THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

F. LORAINE PETRE

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THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

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H. E. GENERAL DON RAFAEL REYES

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY ITS PEOPLE, ITS INSTITUTIONS AND ITS RESOURCES

By

F. LORAINE PETRE

AUTHOR OF "NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN IN POLAND, 1806–1807"

With Numerous Illustrations and a Map

LONDON: EDWARD STANFORD

12, 13, & 14, LONG ACRE, W.C.

1906

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Frontispiece *Photograph, Washington, D.C.*

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PREFACE

This volume, making no pretensions to literary merit, merely seeks to collate such information as I have been able to gather regarding a country little known at present in England. Yet Colombia is beginning to attract the attention of investors and others who, I venture to hope, may find it useful to have, in a convenient form hitherto not available in English, some general information regarding the conditions and prospects, the resources and government, of the State. My personal knowledge of the country is confined to more or less beaten tracks, and some of the principal cities, including the capital. I trust that I have succeeded in avoiding the appearance of dogmatising on insufficient data. Nearly every opinion formed on my own impressions of the country has, before being enunciated, been submitted to the judgment of friends, English or Colombian, of greater experience.

I would take this opportunity of acknowledging the kindness of President Reyes in causing me to be supplied with statistical and other official information, as well as in giving me the signed photograph of himself from which the frontispiece

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is taken. I am also indebted, amongst others, for information to H. E. Dr. Ignacio Gutierrez Ponce, Colombian Minister in London; to Sir G. E. Welby, late British Minister at Bogotá; and to Messrs. E. Cortes, B. Koppel, W. D. Powles, F. Belcher, and Pilditch.

About half the photographs were taken by myself in 1904. I have to acknowledge the kind permission of Mr. Clinedinst of Washington, U.S.A., for the reproduction of the photograph of General Reyes, and of Mr. H. L. Duperly of Bogotá in regard to several views noted as taken by him. The rest are amateur photographs contributed by General Calderon, and Messrs. W. D. Powles, G. G. Odell, Ford, and J. E. Cliffe, to all of whom my best thanks are due.

F. L. P.

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THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

CHAPTER I

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COLOMBIA

There is a well-known story recounting how an American politician, busy dealing out offices to the innumerable claimants for the employment in his gift, found himself called upon to meet the demand of one gentleman for a small consular post at Bogotá. As there was only one claimant the matter was easily settled, and the candidate retired satisfied. But the giver of the office, having no idea of what he had so readily granted, was compelled to turn to a friend to solve the question of the whereabouts of Bogotá. That story is, perhaps, of the "chestnut" order; but it is certainly true that, almost every day, anxious shareholders in Colombian enterprises walk into London offices to inquire about their holdings, with words on their lips which indicate clearly that they believe themselves to be concerned with a British colony, and have no idea that they are dealing with a South American Republic. In the United States, perhaps, recent events in connection with the Panama Canal may have tended to spread some more

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general knowledge of the whereabouts of Colombia. In the city of London something more is known of the country than was the case a few years ago, when practically all that was known about it was that it was a country which had persistently failed to meet its obligations to its foreign creditors. It was looked upon merely as a misgoverned state, in a perpetual state of revolution, and as a place to be avoided, as the grave of all capital which any one was foolish enough to invest in it. Recently, however, there has been a tendency to regard it in a more favourable light; and there is beginning to arise, both in London and on the Continent, a disposition at least to inquire about the resources and prospects of a state which is vaguely reported to contain immense natural riches, and which has, under its present government, manifested a desire to treat its creditors honestly to the extent possible in the existing conditions of its finances. Colombian bonds, which stood at 14 or 15 per cent. on the London market less than three years ago, are now about 46, a rise largely due to the fact that a substantial payment in the beginning of 1906 has, to a certain extent, re-established confidence in the Government.

But the inquirer finds it no such easy matter to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, especially if he is dependent on publications in his own language. There are, no doubt, consular reports published by the Foreign Office, but they deal ordinarily with special subjects, and are not always a very appetizing or easily discovered form of literature.

Mr. Scruggs, a former American Minister at Bogotá, published in England, a few years ago, a work on the "Colombian and Venezuelan Republics," but that deals rather with general matters concerning the two states, without going into much detail, except in the case of the merits of the disputed boundary case between Venezuela and British Guiana. It is the object of the present volume to collect as much general information as is available regarding the state, supplemented and tempered by such personal acquaintance with the country, its people, and its government, as the author was able to acquire during a journey to its capital in 1904, and a residence of several weeks at Bogotá, where business brought him and his companions into personal and official communication with the new President and the principal officials, foreign ministers, and others there.

There is not much difficulty in reaching the Atlantic coast of Colombia. From Southampton the voyage to Cartagena occupies about four weeks. It would require considerably less but for the fact that this port represents the last stage in a somewhat roundabout voyage to some of the West India islands, to Colon in Panama, and to Puerto Limon in Costa Rica. The traveller who is in a hurry will arrive sooner if he takes steamer to New York, and thence goes direct to Savanilla and Cartagena by the Hamburg-American Company's Atlas line, or by one of the other boats plying direct between the United States and the Colombian coast. However, the journey so far is,

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in any case, easy and comfortable. The troubles of the pilgrim to Bogotá only begin when he leaves the ocean steamer to set out on the 650 miles of tropical river, the railway journeys, and the mule rides which still separate him from his destination. He will not find railway travelling in the country quite equal to a journey on an English railway, but he will find many things on the river steamers, his home for most of the distance, which will cause him to regret occasionally that there is so little railway. Even the steamer will be looked on with affection if he should happen to find himself in a mud hole on the Bogotá road, with only his mule's and his own upper parts emerging from the sticky mess.

Yet, with all these drawbacks, the man who has made up his mind not to expect luxury will certainly look back with pleasure, on the whole, to his experiences between Cartagena, with its tropical climate at sea-level, and Bogotá, with its perpetual spring, nearly 9000 feet higher. A great part of the journey is through beautiful scenery, in the midst of magnificent forests teeming with vegetable and animal life, or on mountain roads, the disagreeables of which are occasionally tempered by the excitement of their alignment along dizzy precipices, and which everywhere afford an ever-changing prospect of summit and valley, of forest and of water. There is, too, the charm, to eyes and senses jaded by the hurry and pressure of modern life in Europe, of being in a country associated with the adventurers of the sixteenth

century, and still, in many parts, as uncivilized as it was when Amyas Leigh and his companions cast an envious glance as they passed at Santa Fé, the modern Bogotá. The centres of civilization have spread since then, but they have not marched with the times, and, whilst the national and departmental capitals will not bear comparison with those of Europe, the country villages and smaller towns have lagged still farther behind in the race. In nothing is this more noticeable than in the difficulty which there is in obtaining reliable information as to the statistics of the country. Every statement of the population, of areas, or of other matters capable of expression in figures, requires to be accepted with a qualification, and to be looked on with suspicion, for it is probably only a rough estimate, based on insufficient authority. There is a department of government dealing with statistics, but its publications abound in gaps, to fill which there is no information, and which often represent a period of disturbance and civil war, with their invariable accompaniment of complete disorganization, not only of the statistical department, but also of the matters themselves with which it professes to deal.

Colombia may be described as an irregular area occupying the extreme north-west corner of the South American continent, bounded on the north-west by the new republic of Panama, on the west by the Pacific, on the south by Ecuador and Peru, on the east by Brazil and Venezuela, and on the north by the Caribbean Sea. Panama is still

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claimed, in theory, by Colombians as part of their territory; but no amount of theory will get over the logic of accomplished facts, and the new state may be looked upon as permanently separated from its parent. Until Colombia openly recognises the independence of Panama, the boundary between the two will not be formally defined, though it may be assumed to be the mountain range at the root of the Panama isthmus which, prior to the revolt of Panama in 1903, was recognised as the internal boundary between the departments of Cauca and Panama.

The Venezuelan frontier was referred to the arbitration of the President of the French Republic, who gave his award on the 11th September 1900. That award Colombia is willing to accept, but her troublesome neighbour, and its still more troublesome President, appear still to make claims to much Colombian territory—claims which cannot but meet with reprobation from all respectable states, in face of the recent arbitration. According to the award, Colombia stretches east as far as the Orinoco in that part of its course which runs from south to north in the rapids of Maipures and Atures.

The south-eastern and southern boundaries have yet to be fixed, between Colombia on the one hand, and Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador on the other. In the former direction Brazil claims to extend west as far as the 70th degree of west longitude, whilst Colombia puts the extreme point of her border some four degrees farther east. She claims

a frontier for 600 miles along the north bank of the Amazon, whilst Brazil, Ecuador, and even Peru, claim many thousands of square miles north of that river which, if allowed, would exclude Colombia, not only from the Amazon, but also from its great tributary, the Putumayo, or Içá, and from a great portion of the Yapura or Caquetá and the Rio Negro. The territory in dispute is largely uninhabited, except by savages, many of them cannibals, but it includes much forest in which rubber grows, and which may, therefore, gain increasing value. Therefore, in the interests of Colombia and of future peace, it is to be hoped that means will be found of finally settling these boundaries. The King of Spain is arbitrating between Ecuador and Peru. When that dispute has been decided, the successful party will have to settle with Colombia.

Accepting for the moment the Colombian view of the true boundary where it is disputed, the area of the republic may be put roughly at something like 480,000 square miles. That, perhaps, does not convey any very definite idea of size to most people. Let us put it in another way. The area may be taken as roughly equal to that of Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark together —countries the population of which is more than 78 millions. The people of Colombia are not so easily enumerated; for it is obvious that, with the best arrangements for census taking, and they certainly are not to be expected in Colombia, much reliance could not be placed on the enumera-

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tion of the inhabitants of enormous tracts where men are few and very far between. A census of the republic is in contemplation, but at present it is only possible to make a rough calculation of the existing population. The official estimates, based on the last attempt at general census taking, and on estimated rates of increase, vary from five millions to four. An annual increase of 1½ per cent. works out at the lower figure, and it seems to be generally believed that 4,000,000 fairly represents the numbers. It is useless comparing these with European statistics, though it is useful to do so with some of the populations of the chief South American states, the estimates of which are presumably about of equal value with those of Colombia. They stand thus in round figures :—

Brazil	15,000,000
Argentina	5,000,000
Peru	4,600,000
Colombia	4,000,000
Chile	3,000,000
Venezuela	2,600,000

The estimates for Colombia appear to be exclusive of perhaps 200,000 untamed Indians, for the calculation of whose numbers the materials are still more shadowy.

Three-fourths of the total area, uninhabitable mountain-tops, great prairies, and uncleared forest, are reckoned as uninhabited. Thus the population in the inhabited area would work out at about thirty-three to the square mile, or less than nine

to the square mile of total area. This latter figure compares thus with the other states already referred to :—

	Population per Square Mile.
Chile	12
Colombia	9
Peru	7
Brazil	5
Venezuela	4½
Argentina	4¼

It must be again repeated that these figures can be accepted only as the roughest estimates; but exactitude is perhaps not of much importance where the proportions of people to areas are so low. Though Colombia is the least thinly populated, except Chile, its population is entirely inadequate to its proper development, and the labour question is a difficulty which is encountered at every turn.

This great territory may be divided into several very distinct regions of widely different characteristics. In the north, between the mountains on the borders of Venezuela and those of the Pacific coast, and extending 200 or 300 miles southwards, are great plains, covered with grass, marshes, lagoons, and small forest, cleared only where settlements have grown up. Their level is broken only by the last outliers of the Andes, and by the great mass of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on the northern coast. The climate is damp, hot, and unhealthy for Europeans. The next region is that which may be described as the most mountainous country in the world.

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Three mountain ranges extend northwards through it, separated from one another by the great rivers flowing, for more than 1000 miles, to the Caribbean Sea. This division of the country may be stated roughly as 500 miles long from the Ecuadorian frontier to latitude 8° north, and from 200 to 350 miles broad. On either side the mountains extend northwards on the flanks of the northern plains. Within this area is found every variety of climate, from the tropical heat of the Magdalena valley to the delightful temperature of Bogotá, 9000 feet above the sea, and the icy mountain plateaux, ridges, and peaks at greater altitudes.

The remainder, and the larger part, of the republic consists of the great plains of the upper tributaries of the Amazon and the Orinoco, partly covered with dense forest, and partly forming vast grazing grounds similar to the "pampas" of more southerly states. Here, as in the northern plains, the climate is tropical, and there are but two seasons—the wet, from November to May, and the dry the rest of the year. In the mountain country there are, generally speaking, four seasons of three months each, two wet and two dry—the former corresponding with the seasons of equinox, the latter with the solstices.

It is proposed to devote a chapter each to the rivers and mountains of Colombia; but it will be convenient to give in this place a summary of what is known of the eastern plains. The man who has seen most of the southern portion of them, that lying about the northern tributaries of the Upper

Amazon, is probably General Rafael Reyes, the present President of Colombia. He, with his brothers Enrique and Nestor, spent many years in exploring these territories. The President is the only survivor of the intrepid trio; for Enrique Reyes died of fever on one of the rivers, whilst Nestor was killed and eaten by the cannibals of the Putumayo forests. His brother Rafael was only able to recover some of his bones for interment at Bogotá, along with the remains of Enrique.

On their first expedition the brothers, after a difficult, and often perilous, descent of the eastern slopes of the Andes from the wind-swept "paramos" of Pasto, at last struck the Putumayo River at a place which they christened Sofia, in memory of Rafael Reyes' wife. There they encountered, in the midst of the tropical forest, the tribe of Moroas, who, in addition to not being cannibals, were found to be hospitable and friendly. At Sofia the Putumayo was already 6 feet deep, and navigable for steamers of 5 feet draught. Nowhere in the 1200 miles between this point and the junction of the Putumayo with the Amazon was there any obstruction to navigation, and at half the distance the river was found to be 900 yards wide and 10 feet deep. Everywhere it was enclosed by immense forests, in which grew wild the cacao, rubber, sarsaparilla, ipecacuanha, vegetable ivory, and numerous medicinal plants, not to speak of valuable timber-trees of great size.

Six hundred miles below Sofia the travellers had to change escorts and rowers, for the friendly

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Moroas would not venture into the territory of the cannibal Mirañas. To the Colombians, however, these latter people, and especially their chief, Chua ("Tiger"), proved themselves good friends. They emphasised their friendly disposition by offers of food, in the shape of dishes of their enemies, the Huitotes, with whom they had recently been at war. It can hardly have been the Mirañas to whom Nestor Reyes afterwards fell a victim. By them the explorers were taken down to the Amazon, another 600 miles, by which river they eventually emerged on the Atlantic. Much more exploring in the forests and on the "llanos" was done in succeeding years by the brothers, but General Reyes has not included an account of his later journeys in the interesting paper which he read before the second Pan-American Congress at Mexico in 1901–2.

As has long been known, there is a direct connection by water between the basins of the Amazon and the Orinoco. In territory which, even by Colombian showing, is clearly Venezuelan, the river Casiquiare joins the Upper Orinoco with the Rio Negro, a principal tributary of the Amazon. It is sometimes spoken of as a "canal," though in reality it is a great river, 30 feet deep, flowing rapidly from the Orinoco to the Amazon. It is thus possible for a canoe to enter South America by the Amazon, to pass up that river, the Rio Negro, and the Casiquiare, and to emerge by the Orinoco without ever leaving the water. It would not be necessary to place the limit at a canoe but for the rapids of

the Orinoco, at Maipures and Atures, which prohibit the passage of larger craft.

In territory on the banks of the Rio Negro, claimed by Colombia, the great forests of farther south merge into the true "llanos," corresponding to the Argentine "pampas." Here the surface of the land is absolutely flat, which is by no means the case in the southern forests, where occasional rocky hills rise to 300 or 400 feet above the ground-level. Of this part of the country there is a very interesting account in a readable little book, "Down the Orinoco in a Canoe," by Señor S. Perez Triana, a Colombian gentleman, who reached the mouth of the Orinoco by canoe from the upper waters of its tributaries, the Meta and the Vichada, both rising on the eastern slope of the Colombian Andes. Indeed, one of the streams which go to form the Meta has its source at the back of a ridge which is clearly seen from the streets of Bogotá, only a few miles off. Nowadays a small steamer occasionally comes up the Meta to a point only about 100 miles, as the crow flies, from the Colombian capital.

Señor Triana's first great difficulty was the ride of four or five days, through almost trackless forests, on the steep slope to the commencement of the "llanos" on the river Tua, an affluent of the upper Meta. As he emerged from the seemingly interminable forest, he saw before him a "vast, green, motionless solitude, that extended far into the horizon before our eyes like a frozen sea." Palms were dotted about everywhere among

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the grass, and there were clumps of "moriche" palms in all directions, so similar in appearance that it was impossible to distinguish one from another, and quite hopeless to wander among them without a guide. Four days down the Tua in a small canoe brought the travellers to the Meta, which is described as flowing between high, well-defined banks, with a channel fairly constant even in the dry season, and with none of that tendency to frequent change of its bed which renders navigation so difficult on the rivers flowing from south to north.

On the "llanos" of the Meta, watered in every direction by tributary streams and rivers, are, every here and there, cattle-ranches, on which Señor Triana guessed the number of animals at 10,000, though it is estimated at a much higher figure now. The temperature was hot in the day, if moderate at night and in the early morning, but the nights were rendered almost intolerable by the plague of mosquitoes. The brothers Reyes had suffered from the same infliction on the Putumayo, and, in both cases, the only remedy was found in sleeping buried in the river sand, with nothing but the nose exposed. After four days on the Meta, the travellers decided to avoid the wild tribes lower down by transferring themselves to the Vichada, another tributary of the Orinoco, which here approaches within a mile or two of the Meta. These two rivers and the Orinoco form more or less of an equilateral triangle, with sides of about 150 miles each. The Colombian boundary, as laid down by

arbitration, is on the left bank of the Orinoco, between the mouth of the Vichada and that of the Meta. In this part are two great stretches, the rapids of Maipures and of Atures, which can only be navigated by canoes, and by them only at considerable risk. Below the mouth of the Meta, and up that river nearly to the foot of the mountains, there is no impediment to navigation by small steamers. The rapids thus render ascent from the Orinoco by the Vichada almost impossible.

These two great rivers, the Orinoco and the Amazon, are the natural outlet to the sea for Eastern Colombia, below the slopes of the Andes. In order that they may be of full advantage to it, it is necessary that they should be internationalised, and opened to the traffic of all flags. Accordingly General Reyes, as representative of Colombia at the Pan-American Congress of 1901–2, urged a declaration that "navigation of the said rivers is free for all flags of the world, subject to the provisions of the customs-house regulations of each country." A convention was signed by the delegates at Mexico, amongst whom a representative of Venezuela was *not* included, to the effect that a Fluvial Conference for that purpose should meet at Rio de Janeiro within a year. Things move slowly in South America, and it is understood that the meeting is only now about to take place.

As has been said above, these great eastern plains are watered by innumerable rivers and

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streams, tributaries of the Amazon and the Orinoco. The chief affluents of the former, passing through territory claimed by Colombia, are the Napo, the Putumayo or Içа, the Yapura or Caquetá, and the Rio Negro. Those of the Orinoco are the Guaviare, the Vichada, and the Meta, of which the last alone reaches the main river below its rapids. Each of these tributaries collects on its way the waters of innumerable minor streams, many of them really large rivers.



LOOKING DOWN FROM BOCA DEL MONTE



LOOKING EAST NEAR HOSPICIO

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CHAPTER II

THE MOUNTAIN REGION

A PLAN showing the axes of the various ranges of the Andes conveys the notion of a gigantic skeleton arm, stretching the whole length of the west coast of South America, with the wrist and distorted finger-bones covering the western, southern, and central portions of Colombia. First there is a single axis representing the bone of the upper arm, which divides into two in Peru and Bolivia, representing, as it were, the forearm. About the equator the bones are united in a confused mass of mountains, comprising the plateaux of Quito in Ecuador and of Tuquerres, Pasto, and Las Papas in the south of Colombia, representing the wrist. Then there is again a divergence into three distinct ranges—the central, terminating in Colombia 300 miles before it reaches the coast, the eastern, and the western, each of the last two throwing out another finger or thumb.

The most southerly mountains of Colombia are still the great, confused mass on which, in Ecuador, stand Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, and what Mr. Whymper calls the "avenue of volcanoes." There is nothing quite so big as these giant snowy mountains north of the Colombian frontier, but still there are great cones of volcanic origin which

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have not yet quite lost their activity. Pasto and Coconucos rise to 14,000 feet; Cambal, which was reported to be in eruption during the earthquakes of January and February 1906, falls little short of 16,000 feet; whilst Purace, the farthest north in this section, rises above that elevation. The three ranges which spread out from this central knot of mountains are known in Colombia as the Western, Central, and Eastern Cordilleras. The western is the first to acquire a separate existence, running northwards parallel to the Pacific coast, from which its crest is separated by about fifty miles of spurs, their feet bathed by the ocean. In about north latitude 2° 20′ a sort of transverse dyke once more joins it to the central range. From the south side of this ridge flows the river Patia, which, after descending some 120 miles southwards in the valley between the two ranges, turns westwards and breaks through the Western Cordilleras by a gorge, the sides of which rise 10,000 feet above the river. It is practically the only river in the whole length of the Andes which thus forces a passage for itself through the great wall separating the interior from the Pacific. Mr. R. B. White, who made a survey for a road, which he found quite practicable, through this stupendous gorge, states that a mile or two on either side of it the range shows no sign of the breach—a fact which indicates the steepness of the sides of the fracture, and the forces of upheaval which gave rise to it. Once through the western range, the Patia flows, through the territory of Barbacoas,

to the Pacific, which it reaches some distance north of Tumaco, a port reported to have been destroyed by the earthquakes early in 1906.

Down the north side of the transverse dyke flows the Cauca, the second largest of the great rivers of Colombia which make their way to the Caribbean Sea. For more than 200 miles the broad valley of the river forms a well-marked division between the Western and the Central Cordilleras. All along this distance the outer range continues its course parallel to the coast, to which flow down innumerable streams rising on the western flanks of the mountains. The range is characterised by regularity, and rises to none of those enormous heights which are found in the central mountain axis. There is no peak in it exceeding 11,150 feet, and there is a pass as low as 6725. Exception must be made in favour of Chiles (15,900 feet) and Cambal, which perhaps belong to this range rather than to the great southern mass.

Not far short of the fifth degree of north latitude, the western chain begins to alter in character, to spread out eastwards towards the central range, which likewise closes in on the Cauca. That river, flowing in deep gorges, still marks by its course the division between the two ranges; but there is no longer the distinct broad line of valley which there was farther south. On the other side, too, the Western Cordilleras, very soon afterwards, throw out a dyke occupying a position analogous to that other wall which has been described as forming the watershed between the Cauca and the

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Patia. This new offshoot, however, is of very much less height than that of the Patia. Like that, it is a connecting-link between two chains, and is the divide from which the San Juan flows south to the Pacific, a little north of Buenaventura; whilst the Atrato, rising quite close to its head-waters, but on the northern slope, flows to the Gulf of Darien.

The Pacific coast, meanwhile, has trended off, at Chocó Bay, to the west, before resuming its northerly course. It is now supplied with a new coast range, the little finger, as it were, of the great skeleton of a left hand lying on Colombia. Under the name of the Cordillera de Baudo, it follows the coast from the western end of the transverse watershed of the San Juan and the Atrato, which latter river washes the feet of its eastern slopes. Attaining no great height, it dwindles down as it passes into the isthmus of Panama, and reaches its lowest point a few miles inland from the city of Panama, on the line to be taken by the great canal. It is a forest-clad range, nowhere in Colombia of great importance in any way; though when it once more begins to rise in Costa Rica, and eventually becomes the North American Rocky Mountains, it assumes a very different character.

To return to the Western Cordilleras, when they reach 8° of north latitude they have for the most part sunk into the northern plains, though a more or less continuous, but narrow and comparatively insignificant, chain continues to the north-east,

separating the broad valley of the Atrato from the plains of the San Jorge and the Sinú. The chain is seen in the hills of Turbaco, ten or twelve miles south of the Caribbean coast; it has an outlier in the hill of La Popa at Cartagena, and it finally ends in the low hills near the coast between Cartagena and the mouth of the Magdalena.

Throughout the length of the Western Cordilleras the axis of granite and other plutonic rocks has forced its way to the surface, or has been left bare there by denudation. On either side of it are metamorphic rocks, and on them strata of cretaceous or later deposits. Of all the mountains of Colombia these are perhaps the most prolific in the precious metals, a subject of which much will have to be said later. Volcanic action has long since ceased in most of this range, though the earthquakes of 1906 expended much of their force on it, especially on its western flanks.

The Central Cordilleras, the next range to the east, separated, as described, from the coast range by the valley of the Cauca, is by far the most important of the three in altitude. For about half its length it is still a smouldering volcanic area. Purace, at its southern extremity, still gives off smoke, and at times emits strange sounds. Huila, rising to 18,000 feet; Santa Catalina, over 16,000; Tolima, 18,400; Santa Isabel, 16,700; Ruiz, 17,400; and the Mesa de Herveo, 18,300, are all volcanoes, inactive at present, though scarcely dead. Most of them have snow-clad tops, the triple cones of Huila being covered nearly 3000 feet down from

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the summit. From the upper part of the city of Bogotá, in clear weather, the great range is plainly visible, nearly 100 miles off on the western horizon. To compare it to the Himalayas, where, from the outer hills or the plains, it is often possible to see a snowy wall extending for 150 miles and averaging 20,000 feet or more in height, would be absurd. Nevertheless, this crest of the Central Cordilleras, with the steep truncated cone of Tolima to the south, and the Mesa de Herveo, the remains apparently of a still greater cone, is an imposing sight as the snowy sides of these great mountains glisten and sparkle in the sunshine. The Mesa ("table") de Herveo takes its name, no doubt, from the level line of its summit stretching five or six miles and giving the idea of a gigantic table, with its white cloth of snow falling at a steep angle for some thousands of feet. In reality it is probably the circular section of an enormous cone, the top of which was blown off by some terrific volcanic explosion of ancient days, leaving a crater of titanic dimensions. The three summits of Ruiz, Herveo, and Santa Isabel are collectively known as the Paramo de Ruiz.

As the range progresses northwards into the department of Antioquia, it gains in breadth what it loses in height, for it spreads out westwards to close in on the Cauca, which it reduces to a mere narrow ditch dividing the central from the western range. This great mass of mountains, still often reaching heights of 10,000 or 12,000 feet, forms a large portion of the department of Antioquia. It

extends farthest north on the western edge of the Magdalena valley, where, in latitude 8° N., the Cerros of Inanea and of San Lucas cannot fall short of 7000 or 8000 feet. Thence the fall to the plains is rapid, and the last feeble outliers of the Central Cordilleras may be recognised in a few low hills opposite Banco on the Magdalena.

The passes by which this great barrier can be crossed are rare, of considerable altitude, and of many difficulties. In all those which cross in the southern portion it is necessary to spend at least a day and night, sometimes more, on the "paramos" which mark their summit. These "paramos" or cold deserts are a marked feature of the higher ranges of the Andes, both in Colombia and farther south. A German traveller, Dr. A. Hettner, has given a general description of the Colombian "paramos," of which the following is the sense. For some distance before reaching an altitude of 10,000 feet, the dense forests with which the Cordilleras are clothed begin to show signs of stunting and thinning. By the time that height is reached all forest-trees, strictly speaking, have ceased to grow. Between this point and the line of perpetual snow, say 15,000 feet, is the region of the 'paramos.' Necessarily, therefore, in Colombia, they are almost entirely confined to the southern knot of mountains, to the central chain, and to the eastern, which alone reach these altitudes. Also, they are generally on the central axis of the range. They are rarely characterized by sharp

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ridges, still more rarely by isolated heights. They are generally a broad, more or less flat surface, with rounded hills and gentle undulations, falling by steep walls to the warmer regions below on either side. Deep morasses lie in their hollows, and on these dreary plateaux the sun rarely shines through the thick mist which pervades them, and when its rays do succeed in penetrating the thick fog they have little power left. The mists are constantly dissolved in fine rain, and the temperature, even in the daytime, is rarely much above freezing-point. Shrubs of the character of laurels and myrtles abound on the lower parts of the 'paramos'; higher up these give place to rough withered grass and dried-up plants, which afford a poor substitute for fuel. In the hollows, where there is shelter from the piercing wind, there are ferns and even a bush resembling bamboo, recalling the tropical vegetation of warmer regions. Two of the most characteristic plants are the Frailejon, of the order of Compositæ, with a large yellow flower, and a kind of aloe growing several feet high. Men shun these desolate heights; the few shepherds or cattle-graziers who inhabit the lower parts lead a miserable existence; even the traveller hurries across them at his best speed.

The Paramo de Pasto has been described by General Reyes, who, with his two brothers, wandered for a whole month on it before reaching the descent to the Putumayo on the eastern plains. They were constantly up to their knees

in mud, unable on account of it to wear anything on their feet but sandals. For days at a time an impenetrable foggy gloom surrounded them, forbidding all movement, and rendering life a misery and a torture worthy of Dante's Inferno. The wild scenery and flora of these elevated regions are well illustrated in a recently published work, on the volcanoes of Colombia, by the late Dr. Stübel.

The account left by M. Mollien of the Paramo de Guanacas, on the summit of the most southerly pass over the central range, is almost as bad. He tells how, when he passed it about 1823, he found the bleaching skeletons of refugees of the recent War of Independence who had met their death there from cold and hunger. In one part of this desolate plain, which he likens to a battlefield, he found the corpses of a priest and two negro servants who also had found this terrible death. Every here and there were injured or broken-down mules, abandoned by their owners, and left to eke out a bare subsistence from the miserable vegetation until death should relieve them of their sufferings. In one place he found the head of a child, apparently strayed in the gloom from its mother, only to fall a victim to the inclemency of the climate. Small wonder that he rejoiced as he again returned to a genial warmth at Popayan.

There appears from the map to be another practicable pass, a short way north, leading down to Silvia on the western slopes; but the next well-known pass is that of Quindio, on the direct line

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between Ibague, on the eastern slopes, and Cartago, 200 miles or more below Popayan, in the Cauca valley. Its summit lies just to the south of the Tolima peak, and it is the line by which the telegraph wire from Bogotá to the Pacific at Buenaventura passes. In the early part of last century, as now, it was the pass most generally used, and has been described by Humboldt, Captain Cochrane, and others. Comparing their accounts with Mollien's of the Guanacas Pass, the Quindio certainly seems the less arduous of the two, though far from easy. Humboldt puts the journey from Ibague to Cartago at ten or twelve days in fine weather, Dr. Hettner, writing of it in 1888, says it was passable on a mule during a small portion of the year, whilst in Humboldt's time it was only possible, at all times, to travel on foot, or carried in a basket-chair on a man's back. When Dr. Hettner himself went to and from the Cauca valley, he used the two passes, Honda-Salamina and Manizales-Ambalema. The western end of both is north of Cartago, after the Cauca valley has closed in. Going, he marched by the northern one, which mounts by the valley of the Guarino, a tributary reaching the Magdalena just below Honda. Its summit is close to the border between the departments of Tolima and Antioquia, and just below the northern end of the Mesa de Herveo. On the way up he lost a mule in a mud-hole, and saw the remains of another. The summit he describes as not being a true "paramo"; for, though the trees were stunted by the wind,

their limit had not yet been passed, and there was none of the flora characteristic of the "paramo." A day's journey from the top sufficed to reach Salamina. Thence to Manizales the road runs south-west.

On the return journey from Manizales, the pass over the Paramo de Aguacatal was used. It crosses at the northern foot of the snowy cone of Ruiz. It is described as, on the whole, more difficult than the last pass, and as entailing at least one night's camping in the open on the "paramo," at a height of about 13,500 feet. North of the pass by which Dr. Hettner reached the Cauca valley, there are other more or less practicable passes, but the next of importance is that which leads, in continuation of the railway from Puerto Berrio, to Medellin, whence the Cauca can be reached by a south-westward journey of considerable length.

The Eastern Cordilleras offer yet other characteristics differing materially from those of the other two ranges. The western is covered practically from the lowest to the highest levels with forest, and nowhere exceeds the higher limit of tree-growth. In the central range, especially in its southern part, that limit is generally passed, and the "paramos" are of great extent. In the eastern range the height of the mountains is usually less than in the central, though greater than in the western. The extreme "paramos" at great elevations are few, and in their place appear many fertile upland levels at heights below

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that of the "paramo," of which the plateaux of Bogotá, Velez, and others are the chief. "Mesas," or flat-topped hills, are also frequent, and in some cases, as in the Mesa de Jeridas or de Los Santos, comprise a large area of admirable grazing grounds for cattle and horses. One of them, the La Mesa, on the road from Girardot on the Magdalena to Bogotá, is crowned by a large town, whilst Tunja and other places are described as situated on "mesetas." Though possessing the same agricultural advantages as the other ranges on their lower slopes, the eastern far exceeds them in this respect.

About latitude 8° north the range bifurcates. The eastern branch, corresponding to the thumb of the great skeleton hand to which we have compared the mountains, passing into Venezuela, forms eventually the coast range of that country. The western branch runs north, with its crest forming the boundary between Colombia and Venezuela, and, after it has sunk down, it makes a final effort in the great volcanic outlier, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, with its snowy summits rising near the sea-coast to over 17,000 feet, and throwing out spurs in every direction like an enormous star. In its southern portion the eastern range attains its greatest height in the mountains of Chita or Guican (16,700 feet), and those of Suma Paz (14,500). The latter name is sometimes given to the whole range. Whilst Chita rises to the level of perpetual snow, Suma Paz is only at times snow-clad. The line of separation between the central and eastern ranges is far wider and more distinct than that between the central and western; for the great valley of the Magdalena never closes in like that of the Cauca, and attains a breadth of scores of miles where the central range ends.

In their surface rocks, too, there is a wide difference between the several ranges. The great southern mass is characterized by recent volcanic rocks, which extend along the axis of the central range to the end of the slumbering volcanic area of Ruiz. North of that the axis of gneiss, granite, and metamorphic rocks is everywhere exposed. This, too, is the characteristic of the western range, though its offshoot, the Cordillera de Baudo, shows only triassic formations. In the eastern range the surface is generally of older and newer cretaceous rocks, through which the igneous rocks have comparatively rarely forced a way to the surface. In all three ranges carboniferous rocks, often violently contorted, are of frequent occurrence.

Much of our knowledge of the geography and geology of the Colombian Andes is based on the researches of Colonel Codazzi, a strange product of the Napoleonic wars. By birth an Italian, he took service in Napoleon's armies, with which he served at Lützen, Bautzen, and other battles. When the Emperor fell, Codazzi sought more fighting on the side of the insurgents of Colombia. Eventually this strange personage turned his attention to research and survey in the country of his adoption.

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It may be said of the mountains of Colombia as a whole that they are not generally characterized in outline by the ruggedness of the Alps or the Himalayas, but in some of their details they almost transcend these regions. This is especially the case with the stupendous gorges which their rivers have so frequently carved out for themselves. The great cut through which the Patia forces its way to the Pacific has already been alluded to. Two cañons, near the volcano of Pasto were measured by Humboldt; in one he found the sheer walls rising 4265 feet, in the other 4921 feet, above the river. Mr. White describes the Cauca, where its valley closes in north of Cartago, as flowing through "one of the grandest ravines imaginable." Near Fusagasaga, south of Bogotá, the river Suma Paz flows at the bottom of a narrow cut between sheer walls of great height. Some 300 feet above its bed, two natural bridges, known as the bridges of Icononzo, have been left to span the abyss. The upper one is a clear arch carved out of the rock by the river, whilst the lower consists of three great masses of detached rock keyed together like an arch. The Arma, a tributary of the Cauca, flows in a gorge 5000 feet deep, and even greater depths are attained on the Porce in Antioquia. Codazzi believed that the Sogamoso, a tributary of the right bank of the Magdalena, was the outlet by which had been drained off the waters of a great system of mountain lakes, the ancient beds of which are now fertile plains. The "sabana" of Bogotá was certainly once a great lake, the waters of which

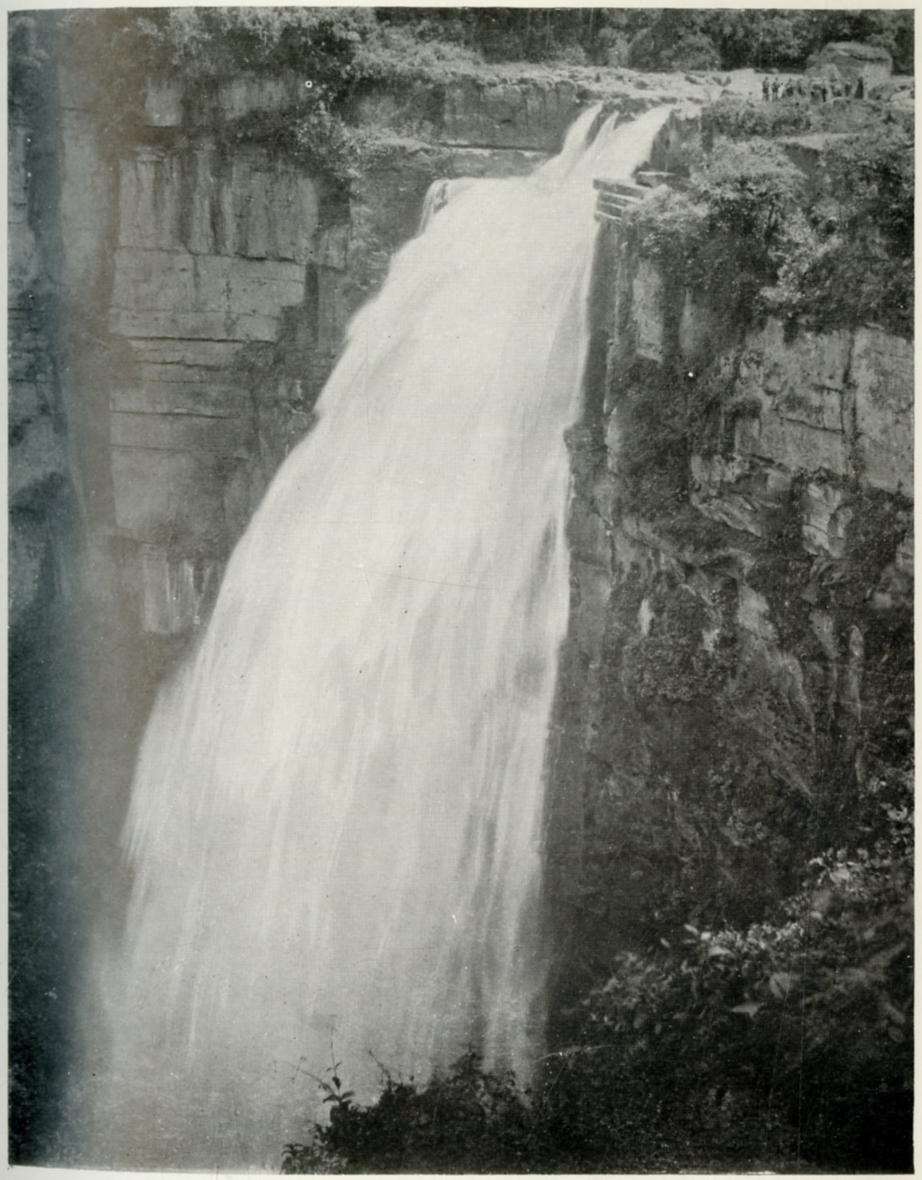


Photo by *H. L. Duperly, Bogotá*

TEQUENDAMA FALL

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eventually found an outlet to the Magdalena by the river Funza or Bogotá. The great fall of Tequendama, about twenty miles from the capital, is perhaps the best-known natural show in the country. Some fifteen miles of rail from Bogotá deposit the traveller at the terminus of the southern railway. A short way farther on the rim of the basin which once formed the lake, at an elevation of nearly 9000 feet, is pierced by the river, which has forced its way through the low hills. For the next three or four miles it bounds and foams, in rapids and cascades, down a slope of some 500 or 600 feet. In one place, the cataract from which the electric-lighting works of Bogotá derive their power, a series of leaps carries it down 200 feet or more in a quarter of a mile. Below that is comparatively calm water for half a mile, and then more rapids. But presently the river, seemingly weary of its slow progress, proceeds to carve out for itself a great gulf in the perfectly level strata which succeed the distorted carboniferous strata a little farther up. Into this it hurls itself by practically one tremendous leap of nearly 500 feet. It is no mere trickle that falls over, but a river which half a mile above is as broad and as deep as, and in appearance not unlike, a large Scotch salmon river. Just before the fall it contracts to a breadth of twenty or thirty yards. The volume of water varies, of course, with the season. When we saw it, in October 1904, it was almost at its greatest in the rainy season. Looking into the depths of the great chasm, it appears to be almost entirely closed

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in by walls of titanic masonry, an idea founded on the level courses of the surrounding strata. A fall of thirty or forty feet precipitates the whole volume of the river on to a ledge of rock, from which it bounds out to fall direct, with a deafening noise, without again touching, into the cauldron more than 450 feet below.

On a level with the ledge just mentioned there is, on the left bank of the fall, a continuation of it which can be reached without difficulty. If you have a steady head, you can stand on the projecting edge, with the water almost touching you, and with nothing below you but space for a depth 100 feet greater than from the top of the cross of St. Paul's Cathedral to the pavement below. At that immense depth the river resumes its course of rapids. The eye seeks, at first in vain, to fathom the depths through the dense cloud of spray raised by the fall of so great a body of water. Every now and again some current of air wafts aside the screen and the river below appears, only to be once more hidden from view in a few seconds. Humboldt, who visited the bottom of this great pit, from which the river again issues at its lower end between huge precipices, says it took him three hours to climb down. He gives as his measurement of the height of the fall 574 feet, and states that the section of the water at the brink is over 100 square yards. But more modern measurements reduce the height to about 480 feet. Thrice the height of Niagara and one-third as high again as the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi, Tequendama

bears no comparison with them, on account of its comparatively small volume. In height it falls far short of the Staubbach in Switzerland, the fall of Gavarni in the Pyrenees, and many others, the small volume of which makes them mere vapour, and not a solid column of water as Tequendama is when the river is full. It should be classed rather with the Kaieteur Fall in British Guiana, which, however, it falls far short of in height. No one who has seen it can ever forget the impression produced by the mighty fall and the sheer walls of the chasm which it has carved for itself.

Of course, amongst the ancient inhabitants it was the foundation of a mythical legend, which Humboldt thus relates: "In the most distant ages, before the moon accompanied the earth—says the mythology of the Muyscas or Moscas—the inhabitants of the plateau of Bogotá lived like barbarians, naked, without agriculture, with no laws and no worship. Suddenly there appeared among them an old man who came from the plains situated to the east of the Cordillera of Chingasa; he appeared to be of a race different from the aborigines, for he had a long bushy beard. He was known under three different names—Bochica, Nemquetheba, and Zuhe. This old man, like Manco Capac, taught men to clothe themselves, to build cabins, to cultivate the earth, and to unite themselves in society. He brought with him a wife, to whom also tradition allots three names—Chia, Yubecayguaya, and Huythaca. This woman, though very beautiful, was very wicked,

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and thwarted her husband in everything he undertook for the benefit of men. By her magic art she caused the river Funza to overflow and fill the whole valley of Bogotá. The greater part of the inhabitants perished in this flood, only a few escaping to the tops of the neighbouring mountains. The angry old man drove the beautiful Huythaca far from the earth; she became the moon, which from that period began to illuminate our planet. Afterwards Bochica, in pity for the men dispersed among the mountains, broke with his powerful hand the rocks which close in the valley in the direction of Canoas and Tequendama. Through this opening he caused the waters of the lake of Funza to drain; he reunited afresh the people of the valley of Bogotá, built cities, introduced the worship of the sun, and appointed two chiefs, between whom he divided secular and ecclesiastical powers. He then withdrew, under the name of Idacanzas, into the sacred valley of Iraca, near Tunja, where he lived for 2000 years, in the exercise of austere penance." This curious legend doubtless embodies the traditional record of two natural cataclysms, the first of which closed up the outlet of the basin, whilst the second re-opened it.

Dr. Hettner takes the more prosaic view that the Bogotá really cut its way back from the western slopes, as Niagara is still cutting back its channel towards the lake from which it flows.

Two other remarkable natural curiosities are mentioned by Dr. Hettner in his account of a

journey through the department of Santander: these are the two great pits known as the Hoyo de los Pajaros ("Pit of the Birds") and the Hoyo del Aire ("Pit of the Wind"). The latter is a roughly circular gulf over 1000 feet in diameter and nearly 400 feet deep. On all sides it is surrounded by sheer walls of bare rock, which only one man, a priest named Cuervo, is said to have descended by means of ropes. At the bottom is a carpet of vegetation. The Hoyo de los Pajaros is only 100 feet in diameter, though 600 feet deep. It takes its name from the nocturnal birds which inhabit its depths, where it is only possible for them to be reached by the sun's direct rays during a few minutes twice in each year. There are many other like examples of the action of subterranean water on calcareous formations in the neighbourhood of Velez.

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CHAPTER III

THE RIVERS AND THEIR NAVIGATION

From the great peaks and uplands of Colombia we turn naturally to the rivers which flow from them, fertilizing their slopes and the subjacent plains. The whole of the eastern plain is occupied by the two great basins of the Amazon and the Orinoco, with the rivers of which we have already dealt in the first chapter.

On the other side of the mountains, whilst the greater part of the Pacific coast is seamed by the short streams which flow down to the ocean from the slopes of the Western Cordilleras and the Cordillera de Baudo, there are only two areas worthy of the name of a basin. In the extreme south-west the Mira and the Patia, the latter rising within and breaking through the outer range, are surrounded by the low-lying territory of Barbacoas, both being navigable for a short distance inland. Farther north, the San Juan is of greater importance. Rising in the connecting link between the main chain and the Cordillera de Baudo, it flows south-westward to the Pacific, north of Buenaventura Bay. It is navigable by small steamers for 140 miles from its mouth—a matter of importance, seeing that its left bank

comprises some of the richest deposits of precious metals in Colombia.

The valley of the Atrato lies north of the ridge from which the San Juan runs south, and is confined between the coast range and the Western Cordilleras of the main range. This river, proportionately to its length of about 350 miles, has a very long stretch of stream navigable by steamers, and even at Quibdó it is 250 yards wide and 12 feet deep. Unfortunately, like other rivers reaching the northern coast, its mouth is closed to ocean steamers by a shallow bar where it falls into the Gulf of Darien.

Between the Western and the Central Cordilleras are the Sinú, the San Jorge, and the Cauca. The Sinú, rising in the western range, flows direct, mostly through level country, to the Caribbean Sea in the Gulf of Morrosquillo, seventy or eighty miles south-west of Cartagena. Though navigable by small steamers for some distance, its value is impaired by the necessity of a sea-voyage from its mouth to Cartagena, which is not feasible for ordinary river boats. When we were at Cartagena, in September 1904, a special boat was being built in order to get over this difficulty.

The San Jorge is separated from the Sinú by a small continuation of the Western Cordilleras, from the mass of which it rises. It also appears to be navigable to some distance from its junction with the Cauca, close to where the latter joins the Magdalena. It is the only important tributary of the left bank of the Cauca; for it is un-

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necessary to mention the innumerable streams which join the upper course of that river, as it serves to demarcate the Western and Central Cordilleras. Of the rivers flowing north to the Caribbean Sea, the Cauca stands second only to the Magdalena. Rising close to the head-waters of the latter it flows, at first impetuously, for sixty or seventy miles from its source in the Paramo del Buey, to the mouth of the Ovejas; thence it becomes navigable as it flows quietly for over 200 miles through one of the most fertile valleys in the world, at an average elevation of about 3500 feet, a valley generally healthy though warm. This open valley, often many miles wide, closes in below the town of Cartago, about latitude 5° north, and the river, flowing in a profound gorge, begins to fall with a rapidity which prohibits navigation. There used to be a small steamer, now defunct, on the part of the river above Cartago, where the broad open valley appears to indicate the former site of a lake.

Once within the gorges below Cartago, the river becomes a raging torrent, falling ten feet or more in the mile, and broken by rocks. It is difficult even to cross it in canoes—fording is impossible; and there is, or was in Dr. Hettner's time, only one iron bridge, near the mines of Marmato. For about sixty miles above the town of Antioquia there is a calmer stretch, on which boats can ply, and then the rapids recommence and continue as far down as Caceres, beyond the point where the Central Cordilleras end, and the

river is able to turn north-eastwards over the northern plain. There is a "salto," really only a small rapid, a short way below Caceres, but from that town to its mouth the river is generally navigable. As the Cauca flows under the northern edge of the central range it receives the Nechi, an important tributary which, with its affluent the Porce, has passed through some of the richest gold-bearing strata, the precious detritus of which abounds in its bed. The Nechi is navigable by small steamers up to Zaragoza, about fifty miles from its junction with the Cauca. The latter river, continuing its course northwards, eventually adds its volume to that of the Magdalena above Magangue, about 200 miles from the coast. It is also connected with the greater river by a channel, the Brazo de Loba, ending below Banco. From this description it will be seen that, though the Cauca is loosely described as navigable, it is so only in detached parts. As an outlet to the rich upper valley it is useless, owing to the rapids between Cartago and Caceres. The 200 miles or so navigable below the latter point are all that have an outlet for steamers to the coast. The upper valley must therefore find its nearest communication with the outer world over the passes of the Western Cordilleras, where the range is narrow and low about Cali—passes leading to Buenaventura on the Pacific. Another possible outlet might be found from its southern end by a road or railway over the transverse dyke between the central and western ranges, and thence down

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the Patia to the port of Tumaco. That region, however, seems to have suffered severely in the recent earthquakes, a fact which is not likely to encourage road or railway construction in that direction. Tumaco itself is reported to have been practically destroyed.

We have left to the last the river which is now, and will probably always be, the main artery of communication between the north coast and the capital, the channel of cheapest carriage, demanding the construction of railways to feed it where water carriage is not possible.

Though the Magdalena and the Cauca have been described as twins in their upper courses amongst the mountains, there are very great differences between them. Even the broadest part of the Upper Cauca valley is narrower than the corresponding portion of the Magdalena. The Cauca is presently enclosed by hills and precipices, whilst the Magdalena, with the exception of the gorge and the rapids at Honda, goes steadily on increasing the width of its valley and flowing with a moderate fall. The Upper Cauca valley averages 3500 feet above sea-level; that of the Magdalena, in the same latitude, is only about 1200 feet at Puricacion, and 1535 at Neiva, the extreme southern limit of steam navigation. Both rivers rise at about the same elevation of 14,000 feet; but, whilst the Cauca has only descended some 10,000 feet when it becomes navigable, the Magdalena has fallen 12,500 feet. At Cartago, near the northern end of its open valley, the Cauca is still 3200 feet



ON THE LOWER MAGDALENA

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above the sea, whilst at Girardot, in about the same latitude, the Magdalena is not more than 1100. Between Cartago and Caceres the Cauca falls over 2500 feet; the Magdalena only 700 feet or so in the like distance. It is these varying rates of fall in different latitudes which make the difference in navigability of the two rivers.

