PANAMA

The Canal · The Country · The People

ARTHUR BULLARD

Central Amer. ✓

PANAMA

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THE CANAL, THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

BY

ARTHUR BULLARD

(ALBERT EDWARDS)

REVISED EDITION WITH ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS

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To my friend,

JOHN O. COLLINS

PREFACE

CHAPTERS I, III, XXVI, XXX, XXXI, and XXXIII appeared as articles in *The Outlook;* Chapter II in *Harper's Weekly;* Chapter VIII in *Success Magazine.* Chapter XXXIV is a compilation of material used in articles for *Success* and *The Coming Nation.* They are reprinted here through the courtesy of the original publishers.

The works of Bancroft, Fiske, Irving, Prescott and Winsor—the principal authorities on the epoch of discovery and colonization—have been freely used.

Other authors have been quoted—acknowledgment is made in the text—and many more have been consulted. The staff of the American History Department of the New York Public Library have been of great assistance.

While on the Isthmus I have received courtesies too numerous to mention from the canal men. I am especially indebted to Col. George W. Goethals, the Chairman and Chief Engineer, and to Mr. Joseph Bucklin Bishop, the Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission. The chapter on health conditions could not have been written except for the kind assistance of Mr. Jennings, the Entomologist of the Sanitary Department.

In a more personal way I am deeply in the debt of my friend, John O. Collins, for suggestions and services without end.

The exact information contained in this volume is due to those I have mentioned. The mistakes are my own.

ARTHUR BULLARD.

NEW YORK CITY,
July, 1911.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

THE body of the book has been carefully revised, new illustrations gathered and two chapters added.

My friend, John O. Collins, has helped me with many corrections of the first edition and suggestions for this. And I am especially indebted to my hosts of "The Monastery," Mr. F. H. Cooke, U.S.N., and Mr. W. H. May, whose kind hospitality made my recent visit to the Isthmus most pleasant.

ARTHUR BULLARD.

1914.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PANAMA

PANAMA

CHAPTER I

THE SEA ROUTE

THE tropics should be visited by way of the sea. You come into them gently, almost imperceptibly. You are more impressed by the intensifying blueness of the water and sky than by the increasing heat. It begins when you leave the grayness of the Gulf Stream and deepens day by day. Each night you turn in feeling that at last you have perceived the ultimate blue. And each morning you wake up to realize that yesterday's blue was as insipid as a first-love compared to deepness of the color of this new day.

The fourth night out I was on the bridge with the captain watching the glory of the summer moon lazily climbing up from the horizon—painting a silver "trail of rapture in the wonder of the sea." Suddenly the rich notes of a guitar broke the silence, and then—after a few preliminary chords—a West Indian negro melody floated up from the forecastle hatch. The captain stopped his sentry-like pacing, smiled contentedly, and pointed with his pipe towards the sound.

"Hear 'em?" he said. "They're getting near home. They never sing above twenty-five degrees north. It's time to get out your white clothes."

And so you pass into the tropics to the music of minor

chords. It is worth the trip just to see the delectable grin of perfect joy with which the negro steward lays out your "ducks."

Late the next night we caught the gleam of Culebra, our new naval base off Porto Rico. It was the first sign of land since the snow-covered Jersey hills had sunk into the sea.

Before dawn the next morning I was startled out of sleep by a sound I had not heard for many months, for it is not heard on Broadway—it was a cock crowing, answered almost immediately by the barking of a farm dog. I was on deck as soon as might be. Our ship was riding at anchor off the Danish island of St. Thomas. The moon had set, and in the darkness there was little to see except the jagged outline of the mountains. The entrance to the harbor was dimly visible, and inside a few early lights twinkled in the town. But the land breeze brought us out many unfamiliar sounds and innumerable rich perfumes—the pungent fragrance of the Southland.

As the dawn broke we got under way. It is a wonderful harbor. The entrance is less than half a mile across, and within—the hills rising a thousand feet on every side—is a six-fathom basin, a mile or more across. Nature has rarely built so perfectly safe a harbor. And at the foot of the bay, climbing up the hillside, is the many-colored town of Charlotte Amalia.

The view from deck, as the ship creeps in to anchorage, is the most charming in the West Indies. The bay lacks the great sweep of Algiers, but it has the same mountain background, the same glorious blue of sea and sky. The village, blue and orange and yellow and red, recalls some of the coast towns of Italy. The garden walls of the hillside villas shine out dazzlingly white against the luxurious green

of the tropical foliage. The ruins of Bluebeard's castle above the town—a landmark of the old days of buccaneers—present the only touch of gray. The rest is a riot of color. Most striking of all is the gaudy red Danish fortress down by the water front. I have never seen so red a building. At first it is glaring and unpleasant, but after a time one's eyes become accustomed to the new scale of color values which the intense sun of the tropics requires. And the bizarre glory of this fort—which would be unspeakably offensive in the gray north—seems to be not out of place in the color scheme of St. Thomas. The town of Charlotte Amalia has taken the atmosphere of Algiers and the gorgeous coloring of Venice, rolled them into one, and reduced it to miniature.

But the place is beautiful only from the ship. As soon as the harbor doctor had approved our bill of health, the bumboats swarmed about the ship. We were taken ashore by an old negro named Ebenezer. We chose him from all the crowd of dilapidated ferrymen who had bid so ravenously for our traffic, because his white-bearded face looked the hungriest. The poverty of the negroes all through the islands is appalling. Old Ebenezer had never been out of St. Thomas. And his horizon was even narrower than the land-locked harbor. As he took us in he pointed out the various places of interest—Bluebeard's castle, the factory where the natives make the bay rum which they think has made their island famous. At last his long, emaciated finger pointed to an uninteresting modern building.

"Th' Barracks, suh."

"Have they a large garrison here?" I asked.

"Oh, yus, suh! an a'my, suh."

"How many?" I asked. "Ten?'

"Oh, suh! No, suh! Mo' than ten, suh. Thu'ty, sir! About thu'ty, suh!"

Ebenezer's whole vision was on the scale of a large army of about thirty men.

It was immediately after breakfast when we came ashore, but the sun was already hard at work. There must have been a difference of twenty degrees in the temperature afloat and ashore. For when we clambered upon the glaring white concrete dock, the heat struck us like a blow. The town is as uninteresting as it is hot. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine colored people to one white. The women were shapeless, and all seemed old. Their costume held no picturesqueness. There was rarely a touch of color—for the most part their dresses were of the dirtiest white. Poverty hangs heavy over everything. The rich forests which once covered the hills have long since passed away. The soil is almost sterile. Little grows but the bay tree, from which the hair tonic—the island's one industry—is produced. Steam traffic and cables have ruined the place. The magnificent harbor which was once crowded with sailing vessels waiting for orders is now almost deserted.

Charlotte Amalia is a good place to shop, as it is a free port. European goods can be bought at fabulously low prices. While I was stocking up on linen clothes, I was approached by the tallest, lankiest, blackest negro on the island. "General," he said, "liketohavesomebodycarryyourgoods?" I had to make him repeat it a dozen times before I could locate the spaces between the words. His eyes were so big and serious about it, his general scenic effect so unutterably droll, that I took him on, and christened him "The Army." We taught him to salute, right about face, etc., and loaded him up with our bundles until he looked more like a pack mule than an army.

He proved of great service to one of our party who wanted to get typical photographs. He posed in a dozen attitudes

himself, procured other groups for us—an old woman with her hay-laden ass. Then we began to poke fun at him; could he get the prettiest girl in the town to pose for us? Certainly. He disappeared around the corner, and came back in ten minutes with a girl who admitted that she was the belle of the island. He was wonderfully solemn about it all.

"Could you bring us a volcano?" I asked. "My friend here wants a picture of a volcano."

"No, suh," he said, saluting with the utmost seriousness. "They are not in season. You can't get them except in May. Come back in May."

I paid him off after that and discharged him. I have a sick feeling every time I think of it. My friends good-naturedly insist that the man was stupid and didn't know what a volcano was. But much as I would like to believe this, I can't. I think he was paying me back in my own coin—overpaying me. I don't think I'll go back in May.

When the captain had finished business with the company's agent, he joined us and led us off in search of refreshment. The Grand Hotel faces the public square by the landing-place. It is built like first-class hotels in tropical cities the world over—thick white walls, high spacious rooms, and a veranda roofed over and protected by many blinds and sunshades. The whole thing is built on a scale ten times too big for a little town like Charlotte Amalia. The great hall was deserted except for a child at play. On the veranda a Danish officer was breakfasting in solitary splendor. There was no servant in sight; no bell with which to call one. The officer, seeing our helplessness, bawled out some Danish summons at the top of his voice. By and by a waiter appeared. He was as black and shiny as an ebony cane. He wore duck trousers, an open network undershirt, to which he had added a high celluloid

collar and a soiled white tie. Could we get some ices? He did not seem at all sure one way or the other. After severe cross-examination he admitted that he could get some bottled kola for the ladies and some beer for the men.

The Grand Hotel with its hundred empty guest rooms, its vast deserted veranda, its barefooted, slovenly servant, is typical of this disappointed island. There is another equally desolate hotel in St. Thomas, called "1868"—after the great year when King Christian the Ninth signed the treaty by which he ceded his West Indian islands to the United States.

In those days the people of St. Thomas dreamed great dreams. And these dreams were the foundation on which these great hotels were built. At last the island was to recover from the decline which steam shipping had brought. From insignificance it was to rise to "The Gibraltar of the West"—the great naval outpost of the United States. England was spending millions on the fortifications of Bermuda and St. Lucia. Spain for centuries had been strengthening San Juan in Porto Rico and the different ports of Cuba. But St. Thomas held the key to the Spanish Main —as a glance at the map will show. American gold and American life were to flow into the port. For half the money the other nations were spending on their fortresses the harbor of St. Thomas could have been made twice as strong. So it was not a baseless dream.

A tornado and tidal wave—the only such catastrophe recorded in these islands—spoiled it all.

Our diplomatic record in regard to these islands is the blackest stain on the annals of the Department of State—and it is to be the more blushed at because the nation we slighted was too small to resent the insult with arms. During the Civil War the need of a naval base in the West Indies became apparent. Lincoln and Seward were greatly

interested in the project, and St. Thomas was selected by them—as it would have been by any intelligent observer. It was perfectly fitted to our purpose. Denmark, which through the war had been more friendly to Washington than the other European nations, needed money. The matter was broached at Copenhagen by our diplomats, and, after considerable haggling over the price, was favorably considered. England and Germany, who did not wish to see our hands strengthened, objected as strongly as possible. But Denmark dared the ill-will of these powerful neighbors and pushed on the negotiations. The proceedings were halted by the bullets which killed Lincoln and wounded Seward. But the matter was reopened as soon as Seward had recovered, early in 1866. He visited St. Thomas to satisfy himself that all was as represented. Things moved rapidly, and in July, 1867, Seward cabled our ambassador in Copenhagen: "Close with Denmark's offer. St. Johns, St. Thomas, seven and a half million. Send ratified treaty immediately." In October the treaty was signed.

Then occurred the tornado and tidal wave which picked up the old United States frigate Monongahela and stranded it high and dry in the middle of the town of Santa Cruz. The ship was refloated, but the sensational stories of the hurricane turned American sentiment against the island.

Denmark, however, considered the preliminary treaty as binding. On the 9th of January, 1868, a plebiscite was held on the island; almost unanimously the inhabitants voted for the transfer. The Danish Rigsdad formally ratified the treaty. And poor old King Christian sent out a pathetic proclamation to his West Indian subjects:

". . . With sincere sorrow do we look forward to the severance of those ties which for so many years have united you to the mother country. . . . We trust that nothing has been neglected upon our side to secure the future wel-

fare of our beloved and faithful subjects, and that a mighty impulse, both moral and material, will be given to the happy development of the islands under the new sovereignty. Commending you to God, . . ."

Our Senate was pledged to ratify the treaty within four months. Action was postponed two years. And meanwhile the treaty became buried in some pigeon-hole of the Committee on Foreign Relations. King Christian had to swallow the insult as best he could, and the islanders regretfully returned to their old allegiance.

Negotiations were renewed from time to time, and hope still lived in St. Thomas until the Spanish War gave us a naval base at Culebra. Then hopeless disappointment settled down on the island.

. . . . . .

It was still night when we sighted Martinique. The black shaft of Mont Pelée pushed up through the semi-darkness to what seemed a ghastly height. The top spur was lost in the clouds. But as the dawn came up out of the sea the air cleared and the sinister peak stood out clear-cut and cruel. The sides of the mountain are a dark, angry red, scarred by innumerable black ravines. It is rendered more appalling by the contrast of its barren flanks with the luxurious vegetation below. The towering cone would be a fearsome thing to see even to one who did not know its murderous history.

About the skirts of the island runs a golden-green fringe of cane-brakes; above are heavy forests of tamarind, mango, and cabinet woods—the darkest shades of green; below are the red rocks and the sea. The shores rise sheer from the deep water, and we passed in close enough to see the white-clad natives at work in the fields. The plantations run high up the slopes to the "Great Woods," and, like French agriculture everywhere, show minute care and a high de-

gree of culture. A farm road circles the island, dotted here and there with white-walled homesteads, half hidden in luxuriant gardens. Sleepy, nodding cocoa palms are grouped about most of the houses, and in every garden are the "flambeau" trees—red and brilliant as a Kentucky cardinal.

We passed within sight of the gray blotch of ruins which was once St. Pierre. It is scarcely a dozen years since Mont Pelée exploded and blotted out this gay city, this Paris of the West, but stories which are told about it are already becoming legendary. If, for instance, you grumble at the lack of good hotels in the West Indies, some one is sure to say: "Ah! you should have seen St. Pierre; there were no better hotels in Europe—and the cafés! Why, the Rue Victor Hugo looked like the Boulevard des Italiens." Or, if you find life in the islands dull, you are straightway assured that St. Pierre was gayety itself. There was a theatre at St. Pierre. There was a promenade in the botanical gardens, where a band played every afternoon, where ravishing creole beauties smiled at you. The legend is explicit in this matter. The beauties of St. Pierre smiled at all strangers. There is not an old timer in the islands who was not a hero in a St. Pierre romance. And on the 8th of May, 1902, a little after early Mass, Mont Pelée with its torrent of fire wiped out St. Pierre and its gayety, and all but one of its thirty-five thousand inhabitants. Nothing is left but the dreariest of dreary ruins.

