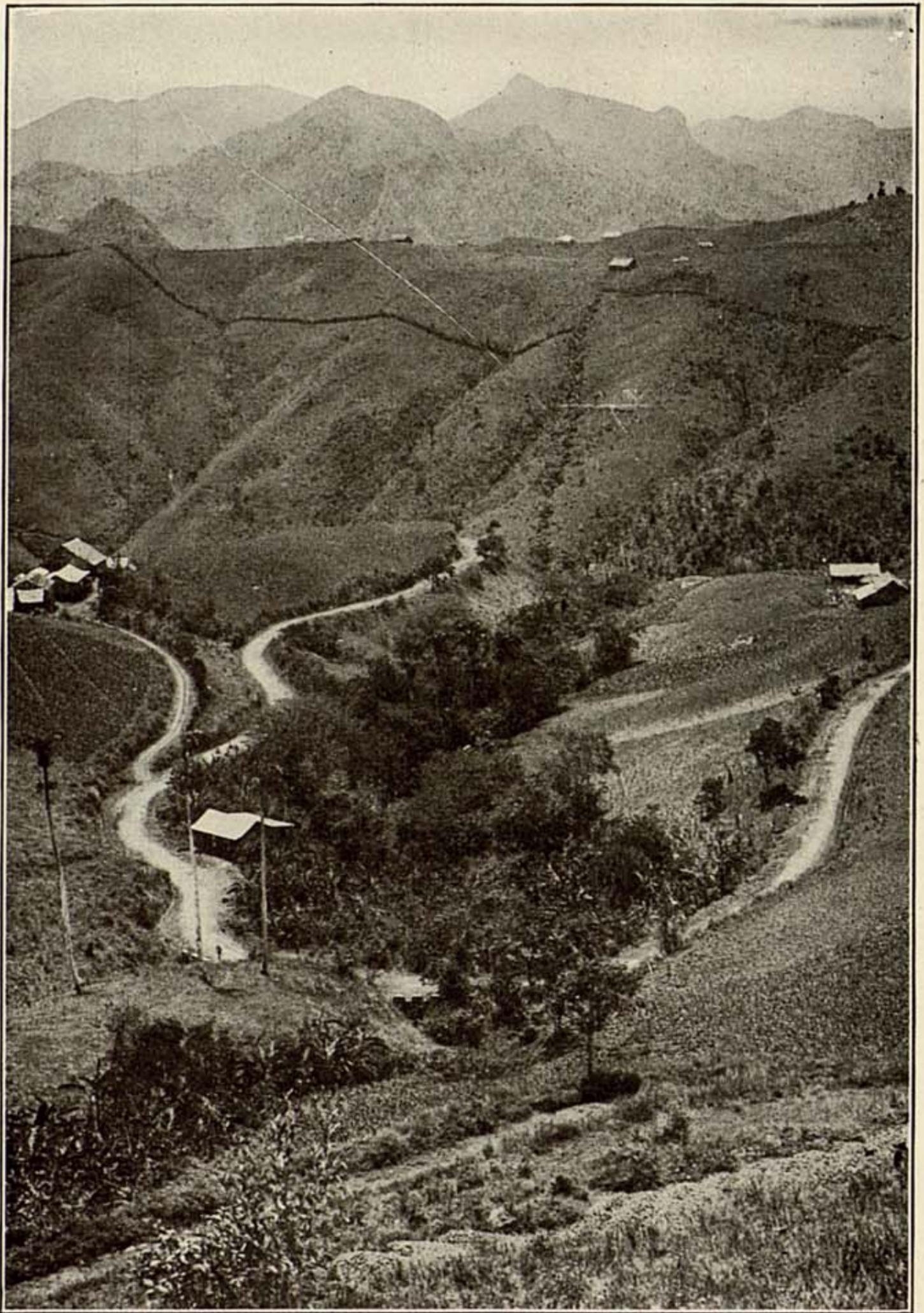
Compared in size to the United States, Porto Rico is little more than a garden patch. It is smaller than our state of Connecticut, and would hardly be a freckle on the broad face of Texas. Its average width is not so great as the distance from Washington to Baltimore, and its length is about that from Baltimore to Philadelphia. There is no place in it more than eighteen miles from the sea, and in a motor car one can travel from coast to coast in a few hours.

Notwithstanding its small area, however, Porto Rico has a more dense population than any other island in the West Indies. It has between thirteen and fourteen hundred thousand people, or almost three hundred to the square mile. In other words, the equivalent of every 160-acre farm is supporting an average of seventy persons. Unlike the population in Haiti and Santo Domingo, the majority of the Porto Ricans are pure white, only one fourth being blacks or mulattoes.

Our journey across Porto Rico begins at Ponce, the chief port on the south coast, and the second largest city on the



More than half the people of Porto Rico belong to the *jibaro* class. They live in little huts scattered through the mountainous interior, earning a livelihood chiefly by working on the large plantations.



The military road across Porto Rico was built by the Spaniards before the Americans took possession. It is still the best of the many fine highways that cover the island like a network.

## BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO

island. The route we shall follow is over the famous military road built by the Spaniards. It is eighty-four miles long, winding its way across the mountains from here to San Juan, the capital, on the north coast. It is as smooth and well made as any highway in the United States, notwithstanding its having been cut right out of the mountainsides.

The military highway, including its branches, was practically the only good road in Porto Rico when it passed into our possession. To-day the island has almost eight hundred miles of first-class roads, including a route between Ponce and San Juan that goes around the western end of the island instead of crossing the mountains. The country is divided into twelve road districts, each in charge of an overseer and a force of foremen and road menders. Every mender has under his immediate supervision a little more than one mile of road, which he is required to keep constantly in good repair. A certain part of his time must be spent also in setting out trees along the roadsides and in pruning the ones already planted.

The highway system of Porto Rico is much superior to the railway system, which consists of only one line reaching four fifths of the distance about the island. Beginning at Guayama, near the eastern end of the south coast, it extends west through Ponce, north along the west coast, and thence east to beyond San Juan. It is planned some day to encircle the island completely.

Leaving Ponce in our automobiles, we make our way through the low coastlands, passing vast sugar plantations. The black earth is covered with a rich growth of pale green cane, above which the black smokestacks of the sugar mills stand out against the sky. Many

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

of them are old mills that have been abandoned since the establishment of the large modern *centrales* in which most of the cane is now ground. In Porto Rico, as in Cuba, sugar is the chief product. One tenth of the total area is devoted to its cultivation, the plantations forming a green necklace all around the island. The annual output of nearly a half million tons forms more than fifty per cent. of all Porto Rico's exports, and to-day brings in between forty and fifty million dollars a year as compared with five million dollars when the Americans first came here. Most of the plantations are in large holdings. Some support *centrales* that grind thousands of tons of cane a day, employ armies of workers, and own great numbers of oxen for hauling the cane to their private railway lines.

Now we are in the foothills. How dry the mountains look in the distance! They make us think of the Alleghanies in August, and as we rise higher we search in vain for the rich tropical luxuriance we expected to see. The fact is that parts of the southern slope of Porto Rico, though naturally fertile, are decidedly arid because the water-laden winds from the Atlantic lose their moisture in passing over the highest mountains. Much of this area was irrigated by the Spaniards, the remains of whose irrigation works are still to be seen. The present government is engaged in reclaiming this land, and has constructed dams to hold back the rivers and insure a steady water supply. The water thus harnessed serves two purposes, first generating electricity for lighting the near-by towns, and then flowing into the irrigation canals of the plantations.

Twenty miles from Ponce we reach the town of Coamo, once noted as the Monte Carlo of Porto Rico. During

## BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO

the Spanish régime it was filled with gamblers courting Dame Fortune at roulette and other games, as well as with health seekers attracted here by the medicinal hot springs. To-day the gambling concessions have disappeared, but the place is still a popular health resort. Its hotel is one of the few modern ones in Porto Rico, being under the same management as the new Condado-Vanderbilt in San Juan.

Beyond Coamo the real ascent of the mountains begins. We climb steadily until we reach Aibonito, a little city in the pass through the range that divides the island. We are now at an altitude more than a half mile above sea level, and are in one of the most picturesque regions about the Caribbean. On all sides, as far as we can see, are billowy mountains, darkened here and there by the shadows of the clouds. Below us is the military road winding its snake-like way toward the coast in great loops and curves. Just above were the Spanish earthworks that overlooked the road when American troops invaded the island in 1898. We can climb up and stand on the very spot where their cannon thundered a warning to our soldiers. So well was the highway commanded by the Spanish fortifications that it is doubtful whether our forces could have gone much farther had not their march been stopped by the peace between the two countries.

Another little city near the mountain divide is Cayey, in the centre of the tobacco lands of Porto Rico. The dark green plants cover the mountains nearly to their summits, many of the fields being so steep that the workers almost have to lean backward to hoe the crop. Much of the tobacco is grown under cover, and the country is splotched with what, in the distance, look for all the

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

world like huge circus tents pitched on the hillsides, or, when seen from above, like mountain lakes.

At the time of my first visit to Porto Rico, shortly after the Spanish-American War, I saw tobacco drying in open sheds made of poles roofed with thatch. It was badly cured, and was so cheap that I could buy a cigar for a cent. The chewing tobacco used by the natives was sold by the yard. It was cured with rum and molasses and twisted into ropes about one hundred feet long and as thick as my finger. A half cent's worth would equal the amount contained in the ordinary pocket plug sold in the United States.

Since then new methods of cultivating and curing the crop have been introduced, and tobacco to-day ranks next to sugar as a money crop of this island. The leaf raised in one district near here is almost as fine as that from the Vuelta Abajo, in Cuba. Some of it is shipped to Havana to be made into cigars, and some is manufactured in Porto Rico. The town of Caguas, not far from here, has three large cigar factories.

The scenery between Cayey and Caguas, on the north slope of the mountains, is a panorama of ever-changing beauty. Sometimes it reminds me of Japan, and sometimes of the mountains of Korea or the hills of China. There are wooded regions that equal the Blue Ridge Mountains in their soft, hazy beauty, and others where the hills are covered with grass, on which fat cattle are feeding. Now we go past fields fenced with barbed wire, not unlike the rolling farm country of Pennsylvania, and now past tracts of land surrounded by hedges of wild pineapples so prickly that the stock will not go through them.



Of furniture the average Porto Rican country home has little, and of modern conveniences none. The nearest stream serves as a laundry, with the stones doing duty as washboards.



The increased production of grapefruit is one of the factors that has helped to make the total exports of Porto Rico worth fifteen times as much as they were when the United States took over the island.

## BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO

Again we are in the midst of thick, semi-tropical vegetation, where some of the trees are festooned with Spanish moss, and others are covered with great masses of bright red, yellow, or purple blossoms. Here we see cotton trees, bearing big balls of white fleece, and ferns, some of which grow to a height of between twenty and thirty feet.

Notice those fields of banana plants over there. They have leaves of soft green a foot wide and as long as a man. What a lot of palms there are, and how many varieties! The most conspicuous trees on every landscape are the royal palms, looming like tall spires against the hills. Along the coast the coconut palms are especially numerous, and are bringing in a considerable share of Porto Rico's annual revenue. They begin to bear at five years of age, after which they will yield their owner an average of a dollar per tree, and that without cultivation. Oranges, pineapples, and grapefruit also are exported in large quantities, the grapefruit industry in particular having increased enormously in recent years. Cotton is now an important crop, and cacao is being raised in considerable amounts.

The whole north slope of Porto Rico is wonderfully fertile, but much of it is so ragged and hilly that if it were in the United States we should not think it could be cultivated. Here, however, the moisture gives the soil such a thick growth of earth binders that it does not wash away. Practically the whole island is susceptible of cultivation, and farming will continue to increase as fast as roads are built to carry the products to market.

One of the chief crops of Porto Rico is coffee. During the Spanish régime it was the principal product of the island. Then, in 1899, came the great hurricane that

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

destroyed so many of the plantations. Since then the industry has never recovered its former place, and in the lowlands more and more sugar plantations are being set out on the former coffee lands. Nevertheless, the Porto Rican coffee is as good as any I have ever tasted, and brings a high price in Europe.

As we go on down the mountains we pass through many little cities and towns. All are built on much the same pattern, each surrounding a central plaza on which face the church and the principal buildings. The homes of the more prosperous are built of stucco or wood, and those of the poorer classes of palm boards and leaves. Out in the country, the average dwelling is made of a framework of poles tied together. Over this palm leaves are laid, and other poles about as thick as broomsticks are tied horizontally across the walls to hold the leaves together. The floor is on stilts, to afford a shelter beneath it for the pigs and the chickens. Usually the hogs are tethered to stakes by ropes tied about their necks. In some places even the chickens are tied.