With every wish to avoid, as far as possible, the personal narrative in this account, it still seems the best means of conveying an impression of navigation on the Magdalena, and of the country through which it passes, to give a record of the voyage as it actually presented itself to us in September and November 1904; that is upwards in the dry season, and down in the wet, though, as it happened, the latter was one of very moderate rains.

The start was made from the coast at Cartagena, where we had been compelled to wait nearly four days until there should be a steamer running from Calamar, on the Magdalena, in connection with the railway from Cartagena. Our visit to that ancient city happened to coincide with the presence there of an American travelling circus. What its attractions as a circus may have been personal experience does not enable us to say, but it certainly had many for the good people of Cartagena —the greatest being an elephant, which was quite a novelty to most of them. On the morning of our departure the circus manager left by the ordinary train at 7 A.M.; we followed by a special at 9 A.M., in company with the elephant, the lions, and the monkeys. The consequences of our association with

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these companions were curious; for, not unnaturally, we were regarded by the villagers, who turned out at every station in crowds to gaze at the elephant, as his owners. This belief entailed upon us the answering of many questions as to times of performance, and involved at one place the invasion of our carriage by a garrulous gentleman, apparently the village idiot, who insisted on shaking hands (his were rather grimy) all round; and, it may be shrewdly suspected, was rather disappointed at not being invited to attend the circus at Calamar on a free pass. We parted company with the elephant at Calamar; but two of us met him again, and travelled with him by sea to the Isthmus of Panama in November.

The train from Cartagena, after passing the channel which separates the town from the mainland and the marshy levels lying below the hill known as La Popa, begins presently to mount the hills of Turbaco, representing the last manifestation of their identity by the Western Cordilleras. The climb is a steady rise of 640 feet in the first twelve miles of the journey, of which, perhaps, the real ascent is confined to seven or eight miles. Near Turbaco are the Volcancitos de Turbaco, visited and described by Humboldt. He says that they consist of eighteen or twenty small cones, of a height of between twenty and thirty feet, on a flat clearing in the midst of the forest which covers these hills. In the top of each cone is a basin of water, through which, about five times in every two minutes, there is an escape of gas which rises with con-

siderable force and some noise, the gas explosions being occasionally accompanied by ejections of mud. Small though its height is, Turbaco is blessed with a cooler climate than that of Cartagena, and the nights at least are less oppressive than in the city.

From the summit of this range the train ran down an incline on the eastern slope corresponding to that by which it had ascended. As it hurried down this part of its journey, the northern plains lay before us, spreading out in an apparently endless sheet of green, a fine cattle grazing and breeding country, broken every here and there by little villages or patches of cultivation. Through the midst of it runs the "Dique," half canal half river, which connects the Magdalena near Calamar with the sea some miles south of Cartagena harbour. This passage was originally opened, by canalizing existing rivers and marshes, in the time of Philip II. of Spain. It remained in use till the beginning of the nineteenth century when, during the troublous times of the War of Independence, it was silted up, and remained closed till 1881, when it was reopened for steam navigation. It has a very slight current when the Magdalena is high, is narrow in places, and much choked with weeds, so that now it is very little used. The railway crosses it by a trestle-bridge. Our train only reached Calamar, 65 miles from Cartagena, about 2.30 P.M., and, being new to the country, we confidently expected to start at once. It was not long before we gave up such hopeful expectations of punctuality,

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for we found that we were destined to spend the night on board at Calamar, the situation of which, on the river bank, is naturally favourable to mosquitoes. Once in bed, nets were a protection against the mosquito, but there were no means of escaping their bites in the interval between sunset and bedtime. It was 9.15 next morning before we got under way. The first impressions of the Magdalena, as seen from Calamar—or, for that matter, at Barranquilla, 66 miles lower down, and close to the mouth—are disappointing. In front of one there is a great stretch of yellow water, heavily impregnated with mud, perhaps half a mile wide, for the whole breadth is not visible owing to the division into more than one channel. What gives the first idea of the great size of this mighty river is the sight of the masses of green vegetation constantly floating on its surface, and passing seawards at a steady three or four miles an hour. These floating islets, torn by the current from the river's banks, vary from a foot or two square to several yards, conveying a distinct impression of the power of the stream which bears them.

Once off, we had not gone 200 yards before we again tied up to the bank to load cattle, partly for conveyance up the river, partly for consumption on the voyage by passengers and crew. The method of loading was primitive. On the bank, twenty feet above the stream, was a fenced enclosure containing the cattle. From this a passage, also fenced, led down to the water's edge, and a couple

of planks joined the bank to the steamer, or, rather, to one of the two lighters which she was towing on either side. The first step was to tie a rope round the animal's horns. By this, aided by goading from behind, the unfortunate beast was got down the passage. Occasionally one would be reasonable and cross the planks quietly on to the lighter, and thence to the steamer. But, as a rule, either the bullock resisted, or he slipped and fell plump into the water between the bank and the barge, from which position he was hauled bodily on board by the rope attached to his horns. Recent reports go to show that better methods prevail now, and that management at Calamar is efficient. The railway generally is described as holding a very high place among South American railways.

After about an hour, the work being completed, the *Helena* once more cast off and started on her voyage in earnest. As there was nothing worth looking at on the banks, with their monotonous clothing of long grass and small trees, we had plenty of time to take stock of our boat, her crew, and our fellow-passengers. Of the *Helena* the best general idea can be gathered from the photograph of the *Antioquia*. The type stands for the Magdalena steamers generally, though there are a few bigger and many smaller. Amidships, on the upper deck, are two rows of cabins, in some cases with, in others without, an outside passage. In the centre, between the rows of cabins, is the dining-saloon, open at both ends, or at any rate forward; and behind this is an open space for third-class passengers, for

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the hanging of meat, and the processes of dishing and serving up the somewhat unsavoury messes on which the passengers are invited to feed. Whilst admitting that the majority of these dishes require a stronger stomach to tackle them than most people out of Colombia possess, they must be defended against the charge of reeking of garlic which has been made against them, and which no one would have been surprised to find substantiated in a Spanish country. Neither on the *Helena* nor on the *Amburgo*, belonging to another line, did we ever notice any excess of garlic—indeed, we doubt if it was used at all. What was really nasty about the dishes was the greasy yellow sauce with which they were invariably covered. The accompaniments, in the matter of table-linen and plate, were certainly repulsive, for the tablecloth and the napkins had to last, unwashed, the whole voyage. The former soon became filthy, and the table-napkins, which followed suit, were usually distributed haphazard at each meal, without any regard to who had used them before. The only chance was to identify your own napkin by tying it in some distinctive knot. Warned by one of our party who had tried the voyage before, we had laid in at Cartagena a large supply of tinned tongues, sausages, and fruit, on which we lived, without, as it fortunately happened, suffering from ptomaïne poisoning. Our fellow-passengers, Colombians and miscellaneous foreigners resident in the country, appeared to enjoy the food provided on the steamer. In the after-part of the boat above are the bathroom, storerooms, &c. The

lower deck is open all round, except where wood for the furnaces, stacked between the stanchions, temporarily closes it in. The cargo is carried partly here and partly in shallow holds below. Every portion not occupied by cargo, engines, or boilers is crowded with a miscellaneous collection of crew, third-class passengers, and cattle.

Amongst the Colombian passengers was a small military detachment, the officers travelling first-class. But for a strip of red cloth on the trouser seams, there was nothing to distinguish these people from the civilian travellers, and they certainly did not convey the impression of military men. The colonel, aged about twenty-three, had his wife, a full-blooded Indian, with him. The captain was laid up with a bilious fever, from which, during the first day or two, he announced that he was going to die. He certainly seemed very bad, but a little antipyrin with which we dosed him, followed by quinine, administered till his head buzzed, changed his views, and the last time we saw him he was putting on his boots to go ashore at La Dorada. His food was attended to by a Chinese passenger, who made beef-tea for him. This Chinaman was a most enterprising individual, who, having just undertaken the supply of cattle for the steamers, was on his way up-river to make his arrangements. He was really a very good fellow, and the tea to which he treated us was a welcome addition to our comforts.

Though the river has an evil reputation for fever, this was the only case on board during

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our voyage. Nor did the population of the river-side settlements seem to be fever-stricken. They had none of the sallow, washed-out appearance so common in feverish tracts in India. Amongst the other passengers were two or three Turks from Syria. It is a curious fact that these people are amongst the most successful foreigners, in a small way, in Colombia, and they are to be found as prosperous store-keepers far up country. One of them was a cattle-breeder from the banks of the Sinú River, who had lost an arm during the late revolution. It appeared that his misfortune was due to his finding himself an innocent spectator of a local brawl between the contending parties, one of whose bullets shattered his arm, and necessitated amputation. He was on his way to Bogotá to demand compensation from the Government. One other passenger may be mentioned, a French photographer from Cayenne, which was suspicious, knowing nothing but his own language. He was afflicted with a habit of sending himself to sleep in his hammock, on the covered-in fore-deck, by spouting verses in which *gloire* and *guerre* were the words of most frequent occurrence. Nevertheless, he was a peaceable person. Indeed, the conduct of all was peaceable, and harmony was only broken, at the end of the voyage, when a conjugal squabble, during which the colonel boxed his wife's ears, ended with tears on the lady's part, and a reconciliation in presence of the general public. At the same time two boys of fifteen belonging to the crew had a difference

over some trifle. One of them whipped out a revolver, which he carried in the usual pocket in the seat of his trousers. John Chinaman interfered at this point by taking away the revolver, and keeping it till this dispute also was amicably settled.

The captain of the steamer was a Colombian, of whom we saw little till we got to Dorada, when he helped to pass an evening by recounting the events of a "naval" battle between stern-wheel steamers, of which the *Helena* was one, on the river. The contending vessels had been protected with breastworks of rails filched from the Cartagena-Magdalena railway, and the bullet-holes, still visible in many parts of our steamer, were evidence of the severity of the engagement. In addition to rifle-fire, ramming was freely resorted to. In the end victory rested with the Government fleet, and the resulting establishment of their "river-power" did much towards assuring ultimate victory.

The purser was a Colombianized Jamaican, on his last voyage previous to promotion to command of one of the smaller steamers plying on the lower part of the Cauca.

To return to our voyage, we steamed all through the first night, the navigation in this part being easy and the river broad; though, the water being low, we did hit a sandbank with one of our lighters. The night was characterized by much distant lightning, and an occasional growl of thunder. It was the same every night, and this

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electrical disturbance seems to be characteristic of the river at almost all seasons. In the early morning the storm broke upon us with tremendous flashes of lightning, followed almost simultaneously by deafening peals of thunder. This proximity would not be pleasant under any circumstances; in our case it was particularly disturbing, as it so happened that part of the cargo under us consisted of twenty-five tons of high explosives for the Colombian National Railway, of so dangerous a nature that they had not been allowed to enter the port of Liverpool, and even the careless Colombian authorities, later on, turned them out of the railway terminus at Girardot. The association was distinctly disturbing, and one's apprehensions were not much allayed by the remark of one of our party that, if the stuff did go off, we should not be much the wiser. The only consolation was that, going up-river, we were less likely to run hard on a bank or a snag than in the reverse direction.

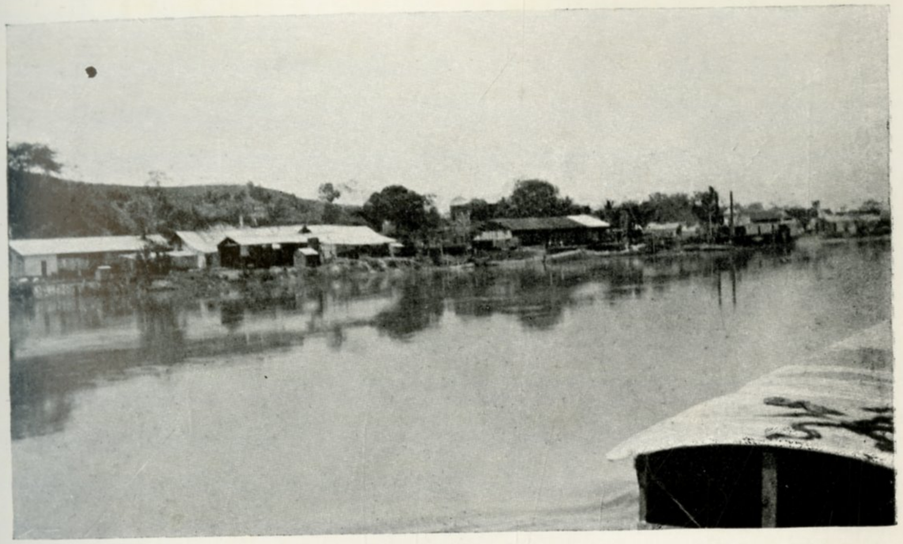
As the thunderstorm passed off, we hove in sight of Magangue, a small town on the left bank of the river, with perhaps 3000 inhabitants. Many of the houses here are built out over the river on piles. Formerly the main stream of the Magdalena flowed past the old, and now decayed, town of Mompox, some twenty miles east of Magangue, but that channel is now only navigable for steamers when the river is in flood. Above Magangue it is not very easy to say whether the steamer is in the Magdalena or in the Cauca, for the former

river, when it changed its course, seems to have taken to the Brazo de Loba, the channel which formerly connected the two below Banco. Indeed, in Perez's geography, published in 1863, Magangue is described as lying on the left bank of the Cauca. It may be taken, therefore, as a fact that that river now joins the Magdalena about half-way between Magangue and Banco, and that the San Jorge, the mouth of which is a short way above the former town, is now a tributary of the united stream, and not, as formerly, of the Cauca only. Owing to the existence of several more or less parallel channels, the width of river visible above the mouth of the San Jorge is considerably less than it was below the mouth of the Mompox branch.

By 3.30 P.M. we were off Sitionuevo, a village where the connecting-link, the Brazo de Loba, formerly diverged from the Cauca to join the Magdalena. We had expected to reach Banco that night, but repairs to the engines necessitated tying up for seven hours, and Banco was only reached about 6.30 next morning. This place is about the same size as Magangue, but better situated, on an elevation rising seventy or eighty feet above the river. It is about 270 miles from the mouth of the river, just above the upper entrance to the Mompox channel. On the opposite (left) bank are a few low hills, which represent the last traces of the Central Cordilleras. On the 6th September, the day we left Banco, the scene began to change; the forests assumed a finer appearance, with large

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timber in place of the small trees of the lower reaches. In the afternoon high mountains began to appear on either bank, still at many miles distance from the river, the constant turns and twists of which generally rendered it difficult for the moment, without consulting the compass and map, to say whether the blue mountains, apparently barring the way, belonged to the Central Cordilleras of the left or the Eastern of the right bank. Here, too, we began to see numerous alligators lying on the sandbanks, sleeping, after the manner of the animal, with wide-open jaws, exposing a formidable array of teeth. An account of the Magdalena, published a few years ago, might have led us to expect to find an almost continuous row of these monsters lining the river-banks from start to finish. That account described the awkwark dilemma of the man who was unfortunate enough to be upset in mid-stream. In constant dread of being caught by an alligator in the water, he would swim for one bank, only to find landing impossible in the face of the array of twenty or thirty foot alligators awaiting him. Turning back, he would meet a similar difficulty on the other bank, and imagination must be left to fill in his eventual fate. All this is gross exaggeration, for nowhere on our journey did we ever see more than a dozen of these animals at a time; we certainly never saw a thirty-footer, probably not more than one or two as long as twenty feet. The natives evidently do not regard them with excessive terror, for, when the steamer is aground on a sandbank, the crew will



PUERTO BERRIO



THE "ANTIOQUIA" (ON LOWER MAGDALENA)

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turn out bodily into water, often up to their armpits, to work at getting her off.

Another pest which seemed to us exaggerated in some accounts is the mosquito. That annoying insect certainly rivals his fellow of the East in power of biting, but he falls very far short of him in his capacity for disturbing one's slumbers by his hateful hum. The Magdalena mosquito hardly ever makes that horrible buzzing which greets the ears as you enter a bathroom in the plains of India. If he happens to get inside your mosquito-nets in the East, there are moments of awful anticipation as he sings in your ear before settling on your cheek. Who can resist the temptation to make a dash at him, which, in nine cases out of ten, has for its only result a self-inflicted box on the ear of the sufferer, followed by the mocking trumpet of the nimble enemy as he retires for the moment, only to return a few seconds later to the attack? The Magdalena mosquito does his work mostly in silence, and thereby deprives it of half its terrors. Withal, it must be admitted that, in the evening hours, it is imprudent to sit on deck in shoes, or without tucking your trousers into your boots. Also, thin khaki or white trousers, which are all that the heat renders comfortable, are no protection, when stretched tight to the skin, against the enemy's proboscis.

The pleasantest time of the day is the early morning, when, with the sun still low, one can sit on deck in light costume drinking the delicious black coffee to which one is reduced in the im-

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possibility of obtaining milk, except at the larger villages. After that, as it gets hotter, the bath is a welcome interlude. Most of the river-steamers have a bathroom, which consists merely of a small room with a tin floor, and a spray in the roof supplied from a water-tank on the top. The water is muddy and the surroundings unpleasant, but it is better than nothing, to the Englishman at any rate. We four Englishmen certainly had a practical monopoly of this luxury, for neither Colombians, nor Turks, nor Frenchman troubled it. You are as likely as not to find the bathroom half-filled with bananas, a clear indication of its general disuse for its legitimate purpose. On one steamer the cross-bar, on which towels were supposed to be hung, was the favourite roosting-place of the ship's hen, an ancient bird who certainly never supplied us with eggs, which could only be procured occasionally at the stations on the banks. Most of us were content to make way for our towels by driving the hen to the end of the bar, but one indignant passenger (or perhaps he was too modest to bathe in the presence of the old lady) forcibly ejected her from the window. Like the dove, she returned to the ark, and was peacefully seated in her accustomed place next morning. There were other unpleasant incidents in connection with the bathroom. One of our party, about to have the water pumped up for his bath at La Dorada, was just in time to prevent its being done before a corpse, in a very unpleasant condition, had floated past.

By breakfast-time, anywhere between eleven and one, the temperature had increased considerably, and by 4 P.M. it was unpleasantly hot, occasionally as high as 102° Fahrenheit in the shade. It is remarkable that, hot as the sun is, it is not feared as it is by Europeans in the East, and that sunstroke is practically unknown; the protection afforded by a Panama hat being generally considered sufficient, except by those whose Eastern experiences have infected them with a wholesome dread of exposure to the midday sun. The *Helena* continued her voyage up-river steadily from Banco all the night of the 6th, though navigation was getting less easy, and there was an occasional unpleasant bump—especially unpleasant when one thought of the dynamite below us—as the lighters grazed a sandbank hidden under the muddy waters of the river. The water looks bad enough, though it is excellent drinking once the mud has been removed by filtering; but it is far too opaque in the river for it to be possible to see the bottom where there is more than six inches of water. The skill of the pilots in picking their way along the river cannot but excite admiration. If the navigable channel were fairly constant, it would not be so remarkable an achievement; that, however, is never the case, for the deep stream, flowing to-day close to one bank, may by to-morrow have shifted to the other, or to midway between the two. These pilots, who spend their lives on the river, seem to have a special instinct which teaches them to judge the probable depth of water, and it is

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really remarkable how rarely they get aground going up-stream. Coming down, at a much greater speed, if a sandbank is run into the case is much worse, and it sometimes happens that a boat gets stuck on a bank for many days together. Unless relieved by another steamer passing, the passengers have an unpleasant time, not unaccompanied by some risk of food running out. When a steamer will pass it is quite impossible to calculate, for the sailings are in no case regular, and depend partly on the cargo awaiting transport, and partly on the sweet will of that autocrat the captain. For seventy or eighty miles above Banco the river flows on the east of the two great islands of Morales and Papayal, cut off on the farther side by another branch starting from near Bodega Central. At that place the Magdalena receives an important tributary, the Lebrija, which is navigable by small steamers for fifty or sixty miles, and for a considerable distance farther by canoes. This river, which takes its rise in the Eastern Cordilleras south of Bucaramanga, is one of the lines of communication with that important town and coffee-growing centre. The journey up it has been described by Mr. A. Millican in the "Adventures of an Orchid Hunter." After leaving the steam-launch in which he ascended the first sixty miles, he continued in a canoe along the foot of the mountains, in a course almost parallel to the Magdalena. Four days of such travel sufficed to reach some very severe rapids, which, even in descending, were a serious danger to the canoes laden with bags of coffee

from the highlands. Two days more brought the traveller to Puerto de Badijas, where the river was left for a ride up the hills to Bucaramanga.

Continuing up the Magdalena from Bodega Central, we reached Puerto Wilches in the evening of the 7th. Here are to be seen a few remains of the projected railway to Bucaramanga through the forest, and across the Lebrija about Puerto de Badijas. A few rails running eastwards are all that remain of this abandoned enterprise, which never got very far, and is now completely overgrown. It was now no longer possible to travel at night, and from dark till sunrise the *Helena* was tied up to the bank, often absolutely touching the impenetrable forest which, except where cleared for small settlements, everywhere covers the country between the river and the mountains, up the sides of which it continues in unchecked vigour. Twenty miles or so above Puerto Wilches is the mouth of the Sogamoso, another large tributary rising in the same region as the Lebrija, to which it flows more or less parallel. This is a second line of communication between the Magdalena and Bucaramanga, being navigable up to Puerto de Sogamoso, at the foot of the hills, due west of the town. Between this river and the Carare, the next great tributary of the right bank of the Magdalena, is the Opon country, where there still are tribes of savages in the primitive stage represented by nudity and poisoned arrows. With these people Mr. Millican came into collision. After beating off their attack, with the loss of

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one of his men by a poisoned arrow, and after inflicting some loss from rifle-fire on his assailants, he wisely abandoned his expedition, and left the orchids of the upper Opon untouched.

The forests of the valley, no doubt, abound in animal life, but one sees little of it on the journey by the river. They are certainly alive with birds of many sorts, and resound with the perpetual chattering of innumerable parrots and macaws of gorgeous plumage. These are continually to be seen, especially in the mornings and evenings, flying in flocks across the river—the great blue and yellow macaws, which are among the most noticeable, fly only in pairs. Egrets flap along the river-course, and sit upon the rocks or trees. It is necessary to land in order to see the lovely humming-birds, too small to be visible from the steamer, which glance and glitter in the sunshine like living emeralds, rubies, or topazes. Butterflies there are, too, of every size and hue. The most beautiful of these, however, come from somewhat higher districts. The brilliant blue ones, often of great size, are found about 3000 feet up in the mountains, and the emerald-mines of Muzo, not far from the head-waters of the Carare, are famous for their butterflies also. From that place comes the most beautiful of all, the Morpho Sulkowski, which gleams and changes in every different light like an opal. Bird and insect life is ever present in infinite variety; and, besides the alligators, representatives of the lizard tribe are occasionally seen in the shape of iguanas, two feet long or

more, hideous in their physiognomy, though often resplendent in green and red scales. But of the mammalia one sees or hears little. Occasionally a cry of "Mono" (monkey) from the Colombian passengers calls attention to a troop of these animals in the forest-trees. One morning at daybreak we were awakened by a rifle-shot from the wheel-house above our heads. The captain had made a very accurate shot, dropping in its tracks a capybara, the largest rodent known, an animal with the head of a beaver, but long in the legs. Of the jaguars, the pumas, the sloths, the peccaries, the deer, the tapirs, and other animals, dangerous or harmless, we saw or heard as little as we did of the bears which inhabit the hills beyond. It was surprising that, tied up as we often were right against the forest, we should not have heard the night-call of the carnivora, or the sharp bark of frightened deer; but truth compels us to admit that we did not, and, moreover, that the cry of even the howling monkey did not salute us. Peccaries are certainly common, as is evident from Mr. Millican's account of a herd amongst which he got on the Lebrija; and he often heard the cry of the jaguar, and shot several specimens. Near the mouth of the Sogamoso we passed the *Eloisa*, of our own line, on the way down. With the exception of one other, she was the only steamer we had sighted so far. She was, at the time, taking on wood for her engines, a necessity from which we had been saved, so far, by a few tons of coal carried, as an experiment,

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in one of our lighters. The supply ran out, however, long before we reached our journey's end, and there was nothing for it but to take on wood every few miles, like our neighbours. These constant stoppages for wood are very annoying, especially on the way up. There are wood stations all along the river at intervals of two or three miles, sometimes on one bank, sometimes on the other. At these places there is a small clearing on the edge of the river, which gradually grows in size as the trees are cut. A few wood-cutters inhabit a wretched hut or two, and the wood is stacked in rows of bundles two or three feet thick, piled about five feet high. From these they are carried on board and stacked on the sides of the lower deck, in much the same way as on shore, except that the height of the stack is greater. A stop is made at least two or three times a day, and generally means an hour lost from the precious daylight. Where the stop is made depends on the captain, and it may be presumed that something hangs on his personal relations with the wood-cutters, and the price they are asking. The sight of the *Eloisa*, or of any other steamer with whose captain our own was not on strained terms, was the signal for an outburst of ear-splitting salutes. First the captains saluted one another with three blasts on the big steam fog-horn; then similar compliments passed between the pursers; and, finally, the engineers signified their salutations to one another by three blasts on the steam-whistle. Mercifully, any unmusical performances

of this sort are impossible at night, when the steamer is tied up or in port; for no sooner is she laid alongside the bank than, with strict economy, the fires are put out, to be relighted only in time to get up steam for the start at daybreak. At the larger places you cannot always reckon on starting then, for, if it happens to be a "fiesta," there may be a dance or other entertainment, at which most of the ship's company attend. As "aguardiente" (white rum of a very potent character) circulates freely, there are apt to be headaches and general slackness next morning. Fortunately for us, there were no such attractions at the time of our voyages up and down.

As the steamer gets higher up the river the forest becomes ever denser and more typical, and in places rocky points jut out to the riverside. Round some of these the water swirls and eddies in a fierce and rapid current; fires are stoked up, and the shower of sparks and the noises of the engines testify to the strain put upon the very cranky-looking boilers. Many a boat is said to have come to an end by the bursting of its boilers, and the possibility of an explosion, on the top of the dynamite cargo, was, in our case, doubly unpleasant.

The *Helena* on the 9th September was some fifty miles below Puerto Berrio, about to enter on perhaps the worst hundred miles of the whole course of the lower river. There are sandbanks everywhere, and, what is much worse, numerous snags. A tax is levied on the steamers, which is

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supposed to be devoted to clearing and improving the navigable channel. Unfortunately, it has been devoted to other objects, in the financial stress due to civil disturbances, and little or nothing has been done either towards blowing up snags or training the river. When the great tree anchored in the bottom sends up a branch as a danger-signal above the water, there is no risk. It is those hidden entirely by the opaque water which are the great danger, and it is on the downward journey that they, as well as the banks, are most to be feared. A very little experience teaches one to recognise which class of obstruction has been touched. In this reach below Puerto Berrio lay the wreck of a fine steamer, the *General Paez*, wrecked, probably on a snag, about a fortnight before we passed. There she lay, head up-stream, canted over to port at an angle of fifteen degrees, the lower side of her upper deck just awash, the other side well out of water, and her cabins and upper works uninjured. Of saving her hull there was no hope, though possibly her engines might be rescued. It is understood that President Reyes has resumed work on clearing this part of the river, but it can only be kept in order by constant attention.

Puerto Berrio was reached the same night, and here we once more found ourselves at a railway terminus. The line was designed to unite the Magdalena with Medellin, the capital of the department of Antioquia, about 100 miles west, 5000 feet up in the Central Cordilleras. Want of capital, and civil disturbances brought it to a standstill

many years ago, when it had traversed less than one-third of the whole distance. Work will probably be resumed shortly, under new management. Puerto Berrio is not much of a place, though, on the whole, looking to its position as the point where the greater part of the trade between Antioquia and the coast is transhipped between steamer and train, it was decidedly the most important place we had reached above Calamar. Here we had rain most of the night—rain such as only falls in the tropics—against which our upper deck was by no means proof, as leakages into the cabins brought painfully to notice. For the next fifty miles the navigation was almost as intricate and dangerous as on the previous day. The *Helena* was constantly going only just fast enough to overcome the stream, whilst men in the bows sounded with bamboo rods. More than once we felt the unpleasant jerk and heave of a sandbank touched, or the still more unpleasant sensation of grazing over a snag. It was necessary to cross and recross the river almost continuously as the deep channel moved. Occasionally we had to hark back, half a mile or more, to get out of a cul-de-sac of sandbanks into which the steamer had run.

On the 11th September, at 3 P.M., the *Helena* at last reached La Dorada, having taken rather over seven days to do the 480 miles from Calamar. Our residence on board was, however, still to continue for nearly twenty-four hours more; for the single daily train to Honda had left about an hour

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before we arrived, and, there being no accommodation on shore, there was nothing for it but to spend the night, and half the next day, on board.

The station of La Dorada lies on the left bank of the Magdalena, and cannot be described as a town or village; it is merely a small settlement which has grown up around the railway terminus. Here the steam navigation of the lower Magdalena practically ends. It is true that steamers, at intervals, push up to Bodega de Bogotá, a port on the right bank, just below the rapids about three miles from Honda, and transfer their cargoes direct there for transport by mule over the extremely bad road direct to Bogotá. But they can only do this when the river is high, and the rains which produce that condition also tend to render the road particularly difficult and dangerous. The rapids between Bodega de Bogotá and Honda are not practicable for loaded steamers, and it is only possible to get them up unloaded by haulage, a process attended with considerable risk. Whether it would not have been possible to open direct communication between the upper and lower rivers by canalization, at a less cost than that of the railway, is a question which, with the construction of the railway, has passed beyond the realm of practical politics. A good and prosperous Government would probably have taken up the matter seriously, but civil dissensions, and the waste of money consequent on them, necessarily compelled resort to the aid of private enterprise, which naturally would prefer a railway to any such scheme.



RIO GUALI FROM HONDA



HONDA

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At La Dorada there are generally several steamers lying awaiting the time for departure, on the return journey down-stream. When they will start it is never possible to ascertain more than a day or two in advance. The absence of any regularity of service on the river is one of the greatest inconveniences to passengers, who find themselves compelled, if they want to catch an ocean-steamer at the coast, to allow a liberal margin of time for these delays. No allowance can, of course, provide against the contingency of a week spent on a sandbank, waiting for a rise of the river to lift the stranded steamer off. A gentleman who came down the river in January 1906 took seventeen days between Honda and the coast, most of the time being spent on a sandbank at Bodega de Sogamoso.

When two of us returned in November, our steamer spent altogether fourteen hours in this position. She stuck for six hours in the afternoon after leaving Puerto Berrio, and again for a couple of hours next morning; finally, it took her six more hours to get off a bank a good deal lower down. The latter catastrophe was apparently due to an unnecessary visit paid, for private purposes of the captain, to a small station on the right bank. We had been running comfortably in the deep stream under the left bank, when, with much blowing of the fog-horn, we suddenly altered our course to the east and ran hard on a bank. The means employed for getting off were ingenious and interesting. The first plan, which had succeeded

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on the two previous occasions, consisted of a sort of steam punting. A small tree was driven into the mud on the down-stream side; to the forked branches at its upper end was attached a wire hawser, which was wound up by the steam-winch till the boat had been edged off a yard or two, when she was fixed in position with other poles. The tree was then hauled up, again driven into the mud near the side, and the process was repeated. On this occasion this plan failed, and recourse was had to an anchor carried out in a canoe to another sandbank, where it was thrown overboard and hauled upon by the steam-winch. This was, after several failures owing to the anchor's dragging, finally successful. After the visit to the right bank, where there was no business to be done, we returned to the deep stream on the left, almost precisely where we had left it, and continued there for some miles without a hitch. It is this fact which induces the belief that the crossing to the right bank was due only to the captain's or pilot's desire to pay a friendly visit. During these operations, as well as during those higher up, the crew were constantly moving about in the water, apparently quite heedless of the alligators, from which, according to some exaggerated accounts, they should have been in the most imminent peril.

Altogether there are, on the lower river, about forty steamers, varying in size from the huge *Bismarck* of 400 tons, drawing $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water, to the little cargo-boats *Flora* and *Berta* of 50 tons,

with a draught of only $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and plying up the Cauca and the Nechi. The majority of the steamers plied in 1904 from Barranquilla, 66 miles below Calamar; the only line starting from Calamar, Compañia Fluvial, now owned by the Cartagena (Colombia) Railway Company, having six steamers. Arrangements are now completed for adding seven more boats to this fleet, by purchase from those hitherto quartered at Barranquilla.

The various steamer companies periodically engage in a rate-cutting warfare, which was in full swing in 1904. In October of that year an arrangement was come to, fixing freights and passage-money to the various ports up the river. For ordinary-sized packages, the charge from Barranquilla was settled at £2, 16s. per ton, with an extra 16s. for the risky journey to Bodega de Bogotá, when undertaken. Much higher rates were charged for packages over half a ton, rising to as much as an increase of 150 per cent. on those of between 5 and 8 tons. The down-stream rates were, for ordinary packages, £2, 4s. from La Dorada and £3 from Bodega de Bogotá, with the same proportionate increases for heavy articles. First-class passengers paid £6 up, and £5 down, to and from La Dorada. This peace was soon broken, and a fresh competition started, which was once more stopped by a compact in the end of 1905, fixing the rates higher than those of the last arrangement.

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CHAPTER IV

THE UPPER MAGDALENA AND THE ROADS TO BOGOTÁ

About 2 p.m. on the 12th September, we found ourselves in the train for Honda on the La Dorada railway. The line, of which a very dismal account was given about 1887, has been much improved since then. The landing-stages at La Dorada have been especially modified for the better, though goods still have to be carried up the bank on men's backs to the waggons, instead of being lifted direct out of or into the steamers by cranes. The river here is about a quarter of a mile broad, with a flat bank about twenty feet above a low river on the left, whilst the right bank is more hilly immediately opposite the station. Looking southwards, the lower spurs of the Eastern Cordilleras are seen to rise perhaps 3000 feet on the right bank. In the early morning, as the mists cleared off in wreaths and banks, streaming up the hillsides and dissolving in the rays of the rising sun, the view was very fine. The engineering difficulties of the eighteen miles of line are few, for the country over which it runs is generally level, and there are only one or two streams of any size to be crossed, among which the chief is the Guarino, a few miles

short of Honda. Another bridge carries the train over the Guali in Honda itself, in order to enable it to reach Arancaplumas, the terminal port of the Upper Magdalena, about 1½ miles farther on. Only in one place short of Honda has the train to run over a small piece of rising ground, approached by rather steep inclines on either side. All the way the Magdalena flows in a tortuous course, at varying distances, to the east, whilst on the west are seen the towering slopes of the Central Cordilleras, and, close to the line, a few curiously shaped outliers, apparently, judging by their flat tops, of trap or basalt. In places the line runs over grass prairies, in others through thick forest.

There is no hurry on the railway, and it takes the better part of two hours to get from La Dorada to Honda. That town, with a population which may amount to 7000 persons, lies in a hollow, almost completely surrounded by spurs of the eastern and central ranges. The rapids of the Magdalena skirt its eastern edge, and through its midst, crossed by an iron road bridge in addition to that of the railway a few yards lower, the picturesque river Guali hurries to join the Magdalena. The beauty of this stream, as you look up it from the bridge, is somewhat marred at times by the red colour of its waters, due to mining operations in its upper part. It divides the town into two portions, of which that to the north contains the railway station, the hotels, such as they are, and the native residential quarter. In the southern portion are most of the shops and business estab-

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lishments, with villas, the private residences of the business community, on a small elevation towards the west. No flattery could rise to calling Honda a fine town, but, taken generally, it is fairly clean and neat.

We stayed at the Hotel America, the property of a Colombianized German, which hardly ranks with the great hotels of London and Paris. The food is certainly an improvement on that of the river-steamers, but to English taste it is not good, and the sleeping accommodation is of the very poorest. A bed of the usual type—namely, a trestle frame with canvas stretched across it—a wash-stand, or a table with a basin and jug on it, a chair, and a looking-glass are about the limits of the furniture. One's slumbers are apt to be disturbed by mice running over one, or by plaster dislodged by lizards from the uncovered tiled roof above. Curiously, however, though Honda is not more than 650 feet above sea-level, and the temperature rises to 102° Fahrenheit, mosquitoes are few, and, except in rooms in the neighbourhood of vegetation and water, mosquito-nets are unnecessary at night. The place derives its importance from the fact that it is the centre of the traffic with Bogotá and the Upper Magdalena, and the railway terminus through which it, as well as the produce of the Mariquita district, passes. The direct road to Bogotá crosses the Magdalena by a suspension-bridge at the southern end of the town, at the head of the rapids.

This road, bad as it is, has hitherto attracted a

large proportion of the traffic between Honda and the capital. It must inevitably fall into complete disuse, both for passengers and goods, as soon as Bogotá is connected by rail direct with Girardot, ninety-three miles above Honda, on the Upper Magdalena. That railway connection will presently be linked up with Honda and La Dorada, thus substituting a railway journey of a few hours for the three days of hard and even dangerous mule ride by the direct road, is certain. It will be an even greater advantage to goods traffic, which will cease to be limited by the carrying capacity of a mule, or to be subjected to loading and unloading at least twice every day.

If the starting times for steamers on the lower river are uncertain, they are even more so on the upper. When we reached Honda there was no steamer at Arancaplumas, and we were compelled to submit patiently to the heat and discomforts of Honda, as we wished to travel, for business reasons, over the route by the upper river and the Colombian National Railway. The *Henri Fould*, then the most powerful, if the least comfortable, boat on the upper river, arrived from Girardot on the 13th September. On the night of the 15th we were hurried on board with the promise of starting at daybreak. The walk to Arancaplumas in the dark entailed the risk of breaking one's neck in stepping from sleeper to sleeper over the open, unfenced girder railway bridge over the Guali. Once on board the *Fould*, we found our sleeping quarters restricted to a narrow veranda, in which

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there was just room for a bed. It thundered and rained a little in the night, and the curtains of the gangway scarcely saved us a ducking. We had, however, said good-bye to the dynamite at La Dorada, which was a comfort.

Day broke and found the *Fould's* fires still unlighted. Washing and dressing were a difficulty, for we had only one tiny cabin between four of us. Our immobility was all the more aggravating when we considered that, had we known the steamer would not, as was the case, start till afternoon, we might have slept in the comparative comfort and quiet of the Hotel America. If the *Helena* was not a floating palace, she was luxury compared to the *Fould*. That useful but inconvenient boat was not even roofed in forward, so that, when she was steaming, a perpetual shower of wood sparks descended from her smoke-stack, with the result of our constantly having to extinguish our own or our neighbour's clothes, which soon exhibited holes in many places. Meals were served in the covered part aft, and were not made more appetizing by the tightness with which our miscellaneous company were packed, or by the sight of the raw meat for future meals hung up within a yard of our seats.

At last we were off, steaming, for the first three or four miles, through a comparatively narrow gorge, against a heavy current. Then the country opened out and the river widened, whilst the hills stood several miles back from it. Till late in the afternoon we went ahead without any serious difficulty. Then, however, we found our-

selves (about eighteen miles above Honda) in a very troublesome reach, where sandbanks, comparatively rare on the upper river, beset the *Fould* in all directions. There was constant sounding of the shallow river, though our boat drew but 2½ feet. Several times it was necessary to turn back to find the true channel, and at one time it seemed hopeless to look for escape from the maze. At last we got through, and steaming slowly in the moonlight, we made fast alongside Cambao, about twenty-three miles from the commencement of our journey. From this place there is what is, by courtesy, called a cart-road to the "sabana" of Bogotá at the railway terminus of Facatativá. The locomotives and other heavy plant which are found on the plateau were got up somehow or other, one wonders how, by this road. At the time we passed, it had fallen into utter disrepair during the recent revolution, and was practically impassable by anything but mules. Since then, it is said to have been repaired, and to be once more open to rough carts.

There was not much difficulty next morning in reaching Ambalema, a small town on the left bank, with most charming views in every direction. To the east, beyond the river, the eastern range shows rounded summits reaching up to the plateau of Bogotá; behind the town, on the west, are the slopes of the central range, crowned by the snow-clad summits of Tolima and the Paramo de Ruiz. Ambalema is famous for its tobacco and for the cigar manufactory of the brothers Goschen. Here, many years ago, it is said, Lord Goschen spent a

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couple of years. The factory has now passed to Mr. Vaughan, who has a fine house on the rising ground at the back of the town.

On the lower river we had seen few country craft, except the dug-out carrying four or five men, poled, with infinite labour, against the current close under the banks. Here, on the upper river, we found the "champan," or large covered-in canoe, and the raft in constant use. The former is a large boat, requiring a crew of fifteen or eighteen men to punt it against the stream. A semicircular roof of bamboos gives protection against sun and rain, but the accommodation is not comfortable, as was proved by two of our party who descended the river in a very dry season, when all steamer traffic was temporarily suspended. The stifling quarters under the roof are thickly populated by fleas and other still more objectionable insects. The rafts are formed of logs or bamboos tied together, and loaded with goods, amongst which a prominent place is occupied by red earthenware vessels, very similar to the "chatties" so well known in India. These conveyances only go down-stream, for it would be almost impossible to punt them against it. Arrived at their destination, the logs of which they are composed, as well as the goods they carry, are sold, and the owners find their way back by other means, to start again later with a fresh raft and a fresh cargo. The *Fould* took sixty or eighty of them on board free, in exchange for services to be rendered, as will presently be described.

Not long after leaving Ambalema, we encountered the first serious rapid on the upper river at Colombaima. At this point the course of the stream is barred by a low reef of rock stretching from bank to bank, in places showing well above low-water, in others always slightly submerged, whilst in yet others the water tears like a mill-race through openings worn by it in the barrier. Through the chief of these the *Fould* had got to pass somehow. Before starting on this undertaking, she tied up for half-an-hour close to the *Cundinamarca*, a larger steamer, which was undergoing repairs to her stern wheel, several of the floats of which had been carried away on her passage down the rapid. We came down in this boat later on, and found her much more comfortable than the *Fould*. The latter, however, owing to her smaller size and more powerful engines, can ply on the river when low-water bars larger boats. Two new steamers have just been put upon the upper river, in connection with the Colombian National Railway. Being very powerful, and drawing only $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water when loaded to the utmost, it is hoped to open with them a regular, continuous, and rapid service between Honda and Girardot.

Whilst we were tied up below the rapid, the sixty or eighty raftsmen got on shore, carrying with them a quarter of a mile of hawser and a canoe, and proceeded by land to a gravel bank above the barrier. All being ready, the *Fould* stoked up, cast off, and charged the torrent in

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the main opening. Labouring and snorting like some over-strained animal, she seemed to be going to carry the whole obstacle with one great effort. To us, she seemed to have got past the worst in a few minutes. It was an exciting time as she fought her way gallantly through the raging waters, seeming every moment to be about to suffer impalement on the jagged rocks, from which she passed but a foot or two off. It was impossible not to admire the coolness and dexterity of the pilots as, by the aid of her powerful double or treble rudders, they guided her through the watery maze. Then came a time when she appeared to have shot her bolt and to be incapable of overcoming the force of the stream. There was one particular spike of rock a few yards to port which served to indicate her advance or repulse. At one moment she would gain a foot or two, only to be driven back as much, or more, the next; for minutes she hovered between the prospect of being able to clear the rapid and that of being swept back, through the channel she had passed, to ruin. Would she burst her flimsy-looking boiler in the supreme effort? Help was in sight. The free passengers launched their canoe from the gravel bank 300 yards up stream, manned by three men, carrying one end of the hawser. As the canoe passed, the hawser was safely flung on board the *Fould*, but the man who threw it overbalanced his light craft, and his two companions, as well as himself, were washed down towards the rocks, clinging to the overturned

canoe. Affairs looked serious for the moment, but the men swam like ducks, and, amidst much laughter and chaff, got safely ashore. Once the hawser was fast to the *Fould's* bows, the long line of men at the other end hauled their best, whilst the *Fould's* furnace was crammed with wood as fast as it could be passed. The pull on the hawser just turned the scale in the contest, and two or three minutes later the steamer was paddling quietly in comparatively still water.

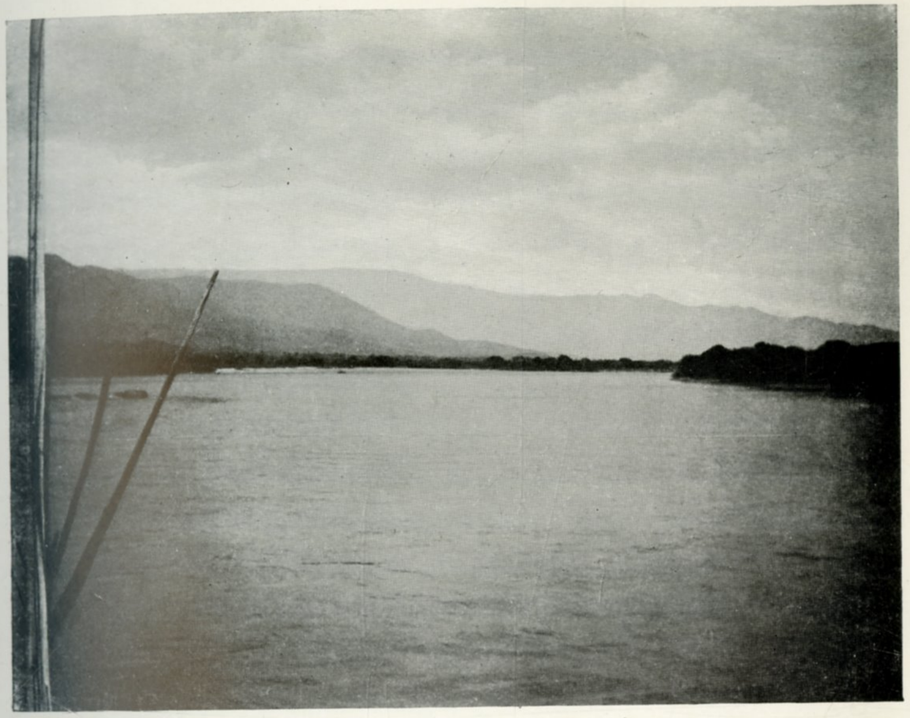
When we came down, later on, in the *Cundinamarca*, the river was fuller, and there was no real difficulty in passing the rapid. It was a curious sensation as, with the ever-increasing rapidity of the current, the steamer and her pilots seemed to be gathering themselves together for the final rush. There must be no shaky nerves or unsteady hands on the wheel, for the boat's head must be kept very straight in the narrow passage between the rocks, and, moreover, she must be kept under steam in order to give her steerage-way. There was a breathless moment as she neared the final descent, a rapid rush, and then a feeling of relief that she was safe through, untouched by rocks which, at the pace she was going, would have ripped her open from stem to stern.

A few miles higher up the hills began to approach the river on either bank, and, as darkness came on, a weird and splendid sight was witnessed. The season was the end of the dry weather, and the rains might be expected to commence any

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day. The grass on the plains and hills was as dry as tinder, and in many places had caught fire accidentally, or been fired deliberately. The Colombian grazier, like his fellow in the East, knows well that, if he is to have the best and most succulent grass crop in the rainy season, he will find it where the withered dry grass of the hot season has been burnt. We passed prairies in the middle of September, which were a sheet of ashes; when we returned over them, early in November, they were covered with the richest grass, two feet or more in height. Therefore, the grazier wisely fires his "potrero" or grass farm, when he knows that, in a few days, the first heavy fall of tropical rain will have rendered the yellow, withered stuff too sodden to burn. If he sees a chance of making out that it has been fired by the sparks of a passing engine or steamer, he will, of course, raise a dismal howl, in the hopes of getting damages for what he has either done himself deliberately, or intended to do a day or two later. He relies on ignorance of this habit, and sometimes does not rely in vain.

As we wound in among the great hills, they were lighted up every here and there, as it were with beacons marking the spots where the forest was on fire. Sometimes the fire was close down to the water's edge, and the fiery blast from it was distinctly felt. When we were to windward of these fires, not blinded by their smoke, the scene in their depths was indescribably grand. Flames leaped up from the burning grass and undergrowth to lick the trunks and branches of the great forest-



ON THE UPPER MAGDALENA



A WOOD STATION

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trees; every now and then one of them, burned through at the base, would fall with a mighty crash, dashing up, as from a fiery sea, a foam of sparks. The smaller and damper trees writhed in the flames, like living beings in torment, and the whole scene conveyed the idea of a terrestrial hell.

That night we were able to creep slowly along till ten o'clock, when our own fiery ordeal of sparks from the funnel ceased as we stopped to tie up against a bank far away from all human habitation. Next morning the river was still closed in by hills, and about ten miles below Girardot, after it turns sharply to the east at Coello, it flows in a very narrow gorge. At the lower mouth of this there were more rapids, but they presented no serious difficulty, being overcome by means of a little extra stoking. Emerging from the gorge, the *Fould* passed under the suspension-bridge which spans the river, at a height of fifty or sixty feet, about a mile below Girardot.

This place, the end of our river journey, is a small town of, as one might guess, 3000 or 4000 inhabitants, a mile or two west of the mouth of the Bogotá River, on the opposite bank of which is the port of Ricaurte. This is the ordinary upward limit of steam navigation, though the steamers at intervals go on as far as Neiva, more than 100 miles farther south. Girardot will doubtless grow rapidly, as it becomes the point of junction between the railway from Bogotá and the upper river steamers, or when the river is crossed by a railway bridge connecting the Colom-

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bian National with the southern extension of the Dorada railway.