Farther down the coast is Fort de France. It does not pretend to be what St. Pierre was, but still it is a fascinating city. The harbor, which is unusually good, is made picturesque by an old fort which is gray with history. The English captured it in 1762, again in 1781, 1794, and 1809. After Waterloo the island was restored to France, and it is thoroughly French. It was hot, but the heat was

soon forgotten in the joy of being again on French soil. The mansard roofs, the iron balconies, the brass bowls before the shops of the hair-dressers, the *pâtisseries*, the gendarmes—everything recalled the cities of France. There are two department stores called "Au bon marché." A provincial French town without two such stores would be as incomplete as an Uncle Tom's Cabin road company without two Topsies.

But of more brilliant color and varied interest than the stores are the open markets. In the early morning they are crowded with natives, sellers of fruit and vegetables, crude pottery, and general merchandise. There is an incessant din of bargaining in the queer French *patois*—of which I could not catch one word in ten.

The crossing of races has gone to the extreme in Martinique. I had never before realized how many different shades there are of black. Of the 180,000 inhabitants very few are pure black, and fewer are pure white. The overwhelming majority are of various degrees of mixed blood. But they are a comely race—in striking contrast with the natives of the northern islands. The women are lithe and well formed, many of them fit models for sculpture. Their dresses are a riot of color. The length of their skirts is a mark of their station in life. A well-to-do creole will have hers made three feet too long in front, with a train of five or six feet behind. They wear a sort of belt below the hips and tuck up their skirts, by this means, to whatever height their occupation demands. In their anxiety to protect them from the dirt of the streets it is evident that their skirts are worn solely as a decoration, and not at all from a sense of modesty. It is a striking example of Professor Veblin's "Theory of Conspicuous Waste." Another thing which attracted my attention was that, while most of the women were barefoot, some wore a slipper on one foot,

invariably the left foot. I asked a policeman why this was. He looked at me with condescending pity at my ignorance.

"Is it not Holy Week?" he asked.

Perhaps to one more familiar than I with the rites of the Church in the tropics this may be an explanation, but to me it only deepened the mystery.

The turbans of the women are quite wonderful affairs, and the bandanna about their necks completes a close harmony of color which makes a parrakeet look like an amateur.

The custom of carrying everything on their heads has given the people a strange stride, in which the knee joint is unused. This custom—if continued indefinitely—will surely result in the atrophying of their arms. It is no exaggeration to say they carry everything on their heads. I saw one woman with a baby buggy balanced on her turban. I was not near enough to see if there was a baby in it. But the greatest marvel was a big buck negro, with perfectly good arms. He was strolling down the street with a soiled and dilapidated brickbat on his head. I stopped him, and asked why he carried with so much care so worthless a piece of rubbish. He took off the brickbat and showed me a letter he was carrying, and explained that he had to put on some weight to keep the wind from blowing it away.

After the monotony of the ship's fare a chance at French cooking was not to be missed. At the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe I found a chef with the true artistic instinct. He came up, dusted all over with flour, from his oven, where he was concocting a *pâté*. Delighted at the idea of an appreciative patron, he sat down with me in the café and sketched out a *déjeuner*. He was from the Faubourg St. Antoine, and it was delightful to hear the twang of a true Parisian accent after the slovenly *patois* of the natives. The lunch was ready at noon, and he had done himself

proud. There was a fragrant melon, the *pâté* of calf brains at which I had found him working, chicken *en casserole*, a salad, and dessert. The only false note was the coffee. It was native. There are people who claim that West Indian coffee is superior to all others. But it must be an acquired taste.

Later in the day I presented a letter of introduction to the agent of an American business house. He came from the north of Maine, of French-Canadian ancestry, and was as out of place in the tropics as a snowball would be. And the fever was melting him away as fast as if he had been one. His hatred of the place was pathetic. He took me over his house, pointing out all the villainies of life in Fort de France.

"Look!" he said, with the eloquent gestures he had inherited from his forebears. "Look! look at this room! They called it a kitchen! And that—that is supposed to be a stove. And here, look at this—it is supposed to be a bathtub! Not for horses—for us! Every time my wife takes a bath in it she cries!"

He was perfectly speechless, he told me volubly, over the lack of sanitary conveniences. He was a grotesque old Northerner in his crisp white ducks, and it was hard not to laugh. But the Tropics will kill him if he is not recalled.

The show-place of Fort de France is the "Savane," the great open square, where, surrounded by a circle of magnificent royal palms, is the marble statue of Josephine. I did not view it at close quarters, for it was raised by Napoleon III, and the official sculpture of the Second Empire could never tempt me to walk a hundred yards in a broiling sun. But seen from the shaded café of the Hôtel de l'Europe, it is exquisite in its setting. Pure white, under the gigantic palms, it is outlined against a heavy

green background of mango trees. Off to the right, past the moss-grown old fort, you can see a clump of cocoa palms on the other side of the bay. It is the plantation of La Pagerie, where the Empress was born. Some ruins of the old house where she passed the first fifteen years of her life still stand.

My memories of Martinique center about a woman whose life had been almost as eventful as that of the sad Empress. I saw her first in the early morning. When our ship cast anchor, we were surrounded, as usual, by a swarm of little boats. They had to keep back a few hundred feet until the Harbor Master had come aboard and lowered our yellow flag. Watching them, I noticed another boat a hundred yards beyond this circle. It was manned by two sturdy blacks, and in the stern-sheets sat a woman in a heavy widow's veil. The moment our quarantine flag dropped she gave an order to her men and they rowed rapidly alongside. She did not wait for her meagre trunk to be hoisted over the side, but disappeared immediately in her stateroom.

I found the affair quite mysterious; for our boat was to stay twelve hours in port, and people are not generally in such a hurry to come aboard. And even more unusual was the lack of any one to see her off; for in this neighborly climate there is generally quite a formidable mob of friends on the dock, and leave-takings are loud and voluminous.

But the interest of things ashore drove the thought of this solitary woman from my mind until, back in the ship at dinner, I found her seated beside me. She had thrown the heavy veil back over her shoulder. Her profile was of the purest French type; long, drooping eyelashes held a suggestion of creole blood, but it must have been a very slight mixture and many generations back. She knew no

English, so I became acquainted with her, helping her decipher the bill of fare. She accepted my aid with gracious reserve. Her long, delicate hands, the gentle refinement of her manners, spoke of race and good breeding.

We were scheduled to sail at eight, but for some reason we were delayed. And after dinner, as I was pacing the deck, she came to me and asked—with a vain effort to hide her anxiety—if I knew how soon we would leave. The farewell whistle had blown a few minutes before, and I told her we were going at once. But this did not reassure her, and I had to go forward to get definite word from the captain. Before I could rejoin her, the anchor was up and we were swinging out of the harbor. I found her settling herself comfortably in a steamer chair. The look of worry had given place to one of exceeding good cheer.

"May I trouble you once more, Monsieur?" she said. "Have you a match?"

I had, and I asked permission to draw up my chair and smoke with her. Her face was animated, and she seemed to welcome a chance to talk. There were a great many questions about America—a strange country to her—and then about myself. When I told her that I was a writer, her face, which was ever a mirror of her thoughts, clouded ominously.

"Madame does not like journalists?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, I do," and she laughed merrily. "My husband is an editor."

Her use of the present tense surprised me, as I had thought her a widow. After this beginning, she told me much of her own story. When she was eight years old, her father, who had been one of the richest ship-owners in St. Pierre, lost his life in a hurricane only a quarter of a mile from the port. Thrice she had had the roof blown off her house by the hurricanes. After her father's death she

had been sent to a convent in Paris for her education. At fifteen she had returned to the reckless city of St. Pierre. It had been a gay time of balls and picnics and much courting. Before seventeen she had married a professor in the high school.

"My mother did not approve," she said, "but it was a true marriage of the heart."

And then her husband had "fallen in love with politics" —such was her expression. And politics in the French islands is a sad thing.

The negroes have developed no ability for good government. It is more than a century since Toussaint l'Ouverture drove the whites away from the neighboring island of Hayti. Since then the Black Republic has had external peace. But its internal history has been one long record of bloodshed and tyranny. And there is probably no place in the Western Hemisphere marked with such utter degradation. The French have kept a certain control over their two other islands—Guadeloupe and Martinique. But it has not been an efficient control, and while the French negroes have not become so debased as in Hayti, they are in pretty sore straits. "The Rights of Man" are in full swing in these colonies; adult men vote, irrespective of color. As the whites are vastly outnumbered, nearly all the officials, except the Governor and the gendarmes, who are sent out from France, are black. The islands which are unusually blessed by nature, and were formerly exceedingly prosperous, are dying of the dry-rot of political corruption. The French Chamber is now investigating the affairs of Guadeloupe. The scandal which started with the negro deputy has involved almost all the officials, notably the judiciary.

Things were just as bad in Martinique. My acquaintance's husband had tried to bring reform by founding a

new party—a coalition of the whites and the more responsible blacks—against the corrupt gang of mulattoes led by the Deputy Sevère. Her husband left his school work and founded a paper—with her money, I judged.

By chance they were visiting his family at Fort de France at the time of the eruption of Mont Pelée. But every one of her relatives perished at St. Pierre. He pushed on his political work with success, and in 1907, in the campaign for the Conseil Général, the new party elected all but two of the Councillors. The following May the time came for the election of the municipal officers of Fort de France. The coalition nominated a negro named Labat for Mayor. The old Mayor, Antoine Siger, was nominated by the mulatto gang to succeed himself. Feeling ran high, but the defeat of the grafters seemed certain. At the last moment the old Mayor appointed the boss, Sevère, President of the Election Board. It was as though some Tammany mayor had chosen Tweed to count the ballots. Labat, with several supporters, went to the Hôtel de Ville to try to arrange for a more trustworthy Election Board. A number of shots were fired, and Siger, who stood close beside Labat, was killed.

"The shots were meant for Labat," she said. "It was the old gang who fired. Why should we have killed Siger? We were sure of winning the election. But the administration was all against us; the Advocate-General, all the judges, owed their positions to Sevère. So they tried to convict the leaders of our party. My husband was away in the interior, voting from our estate, but they arrested him too. The trial lasted a long time, but they only proved the guilt of their own party.

"The day after Siger was killed there was another panic. It was terrible. The whites expected a negro uprising. The old gang had told the blacks that we were planning

to massacre them. And the Governor from France, who is a fool, made matters worse."

Since this tragedy Fort de France has been governed administratively. No elections being permitted, the old corrupt gang is still in power. Nothing but the presence of the mounted gendarmes, who patrol the island day and night, prevents wholesale bloodshed. As it is, duelling is incessant. Her husband had been challenged three times in the last year. He was wounded in the first encounter, drew blood in the second, killed his man in the third. As a result, he had been compelled to flee away by night to the neighboring English island of St. Lucia. She had stayed behind in Martinique to keep his paper alive. But every day she had been insulted in the street, every mail brought threatening letters, at night she slept with a revolver under her pillow. At last she could stand it no longer, and was now on her way to join her husband. Afraid of some hostile demonstration—even of arrest if her departure were known—she had masked as a widow and had been rowed aboard, not from the public dock, but from the plantation of a friend farther down the bay.

We sat up all through the soft southern night—it was useless, she said, for her to try to sleep—talking of the political tangles of the colony. It was a sordid, almost hopeless, story that she told. It was not exaggerated, for I have since had opportunity to verify it.

The morning held another surprise for me. As we drew up to the dock at St. Lucia, I saw a man running wildly towards us. And it is not often that you see a well-dressed man running in the West Indies. He wore a spotless white suit and an elegant drooping Panama hat. He was a negro —as black as the coal-piles ashore.

"*Mon mari!*" And my beautiful lady was leaning over the rail, frantically throwing kisses to the grinning black.

As soon as the gangplank was down he dashed aboard and into her arms. I have seldom seen a more affectionate greeting

. . . . . .

Barbados is not very impressive from the sea. It is a coral island and flat. But the open harbor of Carlisle Bay is one of the busiest ports in the West Indies. Anchored in between the great seagoing steamers is a host of small fishing-boats. One of the first things you notice as your ship comes to anchor—one of the things which distinguish Barbados from the other islands—is the number of trim police-boats which dart about the harbor, bringing order out of a maze of traffic much as a London "bobby" controls things on the Strand.

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century a ship, bearing English colonists to a neighboring island, cast anchor off Barbados. A landing party went ashore, and, finding it a rich country, carved into the bark of a mango tree: "James, King of England and this island." Since then the sovereignty of Great Britain has been continuous. And Barbados stands in striking contrast to the other islands, which have changed their flags almost as frequently as the neighboring Latin-American republics have changed their Presidents.

The police-boats in the harbor are only a foretaste of the orderliness which meets you ashore. The fruits of the three-hundred-year English rule are apparent everywhere. So impressive was the law-abiding air of the place that one of the first things I did was to drive out to the centre of all this order—the police headquarters.

Starting from the miniature Trafalgar Square in the miniature metropolis of Bridgetown, the carriage passed along the most beautiful, the most superbly kept road I

have ever seen. It is of coral rock, which disintegrates in the air till it looks like cement and is almost as soft as turf. On each side are low white walls, over which hang the gorgeous blossoms of the tropics—the brilliant red hibiscus, a deep purple wistaria-like trailer, and an occasional flambeau tree. Towering above you all along the way are the most magnificent of all trees—the royal palms, lofty Doric columns of living marble, crowned with superb capitals of agate green. And back of the flowering gardens, under these graceful giant palms, are neat, prosperous-looking English homes. Their wide bungalow verandas give an impression of cool, care-free, almost lazy ease.

Then, abruptly, come the suburbs of negro slums, cabins of palm-thatch, old boards, and scraps of corrugated iron. The shacks are so crowded together, the alleyways so choked with children, that it makes an ordinary ant-hill seem sparsely settled. It is appalling. In our city slums more than half the misery and indecency of overcrowding is hidden by substantial walls. Here it is all open to the eye—and unspeakably ugly.

It is a vast relief when the road comes to open country. The white garden walls of the English, the squalid hovels of the blacks, give place to the dense golden-green cane-brakes. On every hillock there is a fat, stolid Dutch windmill, which looks weirdly out of place among the cocoa palms. Here and there you see a blotch of darker green—the park which surrounds some manor house.