As we go by, we can look into these primitive homes, for the doors are wide open. The houses contain almost no furniture. In some, the people sleep on the floor, in others the owners have a few hammocks, a bed, or a number of cots, made in the fashion of saw bucks, with canvas stretched over them, so that they can be folded up and set aside during the day. The cooking is done in a little lean-to at the back, the stove rarely being more than an iron pot set up on a few stones over burning charcoal.

The nearest river or creek serves as a laundry. Many times we cross bridges over mountain streams in which scores of washerwomen, barefooted and barelegged, are

## BY MOTOR ACROSS PORTO RICO

sitting in the water and pounding the dirt from the family clothing. Others have spread the washed garments out on the grass and are sprinkling them from time to time so that the hot sun will bleach them.

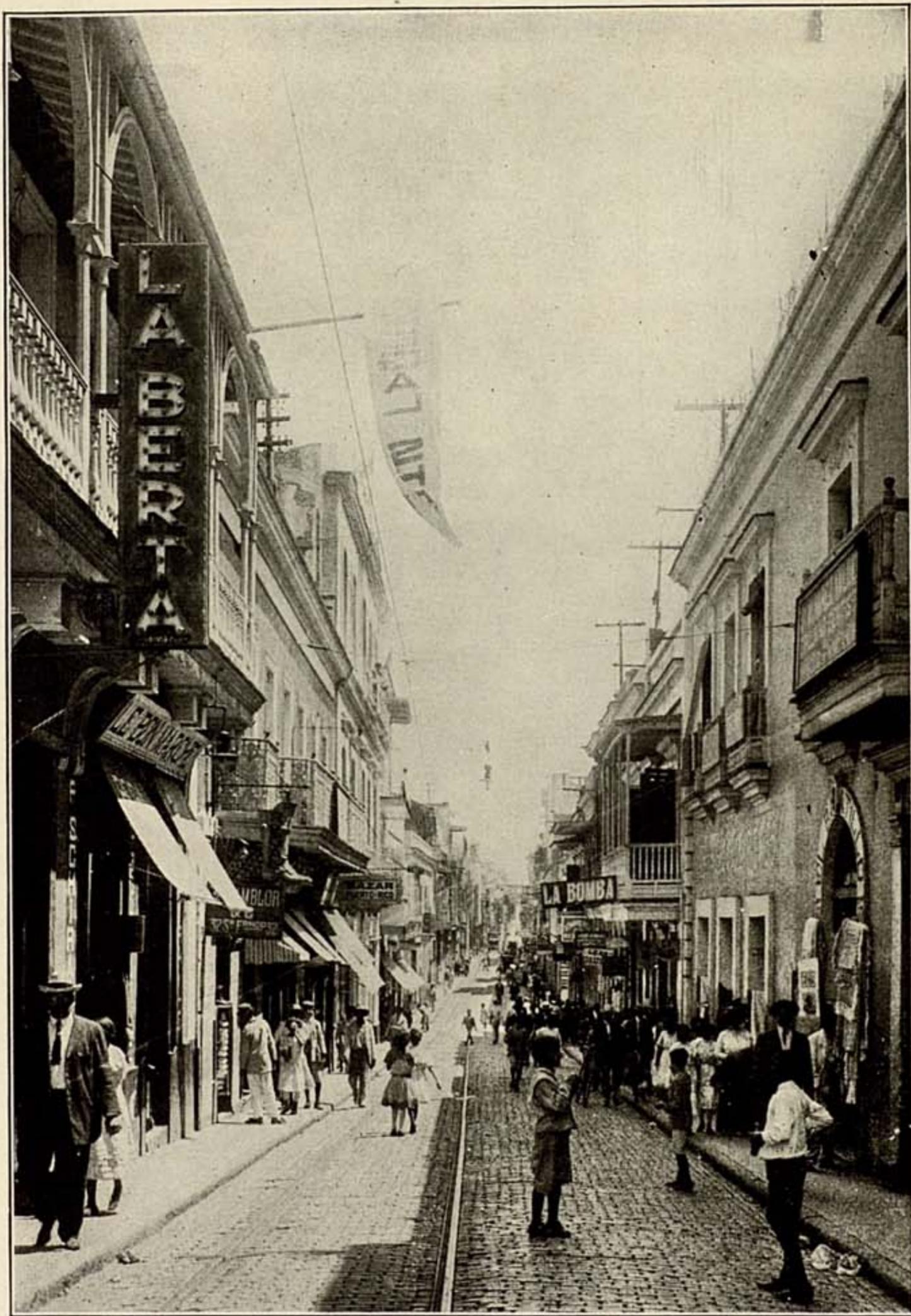
The farm workers of Porto Rico are known as *jibaros*, and number about sixty per cent. of the population. Although they are often dark skinned, they are usually of pure white descent. Occasionally a trace of Indian ancestry may be seen in their prominent cheekbones. They are naturally intelligent and quiet, and are, on the whole, good citizens and excellent workers. Both men and women dress in cottons, and all go barefooted. Some of the women we see have naked babies in their arms, and older children, equally innocent of clothing, play about in front of the huts. They are bright-eyed little things, but many of them look lean and undernourished, except at the waist, where their abdomens protrude to an enormous extent. The great majority of the children have what are known as "banana bellies," caused by their eating a great deal of this fruit from babyhood on.

The staple diet of the *jibaros* consists of bananas and sweet potatoes, varied by rice, beans, and salted codfish when the family finances permit. The codfish is stewed with the rice and beans, and so much is consumed throughout the island that the annual imports of this one commodity often amount to two million dollars' worth. Few *jibaros* are able to own a cow, and if the children have milk to drink, it is from goats. These animals are found all over Porto Rico, even in crowded city streets, where they wander about among pedestrians and motor cars.

As we near San Juan, the traffic on the military road

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

increases mile by mile. Automobiles, trucks, and busses dash along in both directions. Motor vehicles now furnish most of the passenger and freight transportation in the island, and this road over which we are riding is one of the main travelled routes. However, the traffic is by no means entirely made up of motor cars. There are natives on foot, slow-moving ox-carts, horse-drawn carriages, and pack ponies carrying merchandise in panniers slung over their backs. Many of them are ridden by charcoal vendors, who are bringing this fuel down from their kilns in the hills. Farther on we pass a man leading a mule laden with two huge baskets of oranges. We stop and ask the price. He tells us the fruit is exceptionally fine and that he cannot possibly sell it at less than four cents a dozen. We buy some, and, as we go on, eat it in native Porto Rican style. This means removing the peel, cutting a piece from the top, and then sucking out the juice. Oranges are much liked by these people, and at the railway stations and street corners are often sold already peeled. -



Except for the hours when everyone takes his midday siesta, the stores of San Juan do a thriving business. All the better-class shops carry American goods and employ English-speaking clerks.



Aside from their tropical surroundings, the suburban homes of San Juan might be those of any city in the United States, so radically have they departed from the type of Spanish architecture predominating in the old city.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### IN SAN JUAN

**I** ENTERED San Juan by way of one of the bridges that lead from the mainland of Porto Rico to the little island off the north coast on which the capital city lies. San Juan has the finest harbour and the only fortified one in Porto Rico. The oldest section of the city itself is enclosed by a great wall, in some places nearly a hundred feet high. At the northwest corner, rising above the sheer cliff on the Atlantic side, is Morro Castle, completed in 1584; and to the east is the fort of San Cristóbal, deep down under which are the dungeons and torture chambers of the Spanish. El Morro's three tiers of batteries facing the sea and commanding the entrance to the harbour used to constitute one of the strongest fortifications in Spanish America. To-day they are obsolete, and in place of the Spanish troops once quartered there, a portion of the Porto Rican regiment of the United States Army now occupies the fort.

I first visited San Juan just after Porto Rico had been taken over by the United States, when conditions in the city were much the same as those our health inspectors had found in Havana. The streets were rough and full of rubbish, and of sanitary regulations there were none. There were fifteen hundred cesspools in the city, most of them adjoining cisterns and wells. Many had not been cleaned for years, the majority were without cemented

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

bottoms, and all were more or less leaky. It was, indeed, a wonder the whole population was not afflicted with typhoid fever.

All this has since been changed by the sanitary measures inaugurated by the Americans. The city to-day has modern sewerage and water systems, and the paved main streets are clean and well kept. The chief government and business buildings are about the Plaza Principal, one of the three large central squares in the city. The best and most modern appearing shops carry American goods, and their clerks speak English. They appear to be busy all day long, except between the hours of twelve and two, when most of the inhabitants of San Juan take their mid-day siesta. On the less important streets, the retail establishments are the cave-like stores so common in Latin-American cities. They seem exceedingly small, but are always filled with buyers and sellers.

The shop signs as a rule do not carry the names of the owners, and give no indication of the type of merchandise for sale. A notion store is named "La Perla," or "The Pearl." Opposite it is a dry-goods establishment, over which I see the words "El Gallo de Oro," meaning "The Golden Cock," and farther down the street is a hardware store labelled "The Flower of July." A place known as "La Niña," or "The Maiden," sells men's shirts and hats, and a barber shop is called "The Daughter of Borinquen."

Some of the business of San Juan is still done by street vendors, who cry their wares all day long. Here comes a man peddling chickens, shouting at the top of his voice and holding out one of the three dozen squawking fowls he has tied together by their legs and slung over his shoulders. But see those queer bundles he has under his

## IN SAN JUAN

arm. Out of them stick what look like feather dusters, but which are really the tails of live turkeys. The legs and wings of each turkey are bound around with strings, and the fowl then wrapped up in thick palm bark. In this way the peddler can carry three or four of them without interfering with the chickens thrown over his shoulders. Asking as to prices, we find that turkeys are exceedingly cheap and the price of chickens high.

As we talk to this peddler, another man comes up with a round bushel basket slung upon his back. It is filled with eggs packed in dried leaves. Other vendors are selling candy, ice cream, and fruit, especially oranges peeled in the Porto Rican style. Some of them carry their wares on their shoulders, and others push hand carts, weaving their way in and out among the carriages, bicycles, motor cars, and busses. These busses, by the way, are often decorated with religious mottoes, and it is not unusual to see one tearing along a road at top speed with "In God We Trust" painted in huge letters on each side. They make a great noise, for every Porto Rican motor-car driver seems to delight in blowing his horn as often as he can.

Walking along the streets, we meet well-dressed men, women, and school children, labourers in cotton garments, and now and then a Negro or mulatto. There are many beggars, although they are by no means so numerous as they were during the Spanish régime. Saturday is known as beggars' day here in the capital, and at that time the merchants lay in a stock of pennies to distribute to all who ask for alms.

Except for some of the newest business structures, most of the buildings of San Juan are of one or two stories, with

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

overhanging balconies jutting out above the sidewalks. The homes of the wealthy are of Moorish-Spanish architecture, with flat roofs, grilled windows, massive doors, and open patios. On many streets the upper floors are occupied by the rich and the ground floor by the poor. In the most congested district, inside the city walls, thousands live in quarters more like catacombs than the homes of human beings. The rooms here are from ten to twelve feet square, many of them without any light except from the door, and with no ventilation at night except through holes cut in the walls just under the ceiling. In such rooms live families of six, ten, fifteen, and sometimes twenty, sleeping on the floor or upon cots that are taken outside during the day. Most of the rooms are so small that the people do their cooking and washing out in common courts.

The cooking is done over little iron bowls filled with charcoal, each with a hole in the bottom to provide a draught. Such a bowl is only about as large as a good-sized wash basin, and is so small that but one thing can be cooked on it at a time. In some of the courts we see a dozen women preparing their meals while naked babies play about underfoot.

In recent years an effort has been made to relieve the congested conditions in the slum quarters of San Juan by erecting a village of workingmen's homes in one of the suburbs. About a thousand small dwellings of wood or concrete have been built there and let out to dependable tenants for a small monthly rental, the house becoming the property of the occupant after a certain number of payments have been made. Each home has enough ground for a small garden, and for the children to play in the open.

## IN SAN JUAN

But do not think that all the residents of San Juan are poor. This city is prosperous, and there are thousands of well-to-do people who live in beautiful homes here or in the suburbs. The most imposing structure in the city is the residence of the American governor, who occupies the palace of the former Spanish captains-general, overlooking the harbour and Morro Castle. From its windows one can see another old Spanish building, now taken over by the government. This is the Casa Blanca, or "White House," which was built by Juan Ponce de León two and a half centuries before our White House at Washington was begun.

During my stay in San Juan I have attended a reception at the governor's palace, and have also been present at a dance given at the largest theatre in the city, which was converted into a ballroom for the occasion. At both places I was impressed by the beauty of the Porto Rican girls. They are pure Spanish in type, and whether garbed in the picturesque Spanish shawl and comb, or in the latest styles from Paris, they are as modish and smart looking as any of our *débutantes* at home. Many of them have been educated in Europe or the United States, and others belong to old families that own huge estates here but spend most of each year in Spain.