Next day, 19th September, we left Girardot by special train *en route* for Bogotá. The first few miles run across a rolling prairie country, gradually rising to the foot of the eastern range. There are no engineering difficulties till the line has passed Tocaima, one of the places where coal is found. At about thirty miles from Girardot the river Apulo has to be crossed. This tributary of the Bogotá joins it a few miles lower, at Portillo, a place to which comes, by mule from Fusagasaga, much excellent coffee on its way to the coast. The original constructors of the railway made no less than three crossings of the Apulo, instead of only one as there now is. Hence much trouble ensued: for, a few months before our visit, the lower bridge, crossing from the right to the left bank, was carried away by a flood, and when we crossed the temporary trestle-bridge beside it, the iron girder bridge was standing with its farther end supported on a high pile of sleepers. Before the repairs could be completed the bridge was again wrecked by the break of the rains; and it was then decided to do what should have been done years before, to carry the line along the right bank past the second bridge, which crossed from the left bank to the right, thus using only the third for a single crossing to the left. The valley at this point is narrow, but shortly widens out into a broad undulating country leading up to the north-east and gradually becoming steeper as it rises to

the level of the Bogotá plateau near Facatativá. This is the line up which the Colombian National Railway (the Ferro Carril de Girardot, as it is locally called) is gradually winding its way to meet the Sabana Railway, uniting Facatativá to Bogotá, over twenty-five miles of dead level. In September 1904, the line was only open to Anapoima, a town on the left slope of the valley, though it was completed for a few miles farther, and our train ran us up as far as the rails were laid, about three miles short of San Joaquin. When we came down, it was already completed to the latter place, and is now open for a further fifteen miles and approaching completion up to sixty miles from Girardot. Girardot is some 1000 feet above sea-level, and the rise to San Joaquin is another 1200. The climate at San Joaquin is no longer the sweltering heat of the Magdalena valley, and a light blanket at night is welcome.

On the 21st we started again on the twenty-five mile mule ride to the plateau. An hour and a half of steep climb brought us to La Mesa, a flourishing town of over 10,000 inhabitants, splendidly situated on the flat top of a mountain 4600 feet above the sea. From end to end of this "table" (*mesa*) is some three or four miles, with a breadth of one in the widest part. The place is healthy,. though the damp mists which sweep across it give the people a rather bleached appearance, as compared with the rosy cheeks which are seen on the Bogotá plain. Below La Mesa, on the north, there are two more smaller plateaux form-

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ing two steps down towards the valley. Round the lower of these the railway winds to the station of San Javier, which can be reached by mule in less than half-an-hour from La Mesa.

The "camino real" (royal road), leading from Girardot to Bogotá, passes through the whole length of La Mesa, to descend again the eastern end of the hill to a sort of "col," about 400 feet lower, dividing the Apulo valley from that of the Bogotá. The railway is now open to a point a mile or two north of the saddle, on which a small hamlet is known as El Hospicio. Hence it winds back, in curves and loops, towards the north along the slope which closes in the head of the Apulo valley, the top of which looks down on the great plateau of Bogotá.

There is not much royalty now about this "camino real," but at least there is nothing dangerous about it; and there are none of the deep mud-holes or precipices which are a terror on the direct road from Honda to Facatativá. Every here and there are the remains of pavements which have been broken up in order to find ready cut stone for building. These pavements are rather in the way than otherwise in their existing condition of ruin; but they serve to show that the road may have once merited its name better than it does now. For wheeled traffic it is impassable; only the mules, country ponies, and oxen can move over its broken surface. From El Hospicio (4130 feet) to Tena (4610 feet) takes half-an-hour, and the same time is required to

reach the inn at Tambo (5740 feet), where breakfast was taken. At Tena the M. M. Fould have a nice country-house with an electric light installation, the power for which is supplied by a small stream. From Tambo the real climb begins. The first one and a half hours up to Curibital are steep enough; the last half-hour, beyond that point, is as steep as a roof. The final few hundred feet are ascended by a sort of spiral staircase of a road, the engineering of which is highly creditable to the Spaniard who designed and made it. Like the rest of the road, it is in wretched condition, but in parts the tread of the steps, ten feet or more broad, is paved throughout. It is good enough going upwards, and even down when the rock is dry, but when, as on our return, it is greasy and slippery the descent is not quite so pleasant on horseback. However, there is nothing to complain of much, and an English engineer who accompanied us down, having got delayed about arrangements at Madrid, on the plateau, caught us up, partly by coming down the staircase at a trot. The scenery all the way from Tambo is magnificent; the road itself runs up a narrow forest-clad valley with tremendous sheer cliffs in places; in one of the tributary valleys on the left there is a magnificent and imposing gorge. Looking back from Tambo, the eye falls upon range behind range of Cordilleras. La Mesa lies right in front but lower, and in the far distance, on a clear day, the everlasting snows of the Tolima range stand out against the blue sky in all their glory.

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The air has been for long getting cooler, and waistcoats are welcome, though it is still not cold in the valley. Just before the top of the staircase, nearly 9000 feet above the sea, is reached, at Boca del Monte, a curious change is felt: a cold blast sweeps over the pass suddenly, making one hurriedly put on more wraps. Once the top is passed this feeling of cold vanishes, and the air again becomes that of a genial English spring day. At the top of the pass a carriage was waiting to drive us to Madrid, on the Sabana Railway, sixteen miles from Bogotá. The present writer had left San Joaquin at 8 A.M., with every symptom of approaching ague, the result of exposure to the sun on the previous day; by Hospicio the fit was fairly on, and any one who has suffered from that unpleasant complaint will understand that he was glad to try the carriage, rather than ride the remaining five or six miles to Madrid on a tired pony. It did not, however, require much experience of the pitching and rolling of the conveyance on the solid waves of the ill-kept road to induce a keen regret for the choice, and envy of the others cantering alongside.

The Government has recently started repairing this road from Madrid to Boca del Monte. The alignment is good enough, and it should be a very small matter to make it comfortably passable for carts and carriages. Of course, however, as long as it is unmetalled, it is liable to cut up into ruts in wet weather. Judging from what we saw in Bogotá of repairs to a street, Colombian ideas of road-

making are not very advanced. Large lumps of stone, four or five inches in diameter, were spread on the roadway, and over these a steam-roller was driven. It, by the way, had evidently not been much used, for half the population of Bogotá turned out to watch it. It was not heavy enough to have much effect on the large stones; and as they were only covered with a top-dressing of earth, it does not require much knowledge of roadmaking to foresee that they would very soon reappear on the surface, which would become extremely unpleasant for driving. Had the stones been broken to a diameter of 1½ or 2 inches, and then rolled, they would have made an excellent surface.

Even the Boca del Monte road of 1904, with all its jolting, was passed at last, and from Madrid thirty-five minutes by special train covered the sixteen miles of the Sabana line to Bogotá. There bed, plenty of blankets, warm soup, and quinine soon drove away the ague, and the memory of the drive over the plateau.

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CHAPTER V

THE COLOMBIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR HISTORY

BEFORE proceeding with a description of those parts of the country which we saw ourselves, or recording what is to be gathered from the writings and descriptions of others, it will be well to give some general account of the four millions of people inhabiting this extensive state, and of the history of events which have brought them to their existing condition. As has already been said, the numbers of the population are far from certain; they may be four millions or they may be five, and if we assume the former figure, it is only because, on the whole, that seems the most probable approximation, as far as can be judged from the very insufficient data available.

Excluding the few foreigners resident in the country, there are three main stocks from which the Colombians are descended. First in order of antiquity of residence come the copper-coloured races, which the Spanish conquerors of the sixteenth century found established everywhere. If these are not divisible on racial grounds, they are so at least on those of civilization. As in Peru and Mexico, a great portion of the ancient population had already, at the time of the conquest, attained a degree of civilization which separated

them clearly from the dwellers in the forests groping in the outer darkness of primitive barbarism, a state from which, even now, they have not emerged to any appreciable extent. It is not a quarter of a century since the brothers Reyes were offered, as a token of friendship, dishes of human flesh in the forests of the Putumayo, and one of them eventually fell a victim to some of these cannibals. The savages of the Opon territory, almost within sight of the great waterway leading from the coast to the capital, still roam naked in the dense forests, living on the birds and animals killed with arrows tipped with "carare," a vegetable poison. There is a story, which need not be accepted blindly, that the poison used by Indians on the San Juan and Atrato is distilled from the sweat of a frog. Here is Captain Cochrane's quaint account of the method of preparation of this substance: "The poison is obtained from a small harmless frog, called 'rama de veneno,' about three inches long, yellow on the back, with very large black eyes. It is only to be found (so my host informed me) in this place, and another, called Pelmar. Those who use this poison catch the frogs in the woods, and confine them in a hollow cane, where they regularly feed them until they want the poison, when they take out one of the unfortunate reptiles and pass a piece of pointed wood down his throat and out at one of his legs. This torture makes the poor frog perspire very much, especially on the back, which becomes covered with white froth: this is the

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most powerful poison that he yields, and in this they dip or roll the points of their arrows, which will preserve their destructive power for a year. Afterwards, below this white substance, appears a yellow oil, which is carefully scraped off, and retains its deadly influence for four or six months, according to the goodness (as they say) of the frog. By this means, from one frog sufficient poison is obtained for about fifty arrows."

Mr. R. B. White, a mining engineer, writing sixty years later than Captain Cochrane, repeats the story of the use of frog poison, adding that it produces instant paralysis.

Altogether, an official publication issued by the Colombian Government estimates the wild Indians at 130,000, but it is needless to say that very little reliance can be placed on this. Many of the Indians (25,000, according to the estimate) are found in the Goajira Peninsula, on the Caribbean coast, north-east of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Amongst these are not included the more or less civilized Indians, descendants of such races as the Chibchas of the Bogotá plateau, who still in many parts form the bulk of the agricultural population. Generally speaking, they are a short thick-set race, often of magnificent physique. To convince oneself of this it is only necessary to watch the crew of a steamer in port bathing in the Magdalena; for they have none of the objection to cold water which is found among those of higher class. Amongst them are to be seen

shoulders and limbs which, for their muscular development, would delight a sculptor or a painter. As porters there are few finer men anywhere. As the steamer is loading or discharging, men hurry up or down the steep banks, each carrying his 140-lb. bag of coffee as if it were a trifle. A single man will shoulder and walk off with a packing-case which it would take three English railway porters to handle. Humboldt and others describe how they used to be carried, hour after hour, on the back of an Indian porter, over passes and up or down precipitous heights, on which most men would find sufficient work in conveying themselves, without a load.

Certainly below the Indian in the social scale is the negro, the descendant of the imported African slaves. Idle, vain, superstitious, cruel, cunning, and brutal, it seems no libel to describe the negro of Colombia as one of the lowest types of humanity. Yet it is impossible to forget the sad and cruel history of his transportation from his native land, of the miserable bondage in which he was kept, until finally liberated in 1851. It is small wonder that, with such a history behind him, he is what he is. He seems to be selected as himself the avenger of the crimes perpetrated on his ancestors, for he, unlike the savage and the cannibals of the eastern forests, shows no signs of dying down before the advance of civilization. He perpetuates his evil qualities in his children of the full blood, and transmits them to those of the mixed blood.

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At the opposite end of the racial scale are the pure-bred Spaniards, descendants of the "conquistadores," or of subsequent immigrants from Spain. They are but a minority of the population, and those of them who can claim a descent untainted by darker blood pride themselves on the fact.

Between these three original stocks there lie almost innumerable gradations of the mixed blood. There is the "mulatto," half-negro, half-white; the "zambo," half-negro, half-Indian; the "mestizo," half-white and half-Indian. But the mixture does not stop there, and there is every conceivable cross-breed between the mixed descendants of the various races. It is impossible to draw any clear line of division between the various grades of the mixed blood, shading off one into another by imperceptible gradations.

The pure-blooded negroes live generally in the hotter and more unhealthy regions. They form a large proportion of the population on the northern and western coasts, and extend far up the valleys of the Magdalena, the lower Cauca, the San Jorge, and the Sinu. They are to be found in considerable numbers in the open valley of the upper Cauca, in the low-lying territories of Barbacoas and Chocó, and along the Pacific coast. Where they are, the traces of them, too, are to be seen in the mixed races; but in the valley of the Upper Magdalena, and throughout the mountainous regions, they are rarely seen. Here the pure-bred Indian, the "mestizo" of every degree, and the white man predominate. The latter is found everywhere in

Colombia; but the sweltering plains and stifling valleys are essentially not a white man's country, and in them he may be looked upon rather as a temporary than a permanent resident. It is in the high-lying towns, and on the salubrious plateaux of the interior, that he flourishes best and is found most frequently. The department of Antioquia, situated almost entirely on the central and western ranges, where the former no longer rises to the great heights of the Tolima range, is the white man's stronghold; and it is calculated that three-fourths of the Antioquian population is of European descent. There are many pure Spaniards on the whole range of the Eastern Cordilleras, in Santander, in Boyaca, and in Cundinamarca, and the "mestizo" lives alongside them, chiefly in the towns of the interior, where he occupies all ranks of life, and follows almost every profession. He is a shopkeeper or a large trader, a lawyer, a physician, or a priest. The profession of politician is unfortunately common to all races, except the uncivilized Indian. Even the negro follows the trade of politics, and some of them have played a leading part, as soldiers on one side or the other, in the internal disturbances by which the country has been torn during the better part of a century.

Of the pure-blooded civilized Indians, Mr. William Scruggs, formerly American minister at Bogotá, says: "They are a remarkably docile and peace-loving people, generally small agriculturists, market-men, or farm-labourers. They are simple-minded, superstitious, reticent, evasive, and un-

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truthful; but they are seldom thieves, and never highway robbers. They are naturally civil, kind-hearted, and hospitable; but it would be surprising if, after centuries of such experiences as they have had, they were not habitually suspicious of strangers." Their experiences have indeed been miserable in the past; their country was torn from them by foreign invaders, and presently they found themselves forced to minister to the greed of their conquerors by working as slaves. For two centuries they were compelled to furnish a quota of one-seventh of their able-bodied numbers to work in the Spanish mines, in "mitas" or slave-gangs, under conditions so wretched and tyrannical that a story, recorded by a Spanish chronicler, relates how 9000 of them resorted to poison as the only means of escape from tortures which had ceased to be tolerable. When, in 1729, even Spain forbade the continuation of this slavery, their condition became better; now, they find themselves on an equality not only with the more recently emancipated negro, but also with the higher races representing the descendants of their conquerors. But it must still be many years before the memory of the horrors endured in the two centuries before 1729 entirely fades from the Indians' memory. It may be mentioned as an instance of the confidence in the peaceable, honest nature of a population, largely Indian, which is soon felt by the stranger, that one evening in October 1904 two of us found ourselves wandering, in the dark, about the outskirts of Ambalema. There was not a street lamp in the

place, we were not even armed to the extent of a walking-stick, yet it never for a moment crossed our minds, as we felt our way cautiously over the rough roads, that there was a particle of risk to life or property.

Drink, in the form of the fiery white rum known as "aguardiente" (fire-water), is a curse, especially amongst the negro, Indian, and mixed races; and it, no doubt, leads to crimes of violence. On the whole, however, we saw very little violence, and the only occasion on which we saw a revolver drawn was in the boys' quarrel on board the *Helena*. Five minutes after John Chinaman had temporarily confiscated the weapon, the quarrel was adjusted, and the pistol could be returned to its owner without fear. The numerous holidays are responsible for a good deal of the drinking, and from Friday to Monday it is difficult to get any work done. One of the most highly intoxicated men that the writer saw was rolling along a back-street in Bogotá. In his case, at least, liquor did not induce a combative frame of mind. He had evidently had a difference of opinion with some one, but his expressions of dissent resolved themselves into a repetition, in a loud but perfectly polite tone, of the words "No, señor." Everybody in Colombia is "señor," down to the porter who carries your luggage, or the man who drives your baggage-mule. There is no better place to see all classes of the Colombian population, except perhaps the negro, than the market at Bogotá. It is not a savoury place, and one is by

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no means unlikely to pick up objectionable insect adherents amongst the crowded fruit and vegetable, drapery and toy stalls; but one meets with no incivility, even if one goes there in a frock-coat and a tall hat, and the good-natured but eager bargaining over trifles is amusing and instructive.

Of the negro enough has been said earlier. We must confess to a strong dislike to him, which is not lessened in the case of the cross-breeds between him and the white or the copper-coloured man. The black blood seems to have the power of reproducing in the mixed races most of the vices, and very few of the virtues, of both sides. For a summary of the negro character and position, Mr. Scruggs may again be quoted. He says: "Sometimes they are small merchants and traders; some of them are small politicians; a few are small agriculturists; but the majority of them lead idle and aimless lives, and are generally shiftless and improvident. Of the educated classes among them, too many are vagabond politicians or professional revolutionists, with no thought of making a living other than by holding office under government."

Of the population of pure Spanish descent it is more difficult to speak. They have, on the whole, preserved remarkably in their new country the good, as well as the bad, qualities of the race from which they spring. The Colombian gentleman shows all the high-bred courtesy, the refinement, and the grave demeanour of the Spaniard. On the other hand, he has more than the Spaniard's exaggerated idea of honour, showing



RAFTS AT AMBALEMA



Photo by *H. L. Duperly, Bogotá*

STEAMER, CHAMPAN, AND DUG-OUT

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itself too often in a disposition to see insult or slight where none is meant. He, like his European brother, invariably expresses his good-will to a stranger by the formal placing at his disposal of the host's entire household and worldly goods. At the same time, he is inwardly puffed up with the most exaggerated notions of his own, and still more of his country's, position and honour — notions which seem hopelessly to blind him to the facts as they stand before his very eyes. It was just the same a hundred years ago in Spain, when Wellington found every plan thwarted by the unlimited conceit of Cuesta and the other Spanish generals, which prompted them to believe in their own absurd strategy, and to maintain that their divided nation could, unaided, sweep back the tide of French invasion. There is just the same belief in Colombia in the advancement of the nation, the same resentment of anything that can possibly be construed into a desire to interfere. Many a man in Colombia will assert, without the slightest suspicion of the fact that his statement is ridiculous, that his country marches "en la vanguardia de la civilizacion," or that Bogotá is one of the finest and best cities in the world. This is perhaps comprehensible in a person who has never seen the sea, or perhaps even descended from his lofty dwelling-place to the Magdalena. But many Colombians, men of education, nowadays visit and reside for years in Europe and America. Surely their eyes must be opened to the true state of affairs? In a few

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cases it is so, but in others the man who has long resided in London, Paris, or New York is still blind to the backwardness of his own country. A few, in private, scoff at this condition, but even they cannot afford to ventilate their views publicly. Men who in Europe are remarkable for their clearness of vision and common-sense in all other matters, seem suddenly to be bereft of all capability of gauging dispassionately and reasonably the true position when it comes to a question of their own country. How disastrously her interests may be affected by this overweening misconception of her importance, this exaggerated idea of national honour, was shown when they resulted in her refusal to ratify the Panama treaty, which would have rehabilitated her financial position, at the expense of a territorial concession of little or no value to her. It is the fashion to decry every South or Central American republic as a sink of dishonesty and corruption. In the case of Colombia, at any rate, the charge is not altogether justifiable. Corruption there is, undoubtedly, but perhaps the history of Europe and the United States does not warrant the placing of Colombia, in this respect, on a much lower level than some European or American states. Her failures to carry out her pecuniary obligations must generally be attributed to other causes crippling her finances, rather than to the deliberate dishonesty which has induced some other South and Central American states to repudiate their debts.

One of the facts which strikes those who are acquainted with the condition of affairs in the East as most remarkable is the entire absence of race feeling amongst this curiously mixed population. In the East, say what we may, race feeling is strongly marked, and is accentuated by differences of religion, as well as by those of colour. If the relations between the peoples of European and those of Asiatic race are not hostile, they are at least marked by absence of intimacy and want of cordiality. The blame rests with both sides, and in the cases where a comparatively small mixed population has come into existence, it is looked on askance equally by both races from which it draws its blood. In North America the antagonism between the white and coloured races is still stronger.

In Colombia, as well as in other South American countries, this race antagonism or aloofness is non-existent. There is just as much social inequality here as in any other country, but the dividing lines of the various ranks are drawn by wealth or poverty, by education or ignorance, by gentle or common breeding, as they are elsewhere—never by colour. The "mestizo" and the white intermarry freely; the highest positions in the State and in the professional community, as well as in the Church, are as often occupied by men of the mixed blood as by those of pure European descent. It may be said that the mixture of races is so intimate, that there are such imperceptible gradations between the opposite extremes of white, copper-coloured,

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and black, that race antagonism would be absurd, and would be almost equivalent to universal family antagonism. There is, however, much force in Mr. Scruggs's argument that the Church has played a great part in sweeping away race distinctions, or rather in never allowing them to grow up. To this may be added the success which has attended the Spanish insistence in forcing the language of the conquerors on the subjugated race. That is the language universally used by every inhabitant of Colombia, except the uncivilized Indians. The Roman Catholic religion, however distorted by superstition and confusion with old African or Indian forms of worship, is as universally professed as Spanish is talked.

With the means by which both language and religion were forced upon the aboriginal inhabitants, or the imported slaves, we have no concern here. It is not necessary to recall the tortures of the Inquisition at Cartagena, or the 400,000 unfortunates who are said to have suffered there, or the slavery of the mines. The facts of a common language and a common religion remain. It is also true that the Church has always sternly refused to countenance racial or social distinctions within her doors. There the conqueror and the conquered, the master and the slave, the white, the black, and the brown man have always worshipped on a footing of at least temporary equality. In the days of the Spanish dominion the Church was all-powerful; its influence now is not much less, though its position may be questioned by irreverent politicians, though

its property may have been confiscated and its monasteries turned into public offices or private dwellings. Yet, with an ignorant people looking to their priests as the only representatives of education in the outlying villages, with feminine influence playing the part it does in all ranks of society, and itself apt to be dominated and directed by religious considerations, the ministers of the Church undoubtedly exercise a power which no political party can afford to flout or neglect. It is, no doubt, largely to this equalizing policy of the Church that the absence of race antagonism is due. In the East it is very different. Europe has not succeeded in imposing either its languages or its religions on peoples already endowed with highly developed literatures and philosophical religions, and no Christian Church has had an opportunity of acquiring the position and influence of that of Rome in South America.

The population generally is infected with the indolence natural to tropical climates, and even to the nations of Southern Europe. Almost the first word which greets the new arrival on Colombian shores, and the last which lingers in his ears as he quits them, is "mañana" (to-morrow), or the still vaguer "mañana o passada" (to-morrow or after). "Never do to-day what can possibly be put off till to-morrow," is too frequently the motto, one which is repugnant to the more energetic northerner, and is almost fatal to rapid progress and improvement. The steamer on the Magdalena will start, you are told, "mañana," and the next

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man goes one better by making it "mañana o passada." The value of time is incomprehensible to the Colombian; the aspirations of the European or the American in the direction of punctuality and regularity are, to the native, but a strange whim.

For the use of the future historian of the conquest of northern South America there are doubtless available materials as romantic and fascinating as those which Prescott found in the cases of Mexico and Peru, but in this volume it is impossible to give more than the briefest outline of the story of Colombia since it first served the Spanish adventurers as a base for the search for El Dorado.

The country was indeed the home of the "Gilded Man," the anointed heir of the Chibcha kingdom. It was much more than this, for probably a great part of the gold, at least, which the Pizarros and their comrades extorted from Peru came originally from the rich gold-producing areas of the Pacific coast of Colombia. Of all the Spanish-American colonies it yielded the largest harvest of gold, and ran a good second in this respect to the huge Portuguese possession of Brazil.

The first settlement of the Spaniards on the northern coast of what is now Colombia was Santa Marta, founded by Bastida in 1525. In 1533 Pedro de Heredia established himself at Cartagena, as he renamed the site then known as Calamar. Intent, like all his fellow-adventurers, on the search for gold, he started southwards the next year into the regions of the San Jorge and the Sinu; and again, in 1535, he penetrated to the left bank of

the Cauca. In this direction, too, the expedition of Francisco Cesar, Vadillo, and Robledo conquered a great part of Antioquia and the upper Cauca valley. Heredia's expeditions were prolific in gold to such a degree that, it is said, each one of his soldiers received as his share of the spoil the equivalent of £14,200!

It was to Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, however, that the discovery of the Chibcha kingdom of Mequetá (Bogotá) was due. Leaving Santa Marta in August 1536 with some 1000 men, he pushed up the Magdalena with 200 in boats, whilst the rest moved by land parallel to them. Presently the two forces united on land, and pushed on through the dense forest, losing heavily everywhere by sickness, wild animals, and savages. It was not till the summer of 1537 that the almost exhausted remnants of the force reached Bogotá. There the conquerors of the peaceful Chibchas were represented by 170 war-worn men, all that remained of the 1000 who had left Santa Marta nearly a year before. The news of Quesada's success, and his discovery of El Dorado, spread rapidly. Like vultures scenting from afar the carrion, rival adventurers swooped down to snatch the prey from his hands, or to share it with him. Federmann, a German, marching from Venezuela through the burning plains of the Meta, arrived from the northeast in 1538. Pizarro's lieutenant, Belalcazar, after conquering Quito, had moved down to the Cauca valley, where he founded Popayan and Cartago. He, too, swooped on Bogotá, after passing the

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central range, perhaps by the Paramo de Guanacas. Fortunately for the Spaniards, Quesada's tact succeeded in averting a fratricidal struggle over the spoil, which was sufficient for all.

Of the struggles of the Spaniards in fastening their yoke on the necks of the Indians we cannot speak here. By the middle of the sixteenth century they were firmly established in what was called by Quesada himself, in memory of his native Granada, the Kingdom of New Granada. In 1564, New Granada was separated from Peru, to which it had so far belonged, to be constituted a Presidency. In 1718 it became a Viceroyalty, but was again reduced to a Presidency shortly afterwards. In 1740 the Viceroyalty was once more revived in favour of Sebastian Eslaba, continuing as such till the Spanish yoke was finally thrown off in the early part of the nineteenth century. Nor can we speak at length of the intervening period, of nearly three centuries, between Quesada and Bolivar the Liberator. The enslavement and forcible conversion of the ancient inhabitants, the reign of the Inquisition, the introduction of African slaves to work the mines in place of the Indians, the attacks on the coast fortresses by Drake and Vernon amongst the English, by French freebooters, and by buccaneers of various nationalities, were among its principal landmarks.

By 1810, misgovernment by Spanish Viceroys, each seeking only his own profit, heavy imposts, and tyranny of every sort had driven the resident population to desperation. The news of the French

Revolution, and of the fall of the Spanish kingdom before the advance of Napoleon, had slowly filtered even into the wilds of New Granada. Bogotá declared its independence in 1810, but it took nine years of constant fighting before the Spanish dominion was finally ended. In Simon Bolivar, himself a Spaniard of a noble family of Caracas, New Granada found its Washington. There is another opportunity for the historian in the life of this remarkable man, who well deserved the title of El Libertador, conferred on him by the peoples who owed to him, above all others, their emancipation from foreign dominion. To his honesty the best testimony is to be found in the fact that he began life as a rich man, and died, in 1830 at Santa Marta, comparatively poor and in voluntary retirement. Though, at times, he had unlimited control over the whole of the public funds, he never enriched himself at their expense, and he added to them the greater part of his private fortune. Of his energy the simplest test is to trace on the map his immense marches, across some of the most difficult country in the world, throughout the length and breadth of the states now known as Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. He did much to improve administration and to purify the courts of justice. As he attained the zenith of his career, he fell under the suspicion, unjust in all probability, of aiming at an Empire erected on the ruins of the Spanish Viceroyalties, as Napoleon's had been built up on the ruins of Europe. Since his death he has been canonised in the Spanish

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South American republics as their political patron saint, and no town of importance in Colombia is without its statue, or at least its Plaza, dedicated to the memory of the Liberator. Yet it may be permissible to foreigners to doubt whether he did not do an immense disservice to the people whom he freed, by conferring on them popular institutions, for which the centuries of slavery, oppression, and ignorance through which they had passed had unfitted them. In such a community as the people we have described, it is inevitable that the reality of power must generally rest in the hands of the ablest and most ambitious of their leaders, whilst the people themselves are mere pawns in the hands of intriguers for power. When a worthy successor of Bolivar or of his chief lieutenant, on occasions his opponent, Santander, grasps the helm of State, it is well with the country. But such a man is in constant danger of displacement by some of those, of a stamp far too common in South American republics, who play on the ignorance, the credulity, the cupidity, and the evil passions of the people to serve their own personal ambitions.

Bolivar, whilst he lived, succeeded, to some extent, in keeping together the peoples whom he had liberated, though even he was at times confronted by sedition and insurrection. He had united, under the title of the Republic of Colombia, the states now known as Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. He was scarcely in his grave before the Republic broke up into its three

constituent parts, which have never since been united, and which have more than once been at war with one another. Colombia, including Panama, became, in the end of 1831, the Republic of New Granada, with Santander as its first President under the constitution of 1832. That constitution provided for a President holding office for four years, at the head of a loose federation of eighteen provinces, each enjoying a large measure of local autonomy, for which the majority were probably extremely ill-adapted. The President's term of office was fixed at four years, and Santander's task was not an easy one, in face of the elements of general unrest in the country. He forfeited some of his old popularity, by honourably accepting for New Granada half of the obligations incurred for foreign debt by the now disintegrated Colombian Republic; the other half was shared by Venezuela and Ecuador. To such an extent had Santander's popularity waned by the time his term of office expired, that he was unable to procure the election of José Maria Obando, who had acted for a short time as President in 1831, to succeed him. José Ignacio Marquez was elected, and the whole time of his presidency was taken up by civil war, from which, in 1841, he emerged victorious, whilst the country lay prostrate and exhausted. That was the first of the long series of civil wars and revolutions which have ruined the finances and thwarted the progress of Colombia. Santander had died in 1840, in which year the state of Cartagena had seceded from the federation.

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The next President was Pedro Alcantara Herran, whose term began badly with the secession of Panama and Veragua. These, however, as well as Cartagena, were soon shepherded back into the fold. A new constitution was produced in 1843, and some progress was made up to 1849, when the second term of office of Tomás C. de Mosquera, Herran's successor, ended. His successor was José Hilario Lopez, a member of the Liberal party, under whom, amongst other changes, slavery was finally abolished. José Maria de Obando now got his turn, which he had missed in succession to Santander. In his time, 1853, a pernicious amendment of the constitution was effected, recognising the right of any state to secede and declare itself independent, with the right to enter into general relations with the republic. Under this provision, Panama and Antioquia seceded in 1856 and 1857. In the latter year the Conservatives again came into power, with Mariano Ospino as President, against whom a rebellion was fomented, in 1859, by Mosquera. In 1861, Mosquera the soldier captured Bogotá, and, ejecting Ospino the lawyer, became dictator. Once more there was a change of the constitution and of the designation of the republic, which now became the United States of Colombia. The Liberals, however, refusing to accept the new régime, called in the aid of Ecuador in their rebellion in the province of Cauca. Eventually Mosquera was successful. After a period of provisional government on his resignation of the dictatorship, and a time of more trouble under Manuel Murillo, Mosquera became President, for the last time, in 1864. Finding the business more than he could manage, he first offered to resign, then attempted to carry the position by main force, was impeached by Congress, declared war, but was arrested. His active career ended with two years of exile, the sentence substituted for the same term of imprisonment to which he had been condemned on trial—surely a very inadequate punishment for the offences with which he was charged!

There was more fighting in the presidency of Santos Gutierrez, especially in Panama. A period of peace, and some recuperation, followed under General Salgar, Manuel Murillo, and Santiago Perez. Under the first named a treaty regarding the Panama Canal was completed with the United States, to which separate reference must be made later. Aquileo Parra became head of the state in 1876. Peace and some improvements continued during his term of office, and that of his successor, Julian Trujillo. In 1880, a more notable President was elected in the person of Rafael Nuñez, who repressed, without much difficulty, disturbances in Cauca and Antioquia, and arranged for the demarcation of the boundary with Costa Rica, which was eventually settled, by the arbitration of the President of the French Republic, in 1900. In 1880, the state entered upon the ridiculous extravagance of a navy. For the second time since the separation, proposals were made for a reunion of Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, but they broke down.

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The presidential term was now only two years, and when Nuñez's first term ended he was succeeded by Francisco J. Zaldua, and, temporarily, by José Eusebio Otálora. In 1884, Nuñez, then in Europe, was again elected. His Liberal views had meanwhile given way to more Conservative ideas, and the disappointment caused thereby to his Liberal supporters found expression in fresh revolts in Cundinamarca, Magdalena, and Panama. In the last-named state matters reached such a pitch that American marines had to be landed to protect the railway. Peace was once more restored in 1885, largely owing to the energy of General Rafael Reyes, now President of the Republic. Nuñez, who had at first, without formally entering on his office, been content to pull the wires from Cartagena, assumed his position on the suppression of the rebellion. A fresh constitution was drawn up in 1886, of which more must be said later. Its most marked characteristic was the sweeping away of the conception of the republic as a loose federation of "sovereign states," held together by a central government, the ties with which could at any moment be cut by any one of the constituent states. The new constitution reduced the "sovereign state" to the position of a department of a "centralized republic"; the United States of Colombia once more changed their name to become the Republic of Colombia.

Of the newly organized state Nuñez became the first head, with an extended lease of office up to 1898. The year 1895 witnessed a fresh outbreak

by the Liberals, which was easily put down. In the same year Nuñez, who had during his previous term delegated his powers at Bogotá to Carlos Holguin, and now did so to the Vice-President, Miguel A. Caro, died at Cartagena, where he resided. Caro succeeded to the unfinished term of Nuñez's titular presidency, in continuation of the actual power which he had exercised since 1892.

The President elected in 1898 was M. A. San Clemente, a strong Conservative, incapacitated for rule by old age. Another Liberal revolt, begun in 1899, was temporarily suppressed; but early in 1900 the Vice-President, Marroquin, deposed San Clemente, who was kept as a *détenu* at Villeta, on the Honda-Bogotá road, until his death in 1902. Revolt again broke out in 1900, and it was not till June 1903 that its suppression could be finally declared, after a disorganizing civil war, which is said to have resulted in the loss of from 100,000 to 250,000 lives, not to speak of immense damage to property, and the complete stagnation of trade and progress. Panama was again the scene of some of the worst disorders, and the United States, England, and France had to intervene by landing troops at Colon, then (1901) in the hands of the rebels. Complications on the Venezuelan frontier also nearly led to war with that republic. President Marroquin's term ended, apparently unregretted, in 1904. No sooner had internal peace been declared, in June 1903, than Colombia suffered an irreparable loss by the secession of Panama, a result for which it is perhaps fair to hold Señor Marroquin

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without blame. Its details will be more fully gone into hereafter. In succession to President Marroquin was elected, by the narrowest of majorities, General Rafael Reyes, who still occupies the presidential chair.

It has been necessary to go in some detail into the history of the seventy-five years which have elapsed since Bolivar's death, in order to give an idea of the almost constant state of civil disturbance which has been so largely responsible for keeping Colombia, not in the vanguard, but in the very rearguard of civilization, at least one hundred years, in many respects, behind the average of Europe. It is only in the Balkan Peninsula that any European equivalent of this perpetual unrest can be found, though it is true that there is no similarity in the conditions of the two countries. Religious animosities find no place in Colombia, where there is complete religious toleration for the small minority who do not, in name, belong to the National Church.

The European conception of a revolution is of an upheaval from below, the result of the explosion of the irritated feelings of a people, or a class, against the pressure of a government, or a class, rightly or wrongly held to be oppressive or bad. Such was the French Revolution, the outbreaks of 1848, and the upheaval still going on in Russia. A witty Frenchman once defined a revolution in the words, "C'est le pauvre qui dit au riche, 'ôtes-toi de là que je m'y mette.'" That indicated at once the origin, the nature, and the result of a successful European revolution. As it stands, the definition



ON THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY



STREET IN BOGOTÁ

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would fall far wide of the mark if applied to a Colombian "revolution." In that peculiar form of disturbance it is not the poor man who expects to gain by the rising, which may amount to anything between a local riot and a civil war. The whole explosive force comes from the top, instead of from below. The only people who can expect to benefit, if the revolution succeeds, are the leaders. They have the possibility of gain, and, as a general rule, they run no very serious risks in the event of failure. Sir Auckland Colvin, referring in his work on the "Making of Modern Egypt" to Arabi Pasha and his friends, says: "Their patriotism consisted, as patriotism often does, in seeking to oust another that the vacant seat may be secured." The words admirably fit the case of the generality of Colombian revolutionary leaders. The rank and file, on the other hand, have nothing to gain in the end; they may have some compensations of a temporary nature, in the chances of war and plunder, but they incur immense risks of losing, not only their small possessions, but also their lives. The motives which induce the leaders on either side to spare the lives of their more important opponents, when captured, are based on a calculation of the possibility that a sudden change of fortune may reverse the position. That does not hold good in the case of the rank and file, who, in the event of defeat, have only too often no fate to expect but summary execution, unless they are wanted to change sides. The revolutionary leaders are bound to have some nominal principle to fight for, about

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which their followers care nothing, even if they know anything. The real motive with the leaders is far more often the hope of supplanting more successful rivals in the administration. If they succeed, the people only change one ruler for another of precisely the same class; if they fail, they have, as often as not, only to expect a nominal imprisonment, followed by their appearance in the society of the capital, just as if nothing had happened. If they succeed, their followers, and the principle for which they were supposed to be fighting, are equally forgotten, if convenient. The real wonder is that they can succeed in inducing, or compelling, a naturally peaceful people to fight, and fight with the utmost gallantry, in a cause in which they have no real permanent interest. The whole affair is a curious mixture of tragedy and opera-bouffe. The general plot is comedy, the details too often the darkest tragedy. Ghastly stories were to be heard of the late revolution, which, if in some cases possibly exaggerated, at least served as an index of what often happens. It was told how one prisoner, more or less of a leader, was only released after amputation of a foot to enforce his retirement from active warfare. Scenes were described in which wretched prisoners of lower rank were decapitated with a "machete" as they stooped, by order, to pick up a five "peso" note. In Colon or Panama there is on sale a whole series of photographs illustrating a military execution, in which the result of each of the three volleys required to end the wretched sufferer's life is shown in a separate plate.

Evidently he was left in his agony whilst preparation was made for the next photograph. During the desperate fighting about Cartagena, residents of the suburbs were compelled to abandon their evening outing on account of the unburied corpses on the roads. One night an European resident and his wife were driven to seek refuge from stray bullets behind their water-tank.

On the other hand, there is a comic side even to this brutal warfare. An European, crossing the suspension-bridge at Honda, encountered a rebel band, most of them drunk, and reckless who or what they fired at. He gave himself up for lost, until he recognised in the leader a former mine foreman of his acquaintance. This worthy, now a revolutionary colonel, fell on his neck and received him with cordiality, a cue which was at once taken up by his followers. Another man, owner of a cattle farm, was raided one evening by a rebel force, who proceeded, though he was a perfectly neutral foreigner, to confiscate his herd, and to slaughter what was required of it to satisfy the hunger of men to whom a commissariat was unknown, and fighting on an empty stomach was the rule. Being somewhat of a philosopher, the cattle-owner, who happened to have a weakness for ox-tongue, thought he might as well at least share the meal. He therefore sent a polite message to the leader, requesting the favour of a tongue of one of the slaughtered animals. The reply came back that he could have it on sending the price, which was stated!

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Over and over again it happened that a body of troops, of one side or the other, arrived in pouring rain at a coffee plantation. The " bodega " in which the coffee was stored offering good shelter, the bags were unceremoniously turned out to make room. The store, as likely as not, was burnt by accident or design, with the result that the coffee was left to rot under insufficient shelter, or none at all.

Colombians who went up-country immediately after the revolution tell how they found every cottage and house by the wayside a heap of charred ruins. Both sides commandeered the steamers of neutral companies on the Magdalena, and turned them into floating blockhouses with the rails seized from foreign railways. There was even a ludicrous sea-fight in the roadstead of Savanilla. There the Government cruiser, the *Cartagena*, suddenly appeared, the rebels being in possession of the shore. With infinite difficulty they had hauled two old guns on to the top of a cliff west of the pier. How the amateur artillerymen loaded them is not recorded, but, when they did go off, they wrought havoc—amongst their owners, the recoil kicking both pieces into a ravine, and killing a couple of the gunners. Where the shot went is also a matter of doubt, though it is safe to say they did not go anywhere near the *Cartagena*. The remains of the gun platforms still mark the site of this occurrence.

It is almost unnecessary to point out the effects of war of this sort on the country. Trade is ruined; agriculture is hampered; the already not

over-abundant labouring classes are drawn away to the unprofitable trade of war, in which they have no interest; disorder and disorganization reign supreme; government is practically suspended. The pretext of the late revolution is said to have been the fall in the value of the paper currency, due to the Government's trying to find the means to pay its way by the reckless issue of paper, which naturally fell in exchange value. The three years of war only served to aggravate the evil; for the short-sighted Government continued its issues, and, it is said, many notes, unauthorized by any constituted authority, were struck from purloined plates. Speculation was fast and furious. Money lent at usurious rates, 24 per cent. and upwards, had to be repaid many times over in the depreciated paper; and the borrowers, unable to find the means, saw their lands, houses, and other property hypothecated for the loan, pass into the usurers' hands. Men comparatively rich at the beginning of the war were ruined before it ended, whilst small capitalists made handsome fortunes in some cases, or in others found themselves with unrealizable property on their hands. No country can hope for prosperity whilst such a state of affairs continues possible. That is as obvious to all sensible Colombians as it is to the outsider. They will tell you that they want peace; yet there are still men who will not hesitate to involve their country in war for their own selfish ends. President Reyes has, so far, succeeded in maintaining order. In the winter of 1905–6, he was for-

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tunate enough to discover in good time a plot against his Government, in which were involved men of culture and education, well acquainted with Europe. The heads of the plot were arrested, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment at Mocoa, an unhealthy spot on the upper Putumayo. That is an exemplary punishment for Colombia, where revolution has hitherto been treated rather as a game involving no serious penalties, than as the gravest of offences against the State. As an illustration of this way of looking at such matters, there is a story told of an Englishman inquiring of a Colombian whether it was safe to visit his country during a revolution. The reply was a question—"You have your cricket and football seasons, have you not?" "Yes." "Well, we have a corresponding revolution season; there is no cause for alarm."

The sentence on the plotters, if strictly carried out, will do good, but it is needless to point out that in Europe a similar offence would have met with treatment of a very different kind, probably involving the use of a dozen rifles, or a couple of yards of rope. The disregard, during revolution, of the rights of foreigners, as well as of natives, necessarily hampers the Government, already at its wits' ends for ways and means, with a flood of claims for damages. It is hardly surprising that Foreign Ministers at Bogotá find their office less that of a diplomatic agent than that of a collector of the debts of their country's subjects. In justice to the Colombian plotter, it must be said that

assassination does not appear to be one of his favourite methods. None of the thirty or forty presidents since Bolivar (whose life was attempted more than once) has come by his death in this way. This makes it all the more shocking that a dastardly attempt should have been made, in the early part of 1906, to shoot General Reyes. As he was driving in an open carriage in Bogotá with his daughter, no less than eight shots were fired at him from three different directions, five of which struck the carriage. Almost by a miracle, the occupants escaped uninjured. The criminals were arrested, tried by court-martial, and, as they richly deserved, executed.

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CHAPTER VI

BOGOTÁ, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

When Quesada the conqueror first set foot on the "sabana" of Bogotá, it is easy to believe that he was struck by some general resemblance in it to the "vega" of his native Granada. There was the broad open plain, with low hills on all sides of it, and a range rising to some 3000 feet above its surface on the eastern edge, behind the site on which he was about to found his new capital of Santa Fé, so called in memory of the great camp in which the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic sat down to the long siege which was to break the Mahomedan power in Spain. Granada he commemorated in the name of the new kingdom.

The site for the capital was chosen with much care, where stood the little Indian village of Tensaquillo, the pleasure resort of the Zipas, nestling, like Granada, at the foot of the hills of Monserrate and Guadelupe, culminating at a height of 2000 and 2300 feet respectively above the plain. The level country, watered by the Funza and its tributaries, resembled the "vega" with its El Jenil, though it was larger than its prototype of Southern Spain. Even the snows of the Sierra Nevada, on which Quesada's youthful eyes had

gazed, were represented by the far-off summits of Ruiz and Tolima. Quesada appears to have been less of a ruffian than the Pizarros, and more religious. He commenced with the building of twelve houses, in honour of the twelve Apostles; and, of course, a church was amongst the first requisites. The exact site of the original church is disputed. Some claim that it was where the cathedral now stands, whilst the first house built, for Quesada himself, is said to have been in the little Plaza de las Nieves, half a mile farther north. Quesada died of leprosy at Mariquita, beyond the Magdalena, in 1597, and his monument is in the cathedral at the capital. The city has now lost its name of Santa Fé, being universally known by that of Bogotá, the Chibcha metropolis, which occupied a site on the river Funza, about six miles west of the modern city.

The principal part of the city lies on the plain, at the western foot of the range of which the most marked summits are those of Guadelupe to the south, and Monserrate to the north. Behind these are higher peaks and "paramos," forming the watershed between the basins of the Orinoco and of the Magdalena. From the streets of Bogotá, looking through the narrow gorge between Monserrate and Guadelupe, is seen a pass from which springs the little Rio San Francisco, an affluent of the Bogotá or Funza. That, in turn, joins the Magdalena near Girardot. From the other side of the pass there flows eastwards a stream which reaches the Meta, a great tributary

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of the Orinoco. Thus, a bucket of water poured upon the summit of this pass should, in theory at least, go partly to the Atlantic south of the island of Trinidad, partly to the Caribbean Sea north of Barranquilla. To get the best bird's-eye view of the city and the "sabana," as well as of the higher peaks to the east, it is necessary to climb to one of the chapels which crown the two twin peaks of Monserrate and Guadelupe. It is a stiff climb of 2000 feet or more, and many are content with the westward view which can be obtained from a much lower elevation on the slopes. The streets of the city spread far up these, almost the highest point in them being at the Ejipto Church, 500 feet above the main streets. That is on Guadelupe. On the other hill they attain a smaller elevation, reaching only as far as what was once Bolivar's country-house. Even from this there is a magnificent prospect, including, 100 miles away to the west, the snowy range of which the glistening cone of Tolima, and the apparently flat-topped Mesa de Herveo, with its spotless tablecloth of untrodden snow, form the most prominent features. In every direction there are mountains, a sea of gigantic hill-tops, whilst, spread out below the spectator, is the "sabana," with the white line of the Funza winding through its midst from north to south. In the rainy season the snows, except in the early morning, are hidden by clouds, and the "sabana" is clothed all over with temporary ponds and broad stretches of water, where the rivers have overflowed their

banks. The plain is a sheet of green, comparatively speaking little wooded. On it the crops grow almost irrespective of seasons, and may be sown or reaped anywhere between January and December. Two, or even three, crops may be gathered in a single year. This great plain is some seventy miles in extreme length and, in parts, thirty miles in width. Viewed from above, it at once conveys the notion of the great lake which it was before the Funza broke its way out of the south-west corner towards Tequendama.

It is difficult to believe, when standing on the plain, that one is not at an ordinary altitude with low hills on every side, and snowy ranges in the far distance, peering over the lowest of them. A glance at the barometer, marking only 22 inches or so instead of the 30 of sea-level, a finger placed on the quick-beating pulse, tell a different tale, revealing the fact that Bogotá stands at an elevation nearly double that of Zermatt, and but a few hundred feet short of Quito.

The climate is almost an ideal one, the only really disagreeable time being when the fogs which characterize the true "paramo" stray, for a short time, on to this lower plain. Seasons, in our sense of hot and cold, there are none; the line is drawn between the wet season, commencing during the sun's passages across the equator, and the dry, synchronizing with the solstices. March to May and September to November are the wet seasons or winters ("invierno"). The dry seasons or summers ("verano") intervene between the periods of rain.

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Even the rainy season is mild, compared to the monsoon of the East. During our residence in Bogotá, in the height of the rainy season, there was only one really wet day when one could not get out for a good walk without getting wet. An annual rainfall calculated at about 42 inches does not imply an excessive fall in the six months of rain. The mean temperature in the shade scarcely varies from 59° Fahrenheit throughout the year. The highest actual temperature we noted was 67°, the lowest 53°; generally, the diurnal range was between the extremes of 58° and 64°. It is warm, but not hot, in the full midday sun, whilst at night one sometimes thinks a fire would be cheery, though not in the least a necessity. It is no good thinking about it, for there are no fireplaces in the sitting-rooms. Tropical diseases—malaria, yellow fever, and the rest—find no place here. Consumption is practically unknown amongst the natives, and wonderful stories are told of Europeans far advanced in the disease losing it in Bogotá, and living to great ages. Naturally, with the heart working at extra speed in the rarefied air, the human machine wears out comparatively quickly, and, whilst maturity is reached more quickly than in Europe, old age approaches more rapidly; so that, if young people are grown up there at an age when elsewhere they are still boys and girls, very old people are rare. What the exact population of Bogotá may be is almost as uncertain as is the total population of the country. The last census, in 1884, showed 95,761

inhabitants. Since then, Bogotá has suffered less than most places in Colombia from losses in civil war, so that it is safe to assume its existing population at well over 100,000. Representatives of each of the original stocks, and of many of the intermediate cross-breeds, are to be seen in its streets, though the negro blood is rare, and the predominating element is white or "mestizo."

Viewed from above, the city conveys the impression of a dead level of tiled roofs. The towers and domes of the churches, the occasional groups of houses rising above the general level of one or two storeys, do not catch the eye. Yet so clear is the atmosphere, unpolluted by any canopy of smoke, that a towel hung out to dry on a back veranda can be distinguished by the naked eye from the chapel of Guadelupe, 2300 feet above. Away to the north, separated from the city by a mile and a half of country villas, the red-tiled roofs of the large suburb of Chapinero stand out clearly on the green plain. Thirty miles farther in the same direction are the hills of Cipaquirá, covering the great salt-mines, with the town lying at their eastern foot, though not visible owing to the intervention of the slopes of Monserrate. Between that mountain and the spectator lies the gulf formed by the gorge of the Rio San Francisco, flowing down through the very midst of Bogotá. To the south another stream, the Rio San Augustin, likewise flows through the city to the Funza. On that side, the hills forming the rim of the great basin close in in promontories,

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projecting into what was once a great sheet of water. A deep bay stretches back southwards to Sibate and the outlet of Tequendama, and beyond. In front are the western hills, running north and forming yet another bay, in which is Facatativá, at the north-western corner of the plain. Behind this western rim of the basin the eye can in fancy see 200 miles, to the distant Pacific beyond the snowy range. Looking east over a deep valley, one sees the higher parts of the range, from the summit of which distance alone prevents a view of the Atlantic, 3000 miles away.