After half an hour's drive we came to such a park, and, turning in through the gateway, found a charming, well-kept garden. The carriage stopped before a low but spacious bungalow. There was nothing to show that it was not a private home except for the sentry before the door.

In a reception-room upstairs filled with military pictures and portraits of the royal family I found Colonel Kaye, the

Inspector-General. He is so gracious that he seems more at home on the veranda of the Savannah Club than at Headquarters. But this mild-mannered gentleman is police chief over a population of nearly 200,000, only 16,000 of whom are white. There are 166 square miles in the island; it is the most densely populated agricultural district in the world.

"However, there is not much crime," Colonel Kaye remarked. And, to prove his statement, he showed me the calendar of the Supreme Court, which was about to convene. "There are only fifteen cases of felony this term. The court sits every four months. Say an average of fifty serious crimes a year."

He said this in a matter-of-fact way, with no show of pride. But I doubt if there is any community of 200,000 in America which could make so good a showing. There are no regular troops in Barbados. A handful of white men rule 175,000 negroes and keep the rate of felonies down to fifty a year!

"The crime which gives us most trouble," continued the Colonel, "is setting fire to the sugar-cane. This offence comes from three sources: Sometimes the boys do it—just to see the blaze. Sometimes a man who has been discharged does it for revenge. But generally it is in order to get work. When the cane has been scorched, it has to be milled at once."

And this points to an added wonder. The mass of the negroes are deathly poor. During the few months of harvest and planting an able-bodied man on the sugar estates earns twenty cents a day. But during the long winter months some become so utterly destitute that they put a torch to the cane—and risk ten years of penal servitude—to hasten the harvest and their chance at twenty cents a day. Yet in spite of such poverty there are only fifty serious crimes a year.

THE KEEPERS OF THE PEACE IN BARBADOS.

A BULLOCK CART IN MARTINIQUE.

Colonel Kaye, like all the Englishmen I met on the island, was convinced that the quiet and order in Barbados is due to the limited suffrage. The right to vote depends on the ownership of considerable property. This qualification eliminates many of the poorer whites, the descendants of the indentured servants, and almost all the negroes.

The race domination is frankly acknowledged. The island has always been and still is run for the whites—"the better-class whites." The abolition of slavery in 1834 did not alter this in the least. Accepting this premise, the island is well run, very well run. It is a heavenly place to live for the white man who can ignore the frightful misery of the negroes. And there can be no doubt that the English residents succeed in shutting their eyes to everything which is unpleasant or threatening. They get more pleasure out of existence than any people with whom I have ever mingled. It is an energetic, gay life of outdoor sports, cold baths, picnics and balls, afternoon tea, and iced drinks.

The social life centers in the parish of Hastings, two miles down the coast from Bridgetown. The beautiful parade of the deserted barracks has been turned into a playground. The Savannah Club, on a polo day, realizes the English ideal of gayety. The wide, shaded verandas are crowded with fair-complexioned English girls in lawn dresses—just such as are to be seen at a Henley boat race or the Derby. Clean-limbed, clear-skinned Englishmen, in flannels, stroll about between the tea-tables trying to be sentimental without looking so. Inside is a cardroom where "bridge" is being taken seriously. The inveterate golfers are off early, as their course crosses the polo field. Tennis is in full swing on half a dozen excellent courts. The grayheads and children are busy on the croquet grounds. The polo ponies are being rubbed and saddled. At last the

Governor and his American wife drive up in their trap. The police band begins to play, and the game begins. The scene recalls some of Kipling's stories of the "hill life" at Simla.

A quarter of a mile farther down the coast is the great Marine Hotel, the largest and by far the best hotel I found in the West Indies. It is the scene of the big island dances, and is almost as important to the social life of the place as the Club. In its lobbies you meet Britishers from South America and the islands waiting for the Royal Mail boat home. They are a sturdy, adventurous people. But it is an aggravating fact that they will not tell the stories—such fascinating stories they might be—with which their frontier life has been filled. The taciturnity of a Londoner never troubles my spirit—how could a dweller in the dismal city have anything interesting to say? But when I meet a Britisher fresh from the jungle, tanned and scarred, who refuses to talk about anything but the new Dreadnoughts, I grind my teeth and curse the law against manslaughter.

It is not quite all gayety in Barbados. Sometimes—not often—I heard complaints about the steady fall in the price of sugar. As this is the one industry of the island, and the price has been falling for many years, it is a serious problem to the thoughtful. But I found very few who were willing to do so gloomy a thing as think about the future. One of the most popular social functions of the island is furnished by the auction sales. I was invited to a tennis party one afternoon, and when I arrived I found the plans were changed.

"The Broughton auction sale is set for to-day, so we decided to go over and see it instead of playing tennis," my hostess said.

We all piled into carriages, and, after a beautiful ride into the interior, we turned through an old gateway, past

an Elizabethan lodge built of coral stone, into a century-old park. Up the drive I could see an old manor house, which, if it were not for the palms and the flaming hibiscus, might well have been in Surrey or Kent. There was a crowd of carriages about the door; the stable court was full of them. The porch was dense with well-dressed people, as though it were some grand reception.

"All the best people come to the auctions," my hostess said. "Even the Governor comes sometimes."

As we drove up there was a clamor of merry greetings, for in Barbados everybody who is anybody knows everybody else who is anybody. We pushed our way through the crowd into the dismantled house. The rooms were splendidly large, decorated after the noble old English fashion; the woodwork—some of it finely carved—was almost all mahogany. But the carpets were up, the furniture ranged stiffly along the wall, everything movable was numbered. The sale was in progress in the dining-room. The great mahogany table was loaded down with plate and glassware and porcelain. It was being sold in blocks at a pitifully low price. And there was the finest mahogany sideboard I have ever seen. It was simple in its craftsmanship; almost all the lines were straight; but it was marvellously heavy, built in the old days when the precious wood was as cheap in the islands as pine. It had been in the family over a century. And it sold for forty dollars! Such a piece could not be bought on Fifth Avenue for five hundred. I was tempted to bid—it was such a rare old treasure—but I never hope to have a house big enough to hold it.

My party had not come to buy—it was only a social reunion. Most of the island aristocracy was there, and every one enjoyed himself immensely. Out in the corridor I noticed a lonely group of furniture labelled "Not for sale."

There were a tall hall-clock of ancient make, a high-backed rocking-chair, and two family portraits.

"Isn't it a shame!" I heard some one say. "I would like to buy that clock."

It seemed cruel to want to take even these few relics. I wondered what last leaf of this fine old family of Broughtons had saved these tokens out of the wreck. The old high-back chair—how many generations of happy mothers had rocked their babies to sleep in it! And now the youngest of the line cannot find heart to part with it. Some old maid she is, I imagine. She will rock away what is left of her life in that high-back chair in some strange, dismal room, with only the ticking of the ancient clock and the two old portraits for company. And the laughter which came echoing down the dismantled hall seemed to me as horrid as the merrymaking at a Flemish funeral.

For none of the fine hospitable Barbadian houses can escape a similar fate unless the price of sugar goes up and the negroes begin to bear fewer children. And neither of these things seems probable.

But the climate is delicious. Each day, as it passes, is perfect. The trade winds, blowing unobstructed from the coast of Africa, bring a stimulating vigor to the air which is unknown elsewhere in the tropics. It would be hard to imagine a more healthy place. While I was there the island was quarantined for yellow fever. There had been six cases among the two hundred thousand people. None of them died, and the one effect of the quarantine was a vigorous polishing of sewer-pipes. As every one familiar with the tropics knows, a port under quarantine is clean, even if at other times it is unspeakably dirty, for quarantine hurts business and makes the sanitary officials wake up. But Barbados, being English, is always clean. So the outbreak, while I was there, had no visible effect.

Anyhow, it is a lotus island. Nobody worries. It is so delicious to sit on a shaded veranda and hear the clink of ice that even the residents forget the misery of the negroes and the steady fall of sugar. So there is no excuse for a mere visitor not to find the place charming.

CHAPTER II

A CARGO OF BLACK IVORY

ALTHOUGH the outbreak of yellow fever in Barbados was not serious, the quarantine wrecked my plans. I had expected to leave the island on the Royal Mail boat for Colon. But as long as the quarantine lasted no ship which touched at Bridgetown would be allowed to enter any other Caribbean port.

If I had been a Mohammedan or something Oriental I suppose I would have said "Kismet—Allah-il-Allah," and enjoyed myself. It is a delectable island. But being a child of the Western Hurry Land, and overdue on the Isthmus, I fretted exceedingly. The officials of the Health Department had no idea when the embargo would be lifted. It might last a week—or a couple of months. I once tried to call on a Russian editor in St. Petersburg. His wife told me that he was in jail.

"When will he get out?" I asked.

"Even God doesn't know," she said.

I was in a similar condition of uncertainty. Even the American Consul did not know when I could get out.

But the quarantine had not been in force two days, when I found a way out. On the veranda of the hotel I overheard two men in earnest conversation. One was excitedly insisting that it was an absolute necessity for him to be in Martinique within a few days. The older man, a fine looking G. A. R. type of American, said:

"I'm sorry, I can't help you get to Martinique, but I could fix it, if you wanted to go to Colon."

I told him my troubles without further introduction.

He turned out to be a man named Karner employed by the Isthmian Canal Commission to recruit laborers. It had been an interesting job—experimenting in racial types. From first to last the Commission had tried about eighty nationalities, Hindoo coolies, Spaniards, negroes from the States, from Africa, from Jamaica, from the French Islands, to settle down to those from Barbados. They have proved the most efficient. This recruiting officer was about to send over a consignment of seven hundred on an especially chartered steamer. They would avoid the quarantine restrictions by cruising about the six days necessary for yellow fever to mature. Then, if their bill of health was clear they could dock. My new acquaintance was not exactly enthusiastic. It would be easy to arrange for my passage on this boat, he said, but he did not think that one white passenger among this cargo of blacks would have a very pleasing time. But of course I jumped at the chance; it was this—or the risk of being held up for weeks. I was considerably cheered when I looked over the boat. I was to have the first cabin all to myself and the freedom of the little chart-house deck under the bridge. With a pipe and a bag full of ancient books about the brave old days on the Spanish Main, I could even expect to enjoy the trip.

After leaving the boat I met Karner at his office and we went to the recruiting station. On our way we walked through the little park which is grandiloquently called Trafalgar Square. There must have been two or three thousand negroes crowded along one side of it—applicants for work on the Canal Zone and their friends. The commission pays negro laborers ten cents an hour, and ten hours a day. Their quarters are free, and meals cost thirty cents a day. It is a bonanza for them. Barbados is vastly over-populated, work is scant, and wages unbelievably low.

Last year the Barbadian negroes on the Isthmus sent home money-orders to their relatives for over $300,000, so there is no end of applicants.

Several policemen kept the crowd in order and sent them up into the recruiting station in batches of one hundred at a time. The examination took place in a large, bare loft. When Karner and I arrived we found two or three of his assistants hard at work. As the men came up, they were formed in line around the wall. First, all those who looked too old, or too young, or too weakly, were picked out and sent away. Then they were told that no man who had previously worked on the canal would be taken again. I do not know why this rule has been made, but they enforced it with considerable care. One or two men admitted having been there before and went away. Then the doctor told them all to roll up their left sleeves, and began a mysterious examination of their forearms. Presently he grabbed a man and jerked him out of the line, cursing him furiously.

"You thought you could fool me, did you? It won't do you any good to lie, you've been there before. Get out!"

I asked him how he told, and he showed me three little scars like this, .˙., just below the man's elbow.

"That's my vaccination mark," he said. "Every negro who has passed the examination before has been vaccinated like that, and I can always spot them."

He caught two or three other men in the same way and sent them out on a run. They protested vehemently, one arguing that a dog had bitten him there. But the telltale white marks stood out clearly against their black skins; there was no gainsaying them.

Then he went over the whole line again for tracoma, rolling back their eyelids and looking for inflammation. Seven or eight fell at this test. Then he made them strip and went over them round after round for tuberculosis,

heart trouble, and rupture. A few fell out at each test. I don't think more than twenty were left at the end out of the hundred, and they certainly were a fine and fit lot of men.

All during the examination I had never seen a more serious-looking crowd of negroes, but when at last the doctor told them that they had passed, the change was immediate. All their teeth showed at once and they started to shout and caper about wildly. A flood of light came in through the window at the end, and many streaks shot down through the broken shingles on their naked bodies. It was a weird sight—something like a war dance—as they expressed their relief in guffaws of laughter and strange antics. It meant semi-starvation for themselves and their families if they were rejected, and untold wealth—a dollar a day—if they passed. They were all vaccinated with the little triangular spots, their contracts signed, and they went prancing down-stairs to spread the good news among their friends in the square.

Sailing day was a busy one. They began putting the cargo of laborers aboard at sun-up. When I went down about nine to the dock, it seemed that the whole population of darkest Africa was there. I never saw so many negro women in my life. All of them in their gayest Sunday clothes, and all wailing at the top of their voices. Every one of the departing negroes had a mother and two or three sisters and at least one wife—all weeping lustily. There was one strapping negro lass with a brilliant yellow bandanna on her head who was something like the cheer-leader at a college football game; she led the wailing.

A number would be called, the negro whose contract corresponded would step out of the crowd. A new wail would go up. Again there was a medical examination—especially a search for the recent vaccination marks. For

often a husky, healthy negro will pass the first examination and sell his contract. Then by boat loads the men were rowed aboard.

Later in the day I encountered the yellow-bandannaed negress, who had been leading the noise at the dock, sitting contentedly in Trafalgar Square surrounded by three very jovial young bucks. The negroes certainly have a wonderful ability for changing their moods. My heart had been quite wrung by the noise she made when her lover had left in the morning.

About four o'clock I rowed out and went aboard. Such a mess you never saw—what the Germans would call "*ein Schweinerei.*" There were more than seven hundred negroes aboard, each with his bag and baggage. It was not a large boat, and every square inch of deck space was utilized. Some had trunks, but most only bags like that which Dick Whittington carried into London. There was a fair sprinkling of guitars and accordeons. But the things which threw the most complication into the turmoil were the steamer chairs. Some people ashore had driven a thriving trade in deck chairs—flimsy affairs, a yard-wide length of canvas hung on uncertain supports of a soft, brittle wood. The chairs took up an immense amount of room, and the majority of "have nots" were jealous of the few who had them. It was almost impossible to walk along the deck without getting mixed up in a steamer chair.