Formerly a girl of this class was rarely seen in public, and never alone with a young man. Since the coming of the Americans, these conventions have been largely discarded, and the fair Porto Ricans now enjoy much the same freedom as their sisters in the States. I see them motoring about the city and the suburbs, attending the horse races and carnivals, and, in short, patronizing sports of all kinds. The Porto Ricans are fond of gambling and

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

betting, and it was a blow to many of them when Uncle Sam prohibited bull and cock fighting and many of the popular games of chance.

When I first visited this island I was surprised to see so many men and boys flying kites. The strings of the kites had been soaked with glue and dusted with powdered glass, and each flyer tried to cut the string of his opponent's kite by making his own rub against it. When one of the glass-dusted strings touched an ordinary cord, it sawed through it like a knife, and the kite thus loosened sailed away or dropped to the ground. It seemed odd to me that the people should be so excited by these kite fights, until I learned that every man and boy had a bet on some kite, and that varying sums, from pennies to dollars, changed hands each time the kite strings were cut.

Now let me tell you something of the history of San Juan. It was founded by Ponce de León only a decade after the first settlement of Santo Domingo, and several years before Havana and Santiago de Cuba came into existence. Porto Rico had previously been discovered by Columbus, who stopped here in 1493 to replenish his water supply while on his way back to the colony he had founded in Santo Domingo on a previous trip. In 1508, Ponce de León, then governor of eastern Santo Domingo, came to Porto Rico and established a settlement at Caparra on the north coast. Two years later he abandoned that location in favour of the present site of San Juan, which he called San Juan de Bautista de Puerto Rico. Eventually the city came to be known as merely San Juan and the island as Puerto Rico, or, as it is now commonly written, Porto Rico.

It was from this port that Ponce de León sailed in 1512

## IN SAN JUAN

to seek the legendary island containing the Fountain of Youth, a quest he continued intermittently until his death in Havana in 1521. From there his remains were brought back to Porto Rico, to find a final resting place in the city he had founded.

In the meantime, the Spaniards had begun to cultivate the island and to enslave the natives. Having been made to believe that the whites were immortal, the Indians for a long time were afraid to rebel against their lot or to harm any of their persecutors. Finally, two of them, driven to desperation by their cruel treatment, decided to discover the truth for themselves, and one day, while carrying a Spaniard across a stream, they dropped him into the water and held him beneath the surface several hours. Then they laid his body on the bank and sat beside it for two days, watching for a sign of life. When at last convinced that their conquerors, like themselves, were mortal beings, the aborigines spread the news among their tribesmen, who uprose in the rebellion that eventually led to their complete extermination.

The only remains of the Indians in Porto Rico to-day are the native stone implements occasionally found in a grave or in a long-forgotten cave. There are such caves in all parts of the island, many of which are worth a trip of exploration. On the north coast, about seven miles southeast of Arecibo, is an almost perpendicular rock more than three hundred feet high, in the side of which is a grotto containing a number of chambers and arched passageways. It has stalactites said to be comparable with those of the famous caverns of Luray in Virginia.

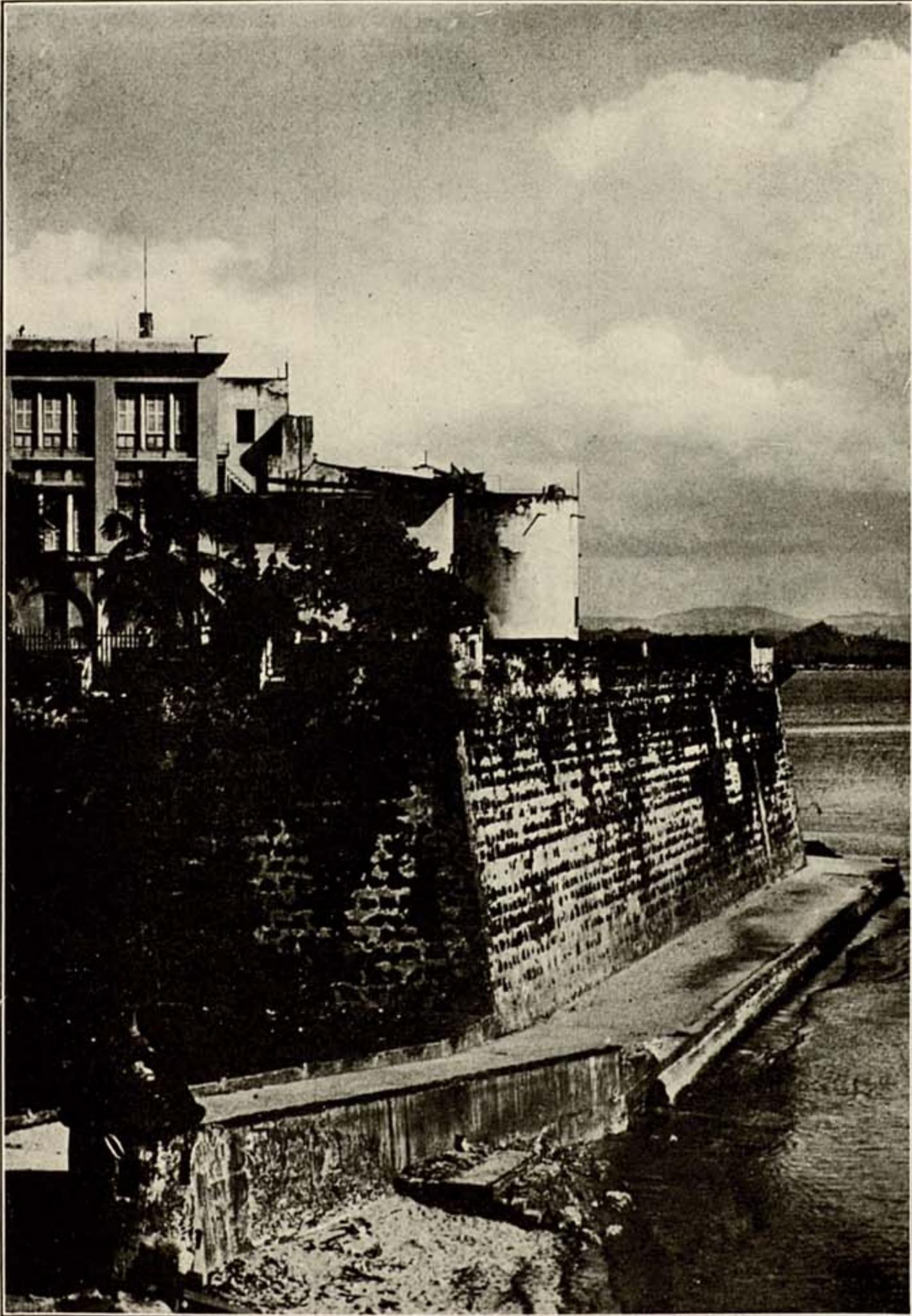
Another remarkable cave, not far from the centre of the island, is entered by a narrow passage about three hun-

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

dred feet long and fifteen feet high, which opens into a series of large chambers alive with bats. Exploring it is a risky undertaking, as the floor is filled with holes seemingly bottomless. The caverns at this place extend on and on for a long distance, one opening into another. They form, in fact, a natural catacomb, only a part of which has been explored. Enough is known, however, to be sure that they are one of the greatest natural wonders of the island.

Like every other port in the West Indies and along the Spanish Main, San Juan was harassed during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries by the attacks of pirates and buccaneers. Both Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake honoured it with a visit, and later came back together for a joint attempt to capture the city. That voyage proved to be the last that either of those famous British navigators made to the Caribbean. Hawkins died at sea off the eastern end of Porto Rico, thus being spared the final humiliation of sharing in his partner's unsuccessful attack on San Juan. Defeated and discouraged, Drake then sailed for Panama, and met his death off old Porto Bello, the scene of one of the earlier triumphs of his privateering career.

At the end of the eighteenth century, another British squadron attempted to capture San Juan, but it, too, was unsuccessful. Thereafter the city existed in comparative peace until it was bombarded by Admiral Sampson a century later. That was while our battleships were looking for Cervera's fleet, before the Spanish admiral had been located in the harbour of Santiago. Shortly afterward, General Nelson A. Miles, with four thousand American troops, landed at Ponce and started to march over the



The American governor of Porto Rico lives in the palace of the former Spanish captains-general, a huge structure towering above the city wall and overlooking the harbour and fortifications.



During the twenty-five years the island has been under United States rule, more than two thousand public schools have been established throughout Porto Rico, and the percentage of illiteracy has been reduced by a half.

## IN SAN JUAN

military road to San Juan. Before any real fighting had occurred, the peace protocol was signed by the United States and Spain, and the same year Porto Rico passed into the possession of the United States.

During the first two decades of our ownership of this island, Porto Rico remained little more than a name to most people in the United States. Now it is becoming known to us principally because of its attractions as a winter resort. This is not surprising when you realize that San Juan is only fourteen hundred miles from New York, and that the frequent and quick steamship services bring the sunshine and scenery of this beautiful island within four days of the snow and sleet of our north Atlantic coast. Another attraction for tourists is the use of the English language and United States currency in Porto Rico. Also, San Juan has now a new hotel, as modern as the best in Havana, and beautifully located in one of the suburbs.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO

ONE of the most striking achievements of American rule in this island is the way Uncle Sam has linked up the dynamo of modern education with the school system of Porto Rico. When I first came here in 1899, just after we took over the island, not one in forty of the then seven hundred thousand population could read or write. Nominally, there were five hundred schools supported by the Spanish government but in reality there was only one public-school building, practically all the classes being held in private houses. The teachers received salaries that were pitifully small, and attendance was irregular. I remember that when a United States inspector visited one of the principal schools of the city at the beginning of our régime, he found that the teacher and all the pupils had declared a holiday and gone off to a cockfight. Nowhere were girls and boys allowed to attend the same schools, and if a town could not afford a separate establishment for each sex, the girls went without any schooling.

Such were the conditions Uncle Sam found something more than a quarter century ago. Now let me tell you of the situation to-day. I have just come from a long talk with the Commissioner of Education, a native of Porto Rico who is at the head of the school system of this island. Some of the things he told me no doubt will be a

## AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO

surprise to those at home who still look upon Porto Rico as a semi-barbarous country.

A good school system is now considered so vital to the progress and development of the Porto Rican people that the annual appropriation for educational purposes alone amounts to almost half of the total expenditures of the government. There are in the island to-day nearly twenty-five hundred schools, including more than two thousand with six or eight grades, about thirty which have ninth-grade work, sixteen accredited high schools offering four-year courses, and an up-to-date university. Five thousand teachers are employed, and a quarter of a million students are receiving regular instruction, including many who are sent to United States universities on scholarships. The percentage of illiteracy thus far has been reduced one half, and is steadily decreasing.

The least progress, of course, has been made in the remote mountain regions, where the homes of the people are widely scattered and there are few good roads. In the cities, one half of the boys and girls of school age are going to school, but in the country the proportion is only one fourth. Nevertheless, the accomplishments of the last twenty-five years have been so great that it will be but a comparatively short time before the school standards of Porto Rico will be comparable with those of our States. That the people are intelligent and anxious to learn is shown by the progress made by the children, and by the thousands of adults who attend night schools. Classes are maintained even in the prisons to teach the inmates to read and write.

It is a striking fact that Porto Rico is almost the only land of the Caribbean where the best and most modern

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

buildings are schools and hospitals rather than palaces and national theatres. Here in San Juan there are a fine new high school, many elementary and night schools, and an art school. They are built of reinforced concrete, according to the latest standards of comfort and efficiency. In the other cities and towns of the island I have seen the same handsome type of structure, and many of them in the country districts as well. There the large consolidated schools, built to accommodate the pupils from a wide area, are steadily replacing the old one-room buildings, some of which were so primitive that they could be distinguished from the thatched *jíbaro* huts only by the American flag waving above them.

The Stars and Stripes fly over every Porto Rican schoolhouse, and each morning there is a ceremony of raising the flag. As it goes up the children recite the salute that begins: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands." The children seem proud of the fact that they are a part of our nation.

The pupils are anxious also to learn to speak English. Spanish is still the language of the people in their homes, and hardly any of the children know a word of English when they enter the first grade. The progress made in Porto Rican education is all the more remarkable, therefore, when you consider the inevitable disadvantages that have had to be overcome owing to this fact. It is just as if all our children at home were obliged to go to schools where Spanish was the spoken language.