From this lofty watch-tower, 11,000 feet above sea-level, let us descend to look at the city itself. The streets of Bogotá are described in books as wide, well paved, and with a stream of water running down the centre; but most of this is pure imagination. They are wide enough for all practical purposes of traffic and ventilation—very different from the narrow streets of Cartagena—but they are certainly not remarkable in this respect. Of the pavements the less said the better. To test them it is only necessary to drive over them, or to walk without carefully picking each step, after a fall of rain. The jolting of the carriage, with broken springs threatened every few yards, or the plunge of the unwary foot-passenger into several inches of mud or water, very soon produces disillusionment. Paved they are, no doubt—some of them at least—but those in which there are not frequent breaches in the cobble-stones are few and far between; and large round stones are, at

the best, not a comfortable surface. As for the streams of water, the only excuse for the legend about them is to be found in the streets rising up the slopes, and in them only during, or for a short time after, a heavy fall of rain, when, it is true, the surface water runs in a small stream in the rough gutter of flat stones in the centre. There are side-walks in many places, but they are so narrow that it is generally out of the question for two persons to pass on them. Consequently, when the centre of the street is not a network of puddles or a morass of mud, most people prefer it to walk in. The vast majority of passengers walk at all hours, unless they use the mule-drawn tramcars, which run along several of the principal streets, and out to Chapinero. There is rarely any danger of being run over, for the President, the Archbishop, and half-a-dozen others are the only owners of private carriages, which they use more on grounds of dignity than of comfort. Half-a-dozen cabs stand in the Plaza Bolivar, but they seem to get very little custom even at night; for the guests at a dinner or a ball generally prefer to walk out and home, and umbrellas, goloshes, and waterproofs are a prominent feature in the cloakrooms of fashionable Bogotá.

In its ground-plan the city resembles a modern American city, with its streets all running at right angles to one another. Each of the series running from south-west to north-east, parallel to the hills, is indicated by the word "Carrera," followed by its serial number; those running towards or up

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the slope of Guadelupe and Monserrate are similarly numbered as "Calles."

Nevertheless the two principal streets, though, strictly speaking, "Carreras," are generally known as the Calle Florian and the Calle Real, or de la Republica, or San Francisco. In many places the blocks of houses, which usually stand between four streets, give place to open squares or "parks." The chief of these, the hub of Bogotá, is the Plaza Bolivar, a fine open space about the size of Grosvenor Square. In its centre is a garden with the statue of the Liberator; the northern side is occupied by shops and houses of three or four storeys; a great part of the western side is taken up by the new municipal buildings, replacing those which were accidentally burnt down a few years ago. The whole of the southern side is filled by the Capitolio, containing some of the public offices and the hall of the senate. This otherwise imposing building is marred by the fact that it has not been completed—partly, perhaps, owing to want of funds; partly, it is said, because the foundations were found insufficient to bear the weight of the central portion as designed.

The cathedral occupies about half the eastern side of the square, the rest being another church immediately adjoining it, and the remains of the old Spanish viceregal palace, now turned into shops. The cathedral itself is of the regular South American style, with double towers and a small dome behind. Its towers are a testimony to the fact that Bogotá itself is not troubled by serious



Photo by *H. L. Duperly, Bogotá*

BOGOTÁ (NORTH CENTRAL PORTION)



Photo by *H. L. Duperly, Bogotá*

BOGOTÁ (SOUTH CENTRAL PORTION)

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earthquakes. There was a slight one whilst we were there, but it was so insignificant that it did not suffice to awake people. Inside, the cathedral is handsomely decorated, without any of the tawdriness which might be expected. The wooden imitations of marble grate on the artistic sense, and it will be well when they are replaced by the Italian marble which, in 1904, was still lying on the river-bank at Girardot, waiting till the completion of the railway to the plateau should enable its transport to the capital. Besides the cathedral, there are nearly thirty other Roman Catholic churches, and one Protestant (Presbyterian). Most of the former are of no great external beauty, whilst inside they are sometimes rather too brilliantly decorated and gilded. Still, the general impression conveyed by churches and church services in Bogotá is favourable, when compared with parts of Italy or Spain. The services are attended on Sundays and holidays by immense congregations, of men as well as women; they are as reverently conducted as in England; the officiating clergy are far superior in cleanliness to many of their brethren in Southern Europe. If the Colombian of the lower classes is no better than others in his habit of expectorating in the streets, he at least restrains himself in church, and, when the crowd has occupied every bench or chair, it is still safe to kneel on the floor. The building of the cathedral was commenced in 1572, but it was not till the early nineteenth century that it was, after many changes of plan, finally

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completed as it now stands. The oldest of the churches is that of Ejipto, founded in 1556; those of Las Nieves and Santa Barbara date from 1581. Of the monasteries and convents, confiscated in the sixties of last century, many have now become public offices or private residences, the most remarkable among them being that which is now the general post-office and other public offices. Others provide quarters for the University, the College of the Rosario, the Mint, and the Military Academy. Besides the Plaza Bolivar, there is the Plaza de los Martiros, to the west, with its memorial to the martyrs of the War of Independence, victims of the brutality of the Spanish generals. There is a San Francisco "park," really a small square; and near the northern outskirts of the city is the Centenario Park, with a pedestal under a cupola awaiting another statue of Bolivar. Santander also has his statue in another square. The little Plaza de las Nieves contains the church of that name, and, as already mentioned, the alleged site of Quesada's first house. In the better parts of the town, the houses have mostly one storey above the ground-floor, sometimes more; elsewhere, everything is on the ground level. Even in the best quarters, the ground-floor front is often occupied by a shop, and few of the most important houses would take high rank, in outward appearance, in Europe. As the steep streets mount towards the Ejipto quarter the houses become poorer, for that is the Alsatia in which live all the beggars and petty thieves of Bogotá. As the pilgrim to Guadelupe descends in the evening, he meets the halt, the lame, the blind, and the diseased returning from their daily campaign of mendicity (and mendacity) in the streets below. They seem to be off duty for the day, for few of them trouble at this hour to beg from the passer-by, and most of them appear to be discussing the results of the day's sojourn in the streets and squares.

During most of the day, the streets of the business quarters are thronged by a miscellaneous crowd, many in all the glory of silk hats and frock-coats, others in every sort of clothing, down to the rags of the beggar. Here and there a landowner rides jauntily past on his mule, his shoulders covered by a "poncho," his legs encased in long skin gaiters with the hairy side out, and an alarming spur on one boot. At one corner, the Izquierda de los Caimanes ("alligators' corner," or shall we say "sharks' corner"?), commonly so called, is the meeting-place of the more shady traders and brokers. At night, the streets are deserted, save by a few stragglers, or by those going to or from dinners or parties or the after-dinner call, which is fashionable here, even on days when the hosts are known to have a dinner-party. After midnight you may walk home from a bridge party (5d. a 100 are the points!) and meet no one but an occasional policeman, diligently notifying his wakefulness by a melancholy whistle, the answer to which, from the next beat, floats sadly through the stillness. Perhaps these guardians of the peace would not be very efficient protectors against robbers or

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assassins, but the passer-by is as safe in that respect as he would be in Piccadilly, and a good deal safer than he would be in many parts of London or Paris. Gas-lamps give a scanty light, supplemented at intervals by the electric light of a private house. Probably, by this time, the municipality has come to terms with the electric light company for the lighting of the streets. In 1904, the question was still under discussion. In the early morning, the ladies of the capital may be seen going to and from mass, all of them, with very few exceptions, wearing the black mantilla, which a few years ago was *de rigueur* in church. Later in the day, they have disappeared, and are not much seen in the streets, though in the polo season (fancy polo at 9000 feet above the sea!) there is an attraction at the grounds on the road to Chapinero. These last remarks apply, of course, to the true Bogotana, rather than to her sister who has acquired more European ideas, including the wearing of French headgear at church, and taking a walk in the morning or afternoon. The word ladies has also been used advisedly, for women of the lower and middle classes frequent the streets at all hours of the day, and girls may be seen looking out, or talking to friends in the street, through the projecting "grilles" of curved bars which, as in the old Spanish towns, protect every ground-floor window.

One of the most curious points about Bogotá is the contrast between the comparatively poor appearance of the best houses, viewed from out-

side, and the luxury which is to be found inside many of them. The entrance is by an archway, often between two shops. Within the passage is a courtyard ("patio"), with a garden, and perhaps a fountain. Round this, on the ground-floor, are storerooms and other offices; near the entrance, a staircase leads to the first floor, where are the reception and bedrooms, though, if there be another storey above, the latter may be mostly on it. In the front of the house are the drawing-rooms, opening on to the veranda looking on to the "patio," and ventilated by windows towards the street. On either side, bedrooms likewise open on to the veranda, but, as a rule, get air only from this direction. At the back of the house is the dining-room. Sometimes there is another "patio" behind this again, with more bedrooms above, and perhaps the kitchen.

The furniture is mostly European, often consisting of fine old pieces such as are not made nowadays. Almost every house of any pretensions in the city, even many a humble one, has its piano. Knowing the difficulty of getting heavy loads up to the plateau, the marvel is that grand pianos and massive sideboards should ever have found their way there, except in fragments. Certainly, once they have reached this elevated spot, they are never likely to leave it again.

The President's palace, standing in a side-street south-east of the Plaza Bolivar, close to the Lower Chamber of Congress, is by no means imposing from outside, though inside it has some

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fine rooms. The same may be said of the Archbishop's residence, but there are private houses as good, and more up to date.

Bogotá is not a place of many amusements. It has its Hurlingham in the polo-ground, where society assembles after church on Sunday. There is a handsomely decorated theatre, but the performances in it are not generally up to the house, though their range is extensive—from opera to "Charley's Aunt," in its Spanish guise of "Su tia de Carlino." A gala night means that fashionable society goes there to gossip, to show its own clothes, and to look at its neighbours'. Ladies' dresses, like the furniture, come mainly from Paris or London, and rumour says that those who secretly resort to the local modiste are careful to have their dresses well creased, with a view to conveying the idea of transmission by parcel post. Amongst the curious and rather absurd fashions amongst men is the wearing of frock-coats and tall hats, at least when calling or attending any public function. Cut, shape, and newness are not of much importance, provided the conventional form is generally observed.

The other amusements of society consist chiefly of dinners and dances, to which the invitations are usually extremely informal. If you are asked to drop in for dinner, "only ourselves—don't trouble to dress," you will indeed be discomfited if you have been foolish enough to take the invitation literally. It probably means a dinner of sixteen or eighteen. So, too, when you are bidden to

look in after dinner "for a little dancing," the entertainment may turn out to be a full-dress ball with a sit-down supper. However, one soon gets to understand these little humilities of form, and to enjoy society, which is easy, agreeable, and not in the least severely formal in any way. Also, with a little practice, you get into the custom (said to be dying out, but still frequent enough) of never lifting your glass without drinking to your neighbour, or some one else at table.

Our experience of Bogotá society was of much friendly hospitality, of many agreeable acquaintances, and of much entertaining conversation carried on around one in a mixture of English, French, and Spanish, with an occasional dash of German. The German element is strong amongst the foreign community, and, as usual, Teutonic trading enterprise runs far ahead of English. Lager-beer can be bought at reasonable prices and of good quality, brewed locally by a German firm. It certainly could not be imported, in the present state of communications, at a reasonable price; for whisky, by the time it reaches Bogotá, fetches £1 a bottle, whilst champagne is not much more expensive, and claret not much cheaper. German traders are numerous, and many of the Magdalena steamers are owned by German firms in Barranquilla. Amongst the villas on the road to Chapinero, several bear inscriptions, or are adorned with frescoes, recalling the Fatherland. The tramways, already mentioned, are the property of an American

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company. Electric light is supplied, to most of the private houses of importance, by a Colombian firm, which gets its power from the cataract of the Bogotá, two or three miles above the fall of Tequendama. There was formerly a telephone service without any proper system of exchange; now, an English company, the Bogotá Telephone Company, Limited, has just opened a complete installation with all the newest forms of switch-boards and instruments. Subscribers are rapidly increasing, for the service is cheap at £7 a year.

Life for Europeans, and the upper classes of Colombians, dependent largely on imported goods, is dear at Bogotá. House rent is high, and for a furnished house of very modest dimensions the foreigner may have to pay as much as £50 a month on a short tenancy. For the poorer classes, living mainly on the products of their own country, and dependent only for clothing on imported goods, it is different.

The water-supply of Bogotá is not satisfactory. A pipe carries water from the gorge of the San Francisco, but it is often muddy owing to want of filtration. There would be no difficulty in giving an excellent supply from this source, or from the San Augustin stream farther south.

There are few places in the world where the tourist finds so little to bring away in the shape of treasures and curiosities. The beautiful butterflies and humming-birds are an attraction, and wax-figures, illustrating the different classes of the population with life-like fidelity, are made.

There are to be bought good specimens of old Spanish silver, but as the patterns are generally very simple, one has to be constantly on one's guard, and, moreover, to be a good judge, in order to avoid wasting money on modern imitations, not always innocent of a birthplace in Birmingham. The same may be said of the little golden idols, figures of animals, and utensils still found in ancient Indian burying-places. Beyond these, and such products as jaguar skins, there is really little to be bought that is characteristic.

Something has already been said about the churches, the clergy, and the congregations. It should be added that, curious though it may seem, Bogotá is a capital where religious toleration flourishes. There is a Presbyterian church and a Protestant cemetery, and freedom of religious practice is laid down by the constitution, but the non-Catholic community is small and mainly foreign. Some years ago, it is said, stones were thrown at Protestant windows, and the inhabitants of the house had to be protected by troops from the violence of the mob. Further inquiry, however, shows that offence had been given by the occupants by a gross breach of taste, in sitting covered on the balcony when the Corpus Christi procession passed and every Catholic was on his knees with his hat off. It is hardly surprising that such conduct should have excited the wrath of an ignorant mob.

What has been said of the churches and services in the capital by no means applies to the villages

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and small towns. In them are to be seen tawdry decorations and tinsel-clad statues, such as shock the most devout Catholic in corresponding circumstances in Southern Europe. The nominal Catholicity of the negro and the Indian is sometimes degraded to a level little above that of the fetishism or the idolatry of his ancestors.

Bogotá, besides being the capital of the republic, was, in 1904, that of the department of Cundinamarca. All over the "sabana," on one side of which it stands, are scattered smaller towns, villages, farms, and country residences. The principal crops grown are wheat, barley, rye, maize, and potatoes, the altitude being too great for tropical crops, such as sugar or cotton, too great even for coffee, all of which are to be found growing on the lower slopes leading down to the Magdalena. About sixty miles to the south is Fusagasaga, where some of the finest coffee in the world is produced. The most important towns of the plateau are the following. Facatativá, with a population estimated at 7500, is the terminus of the Sabana railway, twenty-five miles to the north-west. Here, under present arrangements, much of the traffic between Honda and the plateau, and between the latter and Cambao, is transferred between the railway and the carts or mules which carry on the roads leading to the Magdalena. In this respect, it will probably lose importance with the opening of through railway communication. Cipaquirá, or Zipaquirá, is larger, and lies at the eastern foot of the hills, containing great deposits of rock-salt, of which more will be

said under the head of mineral products. In the hills between these two towns are the iron-mines of Pradera. Chapinero has already been mentioned as a suburb of Bogotá, and amongst the smaller agricultural towns and villages are Madrid, where traffic for the new railway leaves that of the Sabana, to be carried by mules, in six hours, to Hospicio. This is only a temporary arrangement, for very shortly it will be easier to reach the railway by Facatativá.

Soacha, Funza, Mosquera, and Bojacá are some of the remaining larger villages of the "sabana," and Sibaté is the terminus of the southern railway. In the mountains of the eastern slopes are Guatavita, with its historic lake, Fomeque, and Caquezá. San Martin stands far down the slopes, less than 1500 feet above the sea, amongst the tributaries of the Meta and the Guaviare. From it is derived the name of the long strip of "llano" stretching away to the Orinoco, and forming in area by far the largest portion of the department of Cundinamarca. The development of the cattle industry here is one of the improvements aimed at by the present Government. Though San Martin is a small place of a few hundred inhabitants, it dates its original foundation so far back as 1585, and at one time rejoiced in the title of "city."

La Mesa has already been described in speaking of the valley of the Apulo. The other larger places of this fertile valley are Anapoima, Tocaima, and Anolaima, all of which are, or shortly will be, close to the new railway. The population of the whole

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department, on a total area of nearly 80,000 square miles, is about 600,000, which gives about seven to the square mile, though the Bogotá plateau is probably the most thickly populated part of the whole republic. It contains almost half the people of the department.

CHAPTER VII

THE INLAND DEPARTMENTS AS THEY WERE IN 1904

In this and the next chapter, it is proposed to give some general account of the seven departments which, in addition to Cundinamarca, constituted, in 1904, the Republic of Colombia, of their special characteristics, and of their chief towns. Each of them will have again to be referred to in connection with the railways, the mineral and the vegetable products of the state, and these subjects will not be dealt with in detail here.

The largest of all the departments is that of Cauca, touching as it does the external frontiers of the state in every direction. Abutting for a comparatively short distance on the Caribbean Sea on either side of the Gulf of Darien, it runs southward in a long strip, touching Panama on the north-west, and possessing a coast of over 600 miles on the Pacific. On the Ecuadorian frontier it forms a right angle, covers all the central knot from which the Cordilleras spring, and spreads out into the immense forest-covered tracts of the Amazonian tributaries, known as the Caquetá territory. It includes the whole of the Western Cordilleras, except their extreme northern outlier, the Cordillera de Baudo, the western side of the central

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range in about half its length, and more than 100 miles of the eastern slope of the Cordillera de Sumapaz. Its shape resembles roughly a gigantic L. Scarcely over one-tenth of its area is inhabited, and a large part of the so-called populated area is but scantily occupied. The total estimated population of 650,000 gives about 2½ persons to each of the 257,000 square miles. The hot, damp, unhealthy areas on the Atrato, the San Juan, and the Patia are almost impossible for any but negroes and Indians; the inhabitants of the forest-clad plains of Caquetá are chiefly savages, of uncertain number and cannibal habits. The best climates are those of the southern mountains and of the Cauca valley. It is in these, especially in the latter, that the bulk of the population is concentrated and the principal towns are found. The Cauca valley, once the river has got down to moderate elevations of 3000 or 4000 feet, is warm (mean temperature somewhere about 72° Fahrenheit), but generally healthy. Almost every traveller who has visited it describes it as one of the richest agricultural areas in the world, with soil of almost inexhaustible fertility and immense mineral resources. Every tropical crop grows in it almost without care; its sugar-cane is phenomenally rich in juice, and maize is said to yield a three-hundred-fold harvest. On its slopes there is the usual gradation through the coffee region to that of the crops of a temperate climate.

At the head of this valley is Popayan, the departmental capital, founded by Belalcazar in

1538. It lies high (5800 feet) on an open slope at the foot of the volcano of Purace, which rises another 10,000 feet above it. It counts a population of about 10,000, which has the reputation of being the most literary and best instructed in the state. Nevertheless, it seems to be a somewhat sleepy place, with a good climate but not much trade, and few industries, amongst which are woollen manufactures supplying clothing for local use. The similar industry of Pasto, on the great central knot of the Andes, is more extensive and better. This town is larger than Popayan, being calculated to contain 13,000 inhabitants, and its elevation is practically the same as that of Bogotá. It lies on a green plain at the foot of the volcano of the same name.

To return to the Cauca valley in its fertile part, Cali, lying on the inner slopes of the Western Cordilleras, is unquestionably the most important town of the department, though it has not more than 16,000 inhabitants. From the Pacific it is distant but fifty miles as the crow flies, and through it, as at present designed, the railway between the seaport of Buenaventura and the landlocked valley will shortly pass. When that consummation is reached, the importance of Cali should increase rapidly, especially if the coalfields on which it stands should be found to produce coal sufficient in quantity and quality to be worth transporting to the coast for the use of ocean-steamers. Buenaventura itself is at present a miserable and unhealthy place, but it has an excellent and deep harbour, want-

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ing only some improvements in the way of piers and quays to meet the requirements of foreign trade with the Cauca valley, which must inevitably increase largely when it can be carried by rail. Even as it is, the steamers serving the Pacific coast of South America find it worth while to call there regularly. The submarine telegraph from Panama touches at Buenaventura, and is in direct communication overland with Bogotá. Cauca has one other port on the Pacific, at Tumaco, in the extreme southwest. This place, reported to have been practically destroyed by the recent earthquake, is at the best but a poor and exposed roadstead. It serves the unhealthy district about Barbacoas, a town of 6000 inhabitants, largely negro, which has direct communication with the Pacific by small river-steamers. By way of encouraging these Pacific ports, foreign goods are admitted to them at a reduced tariff. Looking to the way in which the Cauca valley is cut off from the rest of the country, there is no serious danger to the customs revenue in this.

Buga (population, 12,500) is an agricultural town of the Cauca valley. Palmira (15,000 inhabitants) rivals Ambalema in its tobacco; and Cartago, at the northern end of the open valley, is on the main road (such as it is) between Bogotá and the Pacific. The other towns of the department—Ipiales on the Ecuadorian highland frontier, Quibdó on the Atrato, Novitá in the San Juan valley, Almaguer on the upper Patia, and Tuquerres at an altitude of 10,000 feet—it is sufficient to name.



EL CAPITOLIO (BOGOTÁ)



BOGOTÁ CATHEDRAL

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The Pacific coast has numerous islands, on one of which is Tumaco. The large island of Gorgona lies farther off the coast, some distance north, and has occasionally been used as a place of deportation for political prisoners of the revolutionary order.

In the angle of the L which Cauca represents, lies the department of Tolima. As far north as the southern border of Cundinamarca, it fills the whole trough of the Magdalena valley, from the crest of the Eastern to that of the Central Cordilleras. North of the mouth of the Fusagasaga River, it is confined to the western side of the valley. Its area is less than one-twelfth, its population nearly half, that of Cauca, the density being about seventeen to the square mile on an area of 18,000 square miles. Most of the inhabitants are "mestizos." The climate varies from the heat of the Magdalena valley to the cold of the high "paramos" and the snowy summits. The soil of the lower parts is fertile, though not to the same extent as that of the western valley, and the production of the precious metals in the past has fallen far short of that of Cauca. The most important of its towns is Honda, which, as well as Ambalema and Girardot, has already been described. Neiva has a population of 15,000. The administrative capital is at Ibague, on the slopes of the central range, 4000 feet above the sea, with a population of 13,000. It corresponds to Cartago in the Cauca valley in being on the road over the Quindio Pass. The railway from opposite Girardot, not the one leading to Bogotá, has only progressed as far as Espinal

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(10,000 inhabitants) on the way to Ibague. When, if ever, it will reach the latter seems doubtful. Espinal produces much of the earthenware which is floated down the Magdalena on rafts. Purificacion, on the Magdalena between Girardot and Neiva, has 11,000 inhabitants; Ortega (10,000) and Chaparral (9000) are markets in the Saldanha valley which require no special notice, except for the existence of coal, iron, and petroleum near the latter. As this volume is not intended for a gazetteer, the other small towns or large villages of the department may pass unnoticed.

The northern boundary of Tolima on the Central Cordilleras lies just beyond the Paramo de Ruiz. Antioquia takes in the greater part of the rest of the range, and includes also the western range, up to the crest, from the same latitude northwards, until it ceases to be of importance. The department stretches down to the Magdalena, which divides it from Santander for over 100 miles. In area it is somewhat larger than Tolima, with a population more than half as large again, amounting to nearly 500,000, about twenty-one to the square mile.

Of all the departments it is the most mountainous (scarcely one-sixth of it is level country), and the least fertile from an agricultural point of view. On the other hand, it has produced more of the precious metals than any except Cauca, over which it has the great advantage of having its mines generally in a healthy country, instead of in such hotbeds of disease as Barbacoas and El Chocó

in Cauca. It has but two seasons instead of four, as in the Bogotá district, and it is unhealthy only where it descends to the northern plains or the low-lying valleys. For the most part its climate is temperate. Being one of the earlier conquests made from Cartagena, its climate and its mineral wealth induced colonization, and the effects of that are seen in the fact that three-fourths of its population are described as white. All accounts agree in describing the Antioquians as the flower of the Colombian population, in moral as well as in physical qualifications. The negro figures to but a small extent in a temperature uncongenial to him, and, even as a slave, he appears to have been less employed here than in Cauca or the northern provinces. Nor are Indians of the full blood numerous.

The upper Cauca valley is landlocked by great mountain walls rising on either side of it; Antioquia is equally isolated by the great slopes which fall from it to the plains. But, whilst once inside the Cauca valley communication is easy, in Antioquia the preponderance of mountains renders it everywhere difficult. That fact has hitherto operated to hamper the natural impulse of an energetic population towards improvement and development of the great mineral resources of their country. Here is what was said by a German traveller (Baron F. von Schenck), in 1883, of the Antioquian character: "The object aimed at by every inhabitant of Antioquia is to become a proprietor, and the activity which he displays in his endeavour is so great that it is to this motive-power that must be

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attributed the initiative, the ready comprehension of business, the boldness and the constancy in enterprise, which distinguish the Antioquian." The Antioquian, too, is always ready to accept improved mining machinery and methods, in so far as it is possible for him to procure them. Medellin, the capital, is the only place in Colombia in which institutions exist for assaying and refining the precious metals. With a country endowed so richly by nature, and having so enterprising a population, the field open to development seems the most promising in the country. At present, the journey from the Magdalena to Medellin is no easy matter. The first forty-three miles from Puerto Berrio are covered by railway; that is followed by a long mule-ride to Barbosa, whence there is a cart-road. The city itself, estimated to have a population of 50,000, is well situated in a valley 4600 feet above sea-level. It has broad streets, good houses, and fine public buildings. Amongst the latter are a University, a school of mines, one of arts and manufactures, a public library, and a theatre. Baron von Schenck described it as one of the richest towns in South America, in proportion to its population.

Manizales, on the borders of Antioquia, Cauca, and Tolima, with 20,000 inhabitants, is situated on a lofty hilltop, six days' ride from Medellin, in the midst of a mining and agricultural district on the western side of the central range, at an altitude of 7000 feet. It has communication with the Magdalena by a difficult road over the high mountains to Honda, and in the opposite direction with the Cauca valley.

Antioquia, the ancient capital of the department, with a population of only 13,000, lies comparatively low (1900 feet), in the valley of the Cauca, at the lower end of a navigable reach of sixty miles, intervening between gorges in which the river is a torrent. It was founded by Robledo, the first invader of the territory, in 1541, but has lost most of its importance, as it is outside the chief mining regions.

Santa Rosa de Osos (11,000 inhabitants) stands at an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet, on a hill of auriferous veins. It is a great mining centre, and near it is a waterfall of 840 feet, transcending in respect of height the fall of Tequendama, though falling short of it in volume.

Rionegro, near the capital, has 12,000 inhabitants; Aguadas and Sonson, respectively 13,000 and 15,000; and Titiribi, west of the Cauca, and a great mining centre, 10,000. Other large places and their populations are: Salamina, Abejorral, Neira, each with 10,000; and Amalfi, Itagui, Remedios, and Amagá, with from 6000 to 9000 each. It will thus be seen that Antioquia is a department richly provided with large settlements. Its agricultural produce scarcely suffices for the food of its inhabitants, who, for the most part, combine field-work with gold-washing, on a small scale, in their spare time. Its future lies in the opening of communications to facilitate the importation of food and machinery, thus setting free the energetic people to devote themselves to mineral development.

Beyond the Magdalena, on the eastern range north of Cundinamarca, stretching down to the

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plains of the Magdalena on one side and to those of the Orinoco tributaries on the other, are the departments of Boyacá and Santander.

Boyacá, the more southerly of the two, includes but a small area, comparatively speaking, of the Cordilleras, and it is cut off by Santander from the Magdalena. By far the greater portion of its area is comprised in the great plains of the Casanare territory, corresponding to and adjoining that of San Martin in eastern Cundinamarca. Of that area the future must lie in cattle-breeding, for which the vast "llanos" are admirably suited. Boyacá's population of 555,000 or more, largely collected on the hills, gives twenty-one to the square mile. But the population is not up to the Antioquian standard, for only one-fifth is pure white, whilst half is pure Indian, and the rest "mestizo," the negro not being found to an appreciable extent.

It contains little mineral wealth in the shape of gold or silver, but in it are the famous emerald mines of Muzo. It has also iron and copper mines, but its prosperity depends chiefly on agriculture. It possesses many "sabanas," resembling, on a smaller scale, that of Bogotá, and of a similar lacustrine origin. It has also fine pasturages, not only on the eastern plains, but also on the Suarez, a tributary of the Magdalena, and elsewhere.

Tunja, the capital, appears to have been a place of some importance in the Spanish times, but is decayed and of little consideration, and has only

8000 or 10,000 inhabitants. Boyacá is not a department of large towns, the chief in this respect being Chiquinquirá (18,000), a well-known place of pilgrimage. Soatá runs it close, and after these come a number of small towns (Sogamoso, Moniquirá, Pesca, Duitama, Miraflores, and others), with from 9000 to 14,000.

Santander is scarcely more than half as large, though its population is only about 140,000 less than that of Boyacá. It is the most thickly populated of all the departments, with thirty-five to the square mile. It extends down the eastern slope of the Cordilleras to the Venezuelan frontier, but has little of the "llanos" possessed by Cundinamarca and Boyacá. On the other hand, it has much more of the Magdalena valley than either of them. On the whole it, like them, is mainly an agricultural country, though it has gold and silver mines at Alta, Baja, and Vetas. It has fine plateaux at Pamplona, Juan Rodriguez, Mesarica, and on the flat-topped Mesa de Jeridas. The last named, devoted to cattle and horse-breeding, is a large grass-covered plain nearly 6000 feet above the sea.

The great variety of climates which Santander possesses enables it to produce every variety of crops, from the cereals of a temperate to the sugar-cane of a tropical climate. Indeed, this can be said of almost every department of Colombia, though least of Bolivar and Magdalena. The department suffers from isolation, owing to want of communication with the Magdalena. It has an outlet on the side of Venezuela, by a short

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length of railway leading down to the river Zulia, a tributary of the Catatumbo, which falls into the lake of Maracaibo. As, however, trade in this direction must pass through Venezuela, a good deal necessarily depends on the whims and fancies for the time being of President Castro, a factor of considerable uncertainty.

Santander is better provided with considerable towns than Boyacá. Bucaramanga, the departmental capital, counts 20,000 or more inhabitants. It appears to be a flourishing and enterprising place, for nearly twenty years ago it was busy importing, with infinite difficulty, an electric light installation. The following description by Mr. Millican, in his "Adventures of an Orchid Hunter," is worth quoting: "The natural situation is very beautiful, the town being built on an extensive plain about 3000 feet above the level of the sea, this plain entirely surrounded by high mountains, and these mountains, for a considerable distance up the side, adorned with pretty country houses, each one with a patch of sugar-cane, a plantation of coffee or tobacco; while, as far as the eye can reach, is an extent of pastures enriched with splendid herds of cattle and half-wild horses."

The streets are described as narrow, with a stream of water running down the middle of each of the principal thoroughfares, and originating from conduits drawing off water from the mountain streams, which are also used to supply baths and fountains in private houses. The town's greatest want is an easy road, or a railway, to the

Magdalena at Puerto Wilches. The railway once commenced from the latter place was, as has already been said, strangled in its birth, and is now represented only by a few rails overgrown by the dense forest. San Jose de Cucutá, rebuilt after its destruction by an earthquake in 1875, has 13,000 inhabitants, and, as the upper terminus of the railway to Villamazar on the Zulia, is of some importance. Through it much coffee and cacao pass out.

Socorro, once the capital, on the Suarez, has an unhealthy climate, but still contains 20,000 people. Velez (15,000 inhabitants), Pamplona (11,000), Jesus-Maria (18,000), San Gil (14,000), Piedecuesta (12,000), Puente-Nacional (16,000), are amongst the largest places. Charalá (11,000) may be mentioned as apparently the place referred to in a *canard* published in a London paper early in 1906. According to the story, the "treasure of the Incas," valued at forty millions sterling, had been discovered there in an old well. This is rather a good example of the wild stories which are, from time to time, spread about Colombia, sometimes tending to depress, sometimes to enhance, the price of securities. Though they generally profess to emanate from Panama, it is perhaps not unreasonable to suspect that they owe their birth to operators on more important stock-markets.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE DEPARTMENTS ON THE ATLANTIC COAST AND THE LOSS OF PANAMA

THE departments of Magdalena and Bolivar call for a more lengthy notice than those of the interior, not because of the extent or value of their mineral and agricultural resources, but because they contain the chief gateways through which Colombia receives its imports and sends out its exports. The fertile Cauca valley will, no doubt, look in the future to the Pacific at Buenaventura as its means of communication with the outer world, but every other part of the country, west of the eastern slopes of the Cordillera de Sumapaz, can only expect this service from the ports of the northern coast. It is hardly too much to say that Cundinamarca, Tolima, Santander, Boyacá, and Antioquia would be starved into barbarism if once the ports at or near the mouth of the Magdalena were closed against them. From those ports the country derives the most important item of its national revenues in the shape of customs dues; through them come nearly all the goods of European or North American production consumed by the upper classes, and to a certain extent, in the shape of cotton and woollen goods, by the middle and lower classes. The supreme importance of these two departments is manifest, whilst their

distance from the capital renders them peculiarly difficult of control from it. Venezuela is much better off with its capital close to its ports, and it would certainly be easier to govern Colombia from Cartagena, Barranquilla, Santa Marta, or the slopes of the Sierra Nevada above the last named, than it is from Bogotá. At any of these places the hand of the Government would be on the throat of the whole country. Unfortunately, Bogotá was long ago selected as the capital, and it undoubtedly has the advantage of being in a climate where the white man can live and flourish.

With the exception of the comparatively short sea frontage of northern Cauca, the whole Caribbean coast of Colombia is either in Bolivar or in Magdalena. Between the two the Magdalena is the boundary line, except for a short distance where it has deserted the old Mompox channel with its main stream. There the principal, and perennially navigable, channel lies twenty miles within the boundary of Bolivar.

The department of Bolivar, except in its extreme south-eastern corner, where it spreads over the extremity of the Central Cordilleras, is mainly plain, broken here and there by the dying hills of the western range. Of its area of rather over 21,000 square miles, nearly as large as Antioquia, some 12,000 are classed as uninhabited, and 4700 are liable to inundation from floods of the Magdalena, the Cauca, the San Jorge, the Sinu, and other rivers. Its population of 280,000 works out at only thirteen to the square mile, against thirty-five

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in Santander and twenty-one in Antioquia. The composition of its people, too, is inferior. The negro accounts for 30 per cent. of it, the white man for only 10; the aboriginal plays but a small part, and most of the remaining 60 per cent. are of every grade of mixed blood, largely tinged with black. As with the other departments, the figures of population are very unreliable, being those estimated in 1881. An estimate of 1893 gives Bolivar 325,000.

Its plains are by nature fertile, and would be a splendid field for the agriculture of a damp tropical climate, especially for sugar and rice. But the importance of the department really depends on its ports, and almost entirely on two of them, Cartagena and Barranquilla, or rather Puerto Colombia (Savanilla). No other ports are worth considering for the present in Bolivar. Several are named, but are practically unused. Besides those towns there are only a few places (Magangue, Mompox, Sabanalarga, Sincelejo, Chinu, and Corozal) of 4000 to 10,000 inhabitants, most of them cattle-breeding centres. In this trade Bolivar and Magdalena have advantages over other departments in their proximity to ports where they can ship live animals to Cuba or the West Indian Islands.

Of Magdalena as a department not much need be said. A little larger in area than Bolivar, it has only 90,000 inhabitants, less than four to the mile. Like that department, it has a large area of plain in the Magdalena basin; but it is much more mountainous, for it contains not only the

north-western extension of the Eastern Cordilleras up to the watershed, but has also the great detached mass of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In both these areas there are agricultural and mineral potentialities which Bolivar has not. There are hardly any towns of importance, except Santa Marta, which owes its value to its port.

Here we may well leave these departments as a whole, to give some account of the ports, their trade, and the towns which carry it on.

The seaboard of Colombia is a double one, facing partly north and partly west, with the breadth of the Isthmus of Panama completely isolating the one part from the other. The 900 miles of coast on the Caribbean Sea are in direct, and comparatively quick, communication with Europe and the east coast of North America; the 600 miles of Pacific coast are inaccessible except by the long voyage round the Horn, or by a double transhipment on to and off the forty-five miles of railway connecting Colon with Panama. Were that condition of things likely to continue indefinitely, Colombia would have very little to hope from her Pacific coast, and would be bound to seek her outlet and her inlet solely by the northern coast. But the time is rapidly approaching when the whole northern part of the South American Pacific coast must receive an immense impulse from the opening of the Panama Canal. This work has been talked about for so many years, and has already caused the waste of so many millions, that there may still be a few who hesitate to believe that it will ever be carried through.

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There seems, however, to be no reasonable doubt that it will be completed within a period which may perhaps seem long to the individual, but which in the life of nations is only a moment of time.

The United States are bound to carry through the business, and it seems possible that, in the end, the canal will be constructed at the sea-level, without the intervention of the locks necessary to raise ships some sixty or seventy feet to the highest point, and to lower them again on the other side. The idea that even a lock canal can ever be a concern paying, as a mere mercantile venture, a reasonable interest on its cost, even excluding all that was lost by M. de Lesseps' company, may be brushed aside at once. No company, looking to direct returns on its capital, could dare to impose canal dues sufficiently heavy to pay an appreciable percentage on the cost. They would require to be so high that no commerce could bear them, and the canal would remain a useless monument of folly. But, as a national enterprise in the hands of the American nation, its position will be very different. Not that the nation, any more than the company, could expect to cover the interest on its outlay by direct returns, for it would equally find it impossible to impose the necessary high dues, without prohibiting the canal to the mercantile navies of the world. But a nation, situated as the United States are, can look to indirect returns, which would be valueless to a company. America's growing interest in the Asiatic Far East, and her possession of the Philippines, must compel her to maintain a strong

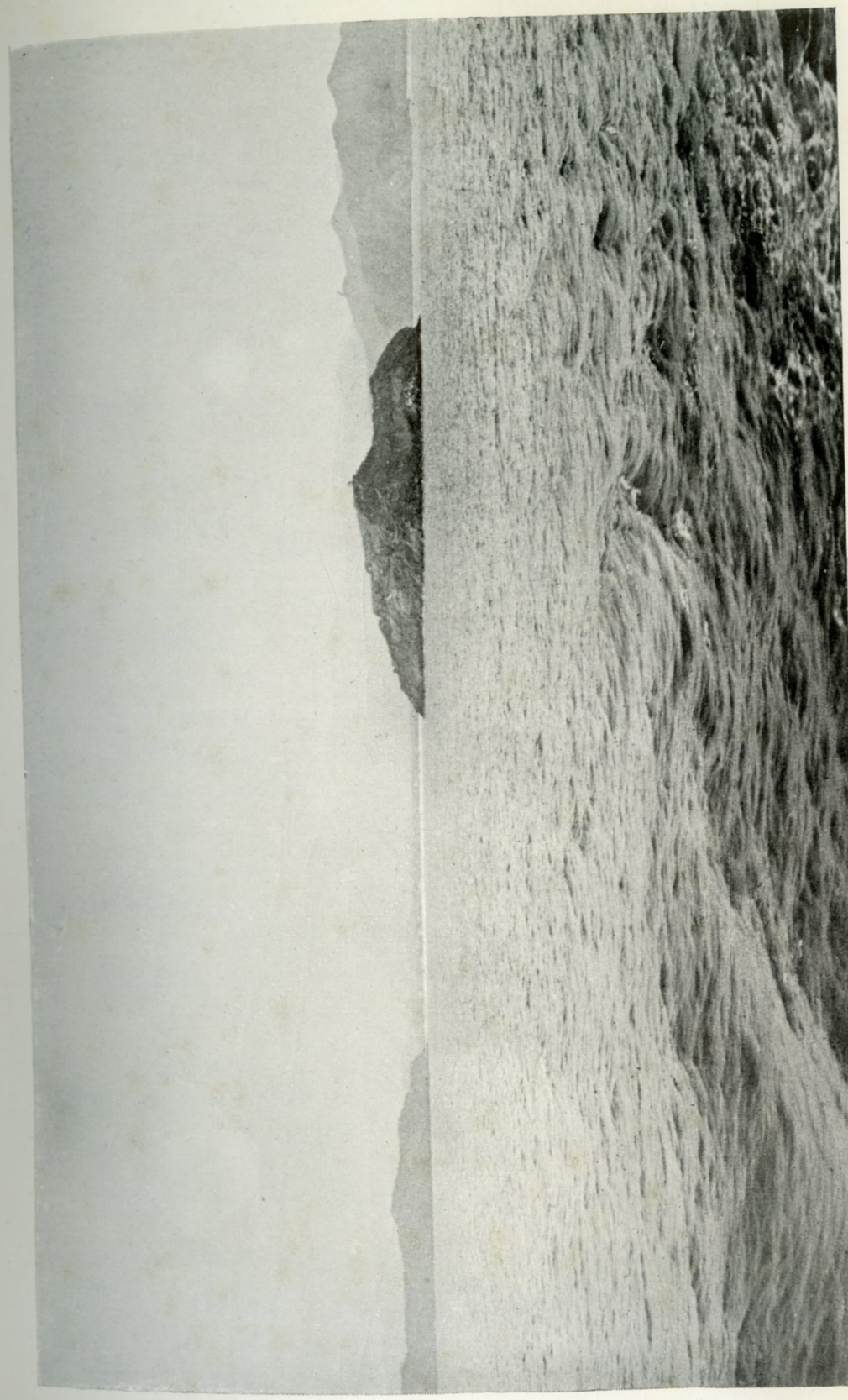
fleet on her western, as well as on her eastern coast. So long as these two fleets are separated by the necessity of communication round South America, it is obvious that both must practically be maintained at full strength, and that reinforcements from one to the other, unless in considerable strength, could only be sent, in time of war, at great risk. The anxiety which was felt over the voyage of the *Oregon* from the west coast to the Caribbean Sea, during the Spanish war, will be remembered. But, with an open line of communication between the two coasts through the Panama isthmus, the whole situation would be altered, and America, with a strong central reserve in the Caribbean, would be in possession of interior strategical lines which would place her in a most advantageous position. With full liberty to reinforce the eastern fleet from the western, or the western from the eastern, and both from the centre, it would be possible very considerably to reduce the strength of each, and, consequently, the annual expenditure both on construction and maintenance. The reduction in annual naval expenditure thus rendered possible may fairly be estimated in millions, and that saving could in all fairness be reckoned as a profit due to the construction of the canal, and as a set-off against the loss on it as a mere mercantile venture. The gain to the nation would be the same, or nearly the same, if the canal were constructed by a company, but to the company itself the nation's gain would represent nothing, or very little. Therefore, as a national enterprise, America

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can look upon the canal as a highly profitable undertaking which she is bound to carry out. She has already paid ten millions sterling and bound herself, eight years hence, to an annual payment of £50,000, besides what she has spent in the last two years on sanitation and construction. The idea that she will allow these great sums to be simply wasted may safely be scouted. President Roosevelt has clearly expressed his determination to carry on the work. It is true that the most recent vote of the American Congress contemplates a lock canal. But that decision is not irrevocable until much more work has been done, and it is difficult to believe that the advantages of a sea-level channel will not eventually carry the day.

To the western coast of Colombia, the opening of this direct communication with Europe and the American east coast will be of incalculable benefit, for it is only two days' steaming from Buenaventura to Panama, and the passage of the canal should not represent more than another half-day. Thus, when communication between Buenaventura and the Cauca valley is also open, that rich country will be brought into touch with the outer world.

The two ports of the western coast, Buenaventura and Tumaco, have already been mentioned. We must now turn to those of the northern coast. Of these there are only four requiring attention, and of these four the farthest east, Rio Hacha, is now of very small importance, and unlikely ever to attain eminence. Behind it, and on its eastern flank, lies a thinly populated country; on its west and



OFF SANTA MARTA HARBOUR

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south-west, it is true, there are the fertile slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, but, for the present at any rate, they will probably continue to rely for their development and trade on Santa Marta. If Rio Hacha has a future before it, it is probably a distant one, for it is not really a harbour at all, but an open roadstead, in which even small ocean-going ships have to lie one and a half miles off the shore and to communicate with it by boats. It is one of the places from which divi-divi is exported, but probably goods will be taken by small coasting boats to Santa Marta for shipment.

Proceeding westwards, we come to Santa Marta, a port which has grown considerably in importance during the last few years, though it is still far behind Savanilla and Cartagena, and is hardly likely ever to be a serious rival to them. The anchorage is in a bay running south-west and north-east, sheltered by heights on the north and north-east from the prevailing winds from the latter direction. There is a considerable depth of water, ranging from 4½ fathoms at the inner end of the bay to 18 and 19 at its mouth. The climate is hot and oppressive, sheltered as the place is from the trade-winds which go so far to mitigate the unpleasantness of Savanilla. As regards danger of silting up, it is perhaps the safest of the Atlantic ports, for no important stream falls into the harbour, and its mouth is to leeward of the prevailing winds. The worst point about it is its contracted area.

The trade of Santa Marta is largely due to the

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railway and to the operations of the American United Fruit Company. The total value of imports for 1904 was nearly £30,000, of which railway materials formed a considerable proportion. Cottons and other dry goods are but little imported, as it is found more advantageous to draw them from Barranquilla, with which the communication is for twenty-three miles by the railway, and for the remaining fifty by small steamers plying on the lagoon leading to Barranquilla.

The total tonnage of shipping entered and cleared during the year was nearly 70,000 tons, of which 56,000 were German, represented chiefly by the Hamburg-American Atlas line.

Of the exports, valued at £89,000, the greater part of the volume, and about five-eighths of the value, consist of bananas exported by the United Fruit Company to New York. These can be grown with great success on the lower slopes and the plains around the foot of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the snowy summit of which is visible some forty miles south-east of the port. Here, too, can be cultivated sugar-cane and cacao, the latter in connection with banana plantations. During the dry season, however, lasting from the beginning of November to the end of March, it is necessary to provide artificial irrigation, for which purpose the services of six rivers descending from the mountains are already impressed. About 10,000 acres were thus irrigated in 1904, and the area is growing. Experiments are being tried by the United Fruit Company in cotton-growing, with promising results as far as the plants are concerned. There are also good hopes of the development of an export trade to the Panama isthmus in cattle bred in the extensive pastures of the low country. Higher up on the slopes of the mountains, at elevations of from 3500 to 5000 feet, excellent coffee can be, and is, grown. The forests contain great quantities of valuable woods, including mahogany and cedar, but it is said that the lumber trade has been checked by high ocean freights. The great check, however, on the rising prosperity of Santa Marta is to be found in the want of population. According to a British consular report, the revolution of 1899–1902 more than decimated the able-bodied agricultural population of the neighbourhood. Wages have consequently risen, and it is said the hours of labour have been curtailed. The necessary result has been the abandonment of the more valuable kinds of cultivation, requiring more labour, in favour of the cheaper form of banana-growing. The want of labour operates adversely to the development of cotton and coffee growing, as well as to that of sugar. It is curious to have to note that cocoa has latterly been sent largely into the interior, where the production is insufficient to meet the consumption. So far, no serious effort has been made to overcome the labour difficulty by the encouragement of immigration.

Some sixty or seventy miles, as the crow flies, to the south-west stands Barranquilla, on the left bank of the Magdalena, about fifteen miles from the bar which prevents access from the ocean to the

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river. This want of direct communication has to be supplied by the eighteen miles of the Barranquilla railway, connecting that river-port with the sea-port of Savanilla, or rather with the pier at the small settlement which has grown up at its inner end under the name of Puerto Colombia. Though it is still generally spoken of as Savanilla, that place lies some miles east, and has long ago been abandoned as a landing-place. This miserable place can be best described as consisting of a few dozen mud-huts, some houses and railway sheds which are not very much better, and, the only really good thing in the place, the pier. It is, as it were, only a suburb of Barranquilla; there is no customs-house, not even a church, unless one counts a small mud building, with a bell hung on a cross-pole outside, in which there is rarely a service. There are (save the mark!) two hotels, which only the direst necessity could compel any European to inhabit. Of the inhabitants, certainly the most remarkable is the old American Captain Sims, whose whole life is bound up in the pier of which he has charge, and which he looks upon as his own child. He has long ago become to all intents and purposes a native, and is certainly the most popular individual in the place, not only with his subordinates, but also with the captains, the crews, and the passengers of the ocean-steamers who find time hang heavily on their hands as their ship lies tied up to the head of the 4000-feet pier. The old man lives on the pier most of his days, and watches it with the tenderest care. The Barranquilla Rail-

way and Pier Company will find it hard to replace a man who serves them so well.

The pier is an excellent one, which cost some £60,000. The trains run out to the head, where they can load and unload by cranes directly from or into the ocean-steamers. There is room alongside it to berth four large steamers, two on each side, in 24 feet of water. There is a very slight tide, averaging only a rise and fall of 1½ feet, though it occasionally is as great as 4 or 5 feet. Immediately on the south-west side of the land end of the pier, the coast rises into low hills, 400 or 500 feet high, which stretch away in a curve to terminate in a bold headland, called on the chart Hermoso Point. Another range of hills reaches the bay two or three miles east of the pier, in a point round which the railway to Barranquilla runs in a sharp curve. Beyond this lie Salgar and Savanilla, the landing-places of twenty years ago, now inaccessible to anything but small boats, owing to silting up. A long stretch of very low land encloses the north-eastern side of the bay. On it is a very poor light, and another, equally poor, stands east of Puerto Colombia on the shore. Ships cannot safely come alongside the pier except by daylight. If it is wearisome to lie alongside the pier-head for three days, as the Royal Mail steamers do, it is at least not unpleasant from the point of view of temperature; for there is nearly always a fresh north-east trade-wind blowing, especially at night, and on the windward side of the ship one can sleep in comfort. When the wind is high, there

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is always some risk to the pier from the strain of the ships attached to it. On the windward side there is a powerful fender of piles, separate from the pier itself, the creaking of which does not add to the comfort of unfortunates compelled to sleep on that side. Even with this protection, a gale of wind may mean the relentless ordering of the ships to sea, to avoid risk of carrying away the pier. Quite recently it was seriously damaged, but that was due, not to any unavoidable defects, but to a steamer, trying to get to sea, running into the pier.

There has, in the past, been such serious silting up in Savanilla Bay that there must always be some apprehension of a change in the direction of the silt, leaving the pier high and dry, inaccessible to large ships. A depth of 24 feet leaves none too large a margin, and 27 feet seems to be the deepest sounding anywhere in the neighbourhood. There are soundings of only 22 feet and 23 feet about half a mile ahead of the line of the pier, and of 21 feet on the south of the entrance channel. Between it and the open sea there is a broad band of mud-coloured water stretching across the mouth of the wide bay. That marks water from the Magdalena. At present it is doing no harm, though people who have watched the roadstead assert that the north-eastern spit has extended a good deal. On the other hand, it is never safe to feel too much confidence in existing conditions, when so shifty a river as the Magdalena is concerned. Such is at present Colombia's most active port, linked by

the railway to its most important commercial town, Barranquilla.