There were more formalities for the laborers to go through. The business reminded me of the way postal clerks handle registered mail. Every negro had a number corresponding to his contract, and the utmost precaution was taken to see that none had been lost and that no one who had not passed the medical examination had smuggled himself on board.

We pulled up anchor about six. All the ship's officers had moved into the saloon; it was the only clean place

aboard—a sort of white oasis in the black Sahara. For fresh air the only available space was the chart-house deck. There was so much to do in getting things shipshape that none of the officers appeared at dinner. So I ate in solitary grandeur. The cabin was intolerably stuffy, for at each of the twenty-four portholes the round face of a grinning negro cut off what little breeze there was. There was great competition among the negroes for the portholes and the chance to see me eat. As nearly as I could judge the entire seven hundred had their innings. I faced out the first three courses with a certain amount of nonchalance, but with the roast the twenty-four pairs of shining eyes—constantly changing—got on my nerves. I did scant justice to the salad and dessert, absolutely neglected the coffee, and, grabbing my writing-pad, sought refuge up on deck. The steward, I suppose, thought I was seasick.

The negroes very rapidly accommodated themselves to their new surroundings. The strangeness of it in some mysterious way stirred up their religious instincts; they took to singing. A very sharp line of cleavage sprang up. The port side of the ship was Church of England, the starboard, Nonconformist. The sectarians seemed to be in the majority, but were broken up into the Free Baptists, Methodists, etc. The Sons of God would go forth to war on the port side, while something which sounded like a cross between "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and Salvation Army rag-time was in full blast to starboard.

There was only one song, a secular one, on which they united. The tune ran something like "Tammany," and as near as I could catch the words the chorus ran:

"Fever and ague all day long
At Panama, at Panama,
Wish you were dead before very long
At Panama, at Panama."

Not exactly a cheerful song, but they sang it with great fervor.

The next day I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the ship's officers. The captain, a Liverpool man, was short and built on the lines of an English bull. His childhood had been spent in France and he was absolutely bilingual. He had read much more than his hearty British tar's look suggested. I sat at his right. Opposite me was the purser, a light weight—a peach and cream complexion and very dudish. He combed his hair carefully and groomed his finger-nails—"a gay dog with the ladies, doncherno." At my right was the first officer, a fine type of straight limbed, straightforward Englishman. Under thirty now, he will be a philosopher at forty. He had not read as many books as the captain, but he had thought a lot more about each one. He was the best of the crowd. Opposite him was the doctor, an old salt, born in Barbados. He had an immense waistline, but his legs tapered down at a sharp angle to ridiculously small feet. His face was broad, his beard cut at the same angle as his legs, his hair flared out from his head in an amazing way, so that he looked just like a turnip. Next to the first officer sat the chief engineer. He was also an oldish man from Barbados. He and the doctor hated each other cordially and took opposite sides on every question except the glory of Barbados. Any slur cast at their native isle brought them shoulder to shoulder in an instant. The second officer was a youngster with a squint eye. He never took any part in the conversation except to startle everyone, now and then, with an explosive request to pass him the pepper-sauce.

During coffee, while various yarns were being swapped, the doctor woke up suddenly out of his coma—the state, according to English novels, into which all elderly, fat Britishers sink after a full dinner. He looked around vac-

antly for a moment, and then, without waiting for any break in the conversation, began ponderously:

"One time on a P. and O. boat—down in the Red Sea—so hot—we had to stop—to cool the engines . . ."

But he got no further; the chief groaned and threw a biscuit at him. The purser jumped up and tied a napkin over his face. Everyone howled derisively. The captain leading, they recited in unison:

"One time on a P. and O. boat—down in the Red Sea—so hot—we had to stop—to cool the engines——"

By this time the doctor had pulled the napkin from his mouth, and, calling them all "bloody rotters," he relapsed into sullen silence.

"What's the story?" I asked.

"Oh, you'll hear it—often enough before you reach Colon," the captain said. "In self-defence we can't allow it at dinner."

"When he starts it," the purser put in, "'one time on a P. and O. boat,' you'd better yell for assistance—it's awful!"

Then came another interruption. Suddenly all these diverse Englishmen, who did not appear to be very friendly, were brought together with a snap. There was a sharp commotion on the deck above us, the growl of many angry voices, some high-pitched curses, and the rush of many feet. Then in the flash of an eye these Englishmen showed me why their race owns half the earth.

"Come on, boys," the captain said, as he jumped up.

A queer idea shot into my mind that the order which sent the Light Brigade charging down the hill of Balaklava must have sounded like that. But there was no time to develop the idea, for we were all running up the companionway at top speed.

The soft southern moonlight was shining down on something very much like an inferno—a tangle of long sinewy

black arms ending in clenched fists, distorted black faces, the whites of eyes, and gleaming teeth—and the low-pitched angry growl of a fighting mob.

The captain's neck seemed to disappear. His head sank right down on his square shoulders. With a yell he led the charge, and all of us—in white duck—plunged into the black turmoil. Seven against seven hundred. Englishmen certainly know how to use their fists. Every time they struck somebody went down. We ploughed our way along the deck to the storm centre. The captain gripped a man and shook him like a rag. We all followed his example, up to the limit of our strength. Personally, I felt like the tail of the dog, for the man whom the Fates thrust into my clutches was three times my strength.

One of the laborers, waving a guitar in his hand like a banner, jumped on a box and yelled to the crowd to rush us.

"Shut up," the captain snapped, "or I'll put a bullet into you!"

It seemed as though every one at once saw the glint of his revolver. A sort of unearthly moan went up from the negroes. They were utterly cowed. Most of them fell on their faces and tried to crawl away.

"Here, you constables," the captain called, putting up his revolver, "who started this muss?"

Ten of the huskiest negroes, it seemed, had been made special constables. They had been discreetly absent during the disturbance, but now turned up trying hard to look heroic. They singled out two of the seven men we held—I am sure it was an absolutely haphazard selection. Without further ado, with no pretence of a trial, these two men were put in irons and thrown into the brig.

Then we went back to finish our coffee and cigars. I asked the captain if he thought we had caught the real trouble-makers.

"Probably not," he said, "but what does it matter? We gave them a good scare. It's pretty hot down in the brig. We'll keep these two there a couple of hours and when they come out they'll be sure to exaggerate the horrors of the place. It will put the fear of God into all of them. Besides, it will give a good deal of prestige to the constables. If we had questioned their word, their authority wouldn't have amounted to anything. You can't temporize with natives, you've got to act quick—even if you aren't right. It isn't exactly justice, but it works."

It is this quick, fearless action and cynical disregard of abstract justice which enables England to hold the lid down on her colonies. I could not help questioning the morality of such actions, but as the captain said, "it works." I guess it is the inevitable ethics of empire. It had saved what was a very critical situation. If they had made that rush, they would have swept us overboard in a minute. Sooner or later, many of them would have been hanged for it. As it was, we had cracked a score of their heads, imprisoned two who were probably innocent. No serious harm—beyond injured feelings—had come to any of them and order was restored.

The captain himself did not feel entirely at ease, but I soon found that his scruples were the opposite from mine.

"Perhaps I ought to have shot that beggar," he said. "It don't do to bluff, with a crowd like that. I was in a muss once on the China sea—a couple of hundred coolies as deck passengers. I don't remember what started the rumpus. The captain tried to bluff them"—he paused to engender suspense—"It didn't work. Before we got through there were three of us dead and about twenty chinks. I guess some of the rest are still in the penal colony. A quick shot might have saved it all. Keep your guns in your pock-

ets till you have to shoot—and then don't hesitate. But I guess this lesson will keep them quiet."

And the incident was closed.

I began to feel an ache in my leg, and, looking down, I saw blood on my white trousers. During the excitement I had barked my shin on one of those infernal deck chairs. The doctor took me to his cabin to disinfect and bandage the wound.

"One time on a P. and O. boat," he began, "down in the Red Sea . . ."

But the purser came along and threatened to throw the doctor to the sharks if he inflicted the story on me. I was getting quite curious about what did happen on that P. and O. But the doctor was too busy reviling the purser to finish the yarn.

That night we ran into heavy weather, and I have never seen anything messier than the deck in the morning. Seven hundred seasick negroes are not a pretty sight, but there was a certain selfish joy in seeing that this storm had made an end of those steamer chairs. They were all smashed to splinters the moment we began to roll.

"I hope," the captain said at breakfast, "that this keeps up. Seasickness will take the mischief out of them."

But his wish was not granted. By noon we had run into a sea like a sheet of corrugated iron, just little ripples, and a metallic look. We were running about eleven degrees north, and it certainly was hot. There was not a breath of wind. The negroes recovered with their habitual quickness, and were in an unusually amiable mood. They turned out willingly to help the crew wash down the decks. I have never seen water evaporate so quickly. One minute the decks were glistening with water, the next they were already dry, within five minutes they were too hot to walk on barefooted.

Of course these negroes were not very comfortable. But they were free! There are many men still living who can remember when slave-ships sailed these very waters. It is hard to imagine what life on a slave-ship must have been. The effort to reconstruct the horrors of those days—not so very long past—makes the inconveniences which this cargo of black ivory suffer seem small indeed. Above all, there was no one among them who was not here of his own free will. There was not one of them whose heart was not full of hope—this voyage to them all meant opportunity. Think what it must have meant to their forefathers! Nothing which happened to them after they were landed and sold could have approached the agony of the long voyage in irons, thrown pell-mell into the hold of a sailing ship. Not knowing their captors' language, they could not know the fate in store for them. The world does move.

When, in the far future, the history of our times is written, I think that our father's generation will be especially remembered because it abolished the negro slave trade. They invented steam-engines and all manner of machines; they cut down a great many trees and opened up a continent and did other notable things. But their crowning glory was that they made an end of chattel-slavery.

Until these imported negro laborers are handed over to the United States authorities at Colon they are under the paternal care of Great Britain. The conditions under which they have been recruited, the terms of their contracts, have been carefully supervised by English officials. Above all, their health is guarded. Their daily menus—and they are quite sumptuous—have been ordered by His Majesty's government in London.

The sunset that second evening was glorious. Right over our bow was a pyramid of soft white clouds; the sun sinking behind them brought to light a glory of rich harmonic

colors. The whole mass shone and glistened like the great thirteenth-century window in the chancel of Chartres. There was gold, bright and flaming on the edges, and the heart of the cloud was hot orange. The sky above, clear across to the east, was red, a thousand, thousand shades of red. And the glory of the sky fell and was reflected in the metallic blackness of the sea. There was an Oriental gorgeousness about it. If one were to wave a brilliantly colored gold-embroidered Chinese shawl above an age-old lacquer tray, it would give some faint idea of the gorgeousness of this tropical sunset.

Several of the ship's officers were on the deck watching it, and when at last the color faded the first officer spoke up.

"It's strange," he said, "in these Western waters you get the best sunsets; the dawn is flat and not at all impressive. It is just the opposite in the East. The sunrises count out there."

It was a new idea to me, and I asked the others if they had found it so. They all backed his statement, recalling gorgeous sunrises in the Orient, but no one could offer any plausible explanation of the fact, they all affirmed.

In a moment's pause the doctor started up, "I remember one time on the Red Sea—on the P. & O. boat—it was so hot—" That was as far as he got. The younger men pulled his beard, ruffled his stray hairs, and poked his ribs till he went away breathing out death and destruction on all of them.

Day after day we slipped along through that burnished sea. As a rule the negroes were cheerful and all went well until the last day. The night had been unspeakably close. It could not have been any hotter that time on the Red Sea the doctor tries to tell about when they had to stop the engines.

I crawled out before five in the morning, hoping to get

some air on deck. My stateroom was suffocating. Not one of the seven hundred negroes was asleep; they were fidgeting about from one unbearably hot position to another. A couple of the officers were up on the bridge talking in monosyllables, and I gathered that they were planning against the possibilities which the evident unrest among the negroes foretold. You read sometimes of sailors feeling in the air the approach of a tornado. It was just the same here; no one could help seeing that trouble was brewing. The men were like tinder. For five days they had been crowded on board with no chance for exercise, and now, the sun barely up, the deck was almost hot enough to fry eggs.

The fire-hose was run out and the decks flooded to cool them, and the hose was left in place to cool the men if need be.

There were a few scuffles during the morning, and four men, one after another, were ironed and chucked into the brig. It was a hard time for the crowd of negroes, but it was certainly little—if any—easier for the few white men.

Trouble came with a rush over lunch. These negroes probably had never had such excellent meals before. But the fates arranged that just this last day, when every one was wearied and cross, things should go wrong in the kitchen. Perhaps the heat had affected the cook—or perhaps some direct rays of the sun had fallen on the rice—anyhow, it was scorched beyond eating.

I suppose the first fifty negroes who were served chucked their rice overboard when they tasted it; no one is hungry in such weather. But at last it came to a trouble-maker. He swore loudly that it was not fit for a pig, that he would not stand such an outrage, that the steward was making a fortune out of them, etc. Part of what he said was unheeded, but a word here and there was taken up and passed

along, growing, of course, from mouth to mouth. Inside of five minutes every negro on board felt that life without a good portion of unscorched rice was not worth living. A growl rolled back and forth from bow to stern, growing deeper every trip. It was what we had been dreading all day.

Half our little company pushed through the angry crowd to the door of the kitchen, for there was some talk of rushing that. The first officer in the bow, the second officer in the stern, each with a negro quartermaster and two or three able-bodied seamen, manned the fire-hose. The rest of us formed a sort of reserve on the bridge. This display of force cooled their ardor for a minute. No one of them wanted to be a leader; they just groaned and growled and howled. Almost all of them had crowded up forward in the bow. The captain stepped out on the bridge and asked what was wrong. A hundred began yelling out their grievances at once. The captain—he has a voice like a fog-horn—ordered them to be still.

"I can't understand when you all speak at once. Send me a delegation, three men."