There is a great demand in the stores and offices for English-speaking clerks, and many grown-up men and women who know only Spanish are trying to obtain at

## AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO

least a smattering of English. Books have been published that claim to teach our language in thirty lessons, but after looking through one of them I must admit grave doubts as to their value. Here is a sample exercise copied word for word, except that I have omitted the Spanish equivalent printed with each sentence:

ENGLISH	PRONUNCIATION
What is your name?	Uat iz iua neim?
How old are you?	Iou ould aa iu?
What is the price of this?	Uat iz ze prais ov zis?
It is very dear.	It iz veri dia.
I will give you a dollar.	Ei uil giv iu ei dola.
That is not enough.	Zat iz natt inaf.
Speak slowly.	Spik slouli.
You speak too fast.	Iu spik tu fast.
This is a fine house.	Zis iz ei fain haus.

The system now followed in the schools is to teach the children oral English during the first three grades, while the general instruction is carried on in Spanish. In the third grade, English reading is introduced, and after the fifth grade, English is used as the medium of instruction, with Spanish taught as a separate subject.

Nearly every eighth- and ninth-grade course now includes the teaching of certain manual arts. Here in San Juan boys in these grades are taught mechanical drawing, wood working, plumbing, machine-shop practice, printing, or electric wiring. In the town of San German in the southwestern part of the island, there is the Polytechnic Institute, founded by a former Presbyterian minister, of which even the school buildings were erected by student labour. When I was last in the Philippines I visited similar schools, all the work on which had been done by native boys.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Girls as well as boys are offered actual experience in practical work of many kinds. They are taught cooking, the care of babies and invalids, home management and hygiene, hat making, and sewing. The hats woven here are much like Panamas, and Porto Rican lacemaking and embroidery have long been well known in the United States. Indeed, such work constitutes to-day the chief manufacturing industries on the island. Most of it is done by the women and girls in their homes on a piecework basis.

Taken as a whole, the Porto Rican school systems incorporate all the various activities of ours in the United States. Parent-teacher associations have been formed, travelling libraries reach every part of the island, school gardens are cultivated and vegetable exhibits held each year; school savings accounts are encouraged, and in many of the schools free noonday lunches are furnished. Although the average cost of one of these lunches is less than five cents, the total amount spent last year for this purpose was about one hundred thousand dollars. Nevertheless, the government has been more than repaid in the increased alertness and health of the children, many a one of whom would otherwise have to go through the day sustained only by the fried plantain and cup of black coffee he had for breakfast.

"How about athletics?" I asked the Commissioner in the course of our conversation.

"When we first took possession of the island," he replied, "the children hardly knew how to play. The Porto Rican boy in the past rather looked down on athletic sports, but now he is as devoted to them as are boys in the United States. He belongs to a football team, and he enjoys watching the growth of his biceps. We have

## AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO

annual field games at which hundreds of students from different towns meet here at San Juan for a big contest. The Porto Ricans are naturally musical, and nearly every school has its band, many of which are represented at the athletic meets. At the last tournament, some of the musicians were children eight years of age.

“We are also establishing school playgrounds everywhere,” the commissioner continued, “and the day will come when every island school will have its gymnastic equipment. As it is now, the San Juan playgrounds have kindergarten tents, giant slides, wings, see-saws, rope ladders—in short, just what you see in your own schools. In the smaller towns, the equipment is not nearly so complete, and sometimes is limited to one baseball outfit. Baseball is the most popular game in Porto Rico, and every school has its team.”

Leading the educational institutions of Porto Rico is the university, which now has an attendance of more than two thousand students. Except for the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, which is located at Mayagüez on the west coast, most of the university buildings are at Rio Piedras, seven miles from the capital. There is a normal school for the training of teachers, and colleges of law, liberal arts, and pharmacy. Here at San Juan is also the new School of Tropical Science, founded for the study of the diseases that have long ravaged Porto Rico and other lands of the Caribbean.

The greatest fight against disease in Porto Rico is being waged against the hookworm, through the united efforts of the insular government and the Rockefeller Foundation. When the Americans first came here they thought the Porto Ricans were naturally lazy and inert, but in 1900 a

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

United States army surgeon discovered that almost the entire population of the highland regions were victims of hookworm. This parasite, they discovered, gets into the intestines, undermining the vigour of its victim and producing anæmia. A poor state of health lowers resistance to infection, and during the shortage of food following the great hurricane of 1899, the numbers afflicted with hookworm greatly increased.

Owing to the absence of sanitary arrangements of any kind, the ground in the mountains was polluted by the larvæ of the hookworm. The infection was contracted by these eggs entering the bodies of the victims through sores in their bare feet, and making their way on through the system. For this reason, the measures taken in combating the disease had to include not only the distribution of medicine, but also a campaign for elementary sanitation.

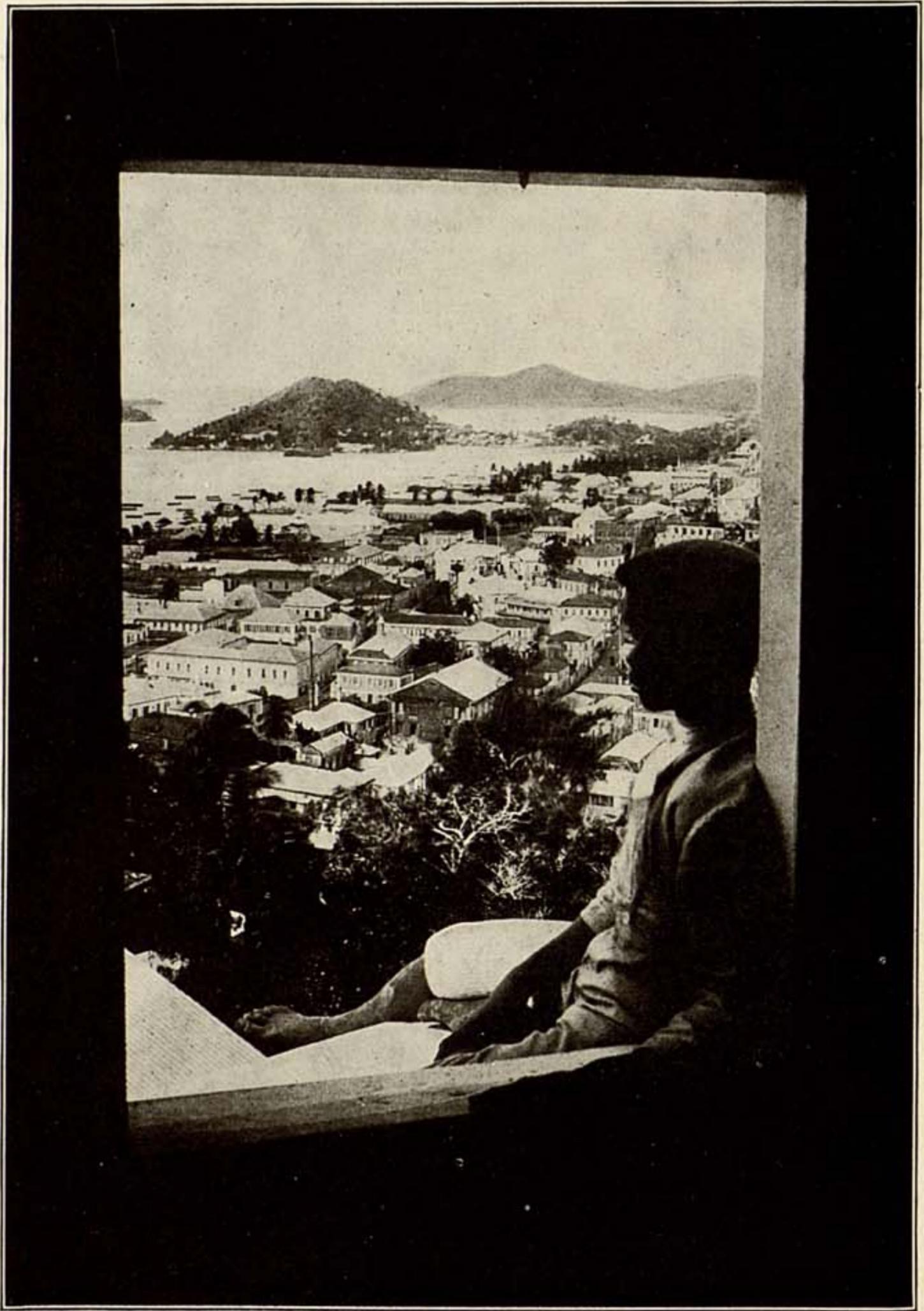
During the first six months of treatment by our medical men, five thousand people were cured of hookworm, and in a recent year the cures numbered thirty-four thousand. All together, more than a quarter of a million Porto Ricans have been relieved of this affliction, but still only one fifth of the infected area has been cleaned up, and the deaths from this cause number between seven hundred and one thousand a year.

The highest death rate in Porto Rico at the present time is that due to tuberculosis, which prevails here as the result of years of congested living, unventilated rooms, poor food, and lack of hygienic knowledge. In an effort to check the increase of the disease, the government has established a tuberculosis sanitarium and several clinics.

On the other hand, we have practically wiped out smallpox from the island. When I first came here our govern-



The making of lace, embroidery, and drawn-work by the women and girls of Porto Rico in their homes, together with the weaving of hats, constitutes the chief manufacturing industry on the island.



From the window of Bluebeard's Castle in St. Thomas, capital of the Virgin Islands, the pirates of the Spanish Main commanded a fine view of the beautiful, sheltered harbour and its approaches from the open sea.

## AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN PORTO RICO

ment was in the midst of vaccinating every Porto Rican. There were hundreds of thousands of sore arms on the island during my stay, and in some districts the people were so disabled that work practically stopped. Among the places I visited then was a farm where the army surgeons were inoculating two thousand cattle to produce vaccine.

The achievements that Uncle Sam has to his credit in Porto Rico affect every phase of life—religious, social, and commercial, as well as educational and physical. Under United States rule modern labour legislation has been enacted, complete freedom of religion insured, much of the graft eliminated from the courts, and the trade of the island multiplied many times. The annual exports are worth fifteen times as much now as they were in 1897, and the combined imports and exports are greater than the total trade of all the Central American republics put together.

And now just a word as to the way this island is governed. Its inhabitants are citizens of the United States with the privilege of voting. Under the Governor, who is an American appointed by the President, are six executive departments headed by commissioners, some also appointed by the President, and some by the Governor. Together with the Governor, these men form an executive council somewhat like our cabinet. The laws are made by the council and by a legislature consisting of nineteen senators and thirty-nine representatives, all elected by the people. At Washington the island is represented by a resident commissioner, who has a seat but no vote in Congress. In the sessions of the legislature and in the courts, the language used is Spanish, but all official documents and court records are printed in both Spanish and English.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Under Spanish rule, justice in Porto Rico was determined largely by bribery and corruption. Nothing could be accomplished in the courts except by crossing the itching palms of the officials with silver or gold, and this was so even to the recording of deeds and all transfers of property. The poor had no rights that the rich were bound to respect, and it cost money to obtain even a hearing in the courts. At the time of my first visit there were two thousand prisoners in the jails awaiting trial, many of whom hardly knew why they had been arrested. One man had been held for five months for stealing an empty bag, and another a year for making off with a chicken. The courts then cost one hundred and sixty thousand dollars a year in salaries alone, and every official drew a large allowance for incidentals. I noticed that one hundred and eighty dollars was appropriated annually to pay for winding the clock in the city hall. To-day all accounts are strictly audited, and the court system has been thoroughly overhauled. Good order is kept everywhere, the island being policed by an efficient force of about eight hundred men under United States army officers. This organization is somewhat similar to the state constabularies of Pennsylvania and New York, except that it keeps the peace in both city and country.

The most noteworthy thing about Porto Rico to-day is that the total annual appropriation needed to carry on all these activities of the government comes from the Porto Rican treasury, and not out of the pockets of Uncle Sam. This little island has for many years paid its own way with the money raised by its own taxes and customs dues, and is not now costing the United States government anything except the expenses of the regiment of troops we keep here.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

**T**O-DAY I am in St. Thomas, the capital of the Virgin Islands. These are the newest possessions of the United States and the last of the islands of the Caribbean that I shall visit. I am standing on the top of Bluebeard's Castle, a tall round stone tower that looks like a Dutch windmill minus its arms. It crowns the summit of a hill at the eastern end of the city, and commands a magnificent view. Below me is the pear-shaped harbour, one of the best in the West Indies; to the right and left are other hills rising from the waterfront, and at my back is the half-moon ridge of mountains, fifteen hundred feet high, up the lower slopes of which climb the streets and structures of St. Thomas. This city was formerly known as Charlotte Amalie, having been named after the wife of King Christian X of Denmark, but since 1917, when the islands were purchased from the Danes by the United States, the official name of the city has been the same as that of the island on the south shore of which it lies.

In the shape of its horseshoe sweep around the bay and in the riotous colours in which it has been painted by both man and Nature, the city of St. Thomas reminds me of Algiers. Most of the buildings are white and have red roofs, but there are also many tinted in the brightest of rainbow hues. Down on the waterfront the old Danish fortress,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

now the jail and police station, makes a vivid splash of crimson, and farther up on the slopes buildings of yellow, gray, orange, and blue stand out against a background of green.