The population of Barranquilla is as uncertain as to its numbers as that of every other town in Colombia. It is steadily increasing, and the latest British consular report available gives 55,000 as the estimate. It is difficult, of course, to judge, from the look of a place, of the numbers of its population, but the estimate strikes an outsider as certainly not erring on the side of moderation. In 1887, the "Orchid Hunter" gives the estimate as 30,000.

The dismal accounts of the horrors of Barranquilla, which greet the traveller by steamer on the way to Savanilla, will certainly be found to be overdrawn. The town is essentially a growth of modern times; the streets are wide, and, though they are not paved, are often inches deep in sand, and of a surface the irregularity of which renders driving no pleasure, they cannot fairly be described as dirty or objectionable in other ways. Cologne or Frankfort, thirty years ago, were far worse in the way of smells, which are only very prominently offensive in Barranquilla down by the river, where the fish-curing is carried on. In the centre of the town, about the cathedral, are many buildings of considerable dimensions, and the places of business and stores of the many important mercantile houses established here. Hotels are not on the same level as a first, or even a sixth, rate European hotel in Barranquilla, any more than elsewhere in Colombia; but there are many worse places to sleep in than

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a third-floor room on the north side of the Pension Ingles, in which it is sometimes necessary to partly close the wooden shutters of the unglazed windows against the strong sea-breeze at night. Sanitary arrangements, it must be admitted, are generally horrible, and the food certainly does not recall the Carlton or Princes, though it is a welcome change after the fare on the river-steamer coming down the Magdalena. Prices of imported goods are also on a satisfactorily lower level than that to which they rise in Bogotá, after the addition of the heavy intermediate freights. In the centre of the town there are many houses of two and three floors; on the outskirts few exceed a single one. To the west the ground rises on a gentle slope, and on this side are the "quintas," or villas, forming the private residences of men who spend their days in the business premises of the lower town. Many of them are pretty, surrounded by gardens, and covered with luxuriant creepers; the air, too, is fresher and purer here than in any but the upper rooms of the business quarter.

The new arrival from Savanilla by train gets his first glimpse of the Magdalena a mile or two from the station, where he alights at the north-eastern end of the town. The main current does not impinge directly upon Barranquilla, for all along the eastern side of the town runs a back-water of the river, from which it is separated by a strip of low land. This backwater or canal forms the Barranquilla docks, in which are always to be seen a number of the stern-wheeled river-

steamers, with their upper decks reaching twenty feet above the water, and the captain's quarters, pilot-house, and steering-room above these again. The steamer, as it comes down-stream, completely passes Barranquilla, and then puts about, which one can fancy to be sometimes an unpleasant proceeding, with a north-easterly gale threatening to overturn the top-heavy craft as she exposes her starboard broadside to it; for it must be remembered that, even on the lower river, no steamer can afford to draw more than 3½ feet of water. Once turned southwards, the steamer creeps carefully up the backwater to her quay. Along the western bank of the backwater are the "bodegas," the offices, and the docks of the various steamer companies which navigate the river up to Honda, the Cauca to Caceres, and the Nechi up to Zaragoza.

As has been already said, Barranquilla is entirely a product of modern times, for in the colonial days it was a mere village of no importance. Access to the Magdalena was then generally obtained either from Santa Marta or from Cartagena, through the Dique or channel connecting that port with Calamar, sixty-five miles up the river from Barranquilla. The latter place really owes its rise, and depends for its existence, on the port, and especially on the pier and railway to Savanilla. For the present, Barranquilla absorbs by far the larger part of the import and export trade of the country. In it the principal business houses are settled, and though it is only sixty-five miles from

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Cartagena, the communication between the two places is no easy matter, so that there are few, if any, businesses carried on at both places. To get from Barranquilla to Cartagena there are the ocean-steamers, which cover the distance in five or six hours; but they only sail at intervals of several days, and, as few or none of them sail in the reverse direction, the only way to get from Cartagena to Barranquilla is by a railway journey of sixty-five miles to Calamar, and thence an equal distance down the river by steamer. As there is no attempt at regularity in the river services, this may mean a day or two of waiting at Calamar. The necessity for some regular service on the river is crying. You may arrive at Barranquilla to find that two or three steamers have just started up-river, and no one knows when the next will go. Presently you will be told that a steamer will sail "mañana o pasada" (to-morrow or later), which may end in yet another day or two wasted. The case is the same throughout the length of the river. The total shipping cleared at Barranquilla during 1904, or rather at Savanilla, is shown in the following table, extracted from a report by the British Consul:—

Table showing Nationality of Vessels which cleared with Articles of Export from Barranquilla during the Year 1904.

Nationality.	Number of Vessels.	Tonnage.	Percentage of Total Tonnage.	Total Tonnage of Export in Tons.	Percentage of Tonnage of Export.
British	43	187,522	29·7	9,419	21·6
German—					
New York Service .	66	174,836	27·7	23,642	54·2
European ,,	23	65,954	10·4	5,193	12·0
French	31	119,135	18·8	5,179	11·9
Spanish	12	62,200	9·9	128	0·3
Italian	5	17,500	2·8	20	...
Norwegian	6	4,805	0·7	...	...
Total . .	186	631,952	...	43,581	...

The nature and quantity of the goods which they carried are shown in the next table.

Return of Principal Articles of Export from Barranquilla during the Year 1904.

Articles.		In—					
		British Vessels.	German Vessels (New York Service).	German Vessels (European Service).	French Vessels.	Spanish Vessels.	Italian Vessels.
Coffee	Bags .	100,704	342,869	50,728	79,253	602	116
Hides	Loose .	36,563	167,603	18,639	7,087	3451	...
	Bundles	2,116	6,301	4,193	489	...	...
Tobacco . . .	Bales .	14,673	287	14,018	486	15	4
Dividivi . . .	Bags .	713	...	4,695	107	...	...
Plants . . .	Boxes .	546	408	69	218	...	...
Cocoa	Bags .	727	54	188	40	1	...
Rubber . . .	Bales .	454	404	200	674	53	...
Cotton . . .	,, .	908	47	285	37	...	...
,, seed . .	Bags .	5,585	326	267	...	...	...
Mineral . . .	,, .	10,837	86	...	107	...	...

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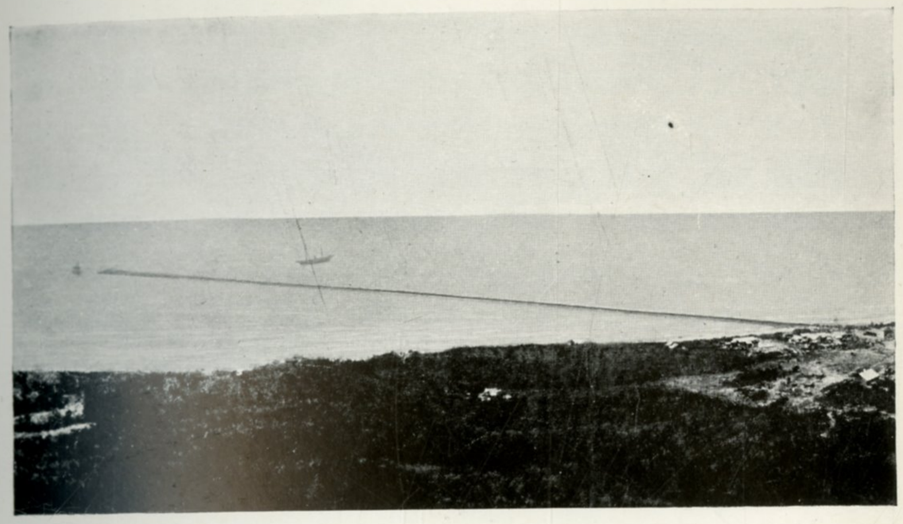
One more table shows the tonnage of ships entered, and the weight of cargo brought as imports.

Return of Shipping Entered at Barranquilla during the Year 1904.

Nationality.	Number of Steamers.			Total Tonnage.	Percentage of Tonnage.	Number of Packages.	Total Weight in Tons of Packages.	Percentage of Weight.
	With Cargo.	In Ballast.	Total.					
British	62	4	66	274,770	35·1	100,134	6,669	17·9
German—								
New York Service	52	21	73	193,173	24·7	262,492	14,057	37·8
European „	25	...	25	73,050	9·3	245,875	11,859	31·8
French	33	...	33	125,933	16·1	57,900	2,445	6·6
Spanish	12	...	12	62,200	8·0	29,363	1,198	3·2
Italian	12	...	12	42,000	5·3	13,090	817	2·2
Austro-Hungarian .	2	...	2	7,050	0·9	4,966	187	0·5
Norwegian . . .	...	6	6	4,805	0·6	...	...	...
Total . .	198	31	229	782,981	...	713,820	37,232	...

No return by weight of the details of imports is given in tabular form, but in the body of the report their nature is described, and, reading it over, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Colombia is importing large quantities of goods in which she ought to be self-supporting.

Such things as machinery, railway materials, ironmongery, barbed wire, drugs and chemicals are, no doubt, impossible of local production in the near future; but it seems rather like carrying coals to Newcastle when we are told that large quantities of potatoes come in from the United States and Germany. The latter country also sends large amounts of beetroot sugar to a country admirably



SAVANILLA PIER



CALAMAR

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adapted for the growing of sugar-cane. Ready-made clothing and boots and shoes have a large market. One inconvenience of the Colombian constitution is also shown in this report. In 1904, it was decided to considerably enhance the customs duties, from which the greater part of the national revenue is derived. According to the constitution, the enhancement can only gradually come into operation during the ten months succeeding a period of ninety days after the passing of the law. Consequently, plenty of time is allowed for ordering large stocks in anticipation of the change, and the public exchequer loses much which it might have otherwise gained.

Amongst the exports not mentioned in the table given above, were 6000 cattle sent to Cuba. One notable point is the small proportion of Colombian trade in the hands of Great Britain, as compared with Germany. Everywhere in the country there are signs of the greater energy of Germans in capturing the trade, by means of travellers, and by more careful attention to the requirements of the country. The British trader seems to go on the principle that it is his business to tell the Colombian what he wants, whereas the German, more wisely, finds out what his customer desires, and supplies him with it.

Five hours' steaming to the south-west, after leaving Savanilla pier, brings the traveller off Cartagena, lying some three or four miles to port. The first view of the city is one of much beauty, which, though it differs in many ways, yet recalls the view

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of Cadiz from the sea. The white houses, the monasteries, and the church towers of Cartagena stand out in sharp contrast against the green background formed by the wedge-shaped hill, crowned with another monastery 500 feet above the sea, called La Popa, from its fancied resemblance to the high stern of a mediæval ship. The foreground is formed by a sparkling blue sea, dancing in the forenoon sunlight. A mile or two beyond the town there is a broad gap in the low coast, through which it seems as if the ship should enter the harbour; but that is passed by, and it seems as if she were not going to touch at Cartagena at all. That gap is the Boca Grande. Through it Drake, with his sails trimmed for a "soldier's wind," entered to attack the fortress in 1585. He had already been preceded by a Corsican pirate in 1544. A precipice is shown at the monastery on the top of La Popa over which the legend says that Drake threatened to throw the monks, unless they disclosed the hiding-place of their treasure. Whether that be true or not, he certainly took Cartagena, and exacted a large ransom to save it from the flames. It was again taken by the French in 1697. The Cartagenians, tired of being easily attacked through the Boca Grande opening on the harbour close to the town, eventually set to work to block it up at great expense. Since then it has remained closed to all but rowing-boats, notwithstanding the prediction of Captain Cochrane, in 1825, that there was "no doubt that the Colombians will now remove these impediments to the entrance." Admiral Vernon's

unsuccessful attack on Cartagena in 1741 is chronicled in the pages of "Roderick Random." The fortress has had to undergo other sieges. Bolivar took it in 1815, and it was again surrendered to the royalists in the same year, only to pass once more out of their hands in 1821.

The Boca Chica is a narrow entrance, through which, however, steamers of 6000 tons can safely pass, but it costs them a journey of quite fifteen miles to thus go round the island of Tierra Bomba. The entrance was formerly defended by the two forts of San Fernando and San Jose on either side, which still stand there, but are of course useless. Once inside this passage, the ship is in a magnificent harbour, protected by land on every side, and averaging fifteen fathoms in depth over an area of 40,000 acres. It extends some nine miles from the island on which Cartagena stands, at its north end, to the mainland, which juts out to meet yet another island to seaward, south of Tierra Bomba. At the north end, about a mile from the city, are the wharves belonging to the Cartagena (Colombia) Railway, to which the harbour management and dues are leased. There are eleven or twelve fathoms of water alongside the wharves, and the trains run right down to the ship's side. The customs-house is also here. If Barranquilla is associated with the nineteenth century and trade, Cartagena's past is connected chiefly with war, and with the Spanish dominion of the three previous centuries. Those were the times of its great prosperity and renown, as the chief place on the Spanish Main. It was the

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capital of the government, and the headquarters of the South American Inquisition, as will be remembered by all readers of Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" The dungeons still exist, and the palace of the Inquisition is courteously shown by the Señores Martinez, whose store and private residence it now is. The instruments of torture and other relics have been removed to Spain, and the only remnant of the evil days now *in situ* is a wooden railing, at which the unhappy victim stood to receive sentence. One of the windows of the adjacent cathedral is said to be barred with the gridiron on which recalcitrant heretics were reminded of the advantages of a change of opinions. It is believed that, from first to last, no less than 400,000 persons were sentenced by this tribunal.

The walls of Cartagena bear testimony to the strength of the place in the old days; in many places they are forty feet thick, and at the north end they expand into an elaborately fortified citadel, within which are enormous fresh-water tanks filled by the rain. The water is said to be good, but, looking to the insanitary catchment area, few would willingly venture on it. An English company has now got a concession for supplying the city with water, which has hitherto been brought in, in carts or by rail, from the Turbaco hills. There are good springs on the slope of these hills, and as they are 300 feet above Cartagena, water will run by gravitation, in pipes laid along the railway, to the distributing reservoirs in the fort of San Felipe. This being 100 feet above the town, there will be an easy

service to the tops of the houses, again by gravitation. This water will be a boon to ships at the quay, as well as to the city people.

Between the fortified city and the mainland to the east, is a shallow lagoon bridged by a causeway, and a few hundred yards beyond that is the fort of San Felipe, standing on a rock 100 feet high. It was from before this, then called San Lazaro, that Vernon was disastrously repulsed in 1741. In its day, it must have been a place of great strength, and the entrance of the underground communication between it and the city is still to be seen. The fort is now in ruins, though still used as barracks.

With the fall of the Spanish rule, Cartagena rapidly declined, especially in consequence of the closure of its communication with the Magdalena by the partly natural and partly artificial canal called "El Dique," the history of which has already been given.

Attempts are now being made to restore the city to something of its former prosperity, and to attract to its harbour the trade which now goes to Savanilla. Of the enormous superiority of the harbour over the open roadstead of Savanilla there can be no shadow of doubt. It would be much improved by the reopening of the Boca Grande, a work which would be very simple nowadays, and would, according to Captain Cochrane, be greatly assisted by the current washing away the sandbar, once the stones, and other heavy obstacles round which it has gathered, have been removed. Looking to the soundings inside and outside the

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Boca Grande bar, it seems probable that, once opened, it would give a deeper entrance than the Boca Chica, in which there is not much spare water below a big ship. Indeed, when there is no ripple on the water, the coral bottom is visible as one looks over the side. Another advantage in opening the Boca Grande would be the avoidance of the circuit of fifteen or sixteen miles now necessary. That is, of course, not so important a matter as it was in the days of sailing-ships, requiring to beat slowly up against a north-east wind for seven or eight miles. Still, fifteen miles represents a certain amount of coal, and one and a half hours of time. Nor is the Boca Chica safe to pass at night, or without a pilot. Inside the walls, Cartagena is very inferior to Barranquilla in the width of its streets, though there is not much to choose in their state of repair. There are, of course, many more fine old houses than in the more modern city, and there are several squares and open places. There are several handsome churches, which, however, would hardly take first-rate rank in Europe. The best are the Jesuit church of San Juan de Dios and the cathedral, the former decidedly the more imposing building, with its double towers and an immense monastery adjoining it, which is the most conspicuous building in Cartagena viewed from the quay.

There is a public library in the centre of the town, and blocks of Government offices, but the general aspect of the place is much less busy than that of Barranquilla. Outside the walls, in the

direction of the fort of San Felipe, stand the railway station and offices of the railway company. These at least are distinctly superior to the corresponding buildings at Barranquilla. The line is continued down to the quay, nearly two miles from the station. As the main line runs out to Calamar, it passes close under San Felipe, and below the south end of La Popa. Beyond the railway station, again, is the market, by no means a bad one, in which there is more life than in most parts of the town. Here, in the Plaza de la Independencia, stands the avenue of busts of patriots shot or hanged by the royalists for their share in the War of Independence. Bolivar, of course, has his statue in the "heroic city," so called for its resistance in the siege by the royalists in 1815.

The exports and imports by way of Cartagena do not differ in nature from those of Barranquilla; it is in quantity that there is the main difference at present. But the whole future of Barranquilla hinges on the question of the continuance, free from silt, of the Puerto Colombia roadstead. Even as matters stand, looking to the great superiority of Cartagena harbour, and the fact that there there is no risk of ships being ordered to sea in a gale, there seems every prospect of Cartagena regaining its old position as the chief port. As the railway company connecting it with the river at Calamar also controls the steamers running from that place, it can always offer the advantage of through bills of lading, without charges for agency in transhipping at either end.

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Though Panama now glories in nominal independence, and is certainly not likely again to form part of the Colombian Republic, it may not be out of place to say a few words on the question of how it came to break loose, in 1903, from the parent state. On more than one previous occasion, as has been mentioned in the historical sketch of Colombia, it temporarily cut the painter, but was again taken in tow each time by the Bogotá Government. It is now loose for good, probably, though it runs some risk of being picked up by the United States of America, if its captain and crew should show themselves incapable of managing it —by no means an unlikely contingency. In the middle of May 1906, the American Government conveyed to that of Panama its views on the question of internal dissensions likely to interfere with operations in the canal zone. That communication very plainly intimated that, under the new order of things, the United States are not prepared to tolerate revolutions or disturbances of any sort.

It is unnecessary to go in detail into the history of M. de Lesseps' unfortunate company, or of the new canal company which took over the business of the Panama Canal, rather as an assignee in bankruptcy than as manager of a going concern. The concession originally granted, in 1878, by Colombia was made when the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, between England and the United States, was still unrepealed. By its abrogation, America's hands were freed. The concession still remained to the French company, which, however, was

clearly barred from transferring it, without the consent of Colombia, to any foreign power, including the United States. Clearly, the second French company was not in a position to carry the work through, and its whole policy was one of marking time whilst the United States Government made up its mind whether to choose the Panama or the Nicaragua route for the inevitable severing of the isthmus between the Atlantic and the Pacific. At last, a decision in favour of Panama was arrived at, and America proceeded to make a triangular arrangement with the company and the Colombian Government. Briefly, that arrangement was to the following effect :—

(1) Colombia to agree to the transfer of the rights, under the concession, of the French company to the United States. Her consent was necessary under the terms of the concession.

(2) To cede, on a lease for 100 years, the right of way for the canal, and a strip of land five miles broad on either side of the waterway, as well as the ports at Colon and Panama.

(3) In exchange, Colombia was to get, at once, £2,000,000 in cash, and, ten years later, to receive an annual rental of £50,000.

(4) The shareholders in the company were to receive a payment of £8,000,000 in cash for all their rights and property, including machinery and the results of work already done on the canal. Colombia held 50,000 shares in the company, and would get a proportionate share of the £8,000,000.

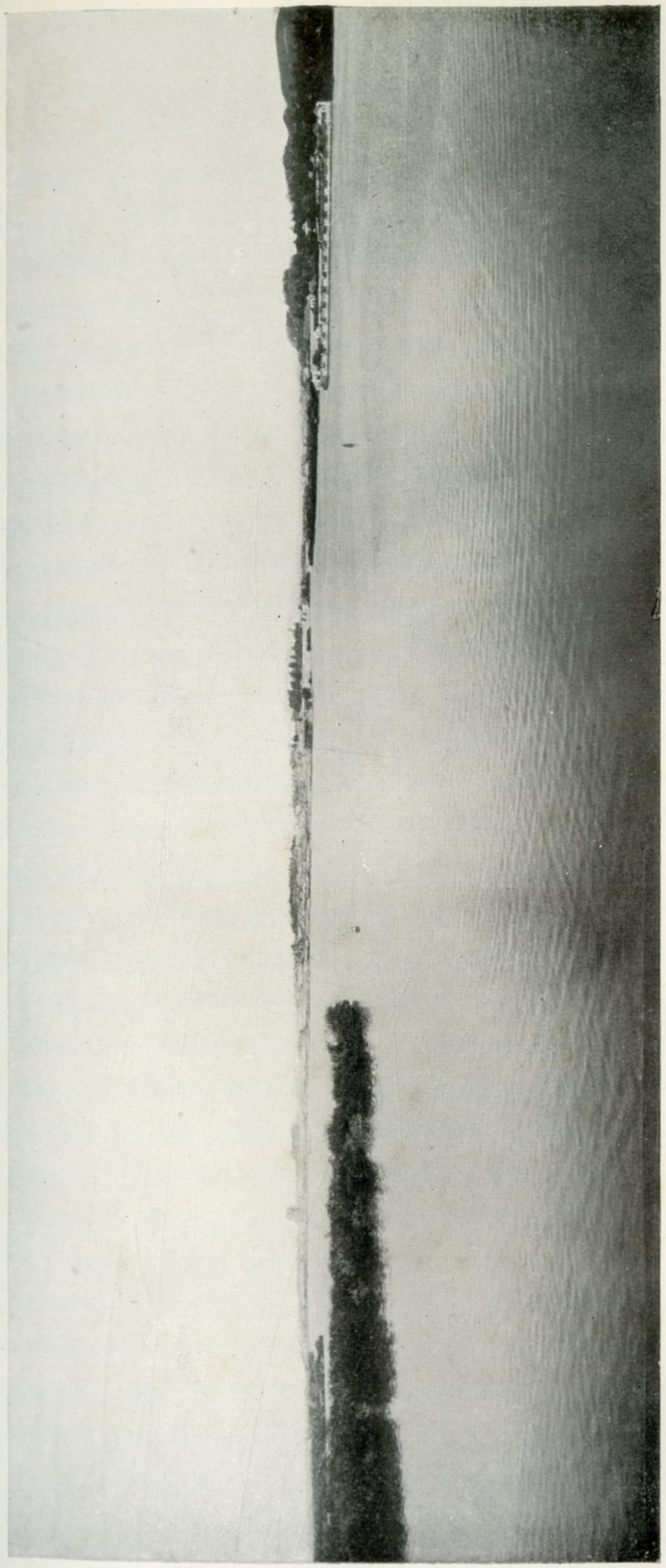
When this treaty was executed, there existed a

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state of civil war in Colombia, the country being administered under martial law by the Government. The treaty was duly ratified by the United States Senate, and was submitted, after the restoration of tranquillity in the country, for ratification by the Colombian Congress. That ratification was refused on grounds thus stated by the Senate:—

"At the time it (the treaty) was signed by the Colombian plenipotentiary, the country was in a state of siege; there was not any law giving authority to enter into such negotiations, and the national representatives could not consider the matter. Moreover, as the treaty implies the construction of public works on a large scale, and also the permanent occupation of a portion of the Colombian territory by the concessionaire, who is not a subject liable to the laws of the country, but a sovereign political power, if the treaty were to be carried out two co-existing political powers would be established, one national and the other foreign, which would necessarily cause collisions, and practically limit the jurisdiction of the nation on its own territory; and all this would be incompatible with the constitutional laws and the traditional organization of the Republic; and so a treaty of this nature could only be approved by a national convention, or by a reforming act of the constitution, effected in the manner therein provided."

At the same time, a further resolution left the door open for fresh negotiations. The United States replied distinctly that the Hay-Herran treaty,



CARTAGENA FROM THE HARBOUR

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unmodified in any respect, was the only possible basis of negotiation. How far this decision may have been a *bonâ fide* declaration of Colombian opinion, or how far it may have been based on other motives, we have neither the means nor the wish to discuss. Probably, few will hesitate in condemning it as unwise, and it was certainly followed by disastrous consequences to Colombia.

On the 3rd November 1903, an insurrection broke out at Panama, and the independence of the isthmus was proclaimed. The Colombian troops were gained over, and the commandant of a battalion just arrived from Cartagena was taken prisoner. The Colombian commandant at Colon was persuaded, by means which may be guessed, to take his troops on board the Royal Mail steamer *Orinoco* for transport to Cartagena, and, when he repented him like Judas, he found that his return to shore was forbidden by American troops.

The exact part played by the United States Government, or at least by American citizens, in this bloodless revolution, the future will perhaps clear up. In England, as well as in Colombia, opinions very far from complimentary to the honour of America were freely expressed, and in Bogotá the feeling was so strong that the house of the American Minister had, for many weeks, to be guarded by troops.

General Reyes, as Agent of Colombia, in December 1903, expressed, in writing, to Mr. Hay the views held by the Colombian Government. He stated categorically that—

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(1) A New York bank had opened a credit of 300,000 dollars in favour of the revolutionary party.

(2) American cruisers were stationed, on the 1st November, at Colon and Panama.

(3) On the 2nd November, their commanders were ordered to prevent any disembarkation of Colombian troops on the isthmus.

These allegations of fact do not appear ever to have been traversed, and the United States Government contented itself with saying that precautions were necessary for the protection of the railway. It is noteworthy that no such strong measures appear to have been taken in anticipation of, or in the earliest stages of, previous revolutions, and that troops were then landed only when the railway was seriously endangered by actual fighting. On this occasion, when America was so palpably interested against the central government, which had refused to ratify the Hay-Herran treaty regarding the canal, it might have been expected that she would have been more than usually careful not to identify herself with either party—that is, if she cared to avoid the suspicions naturally engendered by her conduct. That Colombia, if left a free hand, could have made short work of the Panama revolutionists it is impossible to doubt. The whole country would have been united against Panama, the population of which is estimated at only 250,000, and the result of a contest would have been a foregone conclusion. But American cruisers forbade the landing of troops from Cartagena and Buenaventura. A mad attempt, the *bonâ fides*

of which may well be doubted, was made to march troops by the land route, through the marshes and forests of the north coast and the isthmus. These unhappy men suffered hardships and losses which can only be compared to those of the Spaniards in old days, under Heredia or Quesada. Without a commissariat, they were reduced to eating the uncooked flesh of carrion vultures, and, it is said, three-quarters of them perished in the forests before the remainder got back, in the utmost misery, to Cartagena. If they had ever arrived at Colon or Panama, is it credible that the Americans would have allowed them to proceed, when their arrival by sea had already been forbidden?

On many earlier occasions, the United States, notably in the treaty of 1846, had professed to guarantee the sovereignty of New Granada, or Colombia, over the isthmus. More than once, Panama, when all Colombia was in the throes of civil war, had a much better case for separation, but received no support from America, which was then interested in the supremacy of the central government with which she dealt. Now, in 1903, when Bogotá was recalcitrant and could easily have suppressed Panama, America must needs transfer her protection to a provisional government which had not given any evidence of substantial power or stability. Washington held somewhat different views when it was a question of the recognition by Europe of the belligerent rights of the South, which had established, by its early victories, a very different claim to recognition. With effusive

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haste, the United States recognised the Republic of Panama within a few days of its proclamation; just three weeks after that event, Panama, which could hardly demur if it wished, signed, as the successor of Colombia on the isthmus, a treaty regarding the canal, practically the same as that which the Senate of Colombia had rejected. Everything that was to be paid under the Hay-Herran treaty now went to Panama. With £2,000,000 in cash, Colombia might have completely rehabilitated her financial position, not to speak of the payment for her share in the £8,000,000 paid to the French company by America, and the prospective £50,000 a year as rent. Whether we admit that the motives of the Congress in refusing to ratify the Hay-Herran treaty were based on a *bonâ fide*, though under the circumstances exaggerated, idea that the honour of the country was threatened, or whether its action be attributed to political agitation, or even less worthy motives, the irreparable loss to Colombia was the same. A greedy snatch at the shadow of possibly better terms resulted in the loss of the very solid substance the state held in its power. If the Hay-Herran treaty had been ratified, who can suppose that Panama would have been allowed by America to proclaim its independence, or, if it had done so, that Colombia would have been refused a free hand in bringing it to heel again? The way in which the Colombian constitution and the "national honour" were solemnly paraded, like ancient pieces of ordnance, to procure better terms, is thoroughly characteristic. On this

occasion, the recoil wrought havoc to the state, whilst leaving the enemy entirely uninjured.

Colombia is still negotiating with America over this business. She is also negotiating with France regarding the 50,000 shares in the canal company, of which she claims delivery, and the value of which represents a share in the £8,000,000 paid by America to the company to buy it out.

These 50,000 shares in the New Panama Company were the consideration paid to Colombia for an extension of time, failing which that state could have taken possession, at the end of the original term, of the whole property of M. de Lesseps' company on the isthmus. Panama at first laid claim to these shares, but eventually withdrew her claim. Then the French fiscal authorities seized the shares on a claim for registration fees, amounting to over half a million sterling. Colombia now demands from France the surrender of these shares. The question between the two governments is a somewhat complicated one of international law, into which it is impossible to enter here. The sum involved is a considerable one, of great importance to Colombia, and, as will be seen later, to Colombian bondholders, whose chances of recovering in full the arrears of interest due to them since 1899 are dependent on the success of the claim.

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CHAPTER IX

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The existing means of communication in Colombia can be considered under the three heads of rivers, roads, and railways. We have already given some account of steam navigation on the Magdalena, the lower Cauca, and a few other rivers flowing towards the north. It has also been mentioned that steamers occasionally come up the great tributaries of the Amazon and the Orinoco towards the foot of the Eastern Cordilleras. There is room for small steamers on the Cauca in its upper navigable part, and, with the completion of railway communication with Buenaventura, they should have open a very profitable trade, as feeders to the line from the valley north and south of Cali. There are also some possibilities, in the future, on the Atrato, the San Juan, and the rivers of the Barbacoas district. Canoes ply on many rivers, or portions of them, which are not suited to steamboats. Down-stream they are cheap enough to work, but they require large crews to get them back up the rapid streams which they encounter. Rafts are only useful for the down journey.

Where there is a river navigable with safety by steamers of reasonably large size, it is certain that they will take the traffic, in goods at least,

and that a railway running parallel would ordinarily stand a poor chance of paying. The Dorada Railway only draws traffic because the part of the Magdalena along which it runs is too difficult and dangerous for steamers. Below La Dorada, a railway extension would probably find itself cut out by the river; but there is, as has already been said, urgent necessity for attention to improvements in the beds of navigable rivers. No steamboat company would object to a tax for this purpose, if it were sure that the proceeds would be applied to the object for which it is levied. Naturally, when they are liable to be used for all sorts of other purposes, and the snags and sandbanks are left unhindered to obstruct the river-bed, the tax is viewed in a very different light.

Sir Walter Scott, in "A Legend of Montrose," quotes, *à propos* of certain Highland roads, the poetic effusion of an Irish engineer, who wrote :—

> "Had you seen but those roads before they were made,
> You would have held up your hands and blessed General Wade."

At present, Colombia is in the position of holding up her hands to bless the coming General Wade, who, so far, has not put in a definite appearance.

A glance at a map of the country shows a considerable number of roads marked as existing, and in the map in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* some are marked as "important highways." Alas for the disillusionment of the traveller who expects to find a road like the great highways of France! If he

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is more modest, and hopes for something rather worse than the worst Devonshire lane, or the most shadowy moorland track in Yorkshire, he will still find he has overshot the mark in most parts of Colombia. When he hears that a road is known as the "Camino Real"—the "royal road"—he expects something at least passable for carts and carriages with reliable springs. He will not find it, or the wheeled conveyances. In Cartagena, Barranquilla, or Bogotá, or on some of the level "sabanas," such as that of Bucaramanga, he will find cabs, carriages, and carts; but, as far as he is personally concerned, he will probably prefer either to walk or to ride a mule, or one of the agile country ponies. He can, if he chooses, drive on the "sabana" of Bogotá, or in the suburbs of Cartagena, but he must be prepared to play the part of a pea on a drum, and to risk a broken spring. On such "royal roads" as those from the Magdalena to the Bogotá "sabana" he will scoff at the idea of any one driving, and nobody does drive. There is a cart-road from Cambao to Facatativá, but the marvel to most people is how the boilers, and other heavy parts of the locomotives running on the railways of the Sabana, were ever got up it at all. On the direct road from Honda to Facatativá he will feel far from safe, even on the steady-going mule, and his heart will come into his mouth as his animal cautiously feels its way into a pool of liquid mud up to its withers. A pony has been known to disappear into one of these accidents of the road till nothing but its nose, and the upper part of its rider's body, remained above the surface

of the mud. Some account of a ride over the road from La Mesa to Boca del Monte has already been given.

But these roads are quite in the first rank of their respective classes, and it must be said for them that they bear traces of having known better days, and that they may well be amongst those which the President publicly stated to be worse now than in the colonial times, before the War of Independence. The majority of the roads in the more civilized parts merely follow the old Indian trails, which disregarded all ideas of engineering, or of selecting the easiest way for construction, or the most economical for traction or passage. The cross-roads, where there are any, are still worse; though the fact that they are used can be inferred from their remaining, where that is the case, open and unchoked, in forest tracts, by a vegetation which, if undisturbed for a single season, obliterates all traces of a path. This is the cause which is believed to have prevented the rediscovery of many mines known by name as old Spanish workings, the paths leading to which have long ago been buried in the impenetrable forest which has overgrown them. The difficulties of the Quindio Pass, then, as now, the recognised line of communication between the Upper Magdalena and the open part of the Cauca valley, have been graphically described by Humboldt, and by other travellers of the early nineteenth century. Even with all due allowance for exaggerated pictures, and accepting with some scepticism the alarming illustrations in Captain

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Cochrane's book, it is quite clear that the passage of the central range was no light undertaking in those days. Even in our days, a sober German like Dr. Hettner considers it no mean task, with its necessity for at least one night spent, *sub jove frigido*, on the bleak Paramo de Ruiz.

These are all recognised roads, but there are many other directions in which it is only possible to proceed by hewing a way, with axe and "machete," through the dense vegetation. It was thus that Señor Triana had to proceed from Miraflores to the Tua River. The brothers Reyes wandered for a month on the desolate Paramo of Pasto, where, if a road had existed at all, it stood a good chance of speedy obliteration in the sea of mud.

Who can doubt the necessity, asserted by the President, for better bridle-roads, and for cart-roads in some places? They are necessary, not only for facility of travel, but, still more, for opening the landlocked areas created by their absence. It is clearly hopeless to develop a country, however fertile, if entrance to or exit from it has to be forced by infinite labour. That is why General Reyes wants a road to the cattle-breeding prairies of San Martin and Casanare. It is no good packing beef in them if it cannot be got out with reasonable facility. Possibly the roads in a comparatively flat and well-populated country, like the Cauca valley, or on the "sabanas" of Bucaramanga and other places, may be better; and indeed they appear to be so, if they can be judged of from photographs. The President has recently given a

contract for improving the communications by road in the Upper Magdalena valley between Honda and Neiva.

The difficulty is not so much to get along up and down the Cauca valley, as to get into or out of it in any direction. The resident at Popayan who wants to get to Bogotá has a choice of several passes, the western foot of which he can easily reach. He can go direct, over the Paramo de Guanacas, to La Plata; or from Cartago to Ibague by the Quindio; or by Manizales and the passes leading to Ambalema or Honda; but in all cases his difficulties only begin when he turns eastwards out of the valley.

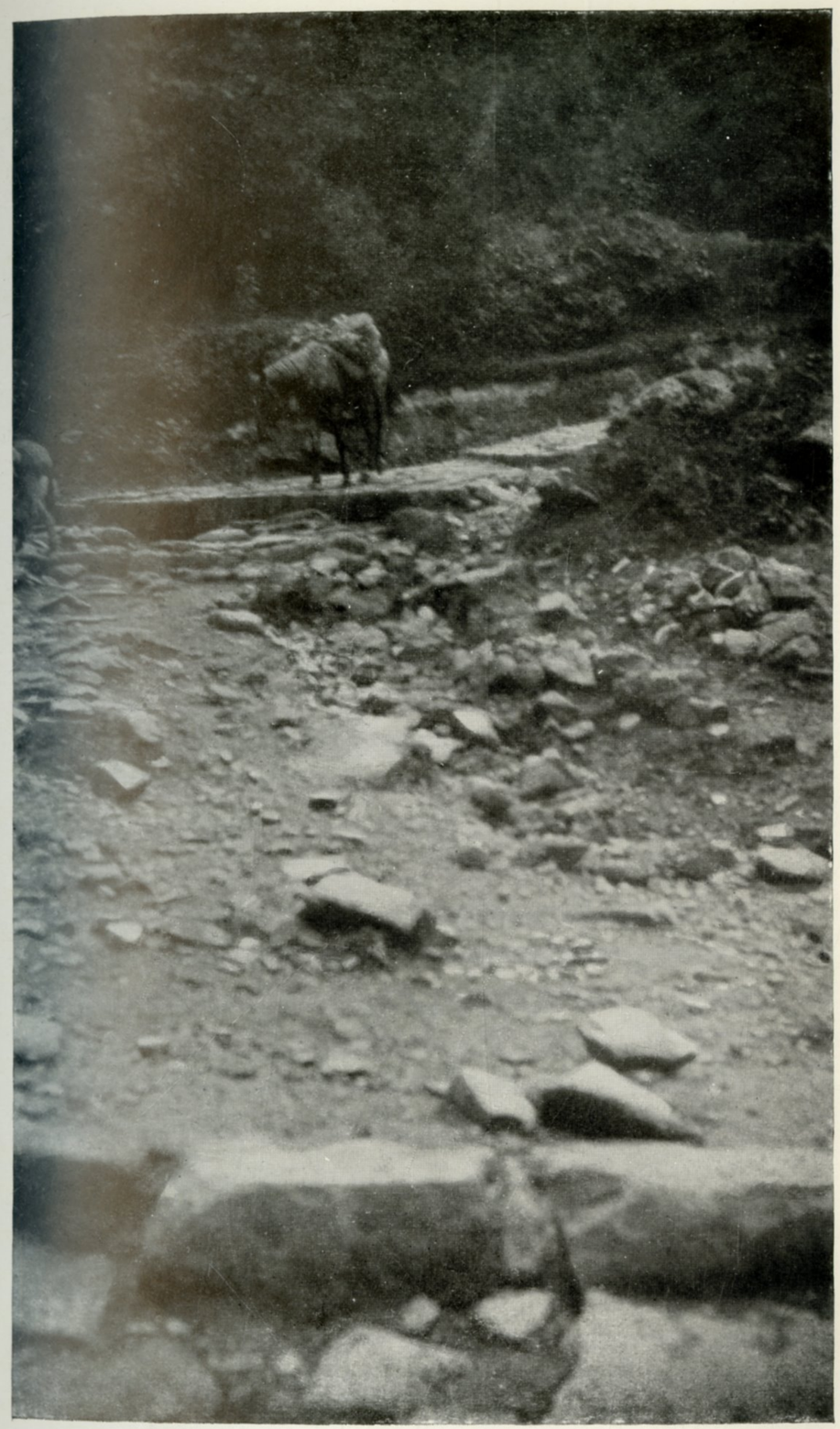
The subject of roads leads naturally to that of the post and telegraph services. There is an official map, prepared for the Colombian Government, which shows, by red and blue lines, the lines of telegraph and postal services. According to it, there is no difficulty in telegraphing between Bogotá and Cartagena or Barranquilla. In practice it will be found no such easy matter. A telegram was handed in at Bogotá on the 8th of February 1906, addressed to London. It reached its destination on the 26th! In this case it had to go *viâ* Barranquilla, because the cable from Buenaventura to Panama had been damaged by earthquakes. There being no direct cable to the Atlantic coast of Colombia, it would be delayed, perhaps a few days, at Barranquilla, waiting for a steamer to carry it to Colon, or to Puerto Limon in Costa Rica. But that would not account for the eighteen days it occupied in transit, and it is fair to assume that, the wires between Bogotá and

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the coast being broken, part of the distance had to be traversed by steamer on the Magdalena. In ordinary times, a telegram for Europe or the States goes by land wire across the Quindio Pass, then over the Western Cordilleras to Buenaventura, whence there is a cable to Panama. We have heard of a case, a record probably, of a telegram from London answered from Bogotá the next day; but three days is a fair average time for transit in one direction. As the land wires pass through great areas of forest or "paramo," where there are a thousand risks of damage by animals, by men, and by storms, it is small wonder that they are constantly interrupted.

As for the post, that is, or was, at least as irregular as the telegraph. To begin upon, there is, even on the Magdalena, no certainty of connection between the mules, which carry letters between Honda and Bogotá, and the steamers which convey them on the river. In 1904, there was not even a contract for their carriage by any particular line of steamers, and they took their chance of finding one to carry them. No one then seemed anxious to take a contract, payment under which was a matter of serious doubt.

The mail for Europe is supposed to leave Bogotá on certain days in the month, but whether it will do so or not was, in 1904 at any rate, by no means certain. As for its arrival from abroad, there was still greater uncertainty. Sometimes there would be no mail in for a fortnight or three weeks, and then there would be two or three together. A



STAIRCASE (BOGOTÁ ROAD)

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letter from England, posted, say, on the 10th August, would arrive, and a week later would be received one posted on the 3rd August, or even a week earlier. The arrangements for delivery of letters and parcels at Bogotá were primitive in the extreme. It is said that there is a house-to-house delivery at times, but the person who places his trust in that is not wise, and practically no one does so in Bogotá. All, who have any regular correspondence, have the key to a numbered box in the general post-office, into which they hope that their letters will be put. But the post-office employés (we are speaking of 1904, and matters are reported to have improved since then) are notoriously inefficient, and, if the addressee happens to be a foreigner, his correspondence is as likely as not to be put into the box belonging to any other person of his own or an allied nationality. In his own box he will find, perhaps, some letters addressed to himself, mixed up with others belonging to persons whose boxes the sorter has not taken the trouble to hunt out. The mail from Europe is not quite of the dimensions of an Indian or colonial mail reaching London, but it takes several days to sort, and there is hope of finding something in the box any time within three or four days of its arrival. Even then it is advisable to go to the *poste restante* room, always well filled with undelivered correspondence, where the staff is peculiarly inefficient. It is to be hoped that President Reyes' proposed reforms in the personnel of the public service have

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resulted in a liberal weeding of the post-office clerks. Red-tape, of course, flourishes, and the amount of signing required to procure delivery of a parcel is appalling. Recent reports, it must be recorded to the credit of the present Government, state that all these arrangements have been greatly improved in the last year or so.

To speak of the Colombian "railway system" would be an error, for the term cannot properly be applied to several scattered fragments of railway, distributed in short lengths all over the central and western area of the republic. At present there is no continuous line of railway of greater length than sixty-five miles, and shorter lengths have been laid down, here and there, where there was the most urgent necessity, with, consequently, the best hope of profit. The only place where there is anything which, by a stretch of language, might be dignified with the title of a system is on the "sabana" of Bogotá, where three separate lines, of a total length of some seventy-four miles, bring the capital into communication with the northern, southern, and north-western portions of the plateau, and with the great salt-mines of Cipaquirá. When these three lines are brought into communication with the river Magdalena, by the completion to Facatativá of the Colombian National Railway from Girardot, a real system will have sprung into existence, which it may be hoped will spread far and wide.

The lines at present working, or under construction, are the following:—

(1) The Barranquilla line, joining that river-port to the pier at Savanilla, 18 miles off.

(2) The Cartagena (Colombia) Railway, 65 miles in length, between the city of Cartagena and the port of Calamar on the Magdalena, about 66 miles above Barranquilla.

(3) The La Dorada Railway, 22 miles, joining La Dorada, on the Lower Magdalena, with Arancaplumas, on the upper river, above the Honda rapids.

(4) The Colombian National Railway, starting from Girardot, 93 miles above Honda on the Magdalena, and, so far, working up to near Hospicio, a point in the dip east of La Mesa, at a height of 4000 feet above the sea, on the road to Bogotá.

(5) A short length of very inefficient railway, from the left bank of the Magdalena opposite Girardot, working some 12 miles to Espinal.

(6) The "Sabana" Railway, from Bogotá, 25 miles, to Facatativá, at the edge of the plateau.

(7) The Northern Railway, from Bogotá to Cipaquirá, 31 miles.

(8) The Southern Railway, from Bogotá to near the mouth of the Tequendama gorge and on to Sibate, 18 miles.

(9) The Cúcuta Railway, from Villamazar on the Zulia River, near the Venezuelan

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frontier of Santander, to S. Jose de Cúcuta, 34 miles south.

(10) The Santa Marta Railway, from that port to the lagoon leading to Barranquilla, and continued on to the Rio Sevilla. Altogether 50 miles open.

(11) The Buenaventura and Cali Railway, designed to connect the former port, on the Pacific, with the Cauca valley. At present only the first 7½ miles from Buenaventura are completed and working.

(12) The railway from Puerto Berrio on the Lower Magdalena, about 100 miles below La Dorada, towards Medellin, the Antioquian capital. At present, only 43 miles have been completed from Puerto Berrio.

Before considering the railway question generally, and the possibility of linking up all or some of these detached lines into regular systems, it will be well to give a brief notice of each of them.

The Barranquilla Railway has its eastern terminus alongside the river-port from which start all the steamers plying from Barranquilla up the Magdalena, as far as La Dorada. Its western end is at Puerto Colombia, and the pier which juts out 4000 feet into the sea from that point, and which belongs, like the railway, to the Barranquilla Railway and Pier Company, Limited. The rails

are carried out to the pier-head, where there is accommodation for four ocean-going steamers to load and discharge directly from and into the waggons. There are no engineering difficulties on this short length of line, and no streams of more than a breadth of a few yards to be crossed. The traffic passing over the railway amounted to about 80,000 tons in 1904–5. The railway itself was originally constructed by a German company. The pier, of later construction, cost about £60,000. It appears to be a particularly good piece of work. It was built after the formation of the present company in 1888. The company has recently entered into a contract with the Government for carrying the mails for five years.

Of the Cartagena-Magdalena Railway a general description has already been given in Chapter III. Its engineering difficulties, though nowhere serious, are greater than those on the Barranquilla line. It has to climb up the Turbaco range, some 640 feet above its starting-point, and to descend nearly the same distance on the other side. Its bridge of piles over the Dique is of some length, and there are other bridges, all larger than the mere culverts between Puerto Colombia and Barranquilla. The distance by rail from Cartagena to Calamar is 65 miles, almost precisely the same as from Calamar to Barranquilla by river. Thus, Calamar stands at the apex of an isosceles triangle with sides of 65 miles, and a base (from Barranquilla by rail to Puerto Colombia, and thence by sea to Cartagena) of about 80 miles. Comparing the journeys up to

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the common point on the route to Bogotá, that from Puerto Colombia consists of 18 miles of rail and 66 miles of river, against the 65 miles of rail only between Cartagena and the same point on the river. Striking a balance, the Cartagena railway, in order to compete with the Barranquilla route, must carry goods and passengers over 47 miles of rail for a price no higher than the cost of 66 miles of river freight. On the other hand, owing to its community of interests with the boats running between Calamar and La Dorada, it saves the heavy agency charges which are paid at Barranquilla. The harbour works and dues at Cartagena are the property of the railway company. The company now controls thirteen boats, touching at, or starting from, Calamar.

The journey from La Dorada to Honda has also been described in an earlier chapter. Mr. Skertchley, in his report of 1891, gave a dismal account of the railway as it then was. Since then, it has been greatly improved, though the rolling-stock and engines were not of a very high class in 1904. Indeed, early in that year, one of the engines had to have two tries before it succeeded in negotiating the only heavy incline on the line. The old light rails have now been replaced by steel rails of 45 pounds to the yard, which are heavy enough to bear the traffic on a line of a gauge of 3 feet. The line has of late years been a profitable concern, except, of course, during the revolution, when everything was at a standstill.

The Dorada Railway Company has now gone

into voluntary liquidation, and the business has been transferred to the Dorada Extension Company. The latter is to carry on the line through Mariquita, in the foothills of the central range, twelve miles from Honda. Thence it will pass southwards along the foot of the hills for about twenty miles, thence to the river again at Ambalema. This will still leave a gap of more than half the stretch of river between Honda and Girardot without railway connection.

The line of the Colombian National Railway up to San Joaquin has also been described earlier. From that point it ascends rapidly, but in no place will the gradient exceed 3 in 100, though a very large proportion will reach that limit; for it has to ascend nearly 5000 feet in a distance of 38 miles, an average of nearly 2½ in 100. The progress of the line was arrested by the revolution of 1900–3, but since the beginning of 1904 it has advanced considerably, 25 miles having been completed, and the grading beyond Hospicio being partially finished for some miles farther. From Girardot to Hospicio, the point to which the line was open in May 1906, is 45 miles. Though the rise is considerable in the remaining portion of the line to Facatativá, there do not appear to be any serious engineering difficulties. No bridges of any considerable size are required, and only one short tunnel.

The ten or twelve miles of railway, starting from the left bank of the Magdalena opposite Girardot, reach only to Espinal. It is very short of rolling-stock, and is altogether very inefficient.

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It is not likely to make much progress in the hands of its present Colombian owner, and its hope lies in its being taken over by a company with more capital and enterprise.

We now come to the three railways on the plateau of Bogotá, running over a dead-level country with no difficulties of gradient, and nothing very serious in the way of bridges. The "Sabana" railway runs north-west from Bogotá to Facatativá, twenty-five miles off, at the outlet from the plateau leading to Honda by bridle-road, and to Cambao by cart-road. It has only one bridge of any importance, that over the Bogotá River, and the construction of the permanent way can have cost little. The chief cost lay in getting rolling-stock and materials up to the plateau. This railway has long been a bone of contention between the central government on the one hand, and the departmental government of Cundinamarca on the other. It would be wearisome to describe here the whole course of the negotiations between these joint claimants of the concern, and perhaps it would not redound greatly to the credit of the national government of the past. It is almost impossible to get at the true traffic and receipts of the line in past years. It has certainly been mismanaged previous to 1904, when it came under the management of a very capable Colombian, Captain J. M. Perez. It is now entirely under the control of the central government, and is operated through the agency of the Banco Central.

The Northern Railway runs from Bogotá due

north to Cipaquirá, 31 miles, and over it the greater part of the products of the salt-mines at that place pass on their way to the capital, thence to be distributed to Tolima and other places. Its engineering difficulties are perhaps less than those of the Sabana line. Of its profits it is still more difficult than with the Sabana Railway to form an estimate; for, under the management of its constructor, General Davila, no accounts were published, and the present company only took it over in May 1905. An extension to Chiquinquirá is proposed, and is stated to have already been commenced.