Then the negroes began to palaver. As far as I could see six men volunteered. They were all rejected. It was ten minutes before they chose their committee, and one of them lost his nerve just at the foot of the ladder to the bridge. They had to go back and get another man. Somehow it had a ludicrous, comic-opera effect.

But the captain listened gravely to the committee and tasted the rice. He threw it overboard with a grunt of disgust—it must have been pretty bad. He talked for a moment with the pale-faced steward and then stepped out where all the angry crowd could see him. I think with a good joke he might have saved the situation—but the joke failed him.

"I am sorry about the rice," he said; "I have tried my best to give you good food, and this is our last day. To-morrow we will be in harbor and have fresh food. This afternoon at three the steward will give you iced tea, and I will see that you have an especially good supper to-night."

"But we want rice!" some one yelled.

However, the captain's little speech had appealed to the common sense of most of the crowd, and only a few took up this cry. But things suddenly took another turn. There were on board some deck passengers who were not contract laborers—several families of negroes. And one girl—she did not look above eighteen—I had already noted as a source of trouble. During the captain's speech the three delegates had climbed down to the deck unobserved and were lost in the crowd. Suddenly, just when things were seeming to smooth out, this girl jumped on a trunk and began to scream:

"Where's our committee? They've put them into the black hole!"

She yelled a lot more, but no one could hear her because of the cry which went up from the mob. Her words were like a whip. In an instant the crowd would be moving. The captain put his hands to his mouth as a megaphone and bellowed to the chief officer:

"Stand by with the hose!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" the response came back.

"Now, gentlemen," he said to us, "we must shut up that girl."

I saw his hand go to his hip pocket, and suddenly I remembered the story he had told about the coolies in the China Sea, and it did not seem like comic opera any more.

He took a step forward to jump down into the maddened crowd on deck. Then help came from an unexpected source. The captain's shouted order and the reply which

rang back had quieted the crowd for an instant. It had not pacified them, but they had stopped their shouting to gather breath for fight. And just in this lull a new voice rose—or rather fell. It was from the lookout in the crow's nest.

"Land ho!" he sang out. "Land on the port bow-ow!"

It saved the day. Two or three on the outskirts of the mob ran to the rail for a look. "Land!" they shouted. Of course they could not see it; it was not yet visible from the bridge, barely in sight from the crow's nest, but equally of course they thought they could. The crowd melted away instantly; every one wanted to see land. Each cloud on the southern horizon, one after another, was picked out as South America. When a baby bumps his nose and you stop his crying by barking like a dog, it is the same thing. The excitement of "Land ho!" had made them forget the scorched rice.

"Anglo-Saxon luck," the captain said to me.

By three o'clock, when the iced tea came out, the mountain tops of Colombia were in plain sight and everybody was happy. They were further distracted from mischief about five o'clock when the wheel was thrown hard over and we turned south. We were close inland now, and the ground swell was choppy; most of them were seasick again. We dropped anchor a little after sunset and they began to sing.

There were more formalities with the health officers in the morning. Everybody had his temperature taken and was re-examined for trachoma. Those whose vaccination had not "taken," went through that ordeal again. And then these seven hundred negroes scattered over the Isthmus to help us dig the ditch.

Although they are not interested in anything but their dollar a day, I warrant that their children's children will

A CARGO OF BLACK IVORY AT THE COLON DOCK.

boast that their grandfathers worked on this job. And I wonder what their children's children will be like. These men are free, their grandfathers were slaves. That is immense progress for a race to make in two generations! If their children and grandchildren keep up the pace there is great hope for the negroes.

Just as I was going down the gang-plank, the doctor flagged me.

"One time on a P. and O. boat—down in the Red Sea . . ."

But I was too eager to be ashore to hear him out.

CHAPTER III

THE CANAL ZONE IN 1909

It was good to land at Colon and see some workaday Americans. For a month I had been among the carefully dressed Britishers of the colonies. It was a joy to see men in flannel shirts and khaki, mud up to their knees, grime on their hands, sweat on their brow—men who were working like galley slaves in a poisonous climate, digging the biggest ditch on earth, and proud of it.

Colon is a nondescript sort of place; there are docks and railway yards and Chinese lotteries and Spanish restaurants and an "Astor House" which reminds one much more of Roaring Camp than of Broadway. There are many mining towns near the Mexican border which one might well mistake for Colon.

One of the Panama Railway steamers had come in during the morning, bringing mail and newspapers from home and a number of the Canal employees back from their leave in "the States." One of them attracted my attention; he was standing on the railway platform among a group in khaki who had come down from their work to welcome him back. They were asking him endless questions about "God's country" and making much sport of his "store clothes," and especially of some Nile-green socks. He pulled up his trousers and strutted about pretending to be vastly proud of them, but it was easy to see that he was keen to be back in his work clothes. Their "joshing" was a bit rough, but good-natured. For they are a free-and-easy lot, these

modern frontiersmen of ours, undismayed by the odds against them.

The Panama Railway is our first experiment in Government ownership; and, as it is always enjoyable to see something accomplished which people have for a long time thought impossible, it was a pleasure to see what a thoroughly good railway it is.

An old college friend met me at the dock, and, after we had looked over the railway, took me out to his quarters. The boundary of the Canal Zone runs through the city of Colon, and the American side of the line is called Cristobal. Many of the houses were built by the old French company, but the camp has grown, since the American occupation. All those who work for the Canal Commission are given quarters free of charge; and they are very good quarters. Some of the bachelors have single rooms, sometimes two have a double room together. There are broad, shaded porches about all the American buildings, and every living-place is guarded with mosquito gauze. The quarters are allotted on a regular scale of so many square feet of floor space to every hundred dollars of salary. The employees are infinitely more comfortable than in any other construction camp I have ever seen. The furniture is ample: table and Morris chairs and comfortable beds. Everything is wonderfully clean. There are abundant baths for every one, and of course the sanitary arrangements are perfect. The bachelor quarters would compare favorably with the ordinary college dormitory.

We did not have time to inspect any of the married men's quarters before our train left for Panama, but my friend tells me that they are even more pleasant than his. Two minutes out from Christobel the train jumps into the jungle. And this jungle is one of the things which defeated de Lesseps. The engineering problems which face us are

practically the same as those which the French tackled; of course, we have better machinery and more money. But one of our greatest advantages is W. C. Gorgas, chief sanitary officer of the Canal Zone. He is the army doctor who cleaned up Havana. He had a much harder job on the Isthmus. Even to the layman who knows no more than I of *anopheles* and *stegomyia*, the excessively heavy vegetation of the jungle looks threateningly sinister. It is Colonel Gorgas who has pulled its teeth. My friend tells me that there has not been a case of yellow fever on the Zone for three and a half years. And to-day there are only a quarter as many men in the hospital with the dreaded Chagres fever as there were in 1906. The health statistics of the Zone compare favorably with those of any of our home cities.

There was a motley crowd on our train. In the second class carriage there were merry West Indian negroes, sullen Spanish and light-hearted Italian laborers. I noticed especially a seat full of Martinique women—their gaudy, elaborate turbans would mark them anywhere. Close beside them were some East Indian coolies—men with Caucasian features and ebony skin. They wear queer little embroidered caps; it is all that is left of their native costume. The faces of some of them are remarkably fine and intellectual. There was also a fair sprinkling of Chinese.

Most noticeable in my carriage was a group of Panamanian women, darker skinned than the women of Spain, but still keeping many characteristics of the mother land. My friend called them "spiggoty" women, and then told me that "spiggoty" is Zone slang for anything native, because in the early days the Panamanians, when addressed, used to reply, "No spiggoty Inglis."

Most of the first-class passengers, however, were Americans. Some were evidently of the Administration—their

soft hands and clean clothes marked them. And I imagine that they are rather looked down upon by the "men on the line," the civil and mechanical engineers, who swagger about, plainly proud of the marks of toil. And there are women too—clean-cut American girls, just such as you would see on a train leading into a co-education college town.

"Gatun!" the conductor calls.

Gatun and Culebra are, I suppose, the two Isthmian names most known in the States. My friend pointed out to me the toes of the great dam. But it isn't a dam they are building; it is a mountain range. It is to be half a mile wide and a mile and a half long, high enough to hold the water up to a level of eighty-five feet above the sea. They have barely commenced work on this great wall, but it already presents a suggestion of its future massiveness which makes the newspaper sensations about its inadequacy a joke. How could a wall fifteen times as wide as it is high fall over? There are some chronic critics who say that the water will leak through it. But this dam is only a part of the wall of hills which will hold in the great lake. And why this specially prepared hill should be more porous than the others, which nature has thrown together haphazard, is more than I can see.

From Gatun the train goes through territory which is to be the lake. For twenty-three miles the ships will cross this artificial lake to Culebra Cut. Never before has man dreamed of taking such liberties with nature, of making such sweeping changes in the geographical formation of a country. Here are we Americans dropping down into the heart of a jungle of unequaled denseness, building a young mountain, balancing a lake of 160 odd square miles on the top of the continental divide, gouging out a cañon 10 miles long, 300 feet wide, and in some places over 250 feet deep.

Think about that for a minute and then be proud that you are an American.

All the technical things my friend told me about millions of yards of subaqueous excavation, and so forth, meant nothing to me. But looking out of the car window mile after mile as we passed through what is soon to be the bed of this artificial lake, I caught some faint idea of the magnitude of the project.

"Look!" my friend cried suddenly. "See that machine —it looks like a steam crane—it is a track-shifter. Invented by one of our engineers. You see, on the dumps, where we throw out the spoil from the cuts, we have to keep shifting the tracks to keep the top of the dump level. Well, it took an awful lot of time to do it by hand. So we developed that machine. It just takes hold of a section of track, rails and ties and all, hoists it up out of its ballast, and swings it over to where we want it. Does in an hour what a gang of twenty men could not do in a week. They're not used much anywhere else in the world. You see, there isn't any other place where they have to shift track on so large a scale."

They seem vastly proud of this track-shifter down here.

"And this is Gorgona," he said, a minute later. "Those shops over there are the largest of their kind in the world—repairing machinery. We can mend anything in there from a locomotive to a watch-spring."

One gets tired of this "largest in the world" talk. But it is only as you accustom yourself to the idea that each integral part of the work is of unequaled proportions that you begin to sense the grandeur of the whole undertaking. The largest dam, the highest locks, the greatest artificial lake, the deepest cut, the biggest machine shops, the heaviest consumption of dynamite, the most wonderful sanitary system—all these and others which I forget are unique—the top point of human achievement. After an hour of this

talk I gained a new respect for Uncle Sam—a new respect for his children who have conceived and are executing this gigantic thing.

The whistle blew in the shops at Gorgona as we pulled into the station, and there was a rush for places in the train. Four men just from their work tumbled into the double seat before me. Fine fellows they were, despite the yellow malarial tinge of their skin and the grimy sweat which ran in little rivulets down their sooty faces. The hands with which they brushed off the beads of perspiration were black and greasy from their work. They wore no coats, and their shirts, wringing wet, stuck close to their backs, and the play of their muscles as they relaxed after the day's strain showed as plainly as if they had been nude. I tried to follow their conversation—which was very earnest—but could not, as it was all about some new four-cylinder engine with a mysterious kind of alternate action.

A few miles farther down the line we came to Empire. The scene on the platform recalled a suburban station on some line out of New York, for, except a few Chinamen and Spaniards, the crowd was just the same as that which comes down to meet the commuters on an evening train after the work-day is over. One group caught my attention. A young mother of thirty, in the crispest, whitest lawn, was holding a baby. Beside her stood a sister, like a Gibson summer girl. The younger woman held by the hand a little lad of four with Jeanne d'Arc hair, bare legs, a white Russian tunic, and a black belt. Fresh from the bath-tub they looked, all four of them. And while I was admiring the picture they made and wondering at the strange chance which had brought such a New Jersey group down here under the equator the mother's face lighted up and she waved her hand. Two of those grimy men who had sat before me swung off the steps of the car and came

towards them. One was the father. Holding his hands stiffly behind him so as not to soil anything, he bent forward and kissed his wife. Then, one after the other, the children were held up to him for a kiss. The other man, somewhat younger, took off his battered hat with a gallant sweep to the sister. He greeted her as formally as if it had been Easter Sunday on Fifth Avenue. Neither of them seemed to realize that he looked like a coal miner. They loitered behind as they went up the hill to the quarters. He walked as close to her white skirt as he dared, and had something very serious to say to her, for they laughed just as Americans do when they are talking earnestly.

It is between Gorgona and Empire that you get your first look into Culebra Cut. It is as busy a place as an anthill. It seems to be alive with machinery; there are, of course, men in the cut too, but they are insignificant, lost among the mechanical monsters which are jerking work-trains about the maze of tracks, which are boring holes for the blasting, which are tearing at the spine of the continent—steam shovels which fill a car in five moves, steam shovels as accurate and delicate as a watch, as mighty— Well, I can think of nothing sufficiently mighty to compare with these steel beasts which eat a thousand cubic yards a day out of the side of the hills.

But it is not till you get beyond the cut and, looking back, see the profile of the ditch against the sunset that you get the real impression—the memory which is to last. The scars on the side of the cut are red, like the rocks of our great Western deserts. The work has stopped, and the great black shovels are silhouetted against the red of the sky. Then there comes a moment, as your train winds round a curve, when the lowering sun falls directly into the notch of the cut and it is all illumined in an utterly unearthly glory.

The night falls rapidly in the tropics, and when, a few minutes later, we reached Panama, it was too dark to see anything of the quaint old city, so we drove at once to Ancon, the American suburb, and put up at the Tivoli, the Government hotel. It was a lucky chance which brought me there on that day, as I saw a phase of life which I might otherwise have missed. A couple of dozen Congressmen had come down on an unofficial visit to the Zone, so that when they got back to Washington and anything was said about the Canal they could jump up and contradict it, and say, "I know, because I've been there." It is safe to say that the men on the Isthmus are more afraid of Congressmen than they are of yellow fever mosquitoes. The Canal Commission has its plans all worked out; if Congress will grant them the money—and leave them alone—the Canal will be built on schedule time. Yet not only their personal reputations, but, what is much more important, the success of the work, is utterly at the mercy of Congress. Several bills are presented in each session which, if passed, would seriously cripple the work. And these bills must be acted upon by men who know little or nothing of engineering. When the men down here have nightmares, it is not of hobgoblins they dream, but of Congressmen. I certainly hope that the average of intelligence in the House is higher than among the Representatives I saw at the Tivoli. At the table next to mine, when the waiter put some ice in his glass, I heard a Congressman ask how much of the ice on the Isthmus was artificial. I could see the face of the man who was doing the honors. He deserves a medal for the serious way in which he explained that in the tropics all ice is artificial. I overheard some others discussing sanitation.