St. Thomas is built on four hills. The three most prominent of these can be seen far out on the ocean, and are called by sailors "Fore-top," "Main-top," and "Mizzen-top." On one of them burn two beacon lights to guide ships into the harbour. If a pilot keeps these lights in line before him he knows that he is following the right course. Another of the peaks is known as Frenchman's Hill, having been named for a party of Huguenots who once found in this island a place of refuge. Their descendants are still living here, a little band of pure whites who have never intermarried with the coloured population.

The central portion of St. Thomas is grouped about the eminence known as Government Hill. There are the governor's residence, the government offices, and the best homes of the city. Most of the houses are of brick or stone, and not a few are handsome and commodious, with wide verandas overlooking tropical gardens of palms, shrubs, and brilliant masses of blooming hibiscus and bougainvillea.

On Government Hill is also a castle that legend says was once the residence of Edward Teach, the pirate whose depredations were feared from one end of the Caribbean to the other about the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Teach was a "gentleman of the high seas" who began his career under the black flag at Port Royal, Jamaica, and rose to be the very Napoleon of piracy. He terrorized the islands of the West Indies to such an extent that a price of one hundred

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

pounds sterling was offered by the British for his capture, dead or alive. This sum was more than twice as much as the reward put upon the head of any ordinary pirate.

It was Teach who was described in "Tom Cringle's Log" as being

. . . the mildest mannered man  
Who ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

History, however, does not bear out this statement, and most accounts unite in pronouncing him a fiend incarnate with most diabolical ideas of humour. The name by which he was known far and wide came from the long, coal-black beard that covered most of his face. One of his favourite practices to add to the fearsomeness of his appearance was to twist his beard into pigtails tied with bright ribbon, and another to stick phosphorescent matches into it to frighten people by their glow. He was not above robbing or murdering members of his own crew. During a drinking bout it was not at all unusual for him to snuff out the lights and then to shoot at random into the darkness in what he called a "friendly" way. "If I did not kill one of you now and then," he once said, "you would forget who I am." At another time, as a "joke," he marooned seventeen of his men on a desert island, where they would have starved to death had they not been accidentally discovered by a passing vessel.

In 1718, Blackbeard's ship was finally cornered in an inlet on the coast of North Carolina by a sloop of the British Navy, and the notorious pirate was killed after a terrific hand-to-hand fight. With his severed head hung up at the bow of their ship as a gory trophy of the encounter, the English then proceeded to Bath Town, North Carolina,

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

where the captured pirates were hanged. The only member of Blackbeard's gang to escape extermination was a man who had been left behind nursing a knee shattered by one of the bullets scattered by the old pirate in one of his playful moods.

Although there is little doubt that this part of the Caribbean was often the scene of Blackbeard's bloody exploits, the assertion that he lived here is probably based more on fancy than on fact. History says the castle that bears his name was really built by a Danish resident of St. Thomas in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and that the same is true of Bluebeard's Tower. Bluebeard is said to have been another pirate of the Caribbean, but less is known about him than of Blackbeard.

The slopes on which St. Thomas is built are so steep that many of the streets leading from the hills to the waterfront are flights of stone steps, alongside which are open gutters. St. Thomas has as yet neither water nor sanitary systems, but nevertheless most of the streets look clean and well cared for, the rains as a rule being sufficient to wash away the refuse. The only level thoroughfare in the city is that along the harbour at the foot of the hills. Here, behind rows of coconut palms, are the principal shops and stores. With few exceptions, they are small, one-story buildings, with no show windows and no modern furnishings. In this part of the city is also the best hotel, a white, two-story structure facing what is known as Emancipation Park, where band concerts are given.

As we stroll along this street we can see something of the people of St. Thomas. Now and then we pass a man or woman of our own race, dressed much as we are, or a United States marine in uniform, but the blacks and mulat-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

toes outnumber the whites more than ten to one. The most common masculine costume consists of a shirt and a pair of cotton trousers, probably once white, but now dirty gray. The native women wear a sort of Mother Hubbard garment tied in at the waist, and a turban swathed about the head, often topped by a wide-brimmed straw hat. The majority of the people are barefooted.

Occasionally we meet an automobile or a carriage, but as wheeled vehicles can be used on few of the streets, most of the traffic moves on foot. Here is a tiny donkey with a little barelegged black boy astride his back, and across the street is another drawing a two-wheeled cart. Everywhere are Negro men and women, boys and girls, with burdens on their heads. Look at that child of eight with a huge tin bucket resting on her woolly pate! And see that little boy carrying a demijohn in the same manner. Here comes a dusky laundress with a great basket of washed clothes balanced on her crown, and farther on is one bearing a tray of fruit. Indeed, there seems to be no limit to the kinds of burdens borne in this way, even to fish, raw meat, and squawking chickens. In the shade of trees or buildings are women who squat all day beside the little piles of yams, peppers, limes, or joints of sugar cane they hope to sell. The profit on the entire stock of one of these street merchants can be but a few cents.

Here we are at the docks. Let us stop and watch the native boys dive for coins. There is always a crowd of such urchins meeting ships and boats, and a piece of money flipped into the water will draw a score of them after it. I doubt if any money is ever lost in this way, for no matter where a coin is thrown one of the boys is sure to come up clutching it tightly in his hand.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Of more interest than the divers are the women coaling that steamer tied up at the wharf. All this work is done by strapping Negresses, who carry the coal to the ship in baskets on their heads. Look at that procession of them going back and forth over the gangplank. They are blacker, if possible, than their "black diamond" burdens. The baskets hold about sixty pounds of coal each, but the women balance them as lightly as though they were filled with feathers, rarely using their hands to steady them. These female stevedores, wearing cotton or gingham, and barefooted and with naked arms, sing and laugh as they march back and forth in a never-ending stream. Their talk is almost unintelligible, being a jargon of Dutch, French, English, and Spanish, but their good spirits are unmistakable.

The harbour of St. Thomas is one of the best in the West Indies. It is almost enclosed by the projecting peninsula on each side, and is further protected from the sea by an outer fringe of small islands. One of these islands is known as Sail Rock, because when viewed from the east it has the exact appearance of a vessel under full sail. The story is told that once upon a time the commander of a French frigate, who sighted the rock at night, mistook it for a privateering ship and opened fire upon it. The echoes returned the noise of his cannonade, making him think that his fire was being answered, and it is said that not until dawn did he realize his foolish mistake.

The water in the bay is now as smooth as a mill pond, and the harbour would seem to be an ideal shelter for shipping of all kinds. The truth is that even the high hills all about do not protect it from hurricanes, which occasionally cause frightful damage in these islands. One of



The four hills on which St. Thomas is built slope up from the harbour so steeply that flights of steps serve the purpose of streets, and wheeled vehicles can be used only along the waterfront.



During the three centuries after their first settlement, the Virgin Islands were captured and held by six European nations before they were finally purchased from Denmark in 1917 by the United States.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

the most severe cyclones occurred not long after the close of our Civil War, while the United States was negotiating for the purchase of the Virgin Islands from Denmark. At that time, among other disasters, was numbered the one in which a great wave picked up the U. S. Frigate *Monongahela* and set it down high and dry on the shores of the island of St. Croix. That tornado was largely instrumental in turning American sentiment against the purchase of the islands, and probably was to a certain extent responsible for the refusal of our Senate to ratify the treaty that had been negotiated with Denmark at that time.

Another terrific hurricane, which struck St. Thomas in October, 1916, was in some respects even more destructive. It stripped the vegetation from the hills of the island, wrecked many ships in the harbour, cast smaller boats on the shore, and tore dozens of houses from their foundations. Trees were uprooted, sheet-iron roofs were torn off buildings and sent hurtling through the air, and telephone wires were dashed to the ground. Hundreds of people were left without a single possession except the clothes they wore, and the destruction of fruit trees and crops took away their chief sources of food. To-day the buildings of St. Thomas have hurricane doors and shutters, and the city has adopted a code of signals to warn the people when a cyclone is believed imminent.

We end our exploration of St. Thomas by a trip on ponyback to the top of the mountain ridge behind the city. From the crest of this ridge we can see not only all over this island, but can obtain glimpses also of other lands in all directions. Only forty miles to the west, across the Virgin Passage, are the heights of Porto Rico, and, nearer still, our little island of Culebra, past which we steamed

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

on our way from San Juan to St. Thomas. Culebra came into our possession with Porto Rico; it is sometimes used by our Navy as a base in war manœuvres. That hazy outline rising out of the Caribbean to the south is St. Croix, and the little island only a few miles off the east coast of St. Thomas is St. John.

The Virgin Islands of the United States consist of the three larger islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, together with about fifty smaller ones. These latter dot the blue waters of the Caribbean so thickly that when Columbus touched here on his second voyage he despaired of having enough saints' names to go around, and so proclaimed the whole group to be under the sacred patronage of the eleven thousand martyred virgins of St. Ursula. Since then the saintly names of many of the islands have been replaced by such designations as Rum Island, Dead Men's Chest, Dutchman's Cap, Fallen Jerusalem, and Salt Water Money Rock. All these waters once swarmed with pirates and buccaneers, and many an island here has been dug up by modern adventurers looking for buried treasure.

From the time of Columbus's visit until Sir Walter Raleigh touched here in 1587, there is no record of any white man landing in the Virgins, and the first settlement was not made until 1625. After that, however, the islands changed hands so often that during the next two centuries the flags of six different nations waved over them. Holland founded a colony here at the same time that New Amsterdam was established, and France, Spain, and Sweden held one or another of the islands at different times. Although the ones we now own were occupied by Denmark in 1666, it was not until 1816 that that coun-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

try's claim was acknowledged by England, which had taken and held them for varying periods on three different occasions.

Great Britain still owns several of the islands in the Virgin group northeast of St. Thomas, and sailing sloops from there come here daily selling fruit, vegetables, charcoal, embroideries, and drawn-work. The sheltered coves of one of those islands, called Anegada, furnished protection for many an English pirate during the seventeenth century. There it was that Sir Francis Drake often lay in wait for the Spanish treasure galleons making their way out to the Atlantic, and there also was wrecked the fleet of Prince Rupert of the Rhine after his brief but bloody career of piracy.

This island of St. Thomas, while possessing the best harbour in the Virgins, is of little importance from an agricultural or industrial standpoint. From east to west it measures only thirteen miles, and from north to south but two or three. There are no rivers or ponds on it, and the rocky hills are but sparsely covered with vegetation. There are no forests and few cultivated patches. Most of the people on the island live in or near the city, and there is only an occasional habitation elsewhere.

The largest, richest, and most thickly populated of the Virgins is St. Croix, forty miles to the southward. Not so mountainous as St. Thomas, its rolling hills provide pasture for herds of cattle, and its rich soil raises sugar cane, coconuts, fruits, and sea-island cotton. Cane is by far the most important crop, the sugar produced there constituting the chief export from the islands. St. Croix has better roads than St. Thomas or St. John and shows more signs of industrial progress. Modern steam mills

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

have replaced the antiquated windmills once used for grinding sugar, a station of the United States Department of Agriculture has been established there for the study of crops and farming methods, and there is even a labour union among the plantation and mill workers.

St. Croix suffers the disadvantage of not having a good harbour at either of its two ports of Frederiksted and Christiansted, which are located at opposite ends of the island, about twenty miles apart. Frederiksted was once visited by Lafcadio Hearn, and was said by him to be a beautiful city, a description that hardly fits it to-day. Christiansted was formerly the seat of the Danish government of the island. Its chief interest to most Americans is that Alexander Hamilton lived there during his boyhood. Hamilton was born on the little island of Nevis, but was sent to Christiansted when only twelve years old to work as a clerk in a counting house. It was while he was so employed that he witnessed and wrote an account of the great hurricane of 1772, thus revealing such pronounced literary talent that he was sent to Boston in the North American colonies to complete his education.

St. John, the smallest of the three main islands of the Virgins, is only nine miles long and about half as wide, and has less than a thousand inhabitants. Most of the sugar plantations it once had were destroyed during the slave insurrection of 1733, and to-day the chief industry is gathering the leaves of the bay tree, which grows wild there. These leaves, which are used for making bay rum, are collected by children who climb the trees and break off the twigs; they are then distilled to obtain the oil in them. Bay rum is made from this oil mixed with white rum or with alcohol, or sometimes by distilling the leaves directly

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

into alcohol. The amount produced annually in recent years has varied in value between thirty and eighty thousand dollars. Most of it is purchased by the British.