The Southern Railway can have cost but very little to construct, for it runs over a dead-level country, and, as it does not cross the Bogotá, there is no bridge of any importance on it. Its length is 18 miles, from Bogotá to Sibaté, a place a couple of miles beyond the Tequendama station, which is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the gorge by which the Bogotá breaks through the hills on the edge of the plateau. No information is available regarding its working in the past, but it is difficult to believe it has been profitable. Indeed, a report on the working of October 1905, published in the Government Diario Official, shows for that month a loss of £80; which, however, would be converted into a gain of £125 if a sum of £205, charged as construction, be excluded. The Government has a mortgage of £60,000 on the line, which, looking to its poor rolling-stock, must represent a large proportion of its capital value. When, with the

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linking of the plateau by rail to Girardot, and perhaps an extension towards Fusagasagá, the coffee of that district passes over the Southern Railway on to the main line, the importance of this railway will probably increase.

The Cúcuta Railway starts from the river-port of Villamazar on the river Zulia, about ten miles from the Venezuelan frontier of Santander. It runs south some thirty-four miles to San Jose, on the way to Pamplona, to which place, as well as to the Venezuelan frontier in the opposite direction, there is a scheme for its extension. In the part already constructed, there do not appear to have been any serious engineering difficulties. The railway, which is largely owned by Colombians, appears to have paid fairly, except of course in the revolution, when Santander was much disturbed. As its outlet is into Venezuelan territory, it must always be somewhat precarious, so long as it depends on the sweet will of President Castro or his successor. It would be a very desirable extension to carry it on, *vid* Pamplona, to Bucaramanga. The idea has been considered, but the section between Pamplona and Bucaramanga is one of difficult country. If this project were carried out, as well as that of a railway to the Magdalena from Bucaramanga, the department of Santander would be well furnished with communication with the Magdalena, and would no longer have to send its produce through Venezuela.

The Santa Marta line runs south, about 23 miles, to the lagoon by which there is steamer com-

munication with Barranquilla. Thence it has been opened to the Sevilla River, 42 miles south of Santa Marta, and altogether, including branch lines, 50 miles of line have been constructed, and work has now been resumed beyond Sevilla. The line is largely bound up with the United Fruit Company, and agricultural and other operations on and about the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. It has possible prospects from the development of the cattle trade with the Panama isthmus, Cuba, and the West Indies.

It is rather difficult to make out the exact condition of the Buenaventura and Cali Railway. What has been constructed appears to have been allowed to fall into disrepair, and it seems doubtful if it is workable, at present, for more than seven or eight miles from the coast. A contract has been given to Messrs. Bishop-Mason, American contractors, to repair the existing line, and to complete it, within five years, over the Western Cordilleras to Cali, and thence on to Palmira in the Cauca valley. These gentlemen have also made arrangements to survey for a continuation over the Central Cordilleras, in their highest part, to the Magdalena valley—a line in which it requires a very hopeful disposition to repose much confidence.

The line from Puerto Berrio to Medellin has been hung up for want of capital for many years, though it is very badly wanted for opening up the department of Antioquia with its great mineral wealth. Up to the present time, only about forty-three miles have been constructed from Puerto

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Berrio. It will require another eighty miles, or more, of track before Medellin is reached, but it is believed there are no serious engineering difficulties in this part. Two other projects propose to link Puerto Berrio with La Dorada up-stream, and with a point about Puerto Wilches below. This line would put Bogotá within five days' journey of Cartagena, when the Dorada line is linked up also to the Colombian National. To the capital the convenience would be great, but it seems questionable, even looking to the difficulties of navigation of the Magdalena above and below Puerto Berrio, whether a railway could compete successfully with the river between La Dorada and Puerto Wilches.

With this information before us as to railways already open or in progress, it is possible to survey generally the possibilities of linking them up, so as to form an outlet for the produce of the country to the sea, and an inlet from it for foreign imports.

Incomparably the most important connection to be made in the immediate future is that of the Colombian National Railway with the railways on the "sabana" of Bogotá. That will bring the capital, the surrounding plateau, and all the rich coffee-growing areas on the slopes into easy communication with the Upper Magdalena, and will, even whilst transhipment to a steamer at Girardot continues to be necessary, reduce very considerably, and equalize at all seasons of the year, the high freights and the uncertainty of transport between



POST OFFICE (BOGOTÁ)

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the capital and Honda. But there will still remain, between Girardot and Honda, the ninety-three miles of the Upper Magdalena, the navigation of which, and its great difficulties in dry seasons, have already been described. As matters stand, goods proceeding up to Bogotá from Honda by the upper river have first to be transferred from the railway to the steamer at Arancaplumas ; on arrival at Girardot they have to be moved again to the railway waggons ; at Hospicio, they have to be loaded on mules for transport to Madrid on the Sabana railway, where they are once again put into railway waggons for the sixteen miles into Bogotá. The last two transfers will disappear the moment the railway is open to the plateau. The first two can only be avoided by bridging the Magdalena at Girardot, and connecting up the Colombian National and La Dorada railways by a line along the Magdalena. It may be said that, with reference to the general cheapness of water carriage, this will add to freight ; but it must be remembered how difficult, and even dangerous, is the navigation of this part of the river, and that transfers between railway and boat cost a great deal. The elimination of these expenses and risks, not to speak of delays, should go far to enable the railway to compete successfully with water carriage. It must be remembered, too, that about eighty tons is the limit of the carrying powers of the steamers which can navigate between Honda and Girardot. A single train could easily carry that amount in a few hours, against the steamer's much longer period. Hitherto, a great portion of the traffic between the

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plateau and the river has been carried by mules plying on the difficult and dangerous road *viâ* Guaduas and Villeta. In the rainy season the road is almost impassable, and freights are prohibitive, ruling as high as £10 a ton for the journey between Facatativá and Honda, which, at the best of times, occupies five or six days. During these days the mules have to be loaded and unloaded at least once, and generally twice, each day. The loads carried are limited in size and weight, and are exposed to constant risk of breakage or damage from water. The linking up by rail of Bogotá and Girardot must infallibly kill this traffic and drive the mule-owners to other roads, in Tolima for instance, where they are badly wanted to feed the railway and the steamers of the Upper Magdalena.

The cart-road from Cambao to Facatativá would cost a large sum to put in proper order and to maintain, and would be a slow and difficult line of communication at the best. Now that railway communication between Girardot and the plateau is assured at an early date, the Government will certainly not be well advised in spending money on the cart-road. It has none too much for the many more profitable objects for its expenditure.

It would seem, therefore, most desirable that direct railway communication should be opened between Bogotá and Honda *viâ* Girardot, with a railway bridge over the Magdalena, which would not be a very serious undertaking, either at Girardot or in the gorge a few miles below it. The project for extending the Dorada line *viâ* Mariquita only as far

as Ambalema will leave the terminus of that line in the air. If the gap between Ambalema and Girardot were filled, there would be good hopes of taking the traffic now going by the upper river. The worst difficulty in the upper river, the Colombaima rapid, is just above Ambalema. When that has to be surmounted, owing to the absence of a railway, it is hardly likely that transhipment would take place at Ambalema, below which there is only one real difficulty in the sandbanks a few miles north of Cambao. The scheme for running a railway down the Magdalena from Dorada to Puerto Berrio, and perhaps on to Puerto Wilches, has already been noticed. However much the Bogotá people might like to have it, this scheme would require very careful consideration as to the possibility of profit.

Before going further into the question of transverse communication from east to west, it is desirable to allude briefly to the scheme for an American inter-continental railway resembling, in its length and in the wild countries it would traverse, the Cape to Cairo line. In England one rarely hears this project mentioned, but in America there are many volumes of surveys and explorations in connection with it.

General Reyes, in the paper which he read to the second Pan-American Congress at Mexico in 1901–2, gives some general figures regarding it, as well as a sketch map of its route. Here are the lengths of it in the various states it is proposed to pass through :—

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State.	Section.	Miles.
1. U.S.A. . .	New York to Laredo . . .	2,094
2. Mexico . .	Laredo to Ajutila	1,644
3. Guatemala .	Ajutila to Hachadura . . .	170
4. Salvador . .	Hachadura to Rio Guscoran .	230
5. Honduras .	Rio Guscoran to Rio Negro .	71
6. Nicaragua .	Rio Negro to Peña Blanca . .	209
7. Costa Rica .	Peña Blanca to Rio Golfito .	360
8. Panama and Colombia	Rio Golfito to Rio Carchi . .	1,354
9. Ecuador . .	Rio Carchi to Rio Canchus .	658
10. Peru . . .	Rio Canchus to Desaguadero .	1,785
11. Bolivia . .	Desaguadero to Quiaca . . .	587
12. Argentina .	Quiaca to Buenos Aires . . .	1,061
		10,213

Of this length of main line, 4772 miles were in existence at the time of General Reyes' paper—that is, practically from New York to the frontier between Costa Rica and Panama.

In addition to the main line there would, according to definite proposals, be a branch joining Cartagena to the main line in the Cauca valley, and another, from Quiaca in Bolivia, to Lima and Valparaiso. Moreover, another branch is suggested running from the Cauca valley north-east through Medellin, across the Magdalena to Merida in Venezuela, and so to Caracas.

Is it credible that this immense project can ever be carried through, as a whole, with any prospect of paying? It seems permissible to doubt; for though there are lengths here and there which, no doubt, would tap rich countries, such as the open part of the Cauca valley, yet, on the other hand, there is

little or nothing in others to repay the great expenditure entailed by engineering difficulties. Such, for instance, are the mountainous regions in the south of Colombia. Everywhere the line would be running parallel to the Pacific, and it would seem that the tendency of all traffic must necessarily be to branch off at right angles to seek the cheaper mode of conveyance. Take, again, as an instance, the Cauca valley. Goods would, no doubt, be sent by rail from either end towards the point at which it was tapped by a branch line to Buenaventura. There they would leave the main line to seek the sea. With the Panama Canal open, hardly anything would go through the gorges of the lower Cauca; nor would much go southwards to Quito, and what might do so would infallibly branch off there by the line to the port of Guayaquil. On the branch from the Cauca to Caracas, goods would be intercepted by the cheaper lines of the Magdalena and the Cauca itself. It is hardly possible to suppose that the activity on the better, and generally easier, parts would yield a profit sufficient to counterbalance the loss on the barren and more difficult sections. If it were ever constructed as a whole, Colombia would benefit by it, provided she had no share in the expense of construction; but it is difficult to avoid the conviction that she would be very rash to involve herself in expenditure on it.

It may be at once admitted that, if it were feasible, it would be better for Colombia to have a direct line from Girardot, or Honda, over the central range to the Cauca valley, and thence on,

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by Cali over the western range, to Buenaventura. But the more one considers the immensity of the central range in this its highest part, the elevation, and the difficulty of the few passes which traverse it, the more apparent becomes the arduous nature of the task of running a railway over it, and the greatness of the cost, if it is practicable at all. A line run thus would measure some 300 miles from Bogotá to Buenaventura, and would pass through a large area of mountainous country of doubtful productiveness, even in minerals. If the communication were by Puerto Berrio and Medellin, it would no doubt be at least 200 miles longer; but then it would be, from start to finish, through a country rich from an agricultural point of view in some parts, in minerals in other parts, and in some rich in both respects. There seems, therefore, good reason on every ground for pressing on the line from Puerto Berrio *viâ* Medellin to the Cauca. Señor Cisneros had some surveys made, about 1878, for the continuation from Medellin to the Cauca, and they certainly showed considerable difficulties, though probably many of the heavy gradients proposed by him could be avoided by a little more development. The highest point on the line, according to Señor Cisneros, would be only 6000 feet, whilst it is improbable that any line across the Tolima range could be made to cross at a lower altitude than 11,500 feet. The construction of a through line in this direction would be the best justification for linking up Puerto Berrio and La Dorada by rail. But we believe that, for many years to come, it will be

better to leave the upper Cauca valley to find its outlet to the Pacific only.

East of the Magdalena there is an opening for a railway connecting Bucaramanga and its rich neighbourhood with the river, from which it is now so much cut off. The railway, which was actually commenced many years ago from Puerto Wilches to Bucaramanga, has been overgrown by the dense forest in which it is hidden. The project will no doubt be revived later, though it is perhaps not so urgent as the Medellin line.

The Barranquilla and Cartagena-Magdalena lines have probably played their parts, and are not capable of profitable extension. Indeed, the very existence of the former must always be imperilled by the possibility of the silting up of Savanilla harbour.

The Santa Marta railway has the right of extension to the Magdalena somewhere about Banco, but it seems very doubtful whether that extension is likely to be profitable. The line could hardly hope to draw much of the traffic which now joins or leaves the Magdalena at Calamar and Barranquilla. Santa Marta is a port very inferior to Cartagena, and not much better, perhaps, than Savanilla. There are no serious difficulties in the navigation of the river below Banco, and there would be a much greater length of line between that place and Santa Marta than even between Calamar and Cartagena. Nor does the country through which it would pass offer any considerable prospects of traffic south of the point where it

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leaves the fertile slopes of the Santa Marta mountains.

As for the Cartagena to Calamar railway, it seems impossible to suggest any profitable extension of it; its prosperity must depend on the success of the efforts being made to revive the ancient glories of Cartagena. In the magnificent harbour at that place it has a distinct advantage over the Barranquilla railway, with its somewhat doubtful roadstead at Savanilla. On the other hand, the latter has the advantage of a land transit less than one-third of that between Calamar and Cartagena. There is, however, to be considered the fact that from Calamar to Savanilla, *viâ* Barranquilla, means about 66 miles of water plus 18 miles of rail, against 65 miles of rail between Calamar and Cartagena.

Of the three railways on the Bogotá plateau, that of the "Sabana" finds its outlet by junction with the Colombian National Railway. For the Southern Railway there are possibilities of extension towards the rich coffee-lands of Fusagasaga; and, in any case, when the plateau is joined to the Magdalena, its importance as a feeder of that line will certainly grow. The same remark applies to the Northern Railway, over which there will assuredly be a largely increased traffic in salt from Cipaquirá for Tolima, and the rest of the Magdalena valley.

There have been schemes for the extension of this railway northwards to the Magdalena about Puerto Wilches. Whether that would pay

and whether a better outlet would not be found towards the Cúcuta railway, are points on which considerable doubt may be felt. Of the Tolima line we have already spoken almost sufficiently. In the rather improbable event of a railway being carried over the central range in this latitude, the Tolima railway from Espinal to Girardot might form a link in the chain between the Pacific and Bogotá.

That all or any of these railways will be constructed entirely with Colombian capital is in the highest degree improbable. The Colombian investor either prefers, at present, to have his money in countries where there is greater security of government, or, if he invests in his own country, he demands, as compensation for doubtful security, a much higher rate of interest than is procurable in Europe, or can be expected from most railways. The large proportion of private Colombian capital in the Cúcuta railway is exceptional. The necessity for European and American capital for the construction of railways is recognised by no one more fully than by President Reyes, and no one is more alive than he to the conditions which have so far kept it out of the country. His idea is to abandon the present system of large subventions, and to substitute a Government guarantee of interest on capital employed. The possibility of realizing this laudable and desirable aspiration must depend entirely on the extent to which the President succeeds in overcoming the distrust of promises which has arisen under preceding Governments.

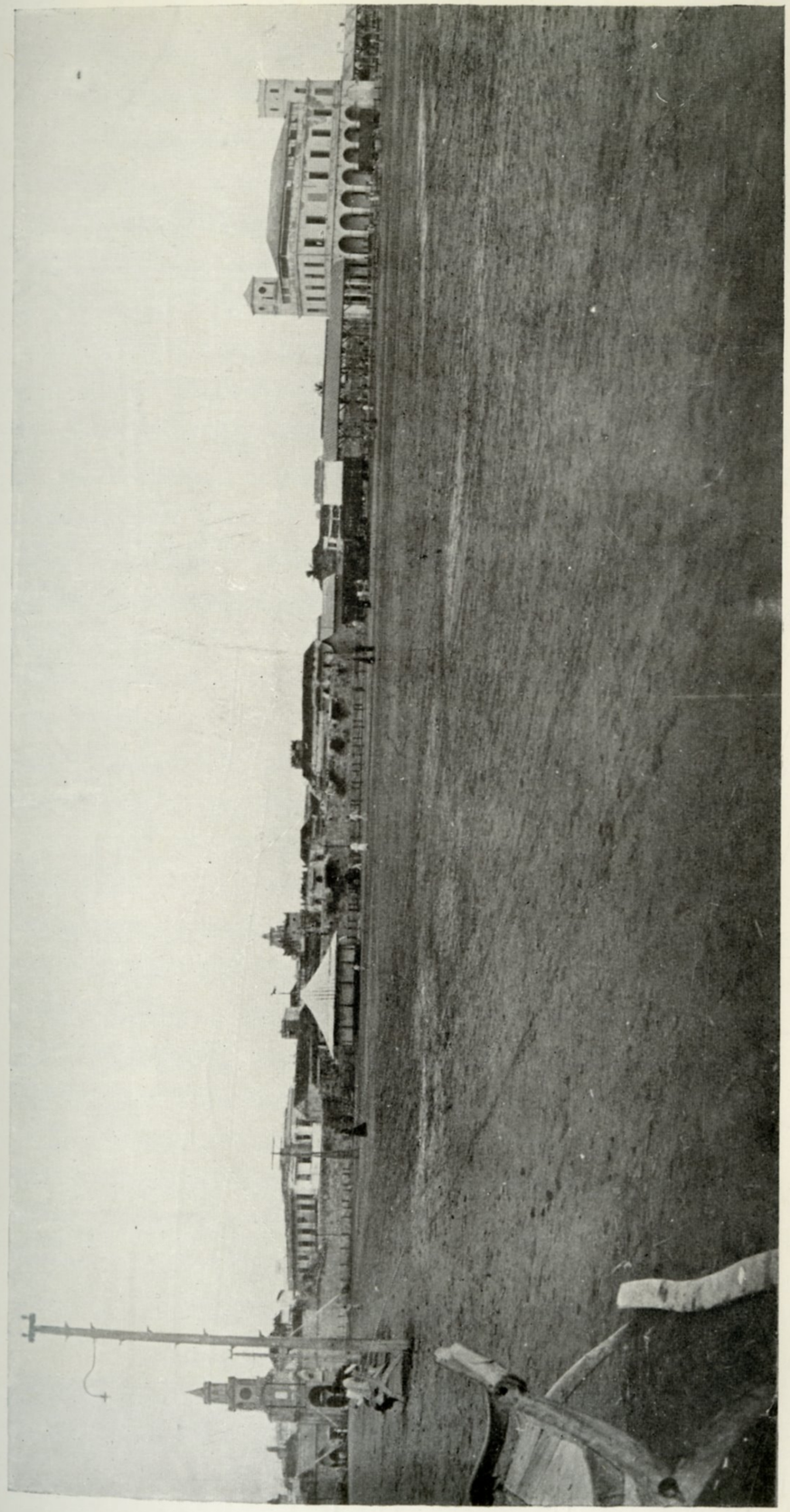
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In a message to the National Assembly in December 1905, President Reyes has described the various schemes which he has mooted for railway extension beyond those actually in being. Some of them are projects which are hardly likely to be taken up at all, or, if they are so, to pay. In other cases it is doubtful if money will be forthcoming for them in their entirety—at any rate in the near future. One of these is the linking up of the Northern Railway with a projected revival of the Puerto Wilches-Bucaramanga line. This latter section should do well, but it seems more doubtful if the portion Bucaramanga-Bogotá would pay. Two suggested railways in the Goajira peninsula do not sound very promising.

Other proposals were for a line from La Dorada along the left bank of the Magdalena to Puerto Berrio, and thence on to a point opposite the mouth of the Carare, some thirty miles north. We have already discussed that question.

The project of a railway over the central range in its highest part has also already been dealt with. That of a line from Pasto to the Pacific seems still more unpromising. Another suggestion of a line from the Gulf of Darien (Urabá) to Medellin is hardly likely to prove profitable, looking to the probable costs of its southern portion, and to the fact that it would be parallel to the waterway of the Atrato. The same may be said of one from Rio Hacha to Bucaramanga.

In so far as the programme contemplates the rapid construction of lines such as the continuation



CARTAGENA (GATE AND RAILWAY STATION)

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of the Puerto Berrio line to Medellin, of the Buenaventura-Cauca line, and a few others, it appears to be a wise one. But other lines, such as we have noted above, can hardly be taken up, at present, unless with a view of gambling in their stocks. Any such projects, ending in heavy loss, could not but be disastrous to Colombia, as bringing general discredit on her railways and frightening capital away from her. For the sake of the country it is to be hoped that these wild schemes will not be launched on the market. However much the State may require railways, it would be unwise to attempt to go too fast. What is wanted is concentration of effort on the best lines.

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CHAPTER X

COLOMBIA'S MINERAL WEALTH

It is to the mineral wealth buried in the flanks of her mountains, or washed down from them into the alluvial sands of her great rivers and her mountain torrents, that Colombia must still probably look in the twentieth century for her prosperity, as she has looked in the past for nearly four centuries. That the country was ever conquered or colonized by Spaniards was not due to the necessity of finding a resting-place for the surplus population of an overpeopled area. Nor was it due to a desire on the part of the European to start life afresh in such homely pursuits as agriculture, in a land where fertility of soil was greater than at home. With some of the nobler adventurers, the excitement of military exploits in an unknown country may have operated to some extent; but even with them, and certainly with the vast majority of their followers, the object ever before their greedy eyes was gold. The riches of the new continent, great as they were, were magnified many times in the stories brought home by the first successful adventurers, and probably few set out on the dreaded voyage across the Atlantic, in ships which nowadays no one would dream of sending on such a journey, without the

hope that they would return, in a few years at most, with riches beyond the wildest possibility of their native land. The legend of El Dorado was no myth in the strict sense of the phrase; for the "gilded man" was discovered, comparatively early in the day, when Quesada reached Bogotá, in 1538, and subdued the Chibchas, whose ruler elect literally corresponded to the description during his formal installation as heir-apparent. But the legend assumed other forms, leading many to a miserable death in the forests of the plains, where there was ever a search for a mythical golden city.

It was the custom for the succession to the Chibcha throne to pass from the reigning sovereign to that one of his nephews who was deemed most worthy, and who was able to pass most successfully through the years of probation which were imposed on the selected candidates. After several years of trial, of penance, and of self-abnegation, years spent in caves and solitudes, without ever gazing upon the sun, the chosen prince was brought forth to be, as it were, anointed as the successor to the throne. The scene of the ceremony was the little circular lake of Guatavita, some thirty miles north-east of Bogotá. All around its shores were assembled his future subjects, each carrying his offering of gold or precious stones to be thrown into the lake as a votive offering to the gods. A raft was moored at the side, piled with gold and emeralds. The Prince, smeared with a resinous substance, and powdered all over with gold dust till his body

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gleamed in the sunlight like a golden statue, stepped on to the raft, accompanied by the nobles who acted as his sponsors, and was rowed out to the centre of the lake. There, amid the plaudits of the surrounding people, the precious burden of gold and emeralds was thrown into the lake, for the placation of the gods. From all sides a shower of gold was thrown into the water by the populace, and the chosen heir returned from his voyage as the Zipa designate, to await the time for his assumption of the vacant throne.

Small wonder that this little lake, on which presumably this ceremony had been enacted during many centuries, should have been looked upon by the gold-seeking conquerors as a ready-made gold-mine, from which it was only necessary to drain the water in order to recover its priceless treasure. But their capacity as engineers was not great, and, though many attempts were made in Spanish times, and even after the War of Independence, it is only quite recently that an English company has successfully drained the lake. Whether the shareholders will be rewarded by the discovery, in the mud at the bottom, of the hoped-for riches, remains to be seen. The whole story of the initiation of the Zipa elect may only be an invention, for there are other versions of how the treasures were thrown into the lake, and some of the old chroniclers were not wanting in imagination.

Another source of a similar nature, from which the Spaniards hoped to obtain much of the harvest of gold which had been garnered by the ancient

inhabitants, lay in the tombs and burial-grounds scattered all over the country, and containing treasures buried with their owners. The amount recovered by the desecration of these places was by no means inconsiderable. For instance, Don Pedro de Heredia, the founder of Cartagena, set out in 1534 in quest of El Dorado. He did not succeed in his main object, but he was fortunate enough to come across the great necropolis of Sinu, near the river of that name. When the ransacking of the graves was completed there were collected, it is said, no less than £100,000, mainly in gold ornaments and idols, which, after deduction of the fifth part claimed by the King of Spain, left £80,000 for the fortunate finders. For more than three and a half centuries, stories of this description have sufficed to attract searchers, and, even in our own time, the relics recovered from graves, often of far greater value as antiquities than as mere gold, have been considerable. Only a few years ago, two Indian cemeteries were discovered, the graves of which yielded up precious ornaments, figures of animals, and household utensils of pure gold, some pieces weighing as much as two, or even three, pounds. There is a regular class of "guaqueros" in Antioquia, nomadic in their habits, who make a profession of the search for "guacas," as these Indian graves are called. It is said that long practice and experience have endowed them with a special knowledge which enables them to detect the existence of a grave, however well concealed, and, long before they have reached the remains, to

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diagnose the rank, the wealth, and even the sex of the occupant. These skilled resurrectionists can soon tell whether the grave was ever worth robbing, and, moreover, can say for certain, at an early stage of their digging, whether it has already been disturbed by earlier searchers, and whether those searchers were Indians or Spaniards. This sounds like an exaggeration, until it is remembered that, in order to provide against discovery, the Indians, in replacing the earth taken from the grave, were careful to lay each layer of soil in the order in which it had been taken out, so that those in the grave corresponded in colour and texture with the stratification of the surrounding soil. Even when the human remains are reached the search is not at an end, for the treasure is sometimes buried deep below the body.

There are many picturesque details and stories recorded in the pages of the old Spanish chroniclers, some perhaps wholly true, others fabulous, and yet others merely exaggerations founded on a slight basis of fact. They, at least, however much they may require to be discounted, suffice to show that the ancient inhabitants were just as much alive as those of other countries to the value of the precious metals. Their frequency no doubt rendered their value small, comparatively speaking, and consequently they were applied to what we should consider base uses, and were given in large quantities in exchange for such common things as salt, the rarity of which to the Indians enhanced their price in gold. These legends, and the frequency

of the possession of precious metals, showed that, even with their primitive methods, the uncivilized inhabitants had garnered a great harvest of gold.

But, if the mineral wealth of Colombia depended on such stores only, it would not have sent to Europe, or filled the purses of the "conquistadores" with, the great sums which, beyond doubt, it has yielded up since the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

There have been many attempts to calculate the yield of Colombia in the precious metals, since its conquest by the Spaniards. Naturally it is not to be supposed that any of these can pretend to absolute accuracy, founded as they are on old records which are, perhaps, exact enough as regards the quantities to which they refer, but cannot indicate the large amounts discovered by individuals and concealed, so as to avoid payment of the royal fifth. For this reason, it seems probable that the estimates are under, rather than over the mark.

Humboldt and Chevalier calculated the proceeds of the gold-mines at £71,200,000 up to 1845. The German Professor Soetbeer estimates £169,422,750. The latest authority is Señor Vicente Restrepo, a Colombian of great industry, added to a large practical acquaintance with mining operations, and a thorough knowledge of his own country, especially of Antioquia, the richest in metals of all the departments, except perhaps Cauca. From his excellent "Study of the Gold and Silver Mines of Colombia," most of the facts in this chapter are derived. Not content with his

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own opportunities of observation, he freely quotes the opinions of other experts, native and foreign, who have had special opportunities for observation. Señor Restrepo, having before him documents not available to the earlier calculators, considers the estimate of Humboldt and Chevalier too low, whilst Soetbeer's is too high. Taking a middle course, he believes the total production of the mines of what is now Colombia and Panama to have been £127,800,000 in gold, and £6,600,000 in silver. Descending to details of departments, and excluding Panama, he gives the following as the total outturns, up to 1886, of gold and silver:—

Antioquia	£50,000,000
Cauca	49,800,000
Tolima	10,800,000
Santander	3,000,000
Bolivar	1,400,000
Cundinamarca	360,000
Magdalena	200,000
Boyaca	40,000
	£115,600,000

Of the gold, considerably over three-fourths was the produce of alluvial deposits, and the rest of auriferous veins.

Comparing the figures just given with the map of Colombia, it is at once apparent that the immense majority of the production must have come from districts west of the Magdalena, and that the Eastern Cordilleras have yielded, comparatively speaking, a very poor share. It is added that the richest districts of Cauca are those of Barbacoas and

Chocó, and that the latter alone produced, after the sixteenth century, more gold than the whole of the rest of Cauca. The map shows that both Barbacoas and Chocó lie on the Pacific slopes of the Western Cordilleras. From these facts the obvious inference is that that range is naturally the richest of the three, especially when it is remembered that an unhealthy climate, and consequent labour difficulties, have all along handicapped the production of Chocó and Barbacoas. Antioquia's mines are partly to the east and partly to the west of the dividing line of the Cauca, and their immense productiveness goes to show that the central range becomes richer as it runs north, beyond the volcanic area of Tolima. South of Antioquia it has not, as yet, been proved to have the same widespread wealth as it has in that province. It would, however, be rash to assume that it is poorer in this part, for it may well be that it contains resources as yet undiscovered. Of the comparative poverty of the eastern range, and of the immense wealth of the western, however, there seems little doubt, as will be shown presently.

The distribution, during three and a half centuries, of the gold production of Colombia and Panama is estimated thus:—

16th century		£10,600,000
17th	„	£34,600,000
18th	„	£41,000,000
19th	„ (up to 1886)	£41,600,000
		£127,800,000

In dealing with the resources of the several

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departments it will be well to commence with Antioquia, which not only has produced, according to the estimate, most gold in the past, but which also, perhaps, offers the best prospects of all for future development. Over Cauca it has the advantage of a good climate at some of its richest centres, as opposed to the pestilential atmosphere of Cauca's most prolific areas, Barbacoas and Chocó. Both of these latter are easily accessible, lying as they do close to the Pacific coast; but their climate, and other considerations, to be mentioned later, militate against them almost as much as the mountainous inaccessibility of Antioquia.

The Antioquian capital, Medellin, stands on the river of that name, which farther north becomes the Porce. The Porce joins the Nechi, which for many miles has run in a parallel valley, and the united stream becomes the principal tributary, on the right bank, of the Cauca, which it reaches beyond the northern limits of the mountains. Up to and beyond this point, the Cauca is navigable for steamers, which can get up the Nechi itself as far as Zaragoza, fifty miles from the junction with the Cauca.

All along the course of the Nechi and the Porce alluvial deposits of gold abound. They are to be found in every tributary torrent of both rivers, and the veins from which their wealth is derived score the sides of their valleys in innumerable places. Santa Rosa is described as built on a "mountain of gold" above the headwaters of the Nechi, and Yarumal, Campamento, Anori, and

Zea are among the most famous gold districts of the left bank. Lower down are Cruces and Zaragoza, both well known. Amalfi stands above the right bank of the Porce. Farther east, on the Magdalena side of the watershed, is Remedios, in the very streets of which gold veins are said to crop out, and with much alluvial gold in its streams. To the south of Medellin, on the eastern bank of the Cauca, is the district about Titiribi, Amagá, Arma, and Zancudo, where the pyritic ore produces abundant silver, with some 7 per cent. admixture of gold.

On the western bank of the Cauca, a short way below the town of Antioquia, is the mountain of Buriticá, with an immense reputation for the richness of its somewhat thin veins of auriferous rock. Here want of water seems to have been a difficulty, for there is a tradition that, towards the end of the sixteenth century, a lady, Dona Maria del Centeno, succeeded, at great expense, in conducting a stream to the top of the hill, and, by its aid, making a fortune. A century later, the mines had been abandoned, and, presumably, the worthy lady's engineering works, if they ever existed, had fallen into disrepair. Frontino, another mining centre, lies west of Buriticá, on the slope which falls from the watershed of the Western Cordilleras towards the Atrato.

Thus there may be said to be, in the department of Antioquia, three great gold-producing districts:—

(1) That of the north, including the valleys of the Porce and the Nechi, and the great alluvial

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deposits resulting from them about Zaragoza and Cruces; also Remedios, on the eastern side of the watershed.

(2) That of the south, where silver is plentiful, including Titiribi, Zancudo, and Arma.

(3) That of the west, including Buriticá and Frontino.

The proposed railway from Puerto Berrio to Medellin would serve the first, and pass close to Santa Rosa. If it were extended to the Cauca valley, it would pass close by the second district. During the Spanish dominion great sums were recovered from many of these sources. The town of Zaragoza was founded by Gaspar de Rodas in 1581, on the strength of the richness of the lower Nechi in gold, and the mines there are said to have produced £1,200,000 in eighteen years. The same amount was got from the placers of Remedios in twenty-six years. The War of Independence naturally checked the mining industry in Antioquia as elsewhere, but it revived about 1826, when stamp mills were first employed at Santa Rosa and other places. The Santa Ana mine, near Anori, proved especially productive.

After 1850, the mining industry received a fresh impulse from the erection, by an Englishman, of smelting works, with the object of dealing with the auriferous and argentiferous ores of Titiribi and Zancudo. That enterprise failed, but a second attempt, under the management of a Colombian, became the most important enterprise in the department, turning out each month some £8000 worth

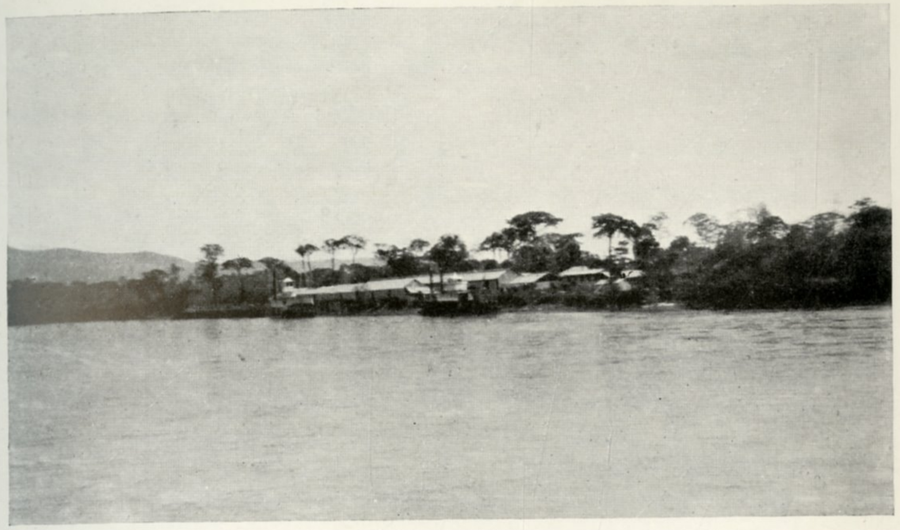
of silver, containing 7 per cent. of gold. The Frontino and Bolivia Company, Limited, an English company, began in 1852 to work at Frontino and in the neighbourhood of Remedios. After a period of bad management, it succeeded under the management of Mr. R. B. White, who has written a good deal about Colombia and its mines. From a recent report of this company, it appears that its chief difficulties hitherto have been in draining the mines, and in finding motive-power. Progress in the northern district was continuous; a good many improvements were introduced in methods of working, and in those of conveying ore to the mills by trams, or by wire cables, where precipices intervened. Hydraulic monitors were also employed, to some extent, in treating the alluvial beds.

The Santa Isabel mines in the north-east of Antioquia, long worked by Colombians, have now been acquired by an English company, the Santa Isabel United Gold Mines, Limited. These mines have hitherto been unsystematically worked so long as operations below a trifling depth were unnecessary. Even so, they yielded great quantities of gold from the oxidised portions of the reefs. The new company, utilising the power of streams, is introducing modern electrical plant and sinking shafts. There are three reefs, from 3 to 5 feet wide, which are expected to yield 2 oz. per ton. Señor Restrepo strongly advocates the use of dredges for the auriferous sands of the rivers, but, judging from a report, to be noticed presently, regarding a similar proposal for the Saldanha river

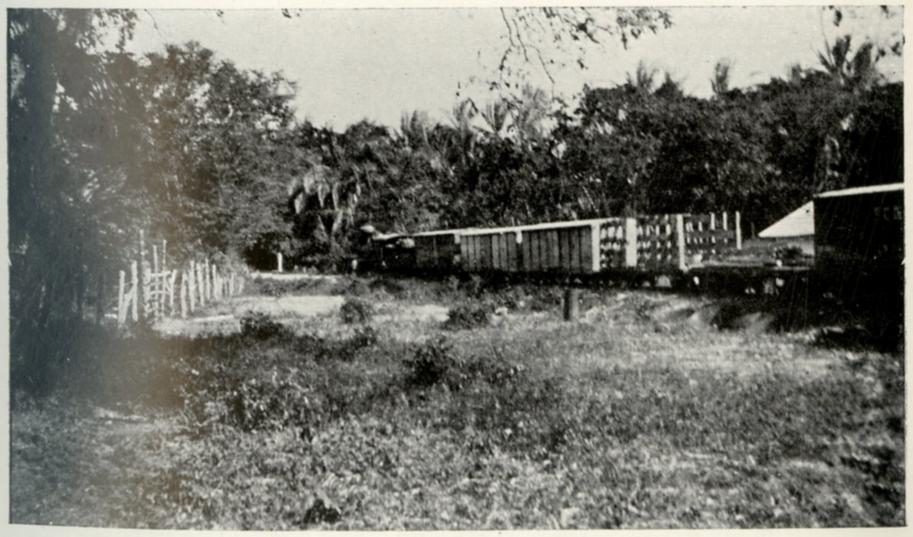
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in Tolima, it would be wise to go cautiously in this matter.

At Medellin a mint was started in 1862, which, up to 1887, struck some £840,000 in gold, and £490,000 in silver coin. A laboratory for assaying the precious metals was established there by members of the Restrepo family in 1858, and two more in 1880 and 1881. A refinery, using the method of electrolysis, was also founded, in 1885, by another Restrepo. The continued success of Antioquia as a producer of gold and silver, and the fact that its yield in the nineteenth century was nearly ten millions sterling greater than that of Cauca, are to be traced to other causes than mere excess of richness in mineral-bearing strata, for probably Cauca is first in this respect. One great cause of Antioquia's forging ahead in the race certainly lies in its population. To begin upon, it contains a greater proportion of the white race than any other department. Its rugged contours, the natural sterility of its soil for agricultural purposes, the consequent insufficiency of food produced within its territory, together with the richness of its rocks in minerals, have all combined to turn a race, naturally hardy and enjoying a good climate, to the pursuit of the trade of miners. Not that they are all by any means miners from year's end to year's end. The search for gold often serves to fill up the spare time when crops are ripening, and it is as well to turn an honest penny by gold-washing. These casual miners are the "mazamorreros," the free-lances



LA DORADA



ON THE DORADA RAILWAY

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of the mining industry, who owe allegiance to no rich mine-owner. The working staffs of the mines, however, even in the early Spanish times, were made up, not of Indian or negro slaves mainly, but rather of white men, working as free labourers. When, in 1729, the compulsory employment of Indians was prohibited, the blow to the Antioquia mines, in which they were less extensively employed than elsewhere, was not crushing, and in many places the Indians, having experienced better treatment than in other provinces, were often willing to continue to work. The case was similar in 1851, when the final abolition of slavery inflicted a deathblow on such districts as Chocó, which had hitherto depended entirely for their labour on negro slaves. The Antioquian, born and bred in a comparatively temperate climate, was naturally loth to work in the hotter parts, such as the Zaragoza and Cruces alluvial deposits, where apparently greater dependence had to be placed on Indian or negro labour. The white population flourished and worked best in the upper valleys of the Nechi and the Porce. Every authority concurs in speaking of the Antioquian population as the best in Colombia, and their enterprise is shown, not only by individual energy in wresting from the soil its precious produce, but also by the activity of men, such as the Restrepos, to whom are due the assaying and similar institutions at Medellin, which in this respect is unique in Colombia. The people have, too, shown a commendable and intelligent readiness to adopt, when they had

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the chance, improved machinery and methods of mining.

From Antioquia we pass to Cauca, the department which, since the conquest, has produced the second largest quantity of the precious metals, a quantity in total amount hardly short of that given by Antioquia. When, however, the distribution in time of this production is considered, there is a very marked difference. Here are the figures:—

	Antioquia.	Cauca.
Sixteenth century . .	£2,000,000	£5,000,000
Seventeenth ,, . .	10,000,000	11,400,000
Eighteenth ,, . .	12,800,000	18,000,000
Nineteenth ,, (to 1886) .	25,200,000	15,400,000

From these it appears that, whilst Antioquia was far behind Cauca in its production during the second and third periods, it bounded far to the front in the fourth. The causes which enabled it to go on steadily all through have already been explained. As will appear presently, the decrees against slavery in 1729, and still more in 1851, had a disastrous effect on Cauca, whilst they affected Antioquia to a comparatively trifling extent.

It is with the western part of the Cauca department, lying between the Pacific and the Central Cordilleras, that it is alone necessary to deal as a gold-producing area; for the present, at any rate, the far greater portion to the east is not worth practical consideration in this respect. The western

part may, as a producer of gold, be divided into three portions: (1) The Chocó district in the north-west, embracing the valleys of the San Juan and the Atrato, and lying entirely on the western slopes of the Western Cordilleras. (2) The district of Barbacoas in the south-west, also lying between the mountains and the Pacific, and including the valley of the Patia, below the point where that river breaks the western range. (3) The Cauca valley, the eastern slope of the outer range, and the western of the central range. As fields of production of the precious metals, the districts of Chocó and Barbacaos stand first in reputation. On the other hand, both enjoy the same evil reputation in respect of climate and unhealthiness. Though Chocó was known so early as 1513 to Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, its inhabitants were so fierce and intractable that the Spaniards were unable till long afterwards to subdue them. It was only in 1654 that Jesuit missions were established there, and the alluvial deposits, abounding in gold and platinum, began to be worked. In the sixteenth century Chocó yielded nothing, whilst the rest of the department was credited with £5,000,000. In the seventeenth century, though, as noted above, the mines of Chocó were only worked for less than half the period, they produced £4,000,000, against £7,400,000 in the rest of Cauca. In the eighteenth, notwithstanding the decree of 1729 emancipating the Indians, the production rose to £10,200,000, whilst that of other parts of Cauca remained practically stationary. In

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the nineteenth, it retrograded £2,000,000, mainly owing to the liberation of the negro slaves in 1851, and of course, as elsewhere, to the check imposed by the revolt against Spain.

Of the abounding riches of the auriferous deposits of Chocó there has been but one opinion amongst the experts who have visited this unhealthy, but by no means inaccessible, district. It is not inaccessible, because the San Juan is navigable from the Pacific for 140 miles, whilst, on the other side, the Atrato, even so far up as Quibdo, is a large navigable river.

Of the many opinions which could be quoted, we select some reports by Mr. R. B. White, at one time superintendent of the Frontino and Bolivia Mining Company, who had much experience, both as a mining and as a railway engineer, on the Pacific coast of Colombia. He says: "The western chain of the Andes, where the rivers San Juan and Sipi take their rise, is highly auriferous. Gold-bearing quartz lodes of all ages traverse the mountains and their spurs, in a profusion perhaps unrivalled in any other part of the world." After describing the geological structure of the range, the manner in which it was probably upheaved at the close of the cretaceous age, and the action of the rivers and torrents constantly carrying down gold from the upland strata to the San Juan, he goes on: "Of the area drained by the river San Juan, down to its junction with the Sipi, at least 600 square miles are covered with alluvium. . . . Of the riches of these alluviums it is almost superfluous for me to speak.

Millions upon millions of pounds sterling in gold have been obtained from them since the time of the Spanish conquest of America. I have, however, satisfied myself that, as a rule, the gravels contain from one to two ounces of gold per cubic yard. The great conglomerates or cement beds which have been left by the Spaniards, as being too hard to work, contain an ounce of gold per ton of stuff." Humboldt had already written: "The richest river is the Andágueda. All the country between the Andágueda, the San Juan, the Tamaná, and the San Augustin is auriferous. The largest nugget which has been found in Chocó weighed 25 lbs." Speaking of the upper Atrato valley, north of the ridge which divides it from the San Juan, he said: "The placers of the north, and those of the district of Citará, produce a finer gold than that of the southern district of Nóvita." To return to Mr. White's report of 1883, he says: "I know of no rivers in any country of the world besides Colombia where such remarkable conditions exist to make them rich in gold. . . . In the neighbouring state of Antioquia, where river-bed working is very general, we find that, although the conditions for the deposition of gold are far less favourable than they are in Chocó, an average produce of 8 ounces of gold to the square yard of channel is not an uncommon result. So that 20,000,000 square yards of river channel in the Chocó might contain 160,000,000 ounces of gold, without exceeding the average found, under less favourable conditions, in Antioquia."

All these quotations apply to alluvial mining

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only; for the Spaniards and their successors have made few attempts, so far, to attack the sources from which these stores of gold are constantly being washed down to the low and unhealthy country. Perhaps, in doing so, may be founded a partial solution of the difficulty; but the supply of food is another obstacle, for, though the country is fertile naturally, it is too thinly populated, and too little cultivated at present, to have a margin for the sustenance of a mining population.

That the Spaniards were able to work the river-beds as they did was largely owing to the employment of negroes and of Indians. The great bulk of the Chocó miners were negroes, and when these were finally emancipated in 1851, it was hopeless to expect them to go on working under a free-labour system. The negro, in South America as in the Soudan, may be depended on to do no more work than he is obliged to, whether by violence or in order to support himself. Consequently, though gold is washed both in the valley of the San Juan and in that of the Atrato, there is no systematic working of the mines. The miners are negroes, who work on the system of sharing profits equally with the owners, but their natural laziness results in only three days' work out of the seven.

Señor Restrepo avers that what has been said of the rivers of Chocó is equally applicable to all those which descend from the Western Cordilleras to the Pacific, in the whole extent of the coast between the San Juan and the Mira, in the south-west corner of Colombia.

It is in this latter direction that the district of Barbacoas lies, in front of the great gorge through which the Patia breaks its way to the ocean. The town of Barbacoas was founded by Francisco de Parada, who in 1600 conquered this territory. The annual production of the Barbacoas mines was about 700 lbs. of gold towards the end of the seventeenth century. The President has recently granted a concession for the exploitation of the auriferous sands of the Rio Patia.

Inside the line of the Western Cordilleras, on the slopes above the Cauca, both of this and of the central range, there are many valuable mines, both alluvial and lode. The mint founded at Popayan in 1749 is stated to have coined £5,800,000 in gold from these sources. The Marmato group of mines, on the left bank of the Cauca, close to the border of Antioquia, was first worked early in the seventeenth century; and the mines of Supia, in the same neighbourhood, were discovered in 1789, but though said to be very rich, they were inefficiently worked, through lack of mining knowledge and machinery. The Marmato mines were worked by an English company after 1824, and, especially the mines of Echendia and Demasias del Salto, were found to be particularly rich. A report of 1581 shows that about that time the province of Popayan was producing some 3000 pounds weight of gold, worth about £152,000. Other mines were discovered near San Vicente de Paez, on the eastern slopes of the snow mountain of Huila, in the Central Cordilleras.

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Toro, Buga, and Cali, in the Cauca valley, were also important centres.

So was Almaguer, in the upper valley of the Patia, between the Western and the Central Cordilleras. This valley, closely shut in on all sides, is unhealthy, though fertile, and is only less bad in this respect than the lowlands of Barbacoas. Neither is a land possible for white labour any more than is Chocó, whilst the Cauca valley, on the other hand, though warm, is not unhealthy.

Very far behind the two departments dealt with above comes Tolima. It is more famous for its silver than for its gold. At Victoria, fifteen leagues from Mariquita, there were said to be rich mines of gold in the sixteenth century; but they were abandoned, in favour of the silver of Mariquita, when their productiveness decreased. Near Ibague rich alluviums were found, but they did not last out a very long working. The Saldanha River was at one time considered a promising area, but a report in 1891 by Mr. Skertchley, a mining engineer sent out there, gave a poor account of the lower river, though admitting there might be better hopes higher up. The silver-mining company at Frias works an alluvial gold-mine also. There are several other gold-mines along the slopes of the range, between the Guarino River and the latitude of Ambalema. On the eastern slopes of the Central Cordilleras, in the northern portion of Tolima, Señor Pautaleon Gonzalez, an Antioquian mine-owner, reports rich alluvial deposits, and adds: "All the Cordillera is auriferous, and if political

disturbances did not frighten off foreign capitalists, we should see this richly-endowed region completely transformed and rapidly prospering." Señor Restrepo's final conclusion regarding Tolima as a metal-producing country is stated thus: "The result of what has been said is that Tolima encloses great mineral wealth, which may be considered almost virgin, since there have been drawn from it scarcely 52,000,000 'piastres' (£10,400,000) worth of gold and silver since the conquest, whilst its mines could produce annually 2,500,000 'piastres' (£500,000)."

Bolivar is the only remaining department on the west bank of the Magdalena. The greater part of it consists of the plains between the Caribbean Sea and the northern end of the central and western ranges, broken only by their outliers; but it includes a considerable mountain area, in the north-eastern corner of the Central Cordilleras, abutting on the frontier of Antioquia. Obviously this is the most promising part of the department in respect of gold. Looking westwards across the Magdalena from Bodega Central, the eye rests on blue mountains towering up 7000 or 8000 feet above the plain, almost the first high mountains seen since the steamer left Barranquilla. These are the Cerros de San Lucas, at the foot of which, on the lake of Simiti, stands the village of the same name. Its large church shows, as is known from history, that it was once a flourishing place, which owed its rise and prosperity to the gold-mines in the hills to the west. Mr. Millican, the

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orchid-hunter, gives a detailed account of his expedition, in search of orchids, to these mountains. Four days of difficult marching brought him to the mine of La Concepcion, which, however, does not seem to be of great importance. Señor Restrepo records that the alluvial mines worked in this neighbourhood in the eighteenth century reached an outturn of about £30,000 a year for four years, though they seem to have fallen off then. A more promising locality seems to be at Guamoco, at the head of the Tiqui, an affluent of the Nechi. Its proximity to the best gold districts of Antioquia, as well as its geological surroundings, lend colour to the expectation of its gold productiveness. The mines there were worked by the Spaniards from 1611 to 1770, when they had lost much of their importance. The district is particularly inaccessible, as shown by the difficulties recounted by Mr. Millican in his account of his expedition in its direction up the Santo Domingo river, a tributary of the Magdalena. The produce of the Sinu and the San Jorge in Bolivar have not been considerable, and are scarcely worth notice. Altogether, Bolivar can hardly be considered a promising department in this respect, and, with its production of only £1,400,000 in three centuries, it is very far behind even Tolima.