"You can never make me believe," said one, "that a mosquito bite can give a man yellow fever."

"I don't know," another replied. "But even if it is true, four million dollars is an awful lot to spend killing them."

My friend told me that one of the Congressmen, when he was shown the site of the locks at Gatun, became wildly indignant and said he thought that Congress had decided on a sea-level canal.

And these men will go home and make speeches, out of their copious ignorance, on the floor of the House, and, what is worse, among their constituents, where there is some chance of their being believed. And after every misstatement they will say, impressively, "I know, because I've been there."

After the dinner I found that a ball was to be given in honor of the Congressmen. The day's work was over, and even the presence of the critics from home could not keep the employees from having a good time. The parlor of the Tivoli makes as fine a ball-room as any I know. And a prettier, daintier crowd of women I have never seen. Hot water and grit soap had been busy on the men, and the scene, except that some of the men were in white, looked like a college dance. I was especially pleased to see the young couple I had noticed down the line. I never would have recognized the man if I had not seen him dancing with the girl. Cleaned and polished, with an orchid on the lapel of his dinner-coat, he looked about as different from the grimy young engineer of five o'clock as could well be imagined.

It was rather a shock, when I went to my room and looked out of the window, to find the moon rising out of the Pacific Ocean. There are not many places on the American continent where this phenomenon is to be seen. Of course, by looking at the map, you can see that the Isthmus is like a letter S, with Colon, the Atlantic terminus of the Canal, west of Panama on the Pacific; but somehow

it did not reconcile me to the confusion of directions. It took some time to accustom myself to looking eastward to see the Western Ocean.

I turned in with an unusual sense of satisfaction. The two big impressions that first day on the Isthmus had given me were: First, the sublime confidence of the men—the absence of any doubt as to eventual achievement. "Of course we'll dig the ditch." And, second, the *esprit de corps* implied in the "we" of that expression. I did not hear any one talk of what he as an individual was doing. Nor did I hear any one tell of what "they" were doing—it is always "we." An ink-stained clerk from the Department of Civil Administration, who never had any more intimate connection with a steam shovel than I have, said to me boastfully: "Well, we knocked the top off the record for dry excavation again this month." It is what Maeterlinck calls "the Spirit of the Hive."

For a people with such undaunted confidence and this trick of pulling together there is no limit to achievement.

CHAPTER IV

COLON AND PANAMA CITY

HAVING once crossed the Isthmus to Panama City there is very little in Colon to call one back—except the boats home.

There is nothing distinctive about Colon. There are a dozen towns scattered along the Caribbean Sea which are similarly unattractive. It has much better health now-a-days than its neighboring rivals—but there are no "tourist possibilities" in a Sanitary Record.

However, if you must go there, you will find a broad, well-paved street with shipping docks on one side—cutting off the sea breeze—and on the other a fairly regular sequence of chances to change your money to native currency, to buy a drink, a picture post-card, a Chinese curio, a lottery ticket—change your money and so on. The saloons are the most ambitious enterprises of Front Street. Two of them boast of "lady orchestras" and one advertises a "Palm Room."

The shipping business is of course immense. French, German, English and American passenger boats call regularly. And I doubt if there is a flag afloat which does not sometimes visit Colon on a freighter. The trans-shipping of cargoes to and from the Pacific makes a great show of busy-ness.

But in all this the natives of the Isthmus have little part or interest. When I last came down on a Hamburg-American boat, we picked up a deck-crew of negroes at one of the West India islands.

The Panamanian—be he gentleman in fine white linen or peon in part of a pair of overalls—sits languorously in the shade of a palm tree or a packing case and drowsily watches the rush of modern commerce—goods manufactured abroad, carried in foreign bottoms, handled by alien crews, put on an American railroad. Of the millions of dollars, pounds sterling, francs, marks which pass through his country, what little sticks in transit goes to Chinese merchants and Yankee saloon keepers.

Doubtless the Lord could have made a less ambitious people than the natives of Colon—but doubtless He never did.

There is a certain amount of historic interest in the very unimposing monument to the founders of the Panama Railroad. There is some charming surprise in the little stone church, built by the railroad for its employees—a bit of Suburban Gothic. The lack of the ivy—which will not grow in these parts—makes it look forlorn and homesick. And there is much surpassing beauty in the sea view from the Washington Hotel—a broad lawn, a file of cocoa palms and the roaring surf. The cocoanut palm is one of the most strikingly frequent—as it is one of the most lovable—features of the tropics. Their charm, I think, lies in their extreme individualism. Even in what they call a "cocoanut grove," each palm stands out alone. They have no social ties—are absolutely unconventional. Each has its peculiar list and its unique way of swaying. And there is no tree which combines so well with the sea.

Panama City—across the continent, but only two hours away—is a different proposition from Colon.

Near the railroad station the main street is distressingly like Colon for its sequence of business opportunities. But beyond the Calle 8, which like the Paris boulevards used to be a mighty fortification, you enter a city which has personality. Just to the left of what used to be the Land

Gate—there was a moat and drawbridge in the old days—stands the Church of Nuestra Senora de la Merced. It dates from the end of the seventeenth century and is the second oldest church in the city. To a large extent Panama has been Hausmannized by the American sanitary engineers. Streets have been graded and straightened and paved, disease infected shacks have been demolished. Still many crooked streets and picturesque bits remain.

No matter how short one's stop in the city a visit to the "Sea Wall" should not be omitted. This is the best remnant of the old fortifications. And there was nothing the Spanish colonial administrations did on a more imposing scale than fort building. These cost so much that the Spanish king is reported to have said that they ought to be visible from his palace in Madrid.

When the tide is in—it rises twenty feet—the waves wash the foot of the old wall. There is a waist-high parapet on top and within it a broad cement promenade. If you walk heavily the prisoners in the cells below can hear your footsteps. On the land side you can look down into the prison yard. It is distressing enough—as are prison yards the world over. Further inland you see a strange skyline—ancient church towers decorated with mother-of-pearl, and modern corrugated iron roofs. It is a comfort to know that the ugliest part of the American town of Ancon will soon disappear.

But seaward the view is by itself worth the long voyage. Up the coast to your right is Balboa—the Pacific entrance to the Canal. It is a busy, smoky place of tugs and dredges, machine-shops and the West Coast steamers. Close in shore are the three little islands of Naos, Flemengo and Culebra. It is this group which Congress has decided to fortify. Farther out you see the larger and more beautiful Taboga. The geologists say that these islands were the

side outlets of the great prehistoric volcano whose principal core made Ancon hill, back of Panama.

Straight out before you is the blue Pacific—it knows how to be bluer than the Atlantic ever dreamed of.

To your left the peaks of the Cordilleras—which the Canal pierces at its lowest divide—rise higher and higher to eastward. It is only a question of the clearness of the atmosphere how far you can see them. The coast—an alternation of white sand beach and mangrove swamp—swings around Panama Bay towards Cape Brava and the Pearl Islands. It was down there somewhere towards the edge of the horizon where Europeans first saw the Pacific from America. There is a hill within the Canal Zone, which rumor says was the eminence from which Balboa first saw the sea—it is stated as a fact in Nelson's "Five Years in Panama"—but the records show conclusively that Balboa crossed the Isthmus much further to the east.

If the sun is at just the right angle to bring out the contrast between gray and green you can see the ruins of Old Panama from the Sea Wall. All that the Buccaneer Morgan left on end in the old metropolis was the tower of the church of Saint Anastasius. The weather beaten gray stones are surrounded and overgrown by tropical vegetation. It is more than hard to see from a distance unless one knows exactly where to look.

There are two times when the Sea Wall is at its best. Just at sun-down—the breathing time in the tropics—it generally offers as good an opportunity to observe the people of Panama as one can get in a short stay. The stroll on the fortifications is as necessary an *apertitif* for some of the natives as an absinthe is for a Parisian.

But the superlative time to enjoy the Sea Wall is on a night of the dry season. The full February moon coming up out of the sea is something to hold in the memory along-

side of Rubens' Venus of the Hermitage or the Taj Mahal —things which one must travel far to see and having seen have not lived wholly in vain. By day the horizon seems very far away, but when the moon slips up over it at night, it seems almost within speaking distance.

Hardly less glorious are the moonless nights. Canopus and Eldeberon and the Southern Cross—all the stars which Stevenson loved so well—burn so close and so brilliantly, that you hold your breath in wonder that you are not scorched by their heat.

All the literature of the tropics is full of expressions of wonder at how they—once seen—call you, till like Kipling's Tommy Atkins, "you can't heed nothing else." They speak moaningly of the discomforts, the heat, the filth, the smells, the vermin, the innumerable diseases, and are surprised that people who have escaped always want to—sometimes do—come back. I think the nights—the moon and the stars—explain it.

The Cathedral Plaza, in the center of the city, is also a place of interest—and some beauty of foliage. It has never seemed to me that the Spaniards knew anything particularly worth while about architecture except what they learned from the Moors. Their architects in the American colonies seem to have forgotten most of that. There are no beautiful dwellings nor public buildings. But some of the churches are impressive—and interesting from their stories.

The Cathedral for instance was built from the private purse of a Bishop of Panama, whose father, a freed negro slave, burned charcoal on the side of Ancon Hill and peddled it on his back in the streets of the city—as one may see the peons doing to-day. The Episcopal See of Panama is the oldest on the American continent. The first church was built in a temporary colony on the Atlantic side—

Santa Maria de la Antiqua del Darien. The seat of the Bishopric, however, was soon changed to Old Panama and no trace of the earlier settlement is left. This bishop was the first of negro blood in America and probably the first of native birth to wear the mitre. Although it was started long before, the cathedral was not completed until 1760.

Its most unique architectural feature is the mother-of-pearl decoration on the crowns of the two towers. Next in value to the Peruvian wealth which flowed across the Isthmus, came the pearl trade from the islands off San Miguel Bay. The roofs of the towers were covered with fine red cement in which were embedded pearl shells from the fisheries. Even after all these years, when the sun breaks out after a shower which has washed the dust from the shells, they sparkle and flash like great jewels. They can be seen far out at sea like some giant heliograph and are mentioned as a landmark in some of the old books on navigation.

In the days when the cathedral was building the See of Panama was one of the richest in the world. Votive offerings of priceless pearls—tradition speaks of one as big as an apple—ingots of gold and silver were offered by the hardy and devout rapscallion adventurers of the day. Among other treasures the cathedral boasted an authentic Madonna by Murillo. What became of all these riches when the property of the church was sold by the State has never been satisfactorily explained by the officials involved. The lost Murillo has probably rotted away—forgotten in some garret.

The oldest church in the city is that of San Felipe Neri. The keystone of its entrance arch is dated 1688. It is close to the Plaza Bolivar. Although little of its exterior is visible—having been built about by a girls' school—it is well worth a visit. It shows how, in the buccaneer days,

the Spaniards trusted in God and built their church walls to resist a siege. San Felipe near the Sea Gate, and La Merced at the Land Gate, were redoubtable fortresses.

The Church of San Francisco on the Plaza Bolivar has been very little restored and probably stands to-day more nearly as it was built than any of the old churches. It was completed about 1740. Its old cloisters have been revised and turned into the College de la Salle by the Congregation of Christian Brothers. But the ancient convent has been torn down. The Sisters of St. Francis led a life not unlike that of the modern Trappist Monks—severe in the extreme. Once the door had closed on them they never left the Convent. After the religious orders were expelled, the halls hallowed by the sanctity of these devoted women were turned into a theatre. And there *La divine Sarah* cast her spells when she visited the Isthmus in the eighties. It was an experience which she has probably never forgotten. For she entirely upset the heart of one of Panama's leading Chinese merchants. This bizarre Celestial expressed his sentimental crisis by touching off an immense package of fire-crackers. The play was—I believe—"*La dame aux camilles*," and the scene in which Bernhardt dies so exquisitely came to an abrupt—and hysterical—end.

San Domingo is the best of the ruins. Tradition has it that the Dominican monks planned and built their own church. They had trouble with the arch near the front entrance which supported the organ loft. The first one fell as soon as the supports were removed. Again they built it, and again it fell. The same thing happened a third time. Then they decided that there was something wrong with their plan. Another monk, who was not supposed to be an engineer nor an architect, had a dream and produced a new plan. When the arch for a fourth time was completed and the supports were about to be withdrawn, the designer stood

THE VIEW FROM THE TIVOLI.

Copyright by Fishbaugh.

CULEBRA CUT IN 1909.

under it, with folded arms—staking not only his reputation as a dreamer but also his life on his inspired arch. It stood. And a most wonderful arch it is. It is almost flat, and is absolutely unique. A somewhat similar arch—copied from it, but not so long—can be seen in the Church of San Francisco. San Domingo—as well as most of the city—was destroyed by fire in 1737. There is nothing left now except the walls and this marvellous arch. If you ask any of the canal engineers whether the earthquakes are likely to disturb their work they will show you the ruins of San Domingo where this flat arch has stood—without any lateral support—for nearly three centuries.

The ruins of the old Jesuit College—which was destroyed by the same fire of 1737—are mostly torn down or built about. The chapel where these devoted missionaries worshipped is now used as a cow-shed. But some very interesting concrete decorations can still be seen.

The only other old churches are San José, on the western sea wall, and Santa Ana, Without-the-Walls. The latter was built as a thank offering for some long forgotten piece of good luck which befell El Conte de Santa Ana—a roystering grandee of the old days. It has an interesting altar service of hammered silver—at least two hundred years old, and as like as not made from some of Pizarro's Peruvian spoils.

There is an unpleasant side to Panama City. It is hinted at in the current witticism that "the Republic of Panama is the Redlight District of the Canal Zone." It is of course a gross exaggeration and an undeserved insult to the people of the country. The American authorities have passed laws—and are able to enforce them in the Canal Zone—against gambling and vice. In the territory of Panama there are neither so strict laws nor so rigid enforcement. In the two cities of Colon and Panama there are sections—

and they are the sections nearest to the American territory —which are given over to debauchery. With thirty thousand men employed on the Canal, and easy transportation along the line, there is—as might be expected—a Saturday night emigration across the border to the jurisdiction where the Ten Commandments are not so effectively backed up by the police. But on the whole the amount of red paint which is smeared over the Republic of Panama by the Canal employees is surprisingly small.