Industrially and commercially unimportant as they are, the Virgins were bought by the United States during the World War because of their position at the eastern gateway to the Caribbean. Except for their strategic value, Uncle Sam has little to show for the twenty-five million dollars he paid for them. St. Thomas has lost the position of relative importance it once occupied in the trade of the Caribbean. Under the Danes the city was practically a free port, and as such was a point of entry for merchandise to be reshipped to other islands of the Antilles. Now, with cables and telegraphs facilitating direct sales, this business has fallen off, and the use of fuel oil on ships has lowered St. Thomas's value as a coaling station. An oil depot has been established here to supply ships, and there are also a floating dock, a shipyard, and repair shops; nevertheless, the vessels that stop here are but few compared with the number that once put in at this harbour.

In the meantime, the production of the islands has been falling off. A large export tax on sugar has lowered the profit on this crop, and discouraged cane growers, and the application of our Volstead act to the islands has prohibited the manufacture of rum as a beverage. Bay rum is still made in St. Thomas, but under heavy restrictions. The islands are far from being self-supporting, although they might be made more nearly so by improved farming and labour conditions, and by better roads and marketing facilities. St. Thomas needs sanitary works, and all three islands need more and better schools.

## LANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Indeed, there are few evidences here of American ownership such as I saw in Porto Rico. The street signs of St. Thomas are still printed in Danish, the traditions and customs of Denmark's rule continue to prevail, and Danish money is in use. Even the old Danish laws are in force "insofar as is compatible with the changed sovereignty," and to determine just what are the limits of this compatibility has often caused confusion and misunderstanding.

The Virgin Islands are governed as two municipalities, one of St. Croix, and the other of St. Thomas and St. John combined. There is a naval station at St. Thomas, and detachments of marines are kept on the islands to maintain order. The governor is appointed by the President of the United States, and functions in connection with a colonial council for each municipality. Some members of these councils are appointed by the governor, but the majority are elected by the people. The citizens entitled to vote must be older than twenty-five years, and of good character, must have resided here five years or more, and must have an income of at least three hundred dollars a year. The fact that out of twenty-seven thousand people but comparatively few can meet this requirement speaks eloquently of the general poverty of the population.

THE END

## **INDEX**



## INDEX

- Acajutla, Salvador, port and railroad terminus, 111.
- Agricultural experiment station, at St. Croix, Virgin Islands, 290.
- Agriculture: experimental farm near Acajutla, Salvador, 115; great possibilities in Guatemala if properly developed, 133.
- Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, College of, at Mayagüez, Porto Rico, 277.
- Agua volcano, near ruins of Antigua, Guatemala, 149.
- Aguacate Mountains, Costa Rica, old gold mines to be further developed, 90.
- Aibonito, Porto Rico, a little city in the mountains, 257.
- Alajuela, city at foot of Mount Poas, Costa Rica, 79.
- Albarez gold mines, in Costa Rica, belonging to an American company, 90.
- Alligator pears, one of Panama's native fruits, 51.
- Allspice, the world supplied by Jamaica, 230.
- Alvarado, founds first capital of Guatemala, 149.
- Amapala, only Pacific port in Honduras, 104.
- Amatitlan, Lake, a resort near Guatemala City, 130.
- Americanization of the Panamanians, 40.
- Americans, on the Isthmus, 30 ff.
- Amusements, in the Canal Zone, 37.
- Ancón Hill, most beautiful spot on the Isthmus, 33.
- Ancón Hospital, large and well equipped, 33.
- Antigua, the ruined ancient capital of Guatemala, 148 ff.
- Antilla, Cuba, a modern city, 209; fruit and vegetable growing centre for New York markets, 210.
- Ants, cause destruction of railroad ties, 23; a pest in the houses, 35.
- Asphalt deposits, in Cuba, 211.
- Athletics, in schools of Porto Rico, 276.
- Atitlan, Lake, in Guatemala, 130.
- Baker, Capt. L. D., instrumental in founding Jamaica's banana industry, 230.
- Balboa, Vasco Nuñez de, crosses Panama and discovers the Pacific, 4; the development of the city by the Americans, 33; finds pearls abundant on west coast of Panama, 53.
- Balsam, Peruvian, a product of Salvador, 115.
- Bamboo, in Panama's jungles, 51.
- Bananas, the most important product of Panama, 50; the large plantations of Costa Rica, and the growing, harvesting, and shipping, 55 ff.; principal crop of Nicaragua's east coast, 101; importance of the industry to Honduras, 108; in Guatemala, 132; the immense plantations of the United Fruit Company near Quiriqua ruins, Guatemala, 158, 167; in Cuba, 202, 209; the chief crop of Jamaica, 229; in Porto Rico, 259.
- Baracoa, first settlement in Cuba, founded by Diego Velásquez, 173.
- Barrett, John W., explains the part of the mosquito in transmissions of yellow fever, 13.
- Baseball, a popular sport in Cuba, 188.
- Batabano, Cuba, village of sponge fishermen, 174.
- Bay rum, chief industry of St. John, Virgin Islands, 290, 291.
- Beans, a staple food of the people of Nicaragua, 101.
- Beggars day, in San José, Costa Rica, 76; in San Juan, Porto Rico, 265.

## INDEX

- Belize, capital of British Honduras, 109.
- Beverages, the native drinks of Havana, 183.
- Blackbeard, the pirate, his depredations in the Caribbean, 282 ff.
- Breakwaters, at Cristóbal, 19; at Balboa, 24, 27.
- Bridge of Slaves, built centuries ago, in Guatemala, 131.
- Buccaneers, Morgan's capture and looting of Porto Bello and Panama, 46 ff.; their headquarters at Port Royal, Jamaica, 223, 224; their headquarters on Tortuga, 233; origin of name "buccaneers," 234; attacks on San Juan, Porto Rico, 270; their operations in the Virgin Islands, 282 ff., 288, 289.
- Bull-fights, becoming rare in Panama City, 44.
- Buried city, of prehistoric race, near Lake Petén, Guatemala, 131.
- Buried treasure, on Cocos Island, 95.
- Burro, the beast of burden of Haiti, 239.
- Buzzards, the garbage collectors of Costa Rica, 93; in Guatemala City, 124.
- Cabañas, old fort and prison at Havana, 186.
- Cabrera, Manuel Estrada, while president of Guatemala made schools his hobby, 134 ff.; his dictatorship a rule of terror, 136; his assassination frequently attempted, 137.
- Cacao, being planted on worn-out banana land in Costa Rica, 57; produced in Nicaragua, 101; the plantations at Nipe Bay, Cuba, 209; in Jamaica, 229; in Dominican Republic, 248; in Porto Rico, 259.
- Caguas, Porto Rico, a cigar manufacturing town, 258.
- Caldera Valley, a summer resort in Panama, 37.
- California gold rush, its effect on Panama, 7.
- Camagüey, most important city in interior Cuba, 203 ff.
- Canal Zone, the administration under the Americans, 30 ff.
- Carnegie peace palace, destroyed in Cartago, Costa Rica, earthquake, 87.
- Cartago, Costa Rica, its destruction by earthquake, 83 ff.
- Castleton Gardens, government experimental farm, near Kingston, Jamaica, 229.
- Catherwood, his sketches gives first knowledge of the ruins of Quiriguá, 158.
- Cattle, herds maintained by the government to supply the Canal Zone with meat and dairy products, 22, 32; Camagüey plains the chief pasture lands of Cuba, 207.
- Caves in all parts of Porto Rico, 269.
- Caves of Bellamar, near Matanzas, Cuba, 190.
- Cayey, Porto Rico, in the tobacco district, 257.
- Cedar, in Costa Rica forests, 89; exported from Nicaragua, 101; in Guatemala, 132; used in manufacture of cigar boxes in Cuba, 202.
- Cervera, Admiral, defeated by Admiral Sampson off Santiago, 213.
- Chagres River, a region of yellow fever and malaria, 12.
- Charcoal, the main fuel in Guatemala, 126; in Porto Rico, 266.
- Chinese: many die while labouring for the French on the Panama Canal, 8; truck gardeners in the Canal Zone, 31; merchants in the Panama cities, 36; in Panama City, 42; China, as the source of Mayan civilization, 161; in Havana, 182.
- Christiansted, a port of St. Croix, Virgin Islands, 290.
- Chucunaques, an Indian tribe on the Pacific side of Panama, 52.
- Cigars, their manufacture in Havana, 196 ff.; how to care for them and how to smoke them, 198; the factories of Caguas, Porto Rico, 258.
- Clay, Henry, interested in the Nicaragua Canal project, 103.
- Clubs, of the Canal Zone, 37; the many organizations of Havana, 184.
- Coal, in Dominican Republic, 248.
- Coamo, Porto Rico, a popular health resort, 256.
- Cock fighting, popular in Panama City, 44.
- Cocobola, in forests of Costa Rica, 89; from the Central American forests, 171.
- Coconuts: important product of Pa-

## INDEX

- nama, 50; in Jamaica, 229; an important product of Porto Rico, 259.
- Cocos Island and its treasure hunters, 95.
- Codfish, salt, a staple food of the Porto Rican, 261.
- Coffee: an important product of Panama, 50; the plantations of Costa Rica, 62; the chief export crop of Nicaragua, 101; small amount produced in Honduras, 109; chief crop of Salvador, 114; in Guatemala, 132, 133; the plantations at Nipe Bay, Cuba, 209; in Jamaica, 229; the chief product of Haiti, 240; in Dominican Republic, 248; one of the chief crops of Porto Rico, 259.
- College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Mayagüez, Porto Rico, 277.
- Colón, its importance as a Canal port, 18.
- Colón Cemetery, Havana, its practice of renting graves, 187.
- Colombia, in its relation to Panama, 6; refuses proposition of the United States for building the Canal, 11.
- Columbus, Bartholomew, founds city of Santo Domingo, 241; his burial place in Santo Domingo, 246.
- Columbus, Christopher, introduces sugar cane into the West Indies, 192; discovers island of Jamaica and establishes a settlement, 221; wrecked on shore of Haiti, he builds fort and establishes a settlement, 233; his headquarters in Santo Domingo, 241, 243; his remains in Santo Domingo cathedral, 246, 247; discovers Porto Rico, 268.
- Columbus, Diego, his fort at Santo Domingo, the oldest in America, 242.
- Columbus Cathedral, Havana, said to have been depository of the bones of Columbus, 182.
- Commissary, its operation in the Canal Zone, 35.
- Cookery, of the Guatemalans, 126.
- Copper: the deposits of Honduras, 109; in Salvador, 114; in Guatemala, 132; the large deposits in Cuba, 211; in Dominican Republic, 248.
- Corinto, the principal port of Nicaragua, 101.
- Corn, a staple food of the people of Nicaragua, 101.
- Cortéz, Hernando, his residence in Santiago, Cuba, still standing, 214.
- Costa Rica: size, climate, and topography, 54; its great banana industry, 55 ff.; importance of the United Fruit Company in the country's development, 60; the people and their costumes, 72; up-to-date and progressive, 73; its volcanoes and earthquakes, 78 ff.
- Cotton, produced in Salvador, 114; an important crop in Porto Rico, 259.
- Courting, as conducted in Guatemala City, 123.
- Cristóbal, American town outside city of Colón, 18, 33; its harbour and shipping, 19.
- Cuba, "Pearl of the Antilles," 172 ff.
- Cuba Railroad Company, an American organization, 199.
- Cucaracha slide, combatted by both the French and Americans in digging the Canal, 26.
- Culebra, island between Porto Rico and Virgin Islands, 287.
- Culebra Cut, renamed the Gaillard Cut, 23.
- Dampier, William, supposed to have buried contents of captured treasure ship on Cocos Island, 96.
- Dana, Charles A., plaza in Camagüey, Cuba, named in his memory, 205.
- Darien, colony formed by the Spaniards, 4.
- De Lesseps, Ferdinand, difficulties in construction of Panama Canal, 9.
- Deflated currency of Guatemala, 127.
- Distances, saving to principal foreign ports, via Panama Canal, 28.
- Diving for coins, by the boys in the Virgin Islands, 285.
- Door knockers, quaint examples in Guatemala City, 119.
- Dominican Republic, on island of Haiti, 232; the land of Columbus, 241 ff.; the American occupation and consequent improvement in the country's condition, 250.
- Drake, Sir Francis, attacks Santo Domingo, 241; loots and burns the city, 244; unsuccessful in attack on San Juan, Porto Rico, 270; his death, 270.
- Dyewoods, rich forests in Guatemala, 132.