The departments east of the Magdalena can be disposed of very briefly. In Cundinamarca there were mines worked in the sixteenth century at Tocaima, in the valley of the Bogotá, from which legend asserts that one Juan Diaz Jaramillo made

a great fortune, enabling him to build a palace, which was swept away by a flood in 1581. A few other places are noted as gold-producing, but no doubt much of the £10,000,000 worth of gold coined at the Bogotá mint came from other provinces. Boyaca has produced practically no gold. Santander is the only one of these eastern departments which has yielded any considerable outturn, some £3,000,000, in the past. The neighbourhood of Pamplona, and the mines of Baja, Alta, and Vetas have given most; but, after futile attempts to work them in the nineteenth century, they have not come to much, though there may be some possibilities in them. The alluvial deposits of Bucaramanga and Giron are hampered in working by want of water, and those of the affluents of the Carare have to contend against a bad climate.

From the department of Magdalena an insignificant amount of alluvial gold has been produced. It is said that there are auriferous lodes in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Seeing their favourable situation, close to the coast, a presumption adverse to their value is raised by the fact that they have hitherto attracted so little attention.

Señor Restrepo's general conclusion as to the gold-producing capacities of the eastern and western departments is thus stated: "One might say summarily that the departments situated to the west of the Magdalena are all auriferous, whilst gold and silver are only found accidentally in those of the east."

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In these days of depreciated silver, standing at a price less than half of what it was fifty years ago, that metal is, necessarily, a far less profitable source for working than gold, and it is only in the case of mines of almost phenomenal richness that it is worth consideration. Colombia's estimated production of silver in the past is :—

16th century	. . . . .	£1,300,000
17th „	. . . . .	1,800,000
18th „	. . . . .	300,000
19th „	(up to 1886) . .	3,200,000
		£6,600,000

In Antioquia little silver is produced, except at the Zancudo mines in the Titiribi district, where auriferous silver is worked, and in the direction of Manizales, in the south of the department.

Cauca is richer in this metal ; the mines of Echandia in the Supia district have been successfully worked, and the Western Andes Mining Company have worked others, at Candelaria and elsewhere. The mines of Linea and Aguas-Claras used to produce, a few years ago, some £56,000 a year worth of auriferous silver for export to England, whilst another £40,000 went, from other mines, to be minted at Medellin.

Tolima is pre-eminently the department of silver. At La Plata, in the southern portion, on the river of the same name, reaching the left bank of the Magdalena, the Spaniards for some years worked mines of much repute. The Indians, however, rose, destroyed the colony, and filled up the mines. These

were rediscovered in the nineteenth century, but do not appear to offer great prospects. It is in the neighbourhood of Mariquita, not far from Honda, that silver-mining has been carried on with the greatest success, both in the past and in our own times. The Santa Ana mines, the nearest to Mariquita, were worked with considerable profit by the Spaniards, though they had great difficulties, due to poor appliances, and eventually they were abandoned at the end of the eighteenth century. The work was reopened after 1824, but the three English companies which successively undertook it certainly lost considerably on the whole. Shafts were carried down to 600 and even 900 feet, where the costs of working, and the impoverishment of the lodes, necessitated abandonment of the mines after 1874.

But in 1871 Mr. W. Welton discovered, or rediscovered, the mine of Frias farther south in the hills. He and Mr. W. D. Powles exploited the mine, and sold it to the Tolima Mining Company. In twelve and a half years (1871–83) over 5000 tons of ore were taken out, yielding silver worth £351,549. In 1883 the gross value of the production was about £81,000, and even greater next year. Mr. Powles himself has described the lodes of Frias as of great variability ; here a vein of rich ore appears on the surface, there it only becomes good as it is followed down.

The general conclusion which it appears possible to draw is not in favour of Colombia as a country producing large quantities of silver, workable at a

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profit in these days, though there are always possibilities of the accidental discovery of valuable mines, as in the case of that of Frias.

Something must be said regarding platinum, the metal occupying a position intermediate in price between gold and silver, of much less frequent occurrence than either, not used like them to any great extent for ornamental purposes or coinage, but having a great and increasing value for industrial purposes, owing to its great power of resistance both to heat and to chemical action. It was scarcely known in Europe before the middle of the eighteenth century, and the supply now comes chiefly from the Ural Mountains. The north-western corner of South America was the original region of its discovery. In Popayan it was recognised and separated from gold in 1720, and, both there and at Bogotá, it is said to have been thrown away into the rivers after separation. In 1778 all platinum was ordered to be sent to Spain without charge, but, as this resulted in smuggling of the metal for sale to other foreigners, the Spanish Government, ten years later, offered a price of two dollars a pound. The miners still found a profit in sales to foreigners at six times this price.

Platinum is found in considerable quantities in the Chocó and Barbacoas districts, the purest coming from Chocó, especially from the rivers Condoto, Opogado, and Iró, tributaries of the San Juan, near Novitá. The annual export of some £10,000 worth of platinum from Chocó is probably susceptible of considerable increase, if warranted by the price on

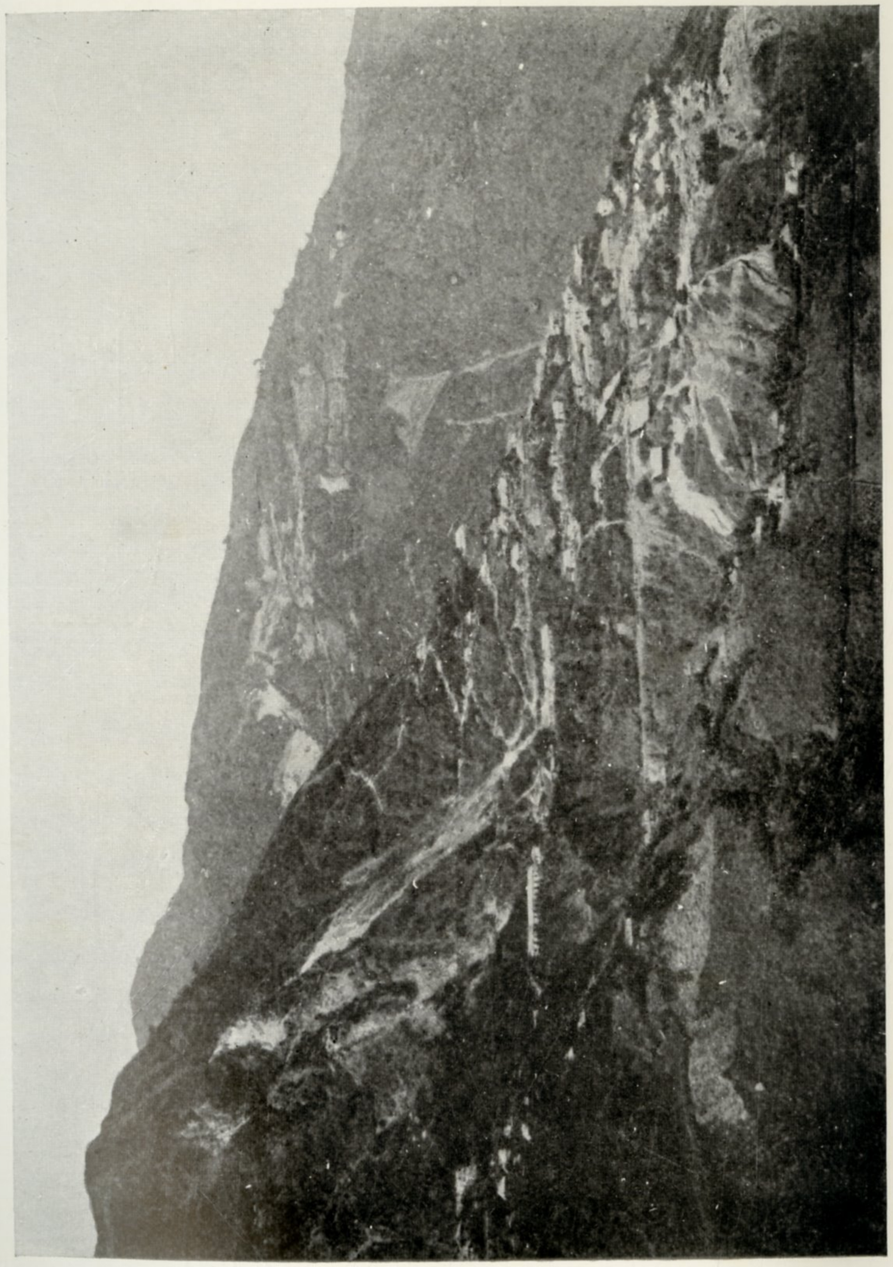
the European and American markets. The dangers of overproduction are illustrated by the case of an Italian at Cartagena who, about 1850, sent such a quantity of platinum to Europe that the price dropped suddenly.

After what has been said regarding the amount of gold and silver taken in the past from Colombia, it would not be surprising to hear it argued that the resources of the country in these metals have probably been exhausted. Fortunately for Colombia, there is not the slightest reason to believe that such an idea has any foundation in fact, or that the millions which have been gathered so far represent anything more than the very topmost layer of the cream of its stores. The Spaniards, it is true, abandoned many mines, allowing the paths leading to them to be lost in the rapid growth of the tropical forests. In some cases it is even said that they took special precautions, during the War of Independence, to conceal the locality of their mines. Many, perhaps most, of the abandoned mines had ceased to yield a large profit to the very primitive methods which alone were then available for their working; it was better to go elsewhere than to be satisfied with a small profit. There were no means of really deep mining, or of pumping out flooded galleries and shafts; dredges were unknown, and the hydraulic monitor had not been invented. Most of the alluvial mining was done by the rough and inefficient methods still employed by the "mazamorreros." It would require too much space to quote much from the descriptions given in Señor

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Restrepo's book of these methods. Those of the independent searchers are primitive in the extreme, carried out with the roughest tools, and often involve very arduous work in diving to recover sand from the beds of rivers, to which access by other available means is impossible to these men, even in the dry season. Some of the larger concerns of the nineteenth century have introduced more elaborate machinery, but even now, thanks largely to the difficulties of transport and want of capital, very little has really been possible. Where stamp-mills have been introduced, difficulty of transport has resulted in light machines, capable of doing only one-fourth or one-fifth of the daily tale of work of those used in California.

Many causes, other than deficient knowledge and machinery, drove the Spaniards from some of their best mines. At La Plata, San Vicente, Ibague, and elsewhere the attacks of Indians, in the seventeenth century, compelled closure. Labour difficulties were perhaps the greatest of all. The unfortunate Indians were, from the middle of the sixteenth century, compelled to furnish "mitas," or labour gangs, formed by a contribution of one man in seven for forced labour, no mercy or consideration being shown, in most places, to these unfortunates. To forced Indian labour succeeded imported negro slaves, necessarily an expensive and inefficient form of labour. To them was due the working of the Chocó and Barbacoas mines, and many of them work now in those unhealthy climates so unsuited to the white man. When



THE MARMATO MINE

they were freed in 1851, there was, as has been already said, an end of all important organized enterprise in such districts, until such time as immigration, of one sort or another, provides miners to work, and agriculturists to supply their food.

The old methods of treatment of ore, in the case of silver especially, were as deficient as the working of the mines themselves. Quicksilver was dear, and was so wastefully employed, through ignorance, that the cost of production, when it was used, absorbed all possibility of profit. Many of the attempts to reopen workings in the nineteenth century have not been distinguished by much greater intelligence and judgment. Expensive machinery has been taken out to Colombia without consideration of its suitability, or of the fact that the absence of communications must end, as it often has ended, in the machinery never reaching the mines for which it was intended. In some cases, incompetent engineers have been sent out to prospect; in others, workmen have been sent from Europe to do what could be more efficiently, and much more cheaply, done by local labour. The profits have been absorbed by reckless and useless expenditure. An instance of where such expenditure was avoided by the employment of a competent explorer is afforded by Mr. Skertchley's report on the question of employing dredgers on the Saldanha River, which has already been referred to. If gold-mining is to be taken up extensively

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in Colombia by English capitalists, too much care cannot be exercised in ascertaining fully the conditions and the requirements, the machinery wanted for each locality, and the best way of dealing with its ores. The points to be kept in view are well summarised as follows in Mr. Jenner's report of 1894 to the British Foreign Office :—

"1. Every undertaking should be preceded by a careful and prolonged examination of the conditions of the locality in which the mine is situated.

"2. The person performing this duty should know Spanish, and have a rudimentary knowledge of the precautions to be taken to avoid falling ill at the very outset.

"3. The means of communication should be carefully considered, so that the machinery required should be sent out at the right season, rightly packed, and in packages of suitable dimensions.

"4. A thorough inquiry should be made, under good advice, as to the legal conditions under which the property is held, and as to the varied obligations that may attach to it in respect to right of way, water supplies, &c., the difficulties arising out of which are not infrequently concealed by the vendors of the property.

"5. The climate and sanitary conditions at all seasons of the year should be taken into account, as well as the possibility of obtaining good drinking water and a sufficient food-supply at moderate rates."

One of the obstacles in the way of the investment of foreign capital in Colombian mines has been the mining law of the country. Mr. Jenner, writing in 1894, stated that it frequently happened that mine-owners, who had complied with all the provisions of the law, were stopped working by complaints of pollution or diminution of the water-supply below their works. According to the law, they were bound to allow a sufficient supply of pure and potable water. In case of dispute with a town or village, the municipal authority decided the case; where it was with an industrial or agricultural business, such as a cattle farm, the matter was to be referred to three experts ("peritos"; or, to quote the local joke, "perritos"—little dogs). One of these being appointed by each of the parties, and the third by the municipal authority (which, in nine cases out of ten, is in sympathy with the complainants), the hopes of the mine-owners for a favourable decision are rarely great. The same difficulty is felt by other enterprises, such as railways, in whose case such questions as the price of land acquired, or of accidental damage by sparks, is referred to a similar tribunal. The decisions of these "peritos" are often characterized by shameless disregard of equity, which is not to be wondered at, considering the class of men usually selected as the nominees of the complainant and the local authority. Few of them, probably, are above pecuniary or personal influences. The tendency amongst landholders is to look upon rail-

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ways and mines alike as fair game, and the results may be imagined. There are endless vexatious delays on technical grounds, and in the end a grossly exaggerated finding is arrived at as to the damage done, or the value of the land to be acquired. In one case, land which consisted of a rocky hillside covered with boulders, and absolutely useless, was valued at £40 a hectare, to which was added a lump sum of £6000 for general damages! This would bring the price to be paid for about one-fortieth of the entire estate, of which it was the worst part, up to a great deal more than the official valuation, for purposes of land taxation, of the whole property! Even the price, without the damages, which were disallowed by the Court of First Instance, represents a value for the whole estate (even supposing the land taken to be of average quality) nearly three times that at which the taxation assessment placed it. Though monstrous claims of this sort may not be enforceable, the very fact that they are liable to be put forward must necessarily cause alarm to intending investors. Inquiry from mine-owners leads us to believe that, in other respects, the mining law of Colombia, which is now codified, is not seriously objected to by them—at least not in so far as it affects existing mines in which freehold rights have been acquired.

There was a time when many mine-owners were on the point of being driven out of the country by a proposed law prohibiting entirely the use of

hydraulic monitors. Fortunately, this law was dropped when those who proposed to pass it were enlightened as to the nature of the machines, and when it appeared that this retrograde measure would probably entail claims on the Treasury by those who had acquired a vested interest under the existing law.

In the days of the "sovereign states," each state had its own mining laws. When the new constitution of 1886 came into force, the mining law of Antioquia was adopted *en bloc* for the whole republic. Recent legislation has been in the direction of rendering the "denunciation" of mines, especially in Chocó and Darien, a less easy matter, and of restricting the rights acquired to a leasehold, instead of a freehold. The object of this is said to have been to prevent the greedy acquisition of large territories as a speculation. The raising of fees aims at the same end.

One hears rumours of precious stones of different sorts being discovered in Colombia, but, in so far as they concern gems other than emeralds, they do not appear to have very much foundation. At any rate, up to the present the country has yielded no other jewels worth considering. On the other hand, the emerald-mines of Muzo and Coscuez have given to the world nearly all the really valuable emeralds it possesses. The gem is found certainly elsewhere—in Salzburg, in Siberia, and in India—but those of Colombia alone exhibit the deep-green colour which is characteristic of the best emeralds. Even there the best stones are

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only found, at present, in any quantity about Muzo, the land of emeralds and butterflies. These mines are comparatively rarely visited by foreigners, for, though in a direct line they are only some twenty-five miles east of La Dorada, they appear to be, at present, almost inaccessible from that direction, and the usual approach is from the terminus of the Northern Railway at Cipaquirá, by mule to Chiquinquirá, a well-known place of pilgrimage with a celebrated shrine, and thence, over very difficult country, through Maripi. Mr. Millican, accustomed as he was to dangerous places, appears to have been greatly impressed with the difficulties and risks of this road, which he describes as passing through some of the most remarkable and beautiful scenery of Colombia. "The traveller," he writes, "is obliged to pass through some of the most dangerous mountain passes, and over precipices where a false step would dash him and the mule to destruction." The appearance of the mines gives the idea of an extinct volcanic crater, at the bottom and on the sides of which the emeralds are found. The matrix in which they are embedded lies on a great precipice of black shale or slate. This black rock contains few stones; they are found, for the most part, in white calcite running in veins through the slate, some being embedded in the matrix, others lying in pockets. Here is Mr. Millican's description of the method of working, as he saw it some sixteen or seventeen years ago:—

"The work of cutting down the side of the rock is done by the natives, their most powerful

instrument being a crowbar. A piece of rock about a yard wide is taken, the whole length of the mine, on the top; this is cut down a few yards, and then another level of the same sort is commenced again at the top, until the whole breast of the rock appears like a monster staircase, the broken rubbish being thrown over to the bottom of the precipice. On an opposite bank from where the emeralds are taken out, a stream of water is kept, by means of sluices, in a reservoir, and as the sluices are opened every quarter of an hour, the water is allowed to rush down the rocks with great force, clearing away with the torrent all the broken stone thrown down by the miners since the last discharge."

At that time no place other than this had been found in the neighbourhood yielding the highly-prized dark-green crystals in sufficient quantity to pay for working. The paler amorphous stones are of comparatively little value, though of much more frequent occurrence. Some progress seems to have been made since the above description was written, for, according to Mr. Dickson, hydraulic monitors are now used for clearing away the top soil, though crowbars are still the instrument chiefly employed for clearing the slate, supplemented by gunpowder manufactured on the spot, and therefore, probably, of the poorest quality. Necessarily it has to be used with care, to avoid carrying away the emerald-bearing veins, which run in every direction through the slate. In these mines, as in every other mine of precious stones,

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there is great difficulty in preventing the abstraction of emeralds by dishonest workmen. Indeed, if rumour does not lie, the dishonesty extends much higher than the ranks of the miners. There was a curious story, current in Bogotá in 1904, of the disappearance of a large quantity of valuable stones, which, it was alleged, had been lost owing to the fall over a precipice of the mule carrying them. The mule, admittedly, fell over and was lost. The only point in dispute was whether he carried any emeralds, or whether they had been otherwise disposed of before the catastrophe. Luggage of passengers leaving Colombia was liable to search at the customs-houses, and this was said to be done in the decidedly vain hope that the missing stones might be discovered. Dr. Hettner alleges that, notwithstanding daily searches of the workmen, and other precautions, a brisk trade in stolen gems goes on at Chiquinquirá and Simijaca, towns in the neighbourhood of the mines. The Spanish Government found themselves so incapable of coping with the dishonesty of their captains of mines that even the mines of Muzo were worked at a loss, and the amount of the royal fifth recovered did not suffice to cover the cost of protection supplied by Government. The working was suspended in 1792, with the result that many mines previously worked disappeared in the vegetation which overgrew them, and have not been rediscovered. This remark applies to the actual site of the mine of Coscuez, which has a traditional reputation of great richness.

Another region producing emeralds lies about

Somondoco, also in Boyaca, on the eastern slope of the Cordilleras amongst the upper tributaries of the Rio Upia, which is itself an affluent of the Meta. Previous to 1875, the Colombian Government reserved all emerald-mines as State property. Nowadays, the only mines so reserved are those of Muzo and Coscuez, the latter, as mentioned, awaiting rediscovery, though it is said to be practically identical with Muzo. Other areas are open to private enterprise, which, however, does not as yet appear to have attained any great success.

The Government management of the reserved mines appears to have been extremely inefficient. Formerly, they were leased for periods of five years, a term too short to allow of the inauguration of improved methods of working, and encouraging the lessees in a feverish haste to find all they could in their short term, and to disregard, in such matters as the removal of rubbish, the interests of the next lessee, who would probably be some one else. In 1904, the Government themselves worked the mine, and, according to Mr. Dickson, got from it about £10,000 ; whilst what he euphemistically terms "private deals," which others would perhaps designate by a harsher term, amounted to about double that value. It is difficult to believe, in the face of later results, that this estimate is not too low. The next move was a lease at auction of the mines for ten years, subject to a reserve rental of £6000 *per mensem*. The lessee was to be bound to disclose the amount and value of his discoveries, and to work the mine

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so as not to damage the property. It is not very clear why these conditions should be objected to, as they apparently are, by Mr. Dickson; for they seem reasonable safeguards, if justly enforced, of the interests of the Government.

There was some friction in 1904 between the President and the Junta de Amortizacion over the lease by the latter of the mines to a syndicate. That, however, appears to have been satisfactorily settled, for General Reyes, in his summary of his administration up to the end of 1905, says that the syndicate's operations have shown the real value of the property to the State. Naturally enough, a good deal of secrecy must be observed in dealing with a market such as that in emeralds.

It is certain that the Colombian Government looks upon the Muzo mine as a very valuable asset, and, if it is properly managed, it doubtless is so. President Reyes' rough budget of 1904 estimated an income of £96,000 out of a total revenue, from all sources, of £863,500. The methods of mining hitherto in use have certainly been inefficient, and with improvements in this respect the outturn should improve. The case seems to be very much on all-fours with that of the Burma ruby-mines as they were before, contrasted with what they are since, the English company took them in hand. Nor can it be possible either to introduce machinery, or to exercise a proper supervision, so long as Muzo remains cut off from Bogotá by the absence of all semblance of a decent road.

A recent law, under which the Government

resumed the right to *all* mines discovered in future, created some excitement amongst owners of emerald-mines outside Muzo and Coscuez, for it provided for the payment of prohibitive rates. This matter is, however, still under discussion, and need not be further alluded to. There are very few mine-owners affected by it, and it is only necessary to say that, apparently, it renders hopeless any attempt, in future, to institute private enterprises in this branch of mining.

Diamonds, rubies, and amethysts are alleged to be found; but if so, they are probably not of importance.

Pearl-oysters, too, are found on the Pacific coast, especially at the islands off Panama, which still belong to Colombia, but there is no likelihood of any large profit in this direction. The occidental has never yet succeeded in competing with the oriental pearl on anything like an equal footing.

We have dealt, so far, with mineral products of high value in small compass, regarding which there is at least sufficient information to form the basis for a systematic inquiry into their possibilities, and to offer a warning against the mistakes which, in the past, have so often led to failure and disappointment. Regarding some of the bulkier minerals, there is very much less information, for the simple reason that, hitherto, they have attracted little attention, as compared with gold, silver, and emeralds. Moreover, their possibilities in the future must be of a very different description from those of the minerals already noted. With the

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communications of Colombia in the condition that they now are, and even in the best position they are likely to hold many years hence if they are seriously taken in hand, it is certain that there will be no demand beyond the country itself for Colombian coal, iron, copper, salt, lead, or other bulky minerals produced far in the interior. If the finest smokeless coal were discovered in the Upper Magdalena valley, the cost of its transport to the sea would put it hopelessly out of the running with Welsh coal, having practically nothing but sea-carriage to pay. So, too, with iron, or copper, or lead. They could only be looked upon as profitable exports in the event of their discovery in close proximity to the seaboard, and, unfortunately, that is, generally speaking in Colombia, the least likely place to find them in. But that is no reason why they should not be of enormous value in the development of the country, if they are properly and scientifically worked. They would then have, for use in Colombia, a very marked advantage, in the matter of transport charges, over the produce of foreign countries, and might be able to render the country self-supporting, instead of being dependent on imports, the price of which is practically doubled by the cost of movement from the coast to the interior.

Next after the revenue from customs dues, the most important item on the receipt side of the Colombian budget is salt, which the country is able to produce for itself; though, perhaps owing

partly, as in other cases, to defective methods of mining and preparation, the want of this necessary of human and animal life is severely felt in parts. For instance, President Reyes has implied the necessity of enabling its supply to the cattle-breeding districts of the eastern plains, if their industry is to be exploited. Señor Triana's book also bears witness to the eager quest of salt by the inhabitants of those regions.

The coast districts produce large quantities of salt by evaporation from sea-water, or that of the lagoons; and it is stated also that, not far from Cartagena, there is a great plain capable of supplying immense quantities of salt.

These sources, however, seem to have been very badly worked hitherto, and large amounts of salt have had to be imported for the use of the people and their cattle. In the interior, the most noted mines of rock-salt are those of Cipaquirá, in the hills west of that town, about thirty miles north of Bogotá. The rock-salt is easily obtained by driving galleries into the hill, and the quantity available seems to be almost inexhaustible. The average outturn from 1888 to 1897 was about 11,000 tons annually. There are other mines at Nemocon, Sesquile, and other places in the same neighbourhood, and these salt-beds are continued on into Boyacá, and perhaps Santander. There are salt deposits of less productiveness in Antioquia, and in many places in Cauca. On the whole, there can be little doubt that, with proper management, Colombia should never require to

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import salt. The problem of distribution can only be solved by improvements in communications.

Iron is found in many parts of Colombia, but, up to the present time, has never been efficiently worked. The best known mines are at La Pradera, in the hills of Cipaquirá, near Pacho. The works here are not provided with the most modern appliances, which it would, until the railway is opened to the plateau, be very difficult, if not impossible, to get up. The iron from La Pradera is said to be soft, like Low Moor iron, and worth over £20 a ton. The works turn out a certain amount of simple appliances, such as sugar boilers and agricultural implements, and they have even succeeded in the manufacture of iron rails for the Northern Railway.

Coal being available in the immediate neighbourhood, there seems no reason why, if the ore is good enough, steel rails at least should not be produced. At present, the cost of transport of rails from the coast to Girardot about doubles their price at Savanilla or Cartagena. Another place where iron is said to be found in conjunction with coal is Cali, in the Cauca valley. It is found in many other places, but is not worked, unless by the most primitive methods, anywhere but at La Pradera. Colombia can hardly hope to enter the markets of the world as an iron producer, but she may, as we have already said, do something towards making herself self-supporting in respect of this metal in its coarser uses.

Coal is found in a very great number of places

in the mountainous parts of the republic. It is dug out of the hill of Monserrate on the outskirts of Bogotá itself, and is carried over that hill on mules from more mines at the back. Near the Tequendama Fall there is much coal, which likewise is dug out of the hillsides without any more elaborate appliances than a pick and shovel. The Sabana Railway gets its coal from Cipacon, at no great distance from Facatativá. At present, the Colombian National Railway, pending arrival at Cipacon, gets coal from Tocaima, near the station of that name. A mine is now being worked on the Magdalena, a little below Girardot, and it is believed that there is more coal near Hospicio. It occurs, in Antioquia, at Amagá with iron, at Titiribi, below Zaragoza on the lower Nechi, and probably elsewhere.

In Cauca it is found on the Rio Sucio, near the gold-mines of Marmato and Supia. The coalfield in this department which has the highest general reputation, but has not yet been exploited, is at Cali, where iron also occurs. There is a general idea that this field is of very great extent, producing good coal. If it at all comes up to its reputation, it may turn out to be of far greater value than any other in the country; for, when the railway from Buenaventura reaches it, coal could be delivered on the Pacific coast, which now is dependent on coal imported from Europe or North America at, necessarily, very high prices. Should it be found possible to send large quantities of fairly good coal down, by 100 miles or so of rail,

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to Buenaventura, it is easy to imagine the value to the port and to shipping.

In Santander there are many localities in which coal occurs. Amongst them are the banks of the Carare, a tributary of the Magdalena, and of its own affluent, the Guayabita. There is more in the neighbourhood of Socorro and Zapatoca, on the Suarez, and at Ocaña farther north. Most of these, however, are somewhat inaccessible places. Even Magdalena, not generally distinguished for minerals, is believed to possess much coal towards the Venezuelan frontier, and at Rio Hacha.

Copper is found in various parts of the country. There are valuable mines, which excited the admiration of Humboldt, at Moniquirá in Boyacá, in which department there is also copper at Tunja, Leiva, Guateque, and in the Chiquinquirá district. Cauca produces it in the valley of the Supia, in the Marmato direction. It occurs in several places in Santander; in Cundinamarca it is said to exist in Tocamia, Villeta, Anapoima, La Palma, and Cipaquirá, besides other localities. Antioquia has it at Concepcion and La Ceja.

Lead is known near Medellin; in Santander, in the regions of Zapatoca and Charala; in Cauca, at Andágueda. It is said to be found in Cundinamarca at Cipaquira, near Anolaima, and elsewhere. Not far from Ibague, in Tolima, cinnabar and lead are found. Tin, the demand for which threatens at present to outrun the world's production, is said to be worked on the Andágueda, in the Chocó district.

A concession of the right to work asphalt mines

on all national property is held by an American company. In 1903 they were shipping about 2000 tons of asphalt yearly from the one mine which they were working, near Chaparral in Tolima. The material is stated to be practically identical with Egyptian asphalt. The mine being near the Saldaña River, its produce is floated down that stream on rafts, and shipped on the Magdalena at Girardot. This is by no means the only, though perhaps the most accessible, place in Colombia where asphalt has been found. A recent issue of the "Diario Official" announces a concession of other asphalt-mines in the Santander department. The minimum outturn required is 1000 tons in every period of two years during the ten of the lease.

Whether any success has attended the search for petroleum in Bolivar we have not heard; it is, however, certain that it exists in the country.

What has been said about the principal minerals is only intended as a general indication of their wide distribution and abundance in the territories of the republic. As yet they have not been scientifically prospected, and have hardly been exploited at all. Till the country has been explored properly, it is impossible to say anything more definite about them than that they appear to exist in at least sufficient quantities to render Colombia independent, in respect of them, of importation.

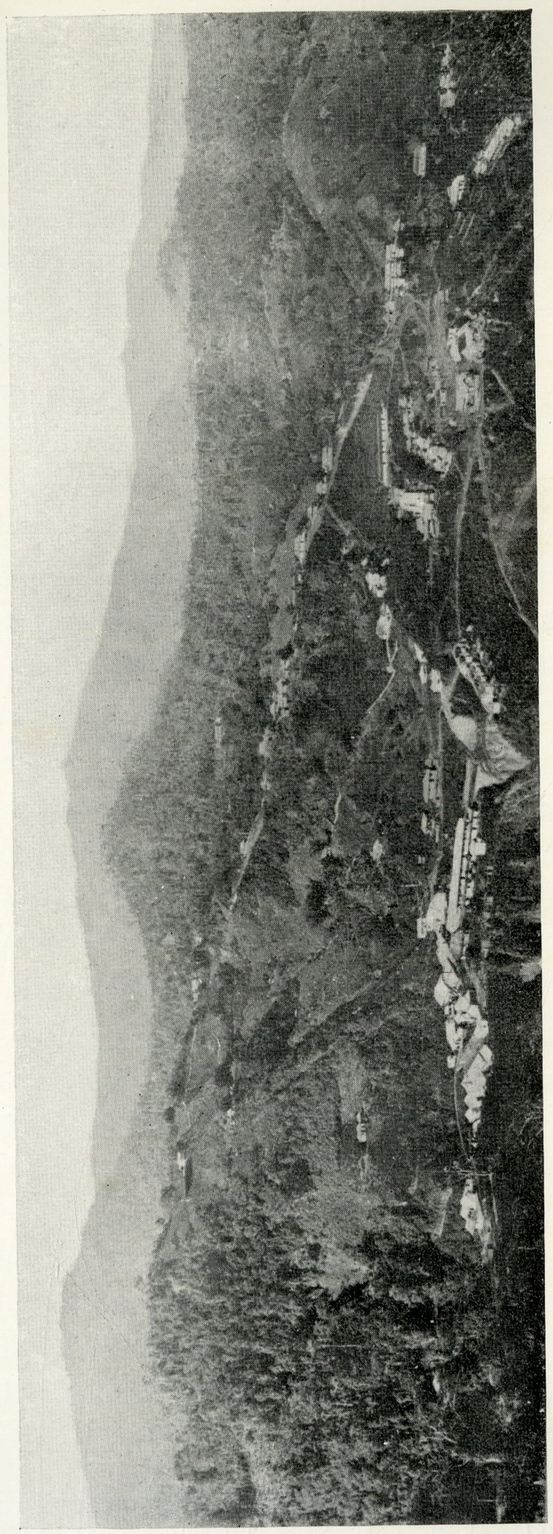
There is scarcely a mineral of importance which is not known to be found in the country—sulphur, zinc, alum, marble, lime, galena, talc, and mercury by no means exhaust the list.

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CHAPTER XI

AGRICULTURAL, VEGETABLE, AND FOREST PRODUCTS

First and by far the most important of Colombia's vegetable products is coffee, the source from which is derived the greater part of the exports required to pay for imports from Europe and America. Unfortunately for the country, its price in the European and American markets has steadily declined of late years, the result, it is believed, of overproduction, and of the vast area which is available for its growth, both in South America and in other countries of the eastern and western hemispheres, many of which enjoy the advantages of a much easier and more rapid communication with the markets. Ceylon and the West Indies are examples of this. Possibly, too, something may be due to a depreciated taste, which is satisfied with cheap Brazilian coffee, and forbids the payment of higher prices for the superior berry of Colombia. To those who appreciate really fine coffee, that which is drunk in Colombia is a revelation. Even on the Magdalena steamers it is delicious, and as the absence of milk enforces the consumption, at all hours from 6 A.M. to night, of black coffee, one has a full opportunity of judging of the real excellence



THE FRIAS SILVER MINE

of the article. The late revolution has also operated unfavourably on the coffee industry, not only by causing a dearth of labour, but also because large stores accumulated during it, for the simple reason that, in the turmoil and insecurity, it was impossible to export them. When, at last, the return of peace enabled the export of the accumulated stocks, much of them had been damaged, and the appearance on the markets of such portions naturally tended to discredit Colombian coffee generally. It is not that coffee, if properly stored, deteriorates in two or three years, but that much of it could not be properly stored, and was exposed to trials of temperature and humidity which could not fail to injure it. It has been already described how, in the search for shelter by government or revolutionary troops, many a coffee-planter saw his precious stores turned out into the damp and heat to rot or mildew, until proper shelter could be again provided for it. It is easy to guess what may be the effect on a market of the association of the producing country with damaged stuff of this sort, and how strongly it may operate to help Colombia's Brazilian rivals, who, it is known, are devoting more and more attention to the careful growing of coffee under less favourable natural conditions.

There is practically no department of the republic in which coffee cannot be grown, though Bolivar is the least favourably situated in this respect, its level plains, lying at but a small elevation above the sea, being unsuited to the plant. Magdalena, too, has comparatively but a small

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area sufficiently high-lying for it. There is, however, a considerable opening for coffee-growing on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where a consular report for 1904 states that the industry is steadily progressing, with excellent results as regards the quality of the produce. Here, as elsewhere, labour is a great difficulty, as it is estimated that quite 10 per cent. of the able-bodied agricultural population of the district was destroyed in the revolution, and even before this there was a deficiency of labour. Naturally, Santa Marta coffee, with its close proximity to the seaboard, should have a great advantage, *cæteris paribus*, over that produced in the interior of the country. Practically, it appears that coffee can be grown anywhere in the country where there is a mean temperature of from about 60° to 75° Fahrenheit, which generally implies an elevation of from 3500 to 6500 feet; though, of course, local conditions of shelter or exposure may render cultivation possible somewhat below or above these limits. However, they are near enough for a general standard.

At the head of the coffee-growing districts stands the department of Cundinamarca. The average price of the coffee of Fusagasagá, some forty miles south-west of Bogotá, is given as 5d. per pound, whilst that grown at La Palma is worth ½d. more. Both, however, are handicapped by the cost of transport from comparatively inaccessible grounds. If the southern railway of the Bogotá plateau is extended, as seems possible,

to Fusagasagá, that district will be much improved. In any case it will be helped by the possibility, presently, of sending coffee direct from Sibate, over the Southern, Sabana, Colombian National, and Dorada railways, to the last-named place. La Palma, lying in the hills some thirty miles east of Honda, can hardly hope for much improvement of its rail or river communication, and can only look to the construction of better roads. Tolima coffee fetches about the same price as Fusagasagá, and some of it at any rate will find an easier outlet when the Dorada railway is extended by Mariquita to Ambalema, skirting the eastern slopes of the Central Cordilleras. In Santander the best coffee is produced in Cúcuta (4d. per pound) and Bucaramanga (4½d.), whilst Ocaña berry is not worth more than 3½d. From the two former places the outlet is, by the Cúcuta railway and the river Zulia, to Lake Maracaibo, and Mr. Scruggs says that much coffee described in European and American markets as "Maracaibo" really comes from the highlands of Colombia. Ocaña coffee appears to find its way to the Magdalena at Puerto Nacional.

Most of these places, perhaps, have been selected as coffee-growing districts for their manifestly superior conditions of soil, at a period when all means of communication were about equally bad. But, as has already been implied, there are probably thousands of other places equally, or nearly equally, well suited to the growth of the plant. As railways extend there seems a strong probability that new

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plantations will spring up, alongside of them, on the slopes, with, perhaps, the result of desertion of some of the older ones. The slopes of the Cauca valley are just as favourable by nature to coffee-growing as those of the Magdalena, but at present they are more inaccessible. Their general fertility is reported by all authorities to be so great that it would not be surprising to find the centre of gravity of the coffee business shift there when the valley is opened out and brought into easy communication with the coast. Such communication is wanted everywhere, not only for the purpose of sending coffee out, but also for bringing machinery in, without limiting the weight of its separate pieces to what a mule can carry over bad country.

Mr. Dickson, British Vice-Consul at Bogotá, has gone fully into the question of Colombian coffee-growing, as it was in 1904 after the last revolution. The general conclusion he comes to is that coffee is not a paying business in most parts of Colombia, unless the berry fetches at least 4d. per lb. at New York. He works out the cost of production at 2d. per lb. on the estates, and calculates that freight to New York, with commissions, &c., absorbs about as much more, except in the case of plantations specially favourably situated in the matter of proximity to rivers or railways. His summary of the history of Colombian coffee during the past few years may be appropriately quoted here:—

"A review of the coffee trade shows that about six years ago Colombian coffee was produced in moderate quantities, and more care was taken in

its preparation. The greater part of it was produced in the larger plantations, with good machinery, and was stove dried. The coffee, which was carefully sun dried, was also much sought after, for Colombian coffee had a good reputation; and, the supply being limited, the price went up, which resulted in an over-planting of coffee all over the country. It was thought that this would replace the quina industry. Money was advanced and credits were given to many who were desirous of enlarging their plantations, and the coffee was very often sold before it was produced. The limited amount of labour available was not sufficiently taken into account. It is true that coffee is easy to plant and is hardy, but it requires three years of care and expense before any result is obtained. Labourers were eagerly sought after, and, with competing prices, they rushed from one plantation to another. About the second year coffee began to be a source of anxiety to the intelligent classes; they saw that it was easy enough to plant, but quite another thing to keep up the numerous new plantations which were being brought into existence, until they were in a condition to yield some return. The result has been that a large number of coffee plantations have been abandoned, in whole or in part, because the available capital, estimated for three years' expenses, was all spent in the first year owing to the unforeseen rise in wages caused by the rush. This was the condition of the coffee industry when the revolution broke out in October 1899.

"The war gave the final blow to the enthusiasm

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for coffee planting, for it ruined even those comparatively few plantations which had survived the critical stages just referred to. During the first months of the war, work continued in an intermittent way, but, as the disorder spread, the employment of male labour became impossible.

"The condition of affairs, bad as it was before the trouble began, is considerably worse now; labour was then scarce, but from that limited amount must now be deducted the considerable number of labourers who perished during the war."

There is much to give cause for reflection in this. It seems fairly clear that, with the competition springing up in more careful cultivation elsewhere, the limit is at hand beyond which Colombia cannot go in coffee production, if she is not to swamp her own market. If she is to hope to rule by the superiority of her coffee, she must be able to produce it at a price which will pay her, and yet, with due consideration to the superiority of the berry, enable her to undersell other producers from Brazil to Ceylon. The cost of production is not likely to go down, in so far as it depends on human labour, and, obviously, such operations as picking cannot be facilitated by machinery. The one direction in which she can hope to reduce the cost of coffee delivered on the market is in cheapening the cost of transport, and in going as far as possible half-way to meet the lines of communication, by utilising lands suitable for cultivation in the neighbourhood of the railways as they spread.

The following figures are instructive. The exports of coffee from Baranquilla in 1899 amounted to 254,410 bags. Next year, the first of the revolution, the number at once fell to 86,917. In 1904, the first after the return of peace, the total, representing largely the stocks accumulated for want of transport, rose again to 574,270 bags—considerably more than double the number in the year preceding the war. Obviously, even if all the coffee of the 1904 export had been of the very best, it must have sent down prices of Colombian coffee at once. Possibly this coffee may recover its position in foreign markets, but it must be remembered that it is not so easy to obliterate the memory of a bad crop as it is for that crop to create a prejudice against the source from which it originated. The coffee business appears to be in so unstable a condition that Colombia cannot safely rely on it as the most important item of her exports.

Another valuable product which grows wild in many parts of Colombia, and is cultivated in some, is cacao, which not only forms a large item in the food of the lower classes, but might also be an important export. So much is it used by the lower classes that domestic servants in Bogotá require to be supplied with it, and are not satisfied to drink coffee. The natural home of this tree is at a much lower level than that of coffee. The following extract from a consular report, published in 1894, shows the profusion in which it is found in the Santa Marta region:—

"At another point, some half-a-dozen miles to

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the westward, while crossing the plain in the direction of the highest summits of the Sierra Nevada, this wild cacao I found to be a predominating, or characteristic, species of the forest undergrowth. Here I traversed a zone of cacao not less than eight miles wide, thus distributed on the plain as well as on the lower slopes of the numerous spurs of the mountains ranging from 300 to 1300 feet above the level of the sea."

Cultivation is easy in innumerable other regions of suitable altitude and climate, from the valley of the Cauca to the eastern forests of the upper Amazon and its tributaries, and to the lower slopes of the ranges of the Cordilleras in the Magdalena valley, in fact almost everywhere where shade is available at a suitable elevation. Much very successful cacao cultivation has, since 1894, been practised about Santa Marta. It is reported that the product is of good quality, fetching high prices in foreign markets. Of late years, however, most of it has gone to supply the wants of the interior, where the production is not equal to the demand. The price there is so high as to attract imported cocoa from Ecuador, Venezuela, and elsewhere. Looking to the facilities for cacao-growing nearer at hand, it is clear that this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and that the Santa Marta region should at least be in a position to export abroad all the cocoa produced there, beyond what is required for its own consumption. The exports of cocoa from Baranquilla in 1904 were about 1000 bags. From Santa Marta there went, chiefly to the United States,

only about £600 worth of cocoa. It may be noted here in passing that it would be much more convenient if British consular reports adopted some fixed notation, instead of giving, as they do, sometimes the number of bags of unstated weight, and sometimes the weight and value without a statement of the number of bags.

From what has been said above, it would appear that, if Colombia has erred in the matter of overproduction of coffee, she has gone wrong in the opposite direction in that of cocoa, and is actually not producing enough for her own consumption of an article in which she should be, not only self-supporting, but should also be able to send it abroad in considerable quantities with advantage.

Sugar is another product of tropical agriculture for the cultivation of which there is an opening not, so far, taken full advantage of. It seems to be one from which high profits are derivable, and there is an almost unlimited area suitable for growing cane. It is said that in the Cauca valley there are lands of such natural fertility that sugar can be grown on them for eighty years in succession, and it is claimed that the juice-producing capacity of the Cauca cane is the highest in the world. But it is not only to that valley that sugar is restricted. It can be grown successfully in practically all parts of the low country, and Mr. Dickson quotes the case of a coffee-planter running a sugar plantation in connection with his coffee. So large were the profits on sugar, that with them he was able to pay the whole cost of his coffee, from production to

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delivery in the markets of the United States, where, consequently, its entire price came to him as profit. The native article has succeeded in driving out cane sugar produced in the United States, but it has not succeeded in keeping out beet-sugar from Germany. A good deal of cane-juice is used for the production of the country drink "chicha," a purpose of doubtful advantage. "Panela," a coarse brown sugar, almost black, is produced by a simple process of boiling, clarifying, and soldifying cane-juice. It then forms a very common article of food for the lower classes, especially in Antioquia, a poor country from the agricultural point of view, and is also used, dissolved in water, as a drink. On board the river steamers this drink is supplied gratis, and is freely partaken of by the natives, and, to some extent, by European travellers. The next stage of refinement beyond "panela" is practised generally in the most primitive manner, which produces an article naturally unable to compete with imported refined sugar. Here there seems to be an opportunity for the exploitation of sugar refineries worked by modern machinery, at any rate to the extent necessary to supply internal demands.

Cotton is an agricultural industry in which there is also, perhaps, an opening. The American United Fruit Company is carrying on experiments in cotton-growing near Santa Marta, the port of which they are the principal exploiters. Complaints have been made of the native cotton, as too short in the staple, but there is probably a possibility of improving this by imported varieties. The manufacture of cotton

goods is in a most rudimentary state, and the people, poor as well as rich, are largely dependent on the manufactures of Europe and America for their clothing.

The "banana" industry, a product of modern taste, flourishes as an export trade on the coast, especially at Santa Marta, under the auspices of the United Fruit Company. From that port there went to the United States, in 1904, about 24,000 tons of the fruit, valued at £51,000. Bananas, of course, grow everywhere at suitable altitudes, forming an important item in the food of the poor; but, necessarily, nothing is to be hoped from an export trade in them, except in proximity to the northern coasts. There their production is only limited by the demand from abroad, and by the difficulty which faces every industry, mineral or agricultural, in Colombia—the scarcity of labour. The banana grows wild, so does the india-rubber tree, and in the latter Colombia has a valuable asset of which she has not taken sufficient advantage so far. An instructive article, which appeared in the *Times Financial and Commercial Supplement* of February 26, 1906, gives some account of the world's rubber trade, amounting to some 65,000 tons a year. The price of rubber has doubled within the last five years, mainly owing to the growing demand in the motor, cycle, and electrical trades. Brazil, the chief source of supply hitherto, has, by wasteful and reckless treatment of the trees in her most convenient tracts, the delta of the Amazon, seriously injured them. The industry is now forced to go

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further afield, towards the central and western forests of the continent. Other countries are coming forward as competitors, notably Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula, where the rubber tree is now being scientifically cultivated. Brazil is paying £2,000,000 for a railway to tap almost virgin rubber areas towards the Bolivian frontier, whilst Colombia has so far done practically nothing. Yet the tree grows everywhere in the tropical forests along the Magdalena, in comparatively easy communication with the coast. It is also abundant in the immense forests in the south-east, below the Cordilleras, and in the angle between the Ecuadorian and Brazilian borders. For this area the outlet is by the great navigable tributaries of the Amazon, whilst the products of the Magdalena valley find their way north by that river. Here Colombia has a great chance, and has the opportunity of profiting by Brazilian experience in avoiding the barbarous and wasteful treatment of trees, which has already gone far towards exhausting the resources of the lower Amazon. She, as well as other South American countries, must hurry up, unless they are prepared to see themselves cut out by the East and by Africa.

The forests produce many valuable timber trees, dye-woods, and medicinal plants. The timber includes mahogany, lignum vitæ, cedar, pine, chestnut, cinnamon, bamboos, and almost every tree that grows in the forests of Brazil.

Amongst dyes may be mentioned Brazil wood, dragon's blood, and others, producing almost every colour. Of medicinal plants, sarsaparilla, ipecacuanha, balsams of Tolu and copaiba, and quinine are among the best known. The cultivation of the last-named has, however, been so vigorously and successfully taken up in the East as to almost supersede the trade in South America.

Besides these classes of forest products should be noted the "divi-divi," used in tanning, and exported from Rio Hacha and Santa Marta. Vegetable ivory is also exported from the forests of the Magdalena and other rivers. Another palm, a very tall one, is the wax palm, a single tree of which yields fifteen pounds or more of wax in the year. Many resins, gums, &c., are found in all the forests, and vanilla flourishes, especially in the valley of the Patia.

Mention must not be omitted of the magnificent orchids, which add to the beauty of many of the forests. Mr. Millican's book gives an account of some of them, and of the forests in which they grow. It rather grates on the feelings of the tree-lover to read how, in order to get a supply of the *Odontoglossum crispum*, he caused to be cut down some 4000 trees bearing 10,000 plants on their branches. At the same time, the figures cannot but suggest the vastness of the forests, when it is remembered that these trees would never be missed in the immense expanse of the tree-covered territory. It was, we may remark in passing, a variety of *Odontoglossum crispum* which recently sold in London at the record price of 1150 guineas.

Rice can be grown in the Colombian lowlands,

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especially about the borders of the marshes and lakes of the northern plains. Tobacco is cultivated in many places, of which Ambalema, on the upper Magdalena, is the most famous. There is the cigar factory which formerly belonged to Messrs. Goschen, where a large business is still carried on and very fair cigars are made. According to Mr. Scruggs, some of the Colombian tobacco is nearly as good as the best in Cuba, and he states that he has known old smokers fail to detect the difference between good Ambalema cigars and good Havanas. He goes on to assert that many a so-called Havana bought in the shops of Europe and America comes in reality, notwithstanding its label, from Ambalema. The price is a very different thing when you buy your cigars at Ambalema or Honda, and about six shillings a hundred represents a very fair smoke. Mr. Scruggs gives one more instance, apparently within his own knowledge, of an experienced judge of cigars who believed an Ambalema, costing about fourpence, to be a high-priced Havana. But Ambalema is only one amongst many places where tobacco is, or could be, grown. Its cultivation had to be abandoned about Santa Marta on account of shortage of labour. Of course the ever-fertile valley of the Cauca grows it, and everywhere the poorer classes can afford to smoke tobacco grown in the country, at a price which is within even their exiguous means.