As in most Latin-American countries the lottery is an established institution. It runs on a government franchise, a certain percentage goes to public charity. It rents its offices from the Bishop of Panama—they are in the ground floor of the Episcopal Palace. It is strictly "honest" and so heavily mulcted by the authorities that the stockholders do not get the extravagant dividends one would suppose from estimating the chances.

The roulette wheels of the French days have given place to "poker rooms." They are no longer licensed by the government but are still an unmitigated disgrace. The saying goes that "a sucker is born every minute." Having watched one of these games a few minutes, I have decided that most of the "suckers" grow up to what looks like manhood and come to the Isthmus. In these "poker rooms" the "house rakeoff" is so high that a filled table is said to net the proprietor $15.00 gold an hour. This is sure income, "the house" gets it no matter who wins. And it is practically impossible to make up your own table. Some of the "house professionals"—notorious sharpers—are sure to "sit in."

The psychology of the men who buck such a game is beyond me. I doubt if there is an American on the Isthmus who is not entirely convinced that they are crooked. Yet the tables are generally full.

A much pleasanter side of Panama life are the Sunday night band concerts in the Cathedral Plaza. The music is sometimes surprisingly good. And the square—always picturesque with its tropical plants—is crowded with the youth and beauty of the Republic. Some of the senoritas in spite of their very dark skins are well worth turning to look at. They stroll around the little park with their rather fat mammas, followed at a respectful distance by their admirers. A Panamanian lover is a faithful swain and easily satisfied. I watched one young fellow follow his lady eight times around the square. At every turn she looked back and smiled at him. Mamma elaborately pretended to ignore this passionate pursuit. The young people did not speak to each other, and if they managed to exchange notes they were mighty clever at it.

Courtship is a long-distance affair. Most of the houses in the city are two-storied with stores downstairs. After following his lady-love from the Sunday night parade in the Plaza, the young hopeful takes up his position on the sidewalk opposite her home. If he has found favor in her sight she eventually appears on the balcony. The length of time she keeps him waiting depends on her heart beats—if they are rapid she comes quickly. Of course their conversation is decidedly limited by, (1) the distance, (2) the neighbors, and, (3) mamma who sits in a rocking chair and listens. About all the lovers can do is to smile at each other. If the young man stands under her window on other nights than Sunday, she has a right to consider that he is serious. And if he ever shows up in the afternoons, the neighbors know she has him safely hooked.

Just before Lent Panama drapes itself in bunting. These Latin-American neighbors of ours dearly love a fiesta. And the Carnival is the greatest of them all.

Weeks before Mardi Gras, the shops begin to display

masks and to advertise confetti. But the preliminary interest centers in the election of the Queen. The rivalry is high. And the election generally goes to a daughter of wealth, for the tickets have to be paid for. The last night of the contest the respective papas go down in their pockets as far as they can afford to—often farther. To have your daughter in the running is said to be almost as great a financial misfortune as to have your bank fail. As usual politics gets into it, and towards the last the contest generally sifts down to two, one of the Conservative and one of the Liberal party. It strikes an outsider as a rather unromantic, sordid way of choosing a carnival queen. But the winner—the year I was there—was pretty enough to satisfy anyone. And she looked so radiantly happy, that I am quite sure she did not realize that the "honor" had cost her father close to five thousand dollars and that she might have had a very nice motor-car instead.

The gayety lasts four days. The wealthy young men spend their time on horseback, their sisters in carriages. The costumes they get up are always gorgeous, sometimes attractive.

The women of the poorer classes content themselves with the native costume—the *pollera.* It is a very full and flouncy skirt, and a waist, cut extremely low. The *articles de luxe* are the side-combs, which are gorgeous. And many of the women have red or white flowers in their hair. Some of them giant fire-flies. Almost any sort of a gown can look attractive on an attractive woman and that is about all one can say in favor of the pollera. The men of the poorer classes go in for the fantastic and hideous.

Mr. Bidwell in his "The Isthmus of Panama" quotes an amusing bit from the letter of a French maid whom his wife had brought to Panama. In writing to a friend at home, she said: "Il y'a á present tout plein de masques dans les

rues, comme á Paris, pendant le Carnival, seulement qu' içi ce sont des vilains nègres qui n'ont pas besoin de masques pour faire peur" (the streets are full of maskers, just as in Paris during the Carnival, only here they are villainous negroes who have no need of masks to frighten one).

The dress-parade is in the Cathedral Plaza. The fun—fast and furious—is in the Plaza de Santa Ana. There is a very pretty ball at the Hotel Central, presided over by the Queen and her Maidens-in-waiting, and a much noisier ball at the Metropole.

The confetti flies for four days and nights and you do not get it out of your hair and clothes till Lent is half over.

Panama is also far ahead of Colon as a commercial city. It is the central market for all the native products, except bananas, and is the distributing point for the entire Isthmus. But here again the real natives have little interest in business. There are several families with German or Jewish names, who have lived here several generations and are citizens of the Republic. They, with the Chinese, control most of the trade and banking. There are several capable business men of the Arosomena and Arrias families, mostly occupied in real estate ventures and trading with the Indians. But on the whole the Panamanian gentlemen go in for politics or diplomacy. After all, there are not so very many of them and there is an endless number of places where a consul could be sent. There is more than one consulate which never collected a fee. The Liberal party is now in power, so of course some of the Conservatives have to work.

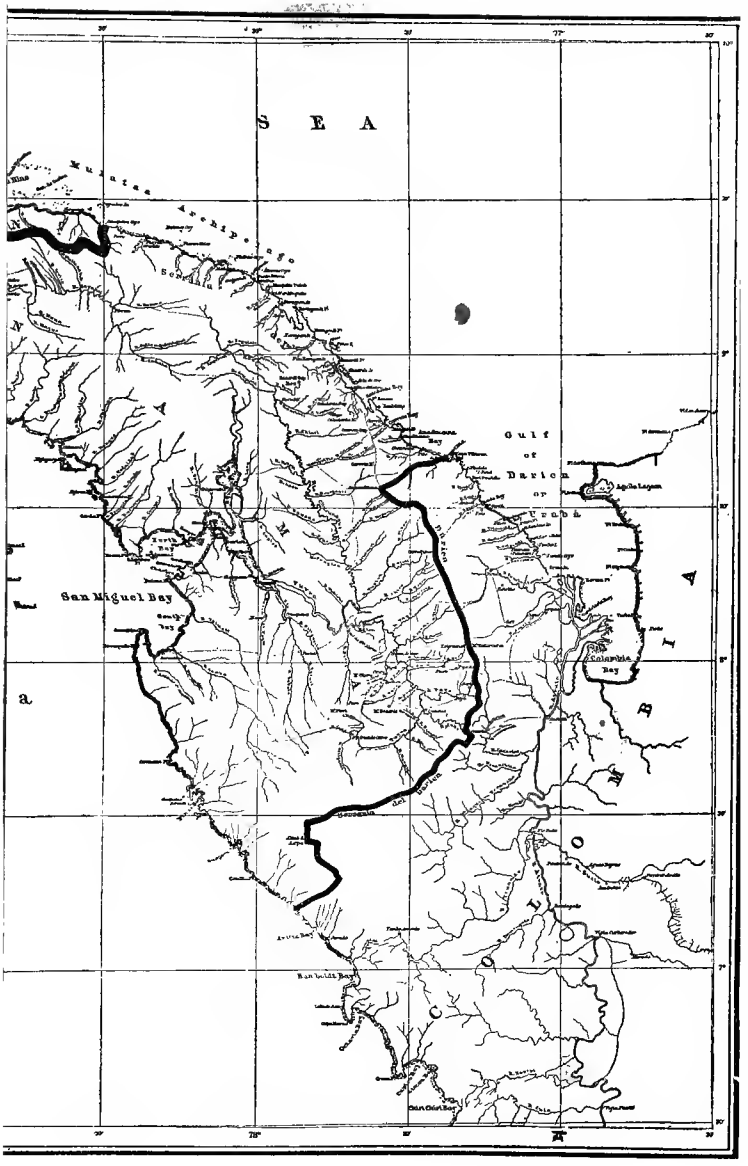
There are two classes of Americans—exclusive of the Canal men—to be found in Panama City: Pirates and Pioneers.

The first are undoubtedly most numerous. Their activities run the gamut from playing stud-poker "for the house"

to promoting fake development companies. It is certainly more livable in the States because they are here—but it is hard on the Panamanians.

There are, however, a few earnest, upright Americans here, who foresee the time when the riches of the country will be needed and utilized. That there are opportunities—especially in agriculture and grazing and lumbering—no one who knows the country will deny.

No American can visit either Colon or Panama without a large patriotic pride in the work of our sanitary engineers. These cities—not so many years ago—were called the worst pest-holes in the Americas. Our men have built water-works, put plumbing into the dwelling houses, dug drains and sewers, paved the streets and established so effective a quarantine at both ports, that although there has never been a time when some of the South American ports were not infected, there have been no cases of yellow-fever, beri-beri, cholera or the plague on the Isthmus for several years. There are few places at home so much like Spotless Town as these two tropical cities.



CHAPTER V

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ISTHMUS

THE Republic of Panama is 425 miles long and averages 70 miles in width. Its most southern point is a little above 7 degrees north of the equator, its northern point about 9° 50′. It is in the same latitude as Ceylon and Mindanao. It is almost due south of Buffalo.

It must be remembered that when Balboa discovered the Pacific, he christened it the Southern Sea, for the Isthmus runs east and west. Every new arrival gets the points of the compass twisted, because of the habit of thinking of the Pacific as a western ocean. Panama City is south and east of Colon, the Atlantic entrance of the Canal. In Panama the sun rises out of the Pacific.

The land frontiers of the Republic are less than 400 miles in the total and are about equally divided between the Costa Rican and Colombian border. But the total coast line is over 1200 miles, 700 of which is on the Pacific.

The most important physical feature of the Isthmus is that here the great chain of mountains, which form the backbone of the hemisphere—from Alaska to Patagonia—breaks down into scattered hills and low divides. At Culebra—where we are making our deepest cut—the pass was only 290 feet above sea level. The highest peak in the Republic is the Cerro del Picacho near the Costa Rican border. It is a little over 7000 feet. There are four other mountains in the western provinces which are over 5000 feet. They gradually decrease in height to the center

of the Isthmus and then begin to climb again towards the Colombian borders, where they again approach 5000 feet.

The Republic is divided into the following provinces: (1) Bocas del Toro, (2) Chiriqui, (3) Veraguas, (4) Los Santos, (5) Coclé, (6) Colon, and (7) Panama. The last is by far the largest, more than a third of the total, and Coclé is the smallest.

Bocas del Toro (the mouths of the bull) is the extreme northwest. It is notable for the wonderful Almirante Bay and Chiriqui Lagoon. They are really one body of water, as the long, narrow peninsula which divides them is almost an island. It will be remembered by students of President Lincoln's administration that this was one of the locations considered by our Government for a naval station. In fact, it is almost certain that if Lincoln had not been assassinated we would have acquired the Lagoon. He had been deeply impressed by the difficulty of blockading the Gulf ports without some such base and he kept Seward busy trying to acquire one of the West India islands or some post on the mainland.

The Chiriqui Lagoon is thirty-five miles long from east to west and about twelve miles wide. It is an unbroken sheet of water and navigable for the biggest warships.

Almirante Bay—really the northwestern extension of the Lagoon—is a maze of waterways between its numerous islands. It has, however, a number of fairly large harbors and deep water in most of its channels. In many places the banks are so abrupt that a deep draught steamer can tie up to the shore. The mainland is a tableland about 600 feet high and within a few miles reaches an elevation of 2000 feet. It is remarkably salubrious, and on account of its ideal facilities for bathing and small boating and its marvellous scenery seems doomed to develop into a smart winter resort.

At present the province is practically a feudal domain of the United Fruit Company, and banana growing is its principal industry. The Chanquinolo River is one of the finest spots in the world for this fruit. There is said to be coal of good quality in the province, but it has never been mined.

Bocas del Toro, a town of about 6000 inhabitants, is the capital of the province. It is built on an island at the mouth of Almirante Bay and is a very busy port of export. About five steamers and as many sailing vessels clear from Boca every week, loaded down to the scuppers with fruit.

The Province of Chiriqui lies to the south and east of Bocas del Toro. It has considerable frontage on both oceans.

David, the capital, has about 8000 inhabitants and is rapidly growing. It is the largest inland city of the Republic and far and away the most progressive.

There has long been a large grain and cattle trade in this province and new crops are being planted, new industries started with surprising frequency. It is the favorite location for foreign settlers. The reports one hears from those who have gone in for agriculture are generally favorable.

In 1910 the government authorized the building of a railroad from Panama City to David. A good deal of money was spent on surveys, and the talk of a railroad generated considerable land speculation in Chiriqui and the intervening provinces. Perhaps this was the end which the framers of the bill had in view. It was hardly a practical project. Neither the present population along the proposed route nor the rosiest estimates of the value of the undeveloped resources in the neighborhood warranted so great an outlay. Happily this scheme was vetoed in time. Some of the money is to be spent in harbor improvements and in short lines and better roads inland.

In the early colonial days the Spaniards worked some

very rich gold mines in the mountains of Chiriqui, and one of the most popular industries to-day is that of trying to relocate these lost mines.

It is here also that the signs of the highest pre-Colombian civilization have been found. The high development of art and architecture with which Cortez met in Mexico, seems to have petered out to the southward. In the other states of Central America some imposing ruins have been found. The largest are in Guatemala. In Costa Rica there are few signs of architectural development and the pottery and implements are more crude. In Chiriqui one finds only a few "painted stones" and graves. A popular form of vacation for the American employees on the Canal is to go grave-robbing in the country back of David. A native walks in front of you and pounds the ground with an iron rod. If he gets a hollow sound, he digs. If he strikes a grave you are almost sure to find weird pottery and sometimes gold ornaments. M. de Zeltner, a former French Consul at Panama, has written an interesting brochure on the prehistoric graves of this district. And the Smithsonian Institute has published an elaborate description of them.