## INDEX

- Earthquakes: in Costa Rica, 78 ff.; of common occurrence in Salvador, 110; the destruction of Guatemala City, 120; destruction of Antigua, Guatemala, 150; destruction of Port Royal, and later, Kingston, Jamaica, 225; Santo Domingo badly damaged, 244.
- Ebony, from the Central American forests, 171; in Cuba, 202.
- Education: the schools of the Canal Zone, 32; in Costa Rica, 74; in Guatemala, 134 ff.; American reorganization of Cuban school system, 177; schools established in Dominican Republic under American occupation, 251; great improvement in school system of Porto Rico, 273; schools sadly lacking in Virgin Islands, 291.
- El Caney battlefield, near Santiago, Cuba, 215.
- Esquemeling, one of the pirates, describes capture of Porto Bello and Panama, 46 ff.
- Farms, in Costa Rica, 63.
- Felton, Cuba, shipping point for the iron mines, 210.
- Fences, in Costa Rica, of growing saplings, which also furnish fuel supply, 63.
- Filarmonia Theatre, Santiago, Cuba, in which Patti made her début, 214.
- Fitzwilliam, Earl, hunts for buried treasure on Cocos Island, 96.
- Floating islands, in Gatun Lake, 22.
- Fonseca Bay, proposed American naval base, 104.
- Food, of the Gautemalans, 125.
- Forestry products, of Costa Rica, 89; of Nicaragua, 101.
- Forests, extent of in Cuba, 202.
- Frederiksted, a port of St. Croix, Virgin Islands, 290.
- Fruits: abundant in Panama, 51; in the markets of Guatemala City, 125; in great variety and abundance in Cuba, 210; both tropical and temperate zone varieties grown in Jamaica, 229.
- Fuego volcano, near ruins of Antigua, Guatemala, 149.
- Fuel, from growing fence posts, in Costa Rica, 63.
- Gaillard, Col. David D., the Culebra Cut renamed in his honour, 23; his explanation of the landslides, 26.
- Gallows Point, near Port Royal, Jamaica, execution place for pirates, 225.
- Gamboa dike, officially demolished from Washington by President Wilson, 16.
- Game, abundant in Panama, 51.
- Gatun Lake, and the dam by which it is formed, 21.
- Gatun locks, their operation, 19.
- Germans, make heavy investments in Guatemala, 134.
- Gilbert, J. S., poem "The Chagres River," 12.
- Goethals, Gen. George W., in charge of construction of Panama Canal, 3, 15.
- Gold: the deposits of Costa Rica, 90; the mines of Nicaragua, 101; the deposits of Honduras, 109; in Salvador, 115; in Guatemala, 132; in Cuba, 211; in Dominican Republic, 248.
- Gold Hill, highest of the low mountains on the Isthmus, 24; slide from, blocks the Canal, 26.
- Gold images, from the old graves of Central America, 94.
- Golf, popular in the Canal Zone, 37.
- Gorgas, Col. William C., his great work in sanitation and fever control in Panama, 14; his achievement in stamping out yellow fever in Cuba, 176.
- Government ownership, of Costa Rican railway, 90.
- Granada, oldest city in Nicaragua, 102.
- Grapefruit groves, at Nipe Bay, Cuba, 209; an important industry in Porto Rico, 259.
- Guantanamo, United States coaling station and naval base, 177, 219.
- Guantanamo Bay, a magnificent harbour, 219.
- Guatemala: a huge relief map of the republic shown in Guatemala City, 128 ff.; size, topography, climate, etc., 129; her great natural resources remain undeveloped, 132.
- Guatemala City, its history, people, and points of interest, 117 ff.

## INDEX

- Haiti, the black republic, 232 ff.; its history of blood and political corruption, 235; the American intervention, 236.
- Hamilton, Alexander, his boyhood in Christiansted, Virgin Islands, 290.
- Hardwoods, heavy growths in forests of Haiti, 240.
- Havana, Cuba, "Key to the New World," 174; the city old and new, 179 ff.
- Hawkins, Sir John, brings first cargo of slaves to West Indies, 241; unsuccessful in attack on San Juan, Porto Rico, 270; his death at sea, 270.
- Hearn, Lafcadio, visit to Virgin Islands 290.
- Hedges, of wild pineapples in Porto Rico, 258.
- Henequen, plantations near Matanzas, Cuba, 190.
- Hieroglyphics, on the monuments of Quiriguá, 162.
- Highways: undeveloped in Costa Rica, 70, 90; the motor road from San Lorenzo to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 105; excellent roads in Salvador, 114; the excellent roads of Cuba, 201; the fine road at Santiago, Cuba, built by Gen. Leonard Wood, 215; the fine motor roads of Jamaica, 229; improvements in Haiti under American control, 238; improved road system established in Dominican Republic during American occupation, 251; the military road of the Spaniards in Porto Rico, 255, 261.
- Hispaniola, name given Haiti by Columbus, 232.
- Hobson, Lieutenant, his attempt to block harbour of Santiago by sinking the *Merrimac*, 213.
- Hogs, wild, in Costa Rica, 66.
- Honduras, the country and its people, 104 ff.; formerly a haven for defaulters and revolutionists, 106; leading banana-producing region of the world, 108.
- Honduras, British, undeveloped colony of Great Britain, 109.
- Hookworm, in Costa Rica, 75; efforts in Porto Rico toward its control, 277.
- Horse racing, a popular sport in Panama City, 44.
- Hotel Camagüey, chief stopping place for travellers in interior of Cuba, 204.
- Hotel service in Puntarenas, 92.
- Hotel Tivoli, maintained by the government at Ancón, 34.
- Housekeeping, in the Canal Zone, 34.
- Humboldt, declares Yumurí Valley, Cuba, to be the most beautiful spot in the world, 191.
- Hurricanes, in the Virgin Islands, 287.
- Hydroelectric development, at the Gatun Dam, 21; in Porto Rico, 256.
- Iguanas, a table delicacy, 124.
- Ilopango, Lake, near city of San Salvador, 113.
- Images, gold, from the grave mounds of Central America, 94.
- Immigrants, smuggled into the United States through Cuba, 194.
- Incas, robbed of their gold by the Spaniards, 5.
- Indians: still in their primitive condition in Panama, 52; the Guatemala natives and their condition, 139 ff.; exterminated in Porto Rico by the Spaniards, 269.
- Indigo, once the chief export of Salvador, 116.
- Irazú, Mount, in Costa Rica, from which both oceans may be seen, 64; a volcano of many eruptions, 78.
- Iron, the deposits of Honduras, 109; of Salvador, 114; of Guatemala, 132; large deposits in Cuba, 210; in Dominican Republic, 248.
- Irrigation in Porto Rico, 256.
- Isle of Pines, has many American colonists, 174.
- Izalco, active volcano in Salvador, 110
- Jai-alai*, chief native sport of Cuba, 188.
- Jamaica, the beautiful island and its history, 221 ff.
- Keating, and his Cocos Island treasure hunt, 95.
- Keith, Minor C., undertakes construction of Northern Railway in Costa Rica, 55; helps to build up a great banana industry, 55, 60; his collection of old gold images, 94; head of

## INDEX

- International Railways of Central America, 164.
- Kingston, capital of Jamaica, destroyed in earthquake, 225; the city rebuilt, 226.
- Kite flying, a sport of the Porto Ricans, 268.
- Knox, Philander C., plans for his carriage ride to Tegucigalpa go amiss, 105; Guatemala City, painted up in his honour, 120.
- La Ceiba, Honduras, an important banana port, 108.
- La Europa Hotel, Puntarenas, its meals and service, 92.
- La Fuerza, old fortification in Havana, 181.
- La Merced, old church in Camagüey, Cuba, 205.
- La Merced Church, Antigua, Guatemala, its ancient glories and present ruins, 151, 153.
- La Punta, fortress of, at Havana, 185.
- La Unión, Salvador, excellent harbour and railroad terminus, 111.
- Labour: the workmen of the Canal Zone, 30; good servants easily secured, 36; on the banana plantations of Costa Rica, 61; a condition of personage in Guatemala, 144; on the sugar plantations of Cuba, 194; early troubles in Jamaica, 222; ships coaled at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, by negresses, 286.
- Landslides, a constant menace to the Canal, 25.
- Las Cruces, fired by its inhabitants on approach of Morgan's buccaneers, 48.
- Lead in Guatemala, 132.
- León, former capital of Nicaragua, 102.
- Lignum vitæ, in Cuba, 202.
- Limón, Costa Rica, eastern terminus of the Northern Railway, 54.
- Limón Bay, its fortifications and harbour improvements, 19.
- Locks, in the Panama Canal, 19, 27.
- Lottery, a popular institution in Panama City, 44; in San José, Costa Rica, 72; practically a national institution in Cuba, 188.
- Mahogany, lumbered in Costa Rica for American market, 89; an important export of Nicaragua, 101; valuable undeveloped forests in Honduras, 109; in Guatemala, 132; Puerto Barrios a centre of supply, 168; other great producing sections, 169; how the wood is lumbered and marketed, 170; in Cuba, 202.
- Maine*, American battleship blown up in Havana harbour, 175; towed out and sunk in the open sea, 180.
- Malaria, in Panama, 6; its control by the Americans, 12.
- Maleçon, the sea-shore drive built by the Americans in Havana, 176.
- Managua, capital of Nicaragua, 102.
- Manganese, in Cuba, 211.
- Mangoes, one of the native fruits of Panama, 51.
- Marble, found in Honduras, 109.
- Marianao, a Cuban society resort, 188.
- Maroons, their clash with the whites in Jamaica, 230.
- Markets, at San José, Costa Rica, 71; of Guatemala City, 125.
- Matanzas, Cuba, the town and its attractions, 190 ff.
- Maudsley, Alfred P., first photographs
- Mruins of Quiriguá, 158.
- ayas, ruins of their ancient city, Quiriguá, 156 ff.
- Medical: the School of Tropical Science at San Juan, Porto Rico, 277.
- Meiggs, Henry, obtains contract for construction of Northern Railway, in Costa Rica, 55.
- Miles, Gen. Nelson A., stopped on march on San Juan, Porto Rico, by signing of peace protocol, 270.
- Military, in the Canal Zone, 31.
- Miraflores, Lake, near the Pacific end of the Canal, 27.
- Mixco, an Indian town in Guatemala, 139.
- Monongahela*, U. S. frigate driven ashore by hurricane in Virgin Islands, 287.
- Monte Tina, highest peak in the West Indies, 248.
- Monuments, at the ruins of ancient Mayan city, Quiriguá, 160 ff.
- Mooretown, Jamaica, a settlement of the Maroons, 230.
- Morgan, Henry, English buccaneer, sacks and burns the city of Panama, 6; heads largest pirate organization ever assembled in capture and loot-

## INDEX

- ing of Porto Bello and Panama, 46 ff.; is pardoned by King Charles II, and becomes lieutenant-governor of Jamaica, 49; sacks Camagüey, Cuba, 203, 205; his headquarters at Port Royal, Jamaica, 224; knighted and appointed governor-general, 224.
- Morro, the fort at Santiago, Cuba, 212.
- Morro Castle, old fort and prison at Havana, 186.
- Morro Castle at San Juan, Porto Rico, 263.
- Mosquitoes, their part in the transmission of yellow fever, 14.
- Motagua River, its valley a site of the ancient Mayan civilization, 157.
- Mount Vernon, origin of the name of George Washington's estate, 219.
- Museum, at San José, Costa Rica, 70.
- Nancy*, American vessel captured by British, and her "shark papers," 227.
- Nanna, William, an American, builds Guatemalan railway, 133.
- Naos, island, connected to mainland at Balboa by breakwater, 24, 27.
- National Theatre, finest edifice in San José, Costa Rica, 68.
- Negroes, a large proportion of Jamaica's population, 226; constitute almost total population of Haiti, 232.
- Nelson, Admiral, once stationed at Port Royal, Jamaica, 225.
- New Washington Hotel, erected and operated by United States government at Colón Beach, 18.
- Nicaragua, the country and its turbulent history, 98 ff.; Americans aid in maintaining order and reorganizing the finances, 100.
- Nicaragua Canal, the projected waterway, 103 ff.
- Nicaragua, Lake, its relation to proposed Nicaraguan Canal, 102.
- Nipe Bay, Cuba, development as agricultural and fruit-growing section, 209.
- Northern Railway, in Costa Rica, 54; up the mountains to San José, 62 ff.
- Oil, in Cuba, 211; in Dominican Republic, 248.
- Oil-burning locomotives, on Panama Railroad, 23.
- Orange groves, at Nipe Bay, Cuba, 209.
- Orange growing, an important industry in Porto Rico, 259, 262.
- Oregon*, her voyage around the Horn demonstrates necessity for Panama Canal, 11.
- Oriente Province, Cuba, leading sugar district, 192.
- Orosí, one of Costa Rica's lofty volcanoes, 78.
- Oxen, chief means of transportation in Costa Rica, 70, 90.
- Ozama River, at Santo Domingo, 241.
- Palliser, Admiral, hunts for buried treasure on Cocos Island, 96.
- Palms, many varieties in Panama's jungles, 51; in Porto Rico, 259.
- Panama, its history, 3 ff.; associated with Colombia, 6; as a short cut to California gold fields, 6; separates from Colombia, 11; its geographical location, 17; as a winter resort, 43; its fauna and flora, 50.
- Panama Canal, story of its building, 3 ff.; a voyage through, 17 ff.; the Americans on the Isthmus, 30 ff.
- Panama Canal Record*, official paper of the Canal Zone, 32.
- Panama City, founded by the conquistadores, 5; sacked and burned by Morgan, 6; the metropolis and its people, 38 ff.; looted and destroyed by Morgan's buccaneers, 46 ff.; the ruins of the old city, 49.
- Panama hats, not made in Panama, 37.
- Panama Railroad, first trans-continental railway in America, 7; forced to move its tracks to new line on creation of Gatun Lake, 23; its train service, 32.
- Papaya, one of the fruits of Panama, 51.
- Patti, Adelina, makes her début in Santiago, Cuba, 214.
- Pearl fisheries, important industry of the Pearl Islands, off west coast of Panama, 53.
- Peddlers, in Guatemala City, 125; in Camagüey, Cuba, 206; in San Juan, Porto Rico, 264.
- Pedro Miguel Lock, on the Pacific side of the Canal, 27.
- Penn, Admiral, unsuccessfully attacks Santo Domingo, 244.

## INDEX

- Peonage, in Guatemala, 144.  
 Peruvian Balsam, a product of Salvador, 115.  
 Petén, Lake, in Guatemala, 131.  
 Pinar del Rio, centre of the Cuban tobacco industry, 195.  
 Pineapples: Panama, 51; in Cuba, 202; the plantations at Nipe Bay, Cuba, 209; wild pineapples used as hedge fences, in Porto Rico, 258.  
 Plaza de Armas, in the ancient section of Havana, 180.  
 Poas, Mount, a famous volcano in Costa Rica, a trip to its summit, 78 ff.  
 Policing of the Canal Zone, 31.  
 Polytechnic Institute, at San German, Porto Rico, 275.  
 Ponce de León, builds the "White House" in San Juan, Porto Rico, 267; founder of the city, 268.  
 Port Antonio, centre of the Jamaica banana industry, 230.  
 Port au Prince, capital of Haiti, 238.  
 Port Royal, Jamaica, ancient rendezvous of buccaneers, 223.  
 Porters, the chief freight carriers in Guatemala, 139 ff.  
 Porto Bello, highway from, to city of Panama, built by the early Spaniards, 5.  
 Porto Rico: the country and its people, 254 ff.; American achievements, 272 ff.; the government and its functions, 279.  
 Prado, the, main thoroughfare of Havana, 184.  
 Public works, in the Canal Zone, 32.  
 Puerto Barrios, chief port of Guatemala, and mahogany lumber centre, 164 ff.  
 Puerto Cortés, Honduras, starting point of the short railway, 106.  
 Puntarenas, "The Atlantic City of Central America," 91 ff.  
 Pyramids, at the Quiriguá ruins in Guatemala, 162.
- Quetzal, the bird of freedom of Guatemala, 131.  
 Quezaltenango, Guatemala, damaged by eruption of Santa María volcano, 129.  
 Quiriguá, ruins of the ancient city of the Mayas, 156.
- Racing, a popular sport in Cuba, 188.  
 Railways: the Northern Railway, in Costa Rica, 54; the transcontinental line of Costa Rica one of the finest scenic routes of the world, 89; the road from Corinto to Managua the only line in Nicaragua, 102; the one railway of Honduras, 106; the roads of Salvador to help form the Pan American System, 114; the road from San José to Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, built by an American, 133; building of the line from Guatemala City to the Pacific, 164; a trip over the road, 165; the systems of Cuba, 199; the government lines of Jamaica, 228; the one line of Porto Rico, 255.  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, first utilized mahogany, 171; in the Virgin Islands, 288.  
 Relief map of Guatemala, the country in miniature shown in Guatemala City, 128 ff.  
 Reventazón River, in Costa Rica, 63.  
 Revolutions, not popular in Costa Rica, 73; unknown in Salvador, 112, 114.  
 Rio Dulce, a beautiful river in Guatemala, 131.  
 Roaring River, Jamaica, its waterfalls, 228.  
 Rockefeller Foundation, efforts against the hookworm in Porto Rico, 277.  
 Roosevelt, Col. Theodore, as President gives Goethals absolute power on the Canal, 15; attacks Kettle Hill with his Rough Riders, 216.  
 Rosewood, from the Central American forests, 171; in Cuba, 202.  
 Rubber, important production of Panama, 50; produced in Nicaragua, 101.
- Sail Rock, an island in the harbour of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, 286.  
 Salvador, smallest American republic, but most densely populated, 110 ff.  
 Salvador, the government up-to-date and progressive, 112.  
 Sampson, Admiral, destroys Cervera's fleet off Santiago, Cuba, 213; bombards San Juan, Porto Rico, 270.  
 St. Croix, one of the Virgin Islands, 288; its agricultural products, 289.

## INDEX

- St. John, one of the Virgin Islands, 288; production of bay rum its chief industry, 290.
- St. Thomas, capital of the Virgin Islands, 281 ff.
- San Blas Indians, still in their primitive condition in Panama, 52.
- San Cristóbal, fort at San Juan, Porto Rico, 263.
- San Felipe, old fort in Guatemala built by Cortés, 130.
- San José, picturesque capital of Costa Rica, 67 ff.
- San Juan, Porto Rico, the city and its changes, 263 ff.
- San Juan battlefields, near Santiago, Cuba, 215.
- San Juan River, its relation to proposed Nicaraguan Canal, 102.
- San Lorenzo, on Pacific coast, Honduras, 105.
- San Miguel, Salvador, an important city, 114.
- San Nicolas, the oldest church in America, 245.
- San Salvador, capital of Salvador, 111.
- Sanitation, the great problem in Panama, 12; in Costa Rica, 75; modern sanitary conditions in Salvador, 113; achievements in the cleaning up of Cuba, 176; great improvement in condition of Porto Rico, 264, 278.
- Santa Clara, Cuba, important sugar centre, 202.
- Santa María, volcano in Guatemala, 129.
- Santa Ana, Salvador, important agricultural centre, 113.
- Santa Tecla, Salvador, an important city, 114.
- Santiago, Cuba, first capital of the island, 174.
- Santiago, metropolis of eastern Cuba, 212 ff.
- Santiago de los Caballeros, second largest city in Dominican Republic, 251.
- Santo Domingo City, founded by Columbus, 233.
- Santo Domingo, capital of Dominican Republic, 241 ff.
- Santo Domingo Cathedral, contains remains of Columbus, 246.
- Schools, of the Canal Zone, 32; of Porto Rico, 273 ff.
- School of Tropical Science, San Juan, Porto Rico, 277.
- Shafter, Gen. W. R., attacks Spanish positions at El Caney and San Juan, 215; receives from General Toral, the surrender of Santiago, 216.
- "Shark papers," of the American vessel *Nancy*, now in Kingston, Jamaica, 227.
- Shop signs in San Juan, Porto Rico, 264.
- Shops, in the Canal Zone, 36.
- Shopping, in Guatemala City, 126.
- Silver: the mines of Nicaragua, 101; the deposits of Honduras, 109; in Salvador, 114, 115; in Guatemala, 132; in Cuba, 211.
- Slides, still a menace to the Canal, 25.
- Smallpox, wiped out in Porto Rico, 278.
- Smuggling of foreigners as well as liquor through Cuba, 194.
- Snakewood, from the Central American forests, 171.
- Social activities, in the Canal Zone, 37.
- Spanish-American War, and liberation of Cuba, 176.
- Spanish Town, the old capital of Jamaica, 223.
- Sponge fishing, at Batabano, Cuba, 174.
- Sports, in Havana, 188; in Jamaica, 226.
- Stephens, John L., discovers ruins of Quiriguá, 158.
- Stock raising, in central Cuba, 204, 207.
- Suffrage, requirements for in Virgin Islands, 292.
- Sugar: produced in Nicaragua, 101; produced in Honduras, 109; in Salvador, 114; the great industry in Cuba, 178; Cuba, the sugar bowl of the world, 190 ff.; cultivation and harvesting of the cane and manufacture of the sugar in Cuba, 194; in Jamaica, 229; principal crop of Dominican Republic, 248; the vast plantation of Porto Rico, 255.
- Sulphur lake, in crater of extinct volcano, in Guatemala, 131.
- Summer resorts, of the Canal Zone, 37.
- Superstition, its extent in Haiti, 237.
- Superstitions of the Guatemala Indians, 146.
- Teach, Edward, the Napoleon of piracy, 282 ff.

## INDEX

- Tegucigalpa, Honduras, capital city without a railroad, 105.
- Tela, Honduras, centre of the banana industry, 108.
- Temple of Minerva, in Guatemala City, dedicated to the cause of education, 134.
- Tigre Island, on which is located the port of Amapala, Honduras, 105.
- Tivoli Hotel, maintained by the government at Ancón, 34.
- Tobacco growing, a great industry in Cuba, 195 ff.; in Jamaica, 229; in Dominican Republic, 248; the industry in Porto Rico, 257.
- Tolls, of the Panama Canal, 29.
- Tortuga, a pirate stronghold, 233.
- Tourist business, one of the chief industries of Havana, 189.
- Traffic through the Panama Canal, 28.
- Transportation facilities undeveloped in Costa Rica, 70, 90; the peon the chief freight carrier in Guatemala, 140.
- Treasure, buried, on Cocos Island, 95.
- Trocha*, barrier across Cuba built by Spaniards during the insurrection, 203.
- Tropical Science, School of, at San Juan, Porto Rico, 277.
- Truck gardening, in the Canal Zone, 31.
- Tuberculosis, efforts to combat, in Porto Rico, 278.
- Turrialba, one of Costa Rica's lofty volcanoes, 78.
- Turtles, on Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, 66.
- United Fruit Company, extensive banana plantations in Panama, 50; its banana plantations in Costa Rica; 55; its commercial activities throughout Central America, 60; its banana plantations surrounding Quiriguá ruins, 158, 167; owner of enormous sugar plantations in Cuba, 210; its hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, 226.
- University of Guatemala, established by the government, 135.
- University of Panama, built from American payments to Panama, 39.
- Valverde, Father, account of Santo Domingo after the earthquake, 244.
- Van Horne, Sir William, builder of the Cuba Railroad, 199.
- Vanderbilt, Commodore, during California gold rush maintained steamboats in San Juan River for crossing Nicaragua, 102.
- Vedado, residential suburb of Havana, 187.
- Velásquez, Diego, founds first settlement in Cuba, 173; founds city of Santiago, Cuba, 212; buried there in the Cathedral, 214; massacres hundreds of the natives of Santo Domingo, 246.
- Vernon, Admiral, his unsuccessful attack on Santiago, Cuba, 219; dilutes his sailor's rum, 224.
- Vice, conditions in Panama, 42.
- Virgin Islands, newest of the United States' possessions, 281 ff.
- Virgin of Cobre, shrine of, near Santiago, Cuba, 217.
- Virginius*, captured by Spanish and some of crew executed at Santiago, Cuba, 214.
- Volanta*, once the universal carriage of Cuba, 202.
- Volcanoes: of Costa Rica, 78 ff.; plentiful and active in Salvador, 110; the twenty-eight cones of Guatemala, 129; Fuego and Agua, twin sentinels over ruined city of Antigua, Guatemala, 149.
- Voodooism, in Haiti, 237.
- Vuelto Abajo, famous tobacco district of Cuba, 196.
- Wallace, John F., first chief engineer of the Panama Canal, 3; his resignation, 15.
- Walker, William, his filibustering exploits in Central America, 107.
- Walnut, Honduran, used in airplane propellers, 171.
- Washington, Lawrence, names Potomac estate after Admiral Vernon, 219.
- Water hyacinths, in Gatun Lake, 22.
- Waterfalls, of Jamaica, 228.
- Waterpower, from the Gatun Dam, 21.
- Well of Death, a geyser of sulphur water in Guatemala, 131.
- "White House," in San Juan, Porto Rico, built by Ponce de León, 267.

## INDEX

- Wilson, President, officially opens Panama Canal, 16.
- Women: interested in national affairs and club work in Salvador, 112; attaining more freedom in Porto Rico, 267.
- Wood, Gen. Leonard, erects model schoolhouse at Santiago, Cuba, 215.
- Workingmen's homes, in San Juan, Porto Rico, 266.
- Wyse, Lieutenant, negotiates concession for construction of Panama Canal by the French, 9.
- Yellow fever, in Panama, 6; its control by the Americans, 12; discoveries and achievements in the cleaning up of Cuba, 176.
- Yumurí Valley, Cuba, of great natural beauty, 191.
- Yzabal, Lake, in Guatemala, 130.
- Zacapa, inland city of Guatemala, 166.
- Zelaya, seizes presidency of Nicaragua but finally is exiled, 99.
- Zinc, the deposits of Honduras, 109.





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