Farther east, is the Province of Veraguas—wedge-shaped, with only a few miles on the Atlantic coast and a couple of hundred on the Pacific. It is remarkable for its beautiful islands and Montijo Bay, the second of the great harbors of the Isthmus.

Coiba Island is the largest in the Republic. It is more than twenty miles long, well wooded and fertile, but it is very sparsely settled. Jicaran, further out to sea, is much smaller, but rises 1400 feet above the sea. It is the most beautiful of all—a real distinction along a coast studded with beautiful islands.

Montijo Bay is fourteen miles long by nine broad. Cebaco, an island fifteen miles long, stretches across its en-

trance and makes it one of the most sheltered harbors ever contrived by nature.

Veraguas, and the small Province of Los Santos, form together a peninsula which reaches to the southern extremity of the Isthmus. The coast then turns back—an acute angle—and runs northwest up to Parita Bay and the Province of Coclé.

These three provinces are the least developed of the Republic. They are sparsely settled. The blood of the population varies between the formulæ: one tenth Spaniard, one tenth Cholo Indian, eight-tenths negro, and one-tenth Spanish, one-tenth negro, eight-tenths Indian. Near the coast the negro strain predominates, in the hills that of the Indians.

The roads are the merest trails—impassable, even for Indians on foot, during much of the rainy season. There is very little circulation of commodities beyond navigable water. The population has the ingrown indolence which comes from life in such bountiful countries. It is only necessary to scratch the earth with a stick to make yams and plantains grow. The only tools needed for rice are a pair of hands. And one could not stop the plentiful harvest of cocoanuts if one tried.

Colon Province is the extreme north of the Isthmus. What has just been said about the three provinces to the west applies to it, with the exception of Colon City. And this city is entirely the work of foreigners. It was founded, and at first called "Aspinwall," by the Panama Railroad Company in 1850.

The province, however, is rich in historical interest. Columbus himself visited the coast on his last voyage in 1502. He named Puerto Bello, and what is now called Colon Harbor, he christened Navy Bay. Not far from the present City of Colon he attempted to found a colony—it

would have been the first on the continent. His brother Bartholomew landed with a company of settlers, but the day before the great admiral sailed away they were attacked by the Indians and driven to the ships. It was along this shore that Don Diego de Nicuesa, seven years later, strove so desperately to gain a foothold for his sovereign. He had set out with a brilliant following to establish a Spanish colony and met with a series of almost incredible disasters. Beaten back by the savage natives, buffeted by storms, his ships eaten by worms, he and the pitiful remnant of his expedition came to a favorable looking harbor. "In the name of God," he cried, "let us stop here." "Nombre de Dios," they called the place; it is still on the map.

East along the coast from Colon is the Gulf of San Blas, named after the most unique tribe of Indians left in America. The San Blas have never been conquered. And they have preserved their ethnic purity as intact as their territory. Their coast is famous for its cocoanuts—the finest on the market. A number of schooners trade with the villages along the shore and on the islands. But there are no European settlements in their territory.

The Province of Panama, with long coast lines on both oceans, is the eastern extreme of the Republic. Most of it is undeveloped. But there is considerable cattle-raising. Several companies, with foreign capital, have been established in the Bayano Valley. They are interested in bananas, cocoanuts, vegetable ivory, rubber and cacao. A lumber company, an English affair, is planning to exploit the mahogany and cabinet woods. And down towards the Colombian border, near the headwaters of the Tuyra River, are the properties of the Darien Gold Mining Company. The mines date from prehistoric times and there have been very few long interruptions in the taking out of bullion. At present the company is run under an English charter,

but most of the stockholders and the technical managers are French.

The Province of Panama contains the third of the great natural harbors of the Isthmus. San Miguel Bay, with its inner Darien Harbor, is a natural naval station without rival. The entrance into Darien Harbor, from the immense outer bay, is almost closed by a large island, on either side of which are deep, safe channels, the Boca Chica and the Boca Grande. Beyond them, is an unbroken expanse of water, thirty miles long by half that width. All the navies of all the nations could anchor here in safety. Half a dozen submarine mines would make the place the surest refuge in the world.

The big tides form a great advantage over the Chiriqui Lagoon. They rise and fall fifteen feet—and at "spring tide" twenty feet. The shores of the harbor are natural dry-docks. Any ships which visit these coasts can be run up on the beach on the top of the tide and left high and dry when it falls. A further advantage is that the Tuyra River is navigable beyond salt water. A short anchorage in fresh water kills the barnacles, which are the pest of navigation in these waters.

One cannot look at the Chiriqui Lagoon on the Caribbean, Montijo Bay and the Darien Harbor on the Pacific, without regretting that the Republic of Panama is not a great maritime nation, that these immensely valuable natural harbors should be unused.

Off the mouth of San Miguel Bay are the Pearl Islands. The archipelago is over thirty miles long. There are sixteen big islands and innumerable small ones. The Isla del Rey is over ten miles long and as big as all the rest put together. Most of the islands which have fresh water are occupied. There is a considerable output of cocoanuts and pineapples, but of course the pearl fisheries are the big industry.

Taking the Isthmus as a whole its most noticeable feature is the maze of innumerable rivers. As a rule the mountains are nearer the Atlantic than the Pacific; so most of the longer rivers are on the southern slope. However, the Rio Coclé del Norte has its source in the province of Coclé, and crosses that of Colon to empty into the Caribbean. The Chagres River, which is to furnish the water for the Canal, is also a northern stream. It is about 100 miles long and navigable half that distance by small boats.

The largest of all the rivers is the Tuyra, or Rio del Santa Maria, as the old maps have it. From its mouth in Darien Harbor it is navigable for small steamers and schooners, fifty miles inland. The cayukas, native dugouts, go up it and its tributary, the Chucunaque, for fifty miles more.

The climate of the Isthmus has a much worse name than it deserves. It makes a very creditable showing indeed in regard to temperature. There is no record of thermometer ever having reached 100° in Panama City. There are many cities in the States which cannot make such a boast.

Mr. Johnson, in his "Four Centuries of the Panama Canal," has summarized the mass of Government observations as follows: "At Panama the hottest time of day is from two to four P.M., when the average temperature ranges from 81.6° Fahrenheit, in November, to 86.1° in March. The coolest hour is from six to seven o'clock A.M., when the average temperature ranges from 74°, in January, to 76.6° in June. The general average of highest temperature is 84°, and the lowest 75.1°." There are very few places within ten degrees of the equator with as mild a record.

But when it comes to "humidity" there is very little to be said for the Isthmus. Even in what is called the "dry season" the humidity runs up to an average close to 80° The average for the whole year is five degrees higher.

Colon has an annual average rainfall of 140 inches and a record of 180 inches. In Panama the annual rainfall is not half as great—60 inches. In Colon one must expect 196 rainy days, and in Panama 141, out of the 365. The dry season runs from the middle of December to the middle of April. The rainy season is the other eight months.

Outside of the Canal circles, where everyone talks of "The Ditch," the principal subject of conversation is the opportunity for foreigners to make money in Panama. The attitude of the Panamanians is enigmatical. They all speak with enthusiasm of the development of their country by outside capital—in the abstract. But the moment a proposition becomes concrete they freeze up. Any effort to get official papers—such as deeds—registered meets with such disheartening delays as to smack of positive hostility to foreigners.

In the face of the unquestioned resources of the Isthmus, there is remarkably little development.

There are three main obstacles in the way of foreign enterprise:

(1) The uncertainty of land titles. There are a dozen large estates which would be bought up and developed at once if titles were clear, which are tied up in litigation. Always some of the heirs are obstructing a settlement, in the hope that the next turn-over in politics will put some of their friends on the bench. There are almost no accurate surveys and the records of the land office are a mess. In Honduras an American once found a deed which recorded the corner of the property as marked by "a dead mahogany tree, with two ravens on the branch." Perhaps the Panama records do not offer so crude an absurdity. But nine out of ten of the myriad springs in the country are called "Aguadulce." And many deeds give "a spring called Aguadulce" as a boundary mark. Frequently the original

land grants read "from the sea back to the mountains." When the hinterland had no value this was a satisfactory description, but it is now a fruitful source of dispute. Very few landholders know definitely how much they own. During my last visit to Panama, an Englishman paid for several thousand acres of timber land. When he took possession, his surveyor could only find a few hundred acres. Mistakes are sure to occur even when both sides are acting in good faith, and the opportunities for fraud are limitless. No one should go into a land transaction without the certainty of a bona-fide survey.

(2) The next obstacle to progress is the dearth of good roads—the almost total lack of bridges. The country, for instance, is full of valuable cabinet woods. A dozen concerns have come to grief after acquiring good title to enough standing mahogany to make a fortune. It is next to impossible to get the stuff out. The cost of transportation is prohibitive. The same handicap burdens every undertaking but weighs especially on any enterprise the product of which is bulky or perishable. There are immense tracts of valuable banana land lying fallow for want of transportation. It works both ways as it is just as difficult to get machinery and provisions in as it is to get your commodity out.

(3) The third obstacle—and the most serious of all for a large undertaking—is the dearth of labor force. If the enterprise requires steady labor, it must be imported. The native population is small and long tradition has habituated them to the simplest of simple lives. Nature is so bountiful that a man can easily raise a family according to accepted standards of living by two days work a week. It is easy almost anywhere on the Isthmus to get fifty men to work for you. But as soon as they have earned enough to buy a year's supply of powder and shot, and half a dozen

needles for the wife, it is all over. Five dollars a day would not keep them on the job. They will have to be educated up to a new and very much more complex system of "wants," before they will become reliable workmen.

The banana fields of the United Fruit Company in Bocas del Toro are the biggest foreign enterprise in the Republic. They have successfully overcome the last two obstacles. Their fruit grows near water and they have built a network of rails into the more remote fields. They control good harbors. So their transportation problem is solved. And they import their labor from the West India islands. But their land titles are in a bad tangle and it is costing them many thousands of dollars to get them straightened out.

The Darien Gold Mining Company is the oldest and the most firmly established in the country. Their titles are clear. They run a small steamer weekly from Panama to Marriganti on the Tuyra River and they transport upriver in "cayukas" and, during the rainy season, in a flat-bottomed stern-wheeler to the head of navigation, from which place they operate a miniature railroad to the mine site. They also have to import most of their labor. Their profits are seriously decreased by the high cost of transportation.

Another industry in which there is considerable capital—mostly local—is pearl fishing. It does not seem to be well organized. But considering the slipshod methods it is very profitable. The "mother of pearl" from the shells pays a small interest on the capital and all the real pearls are clear profit. There are twenty or thirty ships equipped with diving apparatus, which operate at the islands and up and down the coast. But the majority of the diving is done by the natives of the Pearl Islands. They are enslaved to the companies by debt and are viciously exploited. It seems

possible that a concern with sufficient capital to buy out and consolidate the rival companies and organize the industry might make money.

Any large enterprise by outsiders demands sufficient capital and patience to secure clear titles, efficient transportation and a steady labor force.

This applies only to "big business." The Isthmus offers opportunity to half a million settlers of the type of our forefathers who pushed across the Appalachians and won the West. One who wants to live close to nature will hunt long before he finds a location where the Old Mother is kindlier. The opportunities for small homes are limitless. Much fertile land is unoccupied and can be taken up under the homestead law. Dozens of profitable crops are practical—rice, onions, rubber, bananas, and other fruits.

In my opinion there is nothing more surely profitable than cacao. The consumption of chocolate, both as a beverage and in confections, is growing steadily. The market price is rising regularly and is not subject to the speculative irregularities which make coffee and rubber little better than gambling. Unlike rubber, the cultivation is very simple. It is a neglected crop, as is everything to-day which does not promise speedy returns, because it takes eight or ten years for the bush to reach maturity. But I have seen trees eighty years old which were still bearing full capacity.

The natural history of the Isthmus has not yet been written. The Smithsonian Institution is at present conducting a "biological survey" of the Canal Zone. I have had the pleasure of meeting several of the outfit, a specialist on beetles, another on minute moths, a fish expert, a student of mammals, an ornithologist and so forth. When their reports are published we will know more about the flora and fauna of the Isthmus than about any other part of the world. But I found it impossible to find any reliable infor-

mation. The natives of Taboga Island will assure you that every year the land crabs come down to the village in great numbers to join the Good Friday procession. They probably come down from the hills to deposit their eggs near the shore at that time of year. Most of the information about birds and beasts and flowers which can be gained from the natives is equally unreliable.

The data on flora and fauna given by the old chroniclers is not much better. In "A letter, giving a description of the Isthmus of Darien . . . from a gentleman who lives there at present," which was printed in Edinburgh in 1599, I find the following paragraphs:

5. "To write further of the trees, it would fill a good many sheets."

6. "There are also crocodiles. I could tell you a good true story about one of them, but being too tedious I forbear."

7. "There is a great dale of Doggs, Deer, Rabbets, and Monkeys, and many other sorts of Quadrupeds, which Ye have not the like of in Europe." . . . "There is another small Bird here called Cabreros, or Goat-Keepers; in these Birds are seven distinct Bladders of Gall, and their Flesh is as bitter as Aloes: Of these we have abundance."

8. "There is a Root called by the Indians Cazove of which they make a liquor called Vey-Cou much like unto Beer.

"Another fruit called Bananas, is an excellent Liquor, which in strength and Pleasantness of tast, may be compared to the best Wines of Spain. But this Liquor easily causes Drunkenness."

There are very few dangerous animals. There is a sort of wild cat which the natives call lions, lots of alligators and some snakes and scorpions, but I have never heard of a trustworthy account, nor have I met anyone who has heard such an account of any man having lost his life from any of these animals.

There are lots of queer animals, tapirs, ant-eaters, the giant lizard of Central America—the iguana. And there are no end of gorgeous exotic birds, paroquets and humming birds. Most beautiful of all are the snow-white aigrette

herons, of which one sees hundreds on the rivers of the Darien.

Judging from my notebooks, I think I saw a new flower every minute I spent in the interior. Very few of them were familiar. Everywhere the jungle is full of orchids. It is quite probable that a profitable business might be made of shipping the more beautiful varieties to the home market.

WATER FRONT, PANAMA CITY.