From the regions growing these essentially tropical products there is, everywhere on the mountain slopes, a gradual passage, through territories in

which maize and other semi-tropical crops grow, to the higher regions, such as the plain of Bogotá, where the wheat and barley of temperate climes flourish. There does not appear, however, to be any opening for the growing of these in Colombia for purposes of export. The mountainous character of much of the country, and the unsuitability of the hot plains for growing wheat, banish all hope of competition, in the European market, with Argentina. In these products Colombia must rest satisfied with becoming self-supporting.

Amongst the riches produced on the surface of the land we must not forget the opening which there is in vast areas for cattle-breeding and rearing. The northern plains have already a considerable industry of this sort, as is evidenced by the export to Cuba of 6000 head of cattle in a single year. The cattle are good to look upon, and the grazing ground is practically unlimited. If only for hides, cattle-breeding is worth developing. Then, again, a still better country is found on the great prairies about the Meta, the Vichada, and the Guaviare, tributaries of the Orinoco. Here there are immense tracts of grass-covered country, practically unoccupied by man, and the Meta at least is navigable from its junction with the Orinoco far up towards the eastern descent of the Andes. President Reyes has indicated the development of cattle-breeding and the "canning" industry in these territories of San Martin and Casanare as one of the desiderata of the State.

To all these indications of possible industries

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it may be replied that the country has neither the population nor the money to embark on them. That is true, no doubt, and it would be madness to try to go too fast. But it is just as well to point out where the possibilities of the country lie, and what an immense margin for expansion it has. For the present, the Colombians can pick and choose those enterprises which offer the best chances of a large and early profit.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1886 AND ITS MODIFICATION IN 1905

In order to understand the position of the present Government of Colombia and the great changes which have taken place since 1904, it is necessary to give, at the risk of being tedious, a sketch of the Constitution of 1886 which was in force in 1904, and of the important modifications of it which were introduced in 1905.

Simon Bolivar, the Liberator, was distinctly much above the majority of his comrades in the struggle for freedom from the domination of Spain, and in nothing perhaps more than in his clear perception of the necessity for a strong central Government, binding together large groups of the fledgling states in their early attempts to take wing on the unaccustomed air of Liberty. The areas that were afterwards to be states were vast in size, it is true, but, compared with the old world, they were extremely sparsely populated. If each were to be allowed to flutter off independently, or nearly independently, there was a strong probability of disaster to some at least of the communities to which self-government was a complete novelty. Bolivar's enemies and political opponents

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were apparently haunted by the fear that their revolt against Spain might, like the French Revolution, end in the domination of a South American Napoleon; but Bolivar had neither the selfishness, nor the unscrupulousness, nor the genius of the great Corsican. He was a patriot fighting for the liberty of his country, and not, like Napoleon, an enemy who became its friend only because he saw in a change of politics a stepping-stone to his own personal aggrandizement. He ended, almost against his will, as dictator, and he laid down his power voluntarily because he thought that it was bad for the country, though it may well be doubted whether a succession of dictators of his stamp would not have made a far better business of Spanish South America than the Republics and United States which have followed him. He was the advocate of strict subordination of departments to a nation, as against the Federalists who preferred a loosely knit federation of "sovereign states," each practically governing itself and throwing off the ill-riveted yoke of the Federal Government just when it thought fit. Progress could only be hoped for from union of the constituent portions. Perhaps Bolivar erred by proposing to construct a state too large in area to be managed by a single central Government, and he might have been better advised to consent to a division of the three areas of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador into the states which they became soon after his death. The Federal deputies certainly did not act with great public spirit, for those of them who were personally



THE APULO VALLEY



IN THE FOREST (SAN JOAQUIN)

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well disposed towards the Liberator in most matters elected, by their retirement, to throw upon his shoulders the entire responsibility. The position of a dictator was thus practically forced upon him.

Two years after his death, at Santa Marta in 1830, the "essential and irrevocable sovereignty" of the nation was recognised, but by 1858 the pendulum had swung back towards Federalism, and the "sovereign states" of Colombia had been constituted by laws of the preceding three years. The Constitution of 1858 recognised the states thus set up, and was at once followed by civil war, which only ended with the recognition of Mosquera as the "supreme political and military authority." The Federal Constitution of 1863, modelled largely on that of the United States, created a collegiate executive composed of five ministers, "each of whom was to govern with absolute independence of the others, the department over which he was placed."

At last, the Constitution of 1886 returned once more to the idea of a "sovereign nation" governing a number of departments with departmental autonomy extending to purely local affairs, with governors appointed by the Central Executive, and without the right of secession from the Federation.

This Constitution was not modified before 1904, and it still forms the basis of the State organization, though it has been altered in some important points since the accession to power of General Reyes.

It commences by defining the Colombian nation as a "centralized Republic," with sovereignty residing essentially and exclusively in the nation,

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from which emanate all the public powers exercised. The sections comprised in the late "Colombian Union" become departments, and the former "national territories" are incorporated in the departments (erstwhile "sovereign states") to which they belonged. Thus the San Martin territory becomes part of the department of Cundinamarca, the Caquetá territory part of the Cauca department, and that of Casanare part of Boyacá. The first chapter ends with rules controlling the power of Congress to create new departments, or to separate territories or islands from departments, and "dispose of them as it may deem proper." Of the general provisions regarding citizenship, civil rights, and "society guarantees," some of the most important are those which prescribe the death penalty, and limit its infliction. They are certainly curious in some respects, for arson, piracy, and "assault in a gang of malefactors" are added to parricide, assassination, and treason in foreign war, whilst the punishment of death is expressly barred in the case of political offences, and is not even to be inflicted for treason to the established Government in civil war, unless, perhaps, it may be possible to bring it in under the head of certain military crimes so punishable. To most people this provision would seem to offer a distinct premium to revolution-mongers. Why a man who makes war on his own Government, who incites its subjects to rebellion, and who involves his country in all the horrors of civil war, should escape more lightly than the man

who goes over to the foreign enemy passes comprehension.

The Constitution deals in a liberal spirit with religion. The Roman Catholic faith is stated to be that of the nation, but the Church is not an established one, and is declared independent of Government. Whilst priestly functions are declared incompatible with those of public political office, the employment of the priesthood in education is sanctioned. Absolute toleration of all forms of worship, not directly opposed to Christian morality or law, is proclaimed, and, as a matter of fact, observed.

On the visitor to Bogotá the influence of the clergy is not forcibly obtruded. He sees no great number of priests in the streets, he hears no very great talk about them, and his attention is not drawn to them as an important political factor. He sees that many of the monasteries have become State property, and he rarely meets a monk. Yet, if he inquires from those who know the country best, he will hear on all hands that priestly influence is immense in matters far outside the scope of a religious hierarchy. Roughly speaking, the Church in Colombia, as in other countries in modern times, is in sympathy with the Conservative, in opposition to the Liberal party. But in a country in which the vast majority of the population is hopelessly ignorant, the power of the only educated man known to so many is too great to be defied, and the necessity of conciliation is clearly seen by the leaders

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of even the Liberal party. Whilst the Church was at enmity with the State, she was found to be more dangerous to the civil authority than when she can, as now, look for at least some measure of good treatment even at the hands of a Liberal Government. Her power of directing the votes of the ignorant in political matters is a powerful weapon in her hands. Education, of course, is the subject over which there is most likelihood of disagreement. The Government which wishes to force upon the schools books not approved by the Church, or advocates secular education and the exclusion of clerical instructors in secular subjects, has to reckon with the certainty that the ignorant, who are incapable of forming a judgment for themselves in political matters, will blindly follow the lead of the man whom they and their ancestors have always been accustomed to regard as the depository of learning and political wisdom. Against the influence of the priest, thus based on tradition, it is difficult for any other personal influence to prevail. The relations of Church and State were settled by a concordat in 1887, and a subsequent agreement as to Church jurisdiction. There seems, therefore, no reason why the position of the clergy should form the ground of further internal strife. If it ever does so, it will probably be in reality only a cloak for the personal ambitions of politicians.

Public education is required by the Constitution to be in accordance with the faith of the

Roman Catholic Church; primary education must be gratuitous, but not compulsory. The latter provision was certainly very necessary, if only on account of the financial impossibility hitherto of finding money to meet the cost. That of course is not the only reason, any more than it is the only reason in India, for refraining from compulsion. The spread of education is, no doubt, highly desirable, but the time for forcibly imposing it on a scattered population will not arrive yet.

From these general matters the Constitution passes to the legislative, the executive, and the judicial machinery of the State. The power of legislation is vested in a Congress, consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The President and the Cabinet Ministers together are styled the "Government," whilst the chiefship of the executive is assigned to the President. There is a consultative Council of State, and at the head of the judicial branch stands the Supreme Court. To begin with the Congress, the two Houses are required to meet every two years, on the 20th July, and to remain in ordinary session for 120 days, after which the Government may declare the session closed, though it may summon the Houses, at any time, to meet in extraordinary sessions. A quorum of not less than one-third of its members is required in each House for the opening of a session, or for deliberation, and defaulting members are liable to fine by a committee of those present in their respective Houses. The two fractions of the Congress can sit together

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only when a new President has to be installed, or for the election of a "Designado," that is, the understudy who is to assume the headship of the executive in the case of default both of the President and the Vice-President. This system of under-studies runs through the greater part of the electorial system. The President has them in the Vice-President and the "Designado," the senator and the representative equally have their two "substitutes," elected at the same time as themselves, ready to take their place in the event of death or incapacitation, temporary or permanent. The difficulty of by-elections is thus avoided, but, as will appear presently, there are disadvantages still greater in a system which, in the case of the Presidency at least, sets up a candidate *in posse* whose personal interests lie in a change of office. When a law has been passed by both Houses of Congress, it goes to the President for approval. He may send it back with his objections, within a fixed period, and it must then be discussed afresh. If it is sent up again, supported by a two-thirds majority, the President has no option but to approve it, unless he holds it to be a breach of the Constitution. In that event, the point must be referred for the final discussion of the Supreme Court, which is required to pronounce within six days, its judgment being conclusive as between President and Congress.

In addition to its legislative functions, the Congress has a very extensive power of interference in such matters as contracts entered into

by the executive, and the ratification of treaties. The disastrous effects of its exercise of this control in the case of the Panama Canal have already been referred to. The Senate, moreover, has judicial functions in connection with the impeachment of the President, and certain other high officials, when decided on by the Lower House. The Upper House alone can accept or reject the resignation of the President or Vice-President, can authorise the declaration of foreign war, and has the power to confirm or reject the appointment of certain high military and judicial officers of State. The qualifications of a senator are the attainment of the age of thirty, and the possession of an annual income of at least 2200 dollars. There are three senators from each department, and each of them has elected with him two substitutes or understudies. He is elected for six years, and the whole body is renewed by the completion of the term of service of one-third of its members every two years. In the Lower House representation is fixed on the basis of one representative for every electoral area with a population of 50,000, with certain provisions for the representation of unavoidable fractions of that number, over or below the average. Two substitutes are elected at the same time for each representative. The only qualifications of a representative are citizenship, the attainment of the age of twenty-five, and freedom from the stain of conviction of an offence liable to corporal punishment. Election is for four years.

The Constitution does not fix the rate of pay-

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ment of members of the Congress, that being left to their own decision; though a check on corruption is imposed by the proviso that any increase in the rate voted can only take effect after the members voting it have ceased to act. This check certainly seems one which could be evaded in a good many ways. The President and Vice-President are elected, for a term of six years, by the electoral assemblies (of which more anon) voting on the same day. The former, besides being the chief of the executive, appoints the judges of the Supreme Court when vacancies occur, and for the other courts chooses from a list of three candidates for each vacancy, submitted to him by the Supreme Court. With him rests the appointment and removal of Ministers, as well as of the governors of departments. Under Article 121 of the Constitution, he is invested with a power which is, perhaps, more important than any other provision of the Constitution. In case of foreign war or civil commotion, he can, after consulting the Council of State, and obtaining the written consent of all his Ministers, declare that public order is disturbed, and that the whole or part of the republic is in a state of siege. His orders during such period require the counter-signature of the Ministers, who thereby become responsible, in order to render them binding. On the restoration of a normal state, they require confirmation by Congress. It is clear that a strong President, dominating his Ministers, can thus, almost at any time, create what is practically a dictatorship. With a conscientious and able

President, most people, outside Colombia, will probably consider that this is the happiest condition for the country; but everything hinges on the personality of the President, and the dictatorship of a man of the stamp of the late President Marroquin was certainly not a blessing.

The Vice-President is not a person of great importance while the President is able and willing to act, except in so far as he is always a President *in posse*, and therefore always more or less of a danger, if he be an ambitious man looking longingly for the opportunity of stepping into the President's shoes. But he becomes of great importance when, as in the cases of Carlos Holguin and Caro, he practically acts as President during the latter's temporary absence. It was Vice-President Marroquin, too, who put aside San Clemente and placed himself in the presidential chair. The Vice-President acts during the temporary absence or incapacity of the President. In the event of the President's death, or accepted resignation, the Vice-President becomes President for the remainder of his term of office; failing the Vice-President, the "Designado" fills his place. The qualifications for these three offices are the same as those of a Senator.

The Ministers of the Cabinet require only the qualifications of a representative; their work is distributed amongst them by the President, who may delegate to each of them minor portions of his functions. As a matter of fact, with a capable President, the Ministers are really only secretaries carrying out the President's orders, though they are

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nominally responsible, and their counter-signature to his orders is required.

The Council of State is a consultative body of six voting members, with the Vice-President as their head. The Cabinet Ministers have a voice in their deliberations, but no vote. They are, amongst other things, charged with the preparation of bills for submission to Congress. The members are appointed for four years, and half the number go out of office every two years.

The national Attorney-General is, under the Government, the general superintendent and head of all public ministries.

The machinery for the administration of justice has at its head the Supreme Court of seven judges, appointed by the President for life, subject to good behaviour. There are also, as usual, seven substitutes to fill temporary vacancies. The qualifications of a judge of the Supreme Court are the attainment of thirty-five years of age and certain specified legal qualifications. The ordinary judicial functions of the court are appellate only, but it exercises original jurisdiction in the trial of certain high officials, and in the decision of points referred to it, as already described, regarding the constitutionality of proposed laws.

The superior courts of the judicial districts are presided over by judges, who must be thirty years of age and have legal qualifications. The judges of the inferior courts of districts are expected to be "versed in the science of law," a term which appears often to be very laxly interpreted. Even

that qualification is not demanded of a municipal judge. Power is given to create courts of commerce, and to institute trial by jury in criminal cases. Hitherto, the courts do not appear to have gained any high place in general esteem. As has been said of the native courts of Egypt, a high judicial standard can only be expected as the general tone of society advances.

The only provision of importance regarding the "Public Forces" is the assertion of universal liability to service, and a direction for the maintenance of a standing army for the defence of the State.

The arrangement of the chapters of the Constitution is not very convenient, for it is only at this stage that the question of elections, and the electoral qualification, is dealt with. Every citizen (and the term implies the male sex and an age of twenty-one years) can vote for the election of municipal councillors, and for that of deputies for departmental assemblies (which are dealt with presently). Every citizen who (1) can read and write, *or* (2) has an annual income of 500 dollars, *or* (3) owns immovable property worth 1500 dollars, can vote for the election of representatives to the House of Representatives, and for electors, with whom rests the voting for the election of the President and Vice-President. Senators are elected (three for each department) by the departmental assemblies.

The electors (that is, the delegates of the people voting for President and Vice-President) are one for every 1000 of population, and one for every district with less than 1000 inhabitants.

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Each department is divided into electoral districts—one district for each representative the department is entitled to on the basis of population. The next matter dealt with is departmental and municipal administration. Each department is divided into provinces, and these again into municipal districts. For the local administration of the department there is a departmental Assembly, composed of deputies at the rate of one for each 12,000 inhabitants. It meets, ordinarily every two years, at the capital of the department. Its duties are the encouragement of primary education, railways and other industries, and "generally, whatever relates to local interests and internal progress." The funds of the departments have their foundation in the property which, previous to this Constitution, belonged to the corresponding "sovereign state," which lapsed then to the nation, but was reconveyed to the department by the Constitution. The Assembly may levy taxes in accordance with law to meet its expenses. Its acts, however, are liable to suspension by executive order of the Governor, or by judicial order of court. The Governor is appointed for three years, and, unlike the President, the Vice-President, and Senators, can be reappointed without an interval. He is the executive authority of the department, acting on the one hand as agent of the central government, and on the other as superior chief of the departmental administration. He has power to suspend the orders of the municipal councils, which are the managers of the local affairs of the

municipal districts, and are described as "popular corporations." The "alcalde" is the director of the municipal council, acting on the one hand as the agent of Government, and on the other as the officer of the people. His orders are liable to be revoked by the Governor, on the ground of incompetency or illegality.

Finance forms the subject of the penultimate chapter of the Constitution. The national property is classified thus:—(1) The estates and other property belonging, before 1886, to the now defunct Colombian Union, created by the Constitution of 1863. (2) Unoccupied lands, mines, and salt-works which formerly belonged to the states, but without prejudice to the rights of third parties acquired from the states, or held by the states under title of indemnification from the nation. (3) All gold, silver, and platinum mines, and mines of precious stones, without prejudice to the rights of third parties acquired under laws previous to 1886. No indirect tax, and no increase of an existing tax, can come into operation until six months after the passing of the law creating or enhancing it. No alteration in the customs tariff is operative before the lapse of ninety days from the order, and then it only comes into force at the rate of 10 per cent. of the increase in each mouth.

A budget, approved by Congress, is to be prepared every two years, and, failing preparation, the last budget continues to hold good. This injunction for the preparation of budgets has, for

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many years previous to 1904, been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. When Congress is not in session, Government has power, subject to subsequent legalization, to make special grants.

The concluding paragraphs prescribe the method of altering this Constitution by ordinary methods. Any such amendment proposed must—

(1) Be adopted by Congress, after discussion and three readings.

(2) It must then be submitted by Government to the next succeeding legislature.

(3) That legislature must again discuss it fully, and it can only be passed by a majority of two-thirds in each House.

The last provisions seemed to banish all hope of a modification of the Constitution in practice, but General Reyes was equal to the occasion. The Congress which was sitting when he took office in 1904 was, on the whole, hostile to him, and could be got to do nothing. The President in vain preached the necessity for less politics and more real work, and, in the end of 1904, he cut the knot by dissolving the Congress, which had already wasted its time during four months of ordinary, and one of extraordinary session. He declared, under Section 121 of the Constitution, a state of siege in the departments of Cundinamarca and Santander, thus making himself dictator for the time being. During the next three or four months he was busy legislating in every direction, and by the 15th of March 1905 he was ready to meet the

National Constituent and Legislative Assembly, which he summoned for that date. This new Assembly, overriding by the will of the nation any Congress, proved itself a much more amenable body than the late Congress. The state of siege was declared at an end, and the National Assembly proceeded to modify the Constitution as will now be described.

To begin with the President, his ordinary term of office is reduced from six years to four, but in the case of General Reyes himself a special term of ten years, from the 1st January 1905, is fixed; and there is nothing to prevent his re-election at the end of his term, the restriction as to immediate re-election having been withdrawn. The two understudies, the Vice-President and the Designado, are abolished. In case of his temporary absence, the President names his own *locum-tenens* from among his Ministers, and, in the event of his death or resignation, his successor is elected by the Council of Ministers, or the Governor of a department who happens to be nearest to Bogotá at the time. Thus, there is no one who can look upon himself as certain to benefit automatically by the removal of the President, a fact which certainly removes a strong temptation to intrigue.

For the future, the legislative chambers are to meet every two years, on the 1st February, for ninety days only, in ordinary session. The first Congress, however, is not to meet till the 1st February 1908, till when the powers of the Congress will be exercised by the National Assembly.

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When the next Senate is elected it is to be so by the Departmental Councils, and it is to be renewed in the same periods as the Chamber of Representatives. The President and the Representatives are to be elected under a special law passed for the purpose. In all elections the representative rights of minorities are to be provided for by law.

The Constitution may be modified (1) by a National Assembly convoked for the purpose by the Congress, or (2) by the executive power on the demand of a majority of the municipalities. There are other rules on this subject which practically take all power out of the hands of the Congress.

The Council of State is suppressed, and the powers of Departmental Councils are more clearly defined.

The term of six months prescribed for bringing into force new taxation is done away with—though the restriction in regard to enhancements of customs still remains. The judges of the Supreme Court are to be appointed for five years, instead of for life subject to good behaviour, and those of the superior tribunals of districts for four years. In either case the term can be renewed. The first nominations are to be made by the President, with the sanction of the Senate.

Power is given to settle by law the territorial divisions of the republic, to separate territories for administration under special laws, and to fix the number of Senators and Representatives for each division. The last change which we need

notice specially relates to the acquisition of property for public purposes. Compensation is ordinarily to be paid, but in the case of acquisitions for public communications it is to be presumed that the benefit accruing to the property from the new work equals the value of the property acquired. The burden of proving that this is not so rests on the owner, and it is only if he succeeds that he will become entitled to any payment. This provision is of immense importance to railway companies, and is clearly aimed at the prevention of extravagant claims, such as that described in speaking of the mining law.

These reforms of the Constitution alone place the President in a very different position from that which he formerly occupied. But the Assembly has done a great deal more than this towards increasing his power and making General Reyes to all intents and purposes a dictator, so long as he can control the Assembly itself, or the Congress which is to succeed it in 1908. That should in practice not be a very difficult matter, and will be much facilitated by the redistribution of the territorial divisions. Law upon law has been passed by this Assembly, delegating to the executive its powers in almost every branch of the administration. The Government—that is, practically, the President—has almost an absolutely free hand to deal with every matter of importance, and the Assembly has given away nearly every power it possessed of controlling him; what has been left to it is a mere semblance of power. It has

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passed wholesale the legislation which he prepared during the state of siege, and which required confirmation under the provisions of the Constitution. Henceforward, the country has to look to General Reyes, and to rely upon his capacity and firmness for the carrying out of the measures which all must recognise as essential to the prosperity and advancement of the State.

The provisions regarding territorial redistribution have already been acted on. The old eight departments (excluding Panama) have now been formed into fifteen departments and four Intendencies, besides the capital district of Bogotá. The Intendencies are :—

(1) Goajira, in the peninsula of that name, in the extreme north-east.

(2) Meta, comprising the territories of San Martin and Casanare, on the eastern plains of Cundinamarca and Boyacá.

(3) The plains and forests of the Upper Caquetá, formerly part of Cauca.

(4) The forests of the Putumayo, also till lately included in Cauca.

These Intendencies will be managed under special laws suited to their very backward and undeveloped circumstances.

The capital district of Bogotá is carved out of Cundinamarca, and practically consists of the city and its immediate neighbourhood. Facatativá becomes the capital of Cundinamarca. The new departments, separated from the older ones already described, are :—

(1) The Atlantic, with Barranquilla as its capital.

(2) Caldas, consisting of the country surrounding its capital, Manizales, formerly in Antioquia.

(3) Galán—capital, San Gil—includes Charalá, Socorro, Velez, and other places in Southern Santander.

(4) Huila is a department surrounding Neiva in the old department of Tolima.

(5) Nariño, with its headquarters at Pasto, is the mountain area on the Ecuadorian frontier, west of the Intendency of Putumayo, and reaching to Barbacoas and Tumaco on the Pacific coast.

(6) Quesada represents Cipaquirá (the capital), Guatavita, Ubate, Pacho, and other places in that neighbourhood.

(7) Tundama, with its capital at Santa Rosa, is a large slice out of Boyacá, on the Santander frontier.

Each department consists of a number of provinces (ninety-two in all) grouped into twenty-four "electoral circumscriptions." The basal units of territorial division are the municipalities, of which there are 740.

When the next Congress assembles, there will be forty-eight Senators, three for each department, and three for the capital district. They will be named by the Departmental Council, consisting of the governor, his secretaries, and the chief of the departmental Corte de Cuentas. In the capital district, the three Senators will be named by the President and his Cabinet Ministers.

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The Lower House will contain sixty-seven representatives elected by the people in the departments. In the Intendencies, one representative for each is allowed, and he is to be chosen by the Intendant, his secretary, and three notables elected by the municipal council of the local capital.

When it is remembered that the governors of departments and the Intendants are the nominees of the President, that they and their staffs control the nomination of Senators, and that their number has been doubled, it will be evident how complete the President's control has become. The representatives in the Lower House, it is true, are still to be elected by popular suffrage, but with the territory divided as it is (and the process seems not yet to be quite complete), there can be very little doubt of the ability of the Government to control the result in the majority of cases.

The strength of the President's new position is manifest, and so long as General Reyes can maintain peace, he may be regarded as to all intents a dictator as powerful as Porfirio Diaz in Mexico. The results of his administration depend on the personal equation.



SOMONDOCO EMERALD MINE

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CHAPTER XIII

THE GENERAL SITUATION IN 1904 AND IN 1906

THE position of Colombia when General Reyes became President, in August 1904, was disheartening in the extreme, and in nothing more so than in the department of finance. The three years of civil war, ending in 1903, had left the country exhausted and disorganized in every department.

When the traveller lands at Panama, he finds in circulation a silver currency of "pesos," exchanging against about half their nominal value of one dollar American gold. When he reaches Barranquilla and tenders these silver "pesos" in payment of a cab fare, the driver looks stupidly at them and refuses to accept them, though they bear the superscription of the Republic, or the United States, of Colombia. He requires to be paid in the, generally dirty and torn, notes which are the only currency to which he is accustomed. It is the same in most parts of the country; the greater part of the metallic currency has disappeared, and given place to inconvertible paper. The Cartagena-Magdalena Railway certainly has succeeded in enforcing payment in silver, but it is quite the exception, and, during more than two months spent in Colombia, we never saw a silver or gold coin. The notes, which form the almost universal

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medium of exchange in all small transactions, are of values of one "peso" and upwards, but commonly the lowest in use is one of five "pesos," representing, at the existing rates of exchange, about 2½d. English, or 5 cents American. Notes of one or two "pesos" will be seen occasionally; those of "centavos" are curiosities, for the "centavo," originally the equivalent of one cent American, now represents only the hundredth part of a halfpenny.

The ratio of foreign exchange is generally expressed in terms of 100 dollars American gold, and at present it fluctuates about 10,000—that is, 100 dollars, or £20, is equal to 10,000 "pesos," which reduces 100 "pesos" to the value of one American dollar (4s. English), and the "peso" to that of one cent, or one halfpenny. It has, as General Reyes has put it, lost 99 per cent. of its nominal value. Ten thousand has recently been fixed by Government as the rate of exchange for all official transactions. The fluctuations are expressed somewhat curiously. In India exchange is said to be rising when the value of the rupee is appreciated, and it requires fewer rupees to purchase a sovereign. In Colombia the notation is the reverse. If to-day it requires 10,000 "pesos" to purchase a bill on New York for 100 dollars, which yesterday could be bought for 9800, exchange is said to have risen—that is, the value in gold of the "peso" has depreciated. To those accustomed to the Eastern notation, this is at first rather puzzling, and it seems a contradiction to say in Bogotá that a rising exchange means loss to the merchant there.

In the last few years, since the beginning of the late disturbances, there has been a disastrous rise in the rate of exchange, which is not surprising when it is remembered that it is many years since the country was almost cleared of specie, and little was left but forced paper currency. In the beginning of 1897, a bill for £20 on London could be bought for 236 "pesos," which works out at a value for the "peso" of about 1s. 8¼d.

There was a steady rise in exchange to 317 in the end of 1898; in 1899 the rise was much more rapid, and by the end of that year it required 650 "pesos" to purchase a £20 bill. The upward progress of exchange, and the depreciation of the paper "peso," continued in 1900, by the end of which year £20 were equal to nearly 1100 "pesos." As the revolution progressed, the movements of exchange advanced by leaps and bounds, till 4800 "pesos" went to the £20. There was a temporary halt in the first half of 1902, followed by a rise in July, which carried exchange up to 10,000 "pesos" for the £20. No one knew what was going to happen, or where the fall of the "peso" would end. Exchange rose to 22,500, and speculators bought gold at a month's credit, in the belief that it would rise in that period to 30,000 or even 40,000. Their hopes were disappointed by the somewhat unexpected conclusion of peace on the Panama isthmus. Down went exchange at once to 9000 or 10,000, again with disastrous results for the speculators.

The next event was the signing of the Hay-Herran treaty with the United States, the palpable

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result of which was to be the payment to the Colombian Government of £2,000,000, followed ten years later by an annual rental of £50,000, not to speak of the value of the 50,000 shares which Colombia owned in the French company. Here was apparently a grand chance for Colombia—the chance of rehabilitating her broken credit, of creating a gold standard with a convertible paper currency, and, generally, of financial salvation. Who could suppose that the Colombian Congress could or would have the stupidity to throw this splendid chance away, on the ground of a ridiculous consideration of the "national honour" being insulted and the Constitution violated? No one but the lawyers —perhaps not even they at that time—contemplated the possibility of such a disastrous policy. Not even the mad Congress which refused to ratify the treaty probably foresaw that their action meant the irrevocable loss, by the revolt of Panama and its recognition by America, of the most valuable realizable asset of the republic. It was anticipated that exchange would fall to 2000 or 3000, and it actually did touch 6000; then it again rose to 9000 or 10,000, about which point it has fluctuated generally ever since. Those who had speculated on a fall to 2000 or 3000 again suffered, as had those who before looked to an immense rise. Matters had been still further complicated by the reckless inflation of the paper currency, not only by the central government, but also by four of the departments, which were authorised to issue departmental notes. The following quotation, from an excellent report for 1903

by Mr. Dickson, British Vice-Consul at Bogotá, on which and on his report for 1901 the present account is mainly based, sums up the history of the financial difficulties :—

"The history of the economic difficulties is the history of the National Bank of Colombia. That institution was started in the year 1880 (Law 39), and as the shares that were offered to the public were never taken up, it had a purely official character from the beginning. From 1881 to 1885 its bills were exchanged for silver at sight and at par, and were, therefore, regarded as being equivalent to silver coin. During the civil war of 1884–85 there was a run on the Bank, in consequence of which the Government provided for the suspension of cash payments. (Decree No. 1104 of 1885.) This decree has never been abrogated, suspended, or modified. By Law 87 of December 20, 1886, the bills of the National Bank were declared inconvertible and of forced currency. They were also pronounced the only legal tender in Colombia, agreements in any other kind of money being prohibited. In 1887 (Law 124) the issue was limited to 12,000,000 pesos; this limit was, however, exceeded, and in November 1894 the Government decreed the liquidation of the National Bank (Law 70). From this date the National Bank ceased to exist as a corporation, and became a Government institution. On October 16, 1899, the Government published a decree providing for the issue of such sums of paper money as the repression of the revolution should render necessary.

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At this date the issue of paper money in the country amounted to 46,000,000 pesos.

"From October 16, 1899, to February 28, 1903, the Government issued paper money almost as fast as the presses could work, but even this was not sufficient to supply the needs of the Government, and the departments of Santander, Bolivar, Antioquia, and the Cauca were empowered to issue their own money. How departmental bills were not accepted, except in the department of their emission, at par, and how travellers had to submit to large discounts in moving from one part of the country to another, I have explained in my previous report. The discrepancy between large and small bills, to which I also referred, has been done away with. The Colombian Government has issued an official statement as to the quantity of paper money in circulation, which is as follows":—

	Amount.
Issued by—	Dollars.
The Central Government	600,398,581
,, Department of Santander . .	750,000
,, ,, Bolivar . . .	18,702,100
,, ,, Antioquia . .	35,938,495·60
,, ,, the Cauca . .	44,719,688·70
Total	700,508,865·30

Few would be willing to accept this statement of the amount of paper money issued with confidence, and it makes no allowance for the forged and fraudulently issued paper believed to be floating

about. If you tender a new-looking note, which you think above suspicion, it is as likely as not that you will be asked for a dirtier one. Apparently the idea is that the dirty note has passed through so many hands that its reputation for goodness may be accepted as established. Even on this official statement there are, at 10,000 per cent. exchange, more than £1,400,000 worth of paper money in the country. According to a recent official notice, notes have been bought in and burnt, since the institution of the Junta de Amortizacion, to the amount of over 160 millions (say £320,000). Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the general complaint in the country districts is of a dearth of paper, with the result that the primitive system of barter has to be resorted to. An European, who by long residence in Colombia had become practically a native, had the following experiences illustrative of this state of affairs. Being about to pay a visit to Europe, he wanted to cash a bill for £150 (say 75,000 "pesos") in Honda. No firm which could deal with such a bill was able to produce anything like this amount of paper money. It was therefore necessary to split the bill up into smaller amounts, to accept part in cash, and the rest in coffee or other commodities. These the drawer had to have hawked about the streets in small packets, often at a loss, in order to collect, in small amounts, the paper which he required. Though the "peso" is used as a measure of value in small transactions in the produce of the country, in the payment of hotel bills, or wages and the like, all mercantile transactions are based on the American

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gold dollar, worth at present about 100 "pesos." It is only recently that contracts based on this standard have become enforceable by law. Formerly, the law would recognise no contract framed on any basis other than payment in bills of the National Bank of Colombia. It can be easily imagined how such a provision tended to destroy credit, and necessitated dealings in cash in the case of every one who could not be trusted not to avail himself of it.

We must again quote Mr. Dickson's report as a summary of the new law of 1903 :—

"A law with regard to free contracts in any currency (libre estipulación) has been passed by Congress. The real title of the law is 'for the regulating of the monetary system and the redemption of the paper money.' Its principal features are as follows :—

"The monetary unit of the country to be the gold dollar of 1672 milligrammes of weight and ·900 fine, *i.e.* the gold dollar of the United States of America.

"The gold coinage of other nations may circulate freely, as well as silver coins ·835 and ·900 fine.

"Future issue of paper money, whether by central or departmental Governments, absolutely prohibited, both in times of peace and war.

"The paper money, hitherto legally issued by the national and departmental Governments, to preserve its character of a forced currency and its liberatory power in those places where it now circulates, according to the following rules : (*a*) In public or private transactions contracts may be

made at the will of the parties either in the gold unit or in paper money. (*b*) When payment has been contracted for in gold, the obligation can be carried out by the payment of an equivalent sum of paper money at the rate of exchange ruling on the day of payment. (*c*) In the departments and provinces where silver has hitherto been current, that coinage shall keep its character of a circulating medium in relation to the gold unit, according to the price of silver in the market, and contracts may be made in the above currency. (*d*) Obligations contracted, or which may be contracted, with foreign houses or interests, should be carried out in accordance with the terms of Article 203 of the Code of Commerce. (*e*) Obligations contracted in legal tender (*moneda corriente*), in which a particular coinage is not expressed, will be understood as contracted for and payable in the forced paper currency.

"A Council to be created, known as the Council of National Amortization, to be composed of five members, two nominated by the Senate, two by the Chamber of Representatives, and one by the Executive Power. They are to be chosen from among the most distinguished men engaged in commerce, known for their rectitude and competency. (*a*) The gold which the Council collects to be sold in lots of 1000 dollars (£200) at public auction for paper money. (*b*) The paper money which the Council shall collect by the above-mentioned sale and by contributions to be publicly burned. (*c*) The Council to have full management

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of the funds confided to it and of its own constitution. (*d*) The Council to fix, day by day, the rate of exchange, based upon transactions effected in the open market, and that rate will hold good in all judicial matters.

"The Council to appoint sectional councils in the country for the changing of deteriorated bills, buying up and burning paper.

"The following sources of income to be at the disposal of the Council for the amortization of the paper money: The rent from the emerald mines of Muzo and Cosquez; from the mines of Santa Ana, La Manta, Supia, and Marmato; from the pearl fisheries of the Republic; from the produce of the exploitation of the national woods; harbour and lighthouse dues; tonnage, &c.

"The export duties to include those on vegetable ivory, which, it is proposed, shall be made the same as levied by the Republic of Ecuador.

"The Council is authorised to rent the Muzo and Cosquez mines for the period of ten years. Estimates of income and expenditure to be fixed in the gold unit described above (the United States dollar): (*a*) Customs duties to be levied in gold or in bills at the exchange of the day. (*b*) The rents of national property, such as the mines of Muzo, &c., to be levied exclusively in gold. (*c*) Rents not mentioned above to be fixed in gold, but levied in paper, in periods of three months. (*d*) For the fixing of exchange for the periods of three months the figure of the National Council of Amortization shall be the standard, but for the

first three months period liquidations will be made at 10,000 per cent.

"The members of the National Council to be re-appointed every four years, but those appointed in 1903 to hold their office till September 30, 1908.

"The National Council to issue a new edition of bills to be exchanged for those deteriorated. For this purpose they may appropriate the sum of 250,000 dollars gold (£50,000), to be taken from the funds they shall receive for the purposes of amortization."

General Reyes at any rate was not enamoured of this Council of Amortization, which he looked upon as an unconstitutional check placed upon the executive. In October 1904, in sanctioning a law with certain modifications of the original bill, one of which conferred powers on the Junta de Amortizacion, he strongly protested against the apparent attempt of the Congress to "curtail the attributes of the executive by placing it under the tutelage of a Junta which should never act as an independent body." He has now got over the difficulty by placing at the head of the Junta de Amortizacion the Minister of Finance, who practically controls it.

The bill, the modification of which led to the remarks just quoted, had been designed to meet, by a loan from the Council of Amortization to Government of one hundred millions of "pesos," certain urgent charges necessary for the work of reorganizing the public services. The money was to be taken from notes already printed in England for exchange against damaged and departmental notes. If these

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were insufficient, more notes were to be struck off to the necessary amount. With these one hundred millions (£200,000) were to be paid what was due to the army and the employés of the Judiciary, the civil service, &c., provided in all cases that the employés had not discounted their claims, or passed them to third parties. In order to reimburse this loan, the Board of Amortization were to issue bonds which should be compulsorily used for payment of 30 per cent. of all demands for import dues exceeding 300 "pesos" gold. The bonds were to be sold in the market for paper or gold to the best public interest, provided they were never to be sold under 20 per cent. discount on their face value; any paper received as their price was to be burnt. It was an interference by Congress with this 20 per cent. discount limit which aroused the President's wrath, as above-mentioned.

Other sections of the bill provided for the destruction of the plates and lithographic stones for printing notes, so as to prevent future fraudulent issues. The reduction of the army and payment of the claims of disbanded officers and men were also provided for.

In a long Presidential message, dated 19th October 1904, General Reyes expounded his programme of administration. It must be remembered that, at this time, he was hampered by a hostile Congress, which had only elected him, by a narrow majority, because his antagonist was manifestly impossible and very reactionary. A fortnight earlier, he had issued another message, in which he

exposed the general budgetary situation in the following estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year :—

Receipts.	Pesos (Gold).
1. Customs	2,500,000
2. Salt	1,000,000
3. Sealed paper and stamps	70,000
4. Post Office	20,000
5. Telegraphs	70,000
6. Consular fees	177,500
7. Emerald mines	480,000
	4,317,500 (£863,500)

The charges to be met, even with the existing insufficient salaries, and disregarding the actual deficit, were estimated at 5,940,975 dollars (£1,188,195), thus leaving a deficit of 1,623,475 dollars (£324,695). When salaries should be rectified, this deficit would amount to 4,023,475 dollars (£804,695).

In the second message the President explained how he proposed to abolish this deficit, and the chief means indicated were as follows :—

1. A new law relating to the Internal Debt.

2. An enhancement of the Customs duties, and their calculation on a gold instead of a paper basis.

3. The correction of the abuses in the public service, due to inadequate salaries paid to inefficient servants.

4. By a business-like working of the salt-works, both inland and maritime.

5. By the exploitation of the riches of the forests of Caquetá, for which purpose an expendi-

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ture of about £20,000, spread over two years, was necessary for opening a road from Pasto to the Putumayo, as well as for the improvement of the roads from Tolima to that territory.

6. A similar treatment of the grazing prairies of San Martin and Casanare. Supplied with salt from the mines of Pajarito and Recetor, in the highlands of Boyacá, these plains should form the basis of packing-houses for meat to be exported, an industry estimated at £1,600,000 annually.

7. The acceleration of railway construction, the deficiency in which General Reyes held to be a reproach to a nation calling itself civilized. Special stress was laid on early connection by rail between the plain of Bogotá and the Magdalena, and its continuation to the Cauca valley and Antioquia. It was also specially pointed out how necessary railways were in enabling Government to prevent or suppress disturbances in distant provinces.

Under the heading of "Foreign Affairs," the President urged the necessity for caution in dealing with the United States over the question of Panama. His utterances on this thorny question were somewhat Delphic, and he was clearly anxious to put it aside until he could himself deal with it, after the dissolution of this hostile Congress, with the hope hereafter of submitting his negotiations to a more tractable Assembly.

He proposed to reduce the foreign legations to three—one in Europe, one in North America, and one in the southern continent. He also proposed a reorganization of the consulates, and promised special attention to the question of settlement of boundary controversies with Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil.

Public instruction, especially its basis, primary education, required particular attention. Normal schools for the training of teachers, professional schools, and schools of agriculture and mines were indicated as urgent necessities for the advancement of education and the economic development of the country.

In the army and navy radical changes were foreshadowed. The strength of the former was to be reduced to 5000 men; even these were to be organized as bodies of labourers, to be employed in peace time on the construction of roads and railways. The message contained a good deal of what we should call clap-trap on the honour and aspirations of the army, which, however, was no doubt desirable in submitting these proposals to a body afflicted with an incurable sensitiveness on the subject of "national honour."

The navy, as a fighting force, was recognised to be useless, and it was proposed to reduce it to one revenue steamer on each coast, for the prevention of smuggling Hitherto, unless general rumour belied it, one at least of the ships of war was at the head of the smuggling industry. With the exception of the two ships to be thus retained, the "fleet" was to be sold at auction. Probably it would not fetch much. The third-class cruiser, the *Cartagena*, on the north coast,

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is not a bad little ship of her sort. The other recognised constituent of the "Atlantic squadron" was a steam yacht formerly belonging to Mr. Gordon Bennett, which would serve admirably for the revenue preventive service.

In justification of his proposals for increased taxation, the President pointed out that Colombia then paid very much less per head of population than other countries similarly situated. Taking Brazil as a State of conditions similar to those of Colombia, he calculated that his own State could easily bear an annual taxation of £3,040,000. With a final hint at the absolute necessity for development of foreign credit, the message concluded with a saving clause deprecatory of its being taken in too literal a sense, or as more than an indication of the "aspirations and wishes of the Government for the immediate future."

With that limitation, it must be regarded as a broad-minded, statesmanlike exposition of the needs of the country. How far the aspirations will be held constantly in view by General Reyes and his successors, and to what extent they will be realized, time alone can show. The President himself spoke of six years, the then term of his own Presidency, as necessary for their realization. With the seclusion in which Colombia is wrapped by its undeveloped communications with the outer world, it is never easy to learn promptly how matters are progressing. On the one hand, we constantly receive alarmist telegrams, originating nominally in the hostile State of Panama, but,

perhaps, if traced to their birthplace, springing from sources in closer connection with the stock markets of Europe and America. On the other hand, there are official denials of them, emanating from Bogotá, and proclaiming the establishment of peace, prosperity, and rapid progress. Both require to be discounted freely, and it is only six or seven weeks later that private advices from unprejudiced sources begin to throw a clear light on the real course of events. Often it is much longer, for Bogotá, it must be remembered, can only communicate with difficulty with the remoter provinces. There can be no doubt that President Reyes must have had many anxious moments in the early part of 1906. A conspiracy, which he affected to treat as contemptible, appears to have been by no means so light a matter. Fortunately, its existence was discovered in time, its leaders were arrested, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

When the Presidential messages were issued in 1904, the Congress contained a very powerful minority which had been hostile to the election of General Reyes. How the President got rid of his obstructive Congress, and substituted a more pliable National Assembly, has already been described.

Whatever the position may be represented to be for form's sake, the actual fact is that President Reyes became, from the date of the dissolution of the Congress of 1904, just as much a dictator as Porfirio Diaz was in Mexico, when he entered the capital in 1876. Between the positions

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occupied by those two men there are many points of similarity. On the whole, that of President Reyes is the more favourable of the two. Mexico in 1876 and Colombia in 1904 were equally suffering from the exhausting effects of many decades of internecine warfare; but Mexico, if anything, had suffered the most, for it had had to undergo the additional infliction of Louis Napoleon's mad project of an European empire under the unfortunate Maximilian. Again, Mexico was worse off than Colombia in the matter of general internal lawlessness, for the country was infested by bandits and disbanded soldiers, and life was unsafe everywhere. As we have said, in Colombia, a year after the conclusion of the last revolution, the country generally was peaceful and life and property safe.

Both countries had equally, for years past, been the sport of every ambitious man who might think he saw his way to power and riches. There was always money forthcoming, somehow or other, for the purposes of such warfare; it was rarely to be found for the payment of the State's just debts, or for the improvement of its administration. In both States every department of the public service was in the wildest state of confusion, and corruption flourished; neither had any credit at home or abroad; in both the existing armed forces were in excess of what was required in a State which was not in the least likely to be involved, or if it were so, to have any chance of success, in foreign war.

President Reyes has studied on the spot the system of Porfirio Diaz, which has lifted Mexico out of the mire in which she was plunged into a position of respectability amongst nations, and has rendered her administration and her development worthy of consideration. He openly expresses his admiration for Diaz's methods, and is generally believed to accept them as his model. Like Diaz in 1876, he had had little opportunity of trying his hand at administration when he became President in 1904. Hitherto he had gained distinction chiefly as a soldier and an explorer. He had especially distinguished himself in putting down by strong methods the revolt in Panama in 1885. In one point his position was inferior to that of Diaz in 1876, for, whilst the Mexican President first enjoyed that office at the age of forty-six, Reyes was eighteen years older in 1904.

Will President Reyes succeed in raising Colombia as President Diaz has succeeded in raising Mexico? That is a question of the personality of the man. The Colombian President has not occupied the chair long enough yet to enable a judgment to be formed with confidence. Probably, in 1878 few believed that Porfirio Diaz would succeed as he has done notwithstanding the immense difficulties he had to face, not to speak of the risks of plots and attempts at assassination which assailed him. President Reyes has already had a taste of this danger, and has met it with a firmness which augurs well. He may have to face it again, and, as we have said, it is still too early to anticipate the

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success of his endeavours to regenerate his unhappy country.

Sixteen months after his inauguration as President, General Reyes issued, at the end of 1905, a message to his fellow-countrymen, setting forth fully what he claims to have done already for them. Naturally, such a manifesto is couched in very hopeful language, and it would be unwise to accept everything that is said in it at its full face value. On the other hand, it must be admitted that there is much in it showing considerable progress, and the rise in the price of Colombian bonds alone indicates that, in the markets of Europe and America, the state's credit has improved vastly. In the end of 1903, when the Panama revolt was announced, Colombian government securities were going begging at 15 per cent., or even lower. In April 1906, they were regularly quoted on the London Stock Exchange at 45 or 46; and money was forthcoming then for investment in railways and other industrial enterprises in the country. This was certainly largely due to a feeling that the present Government of Colombia wished honestly to meet its liabilities, in so far as its means allowed, and that there was some stability at last in the administration. So much did this feeling prevail that a telegram, professing to come, like many others, from Panama, and falsely announcing the impending retirement of General Reyes, entirely failed seriously to affect the price of Colombian bonds.

Though the foreign debt is not the first subject dealt with in the presidential manifesto, it



EL PARAISO (CAUCA VALLEY)



IN THE CAUCA VALLEY

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will perhaps be convenient to deal with it here, before passing to other matters in which progress is claimed to have been made. The history of the Colombian external debt is briefly as follows. The original negotiations took place in 1820, when the Republic of Colombia included, in addition to the present areas of Colombia and Panama, those of Venezuela and Ecuador. Transferable debentures were then issued to the creditors of the republic, bearing interest at 10 per cent. if paid in London, or 12 per cent. if paid in Colombia. No interest was paid in 1821, and only that due on £1759 in 1822 for one year. In 1822 Messrs. Herring, Graham, & Powles contracted for a loan of £2,000,000 at 6 per cent. at 80, from which, before the money reached the Government, the 1820 debentures were paid off with interest. A further loan of £4,750,000 was issued at 88½ by Messrs. R. A. Goldschmidt & Co. Default on both these loans ensued, and in 1832 the republic was divided, and Colombia (or, rather, New Grenada) assumed responsibility for a total amount of £4,903,150, of which £1,590,175 was on account of interest. No interest was paid in the next ten years. In 1845, a new arrangement was entered into with the Government, providing for interest at a lower rate, gradually rising to the full amount. The other provisions of the agreement need not be gone into. It will suffice to state that practically nothing was paid, up to 1861, in the way of interest in cash, except the coupon for 1850. In 1861 a fresh agreement was entered into with the state, which,

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by that year, had twice changed its name. A further loan, in 1863, of £200,000 by the London and County Bank, secured on 15 per cent. of the gross revenue of the salt-mines, was not liquidated till 1881, instead of in 1874.

By 1873 the external debt, with accumulated interest, amounted to over six and a half millions sterling, and yet another arrangement for its conversion was effected. The old story of constant default continued, and in 1886 the state once more became the Republic of Colombia under the constitution of that year. In 1889 a fresh arrangement was attempted, but the agreement, as modified by the Colombian Congress, was rejected by the bondholders as inequitable. At last, in 1896, an arrangement was effected on the following terms, as stated by the Council of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders:—

"(1) New bonds to be issued for £2,700,000, bearing interest, payable in gold in London, at the rate of 1½ per cent. from 1st January 1897, increasing by ½ per cent. every three years until it reached 3 per cent. per annum.

"(2) The principal of the 1873 bonds outstanding to be converted at par, and the arrears of interest at 43 per cent. of their nominal value.

"(3) An accumulative sinking-fund of ½ per cent. per annum, commencing from 1st January 1900, and increasing ½ per cent. every three years until reaching 1½ per cent. per annum, to be applied, by tenders or purchases while the price of the bonds is below par, by drawings at 60 per cent. while the

bonds earn less than 3 per cent., and at 70 per cent. when the rate of interest rises to 3 per cent., in the event of the price rising to or above par.

"(4) Monthly payments to be made to the agent of the bondholders at Bogotá.

"(5) Old securities, not presented for exchange under the settlement of 1873, to be admitted to conversion into the new bonds, if any such remain over at the close of the conversion, on such terms as the agent of the Government and the Council may arrange, if lodged within one month of the opening of the conversion."

Even if this arrangement had been carried out in full by the Colombian Government, it represented a very small salvage out of the total amount received by Colombia, and the accumulated arrears of interest thereon. But beggars cannot be choosers, and even this fraction of a loaf, if obtainable, was better than no bread.

But Colombia was in almost as bad a way as ever, and was approaching the period of utter stagnation and disorganization of the revolution of 1900–3, and of the disaster of 1903, when Panama broke away and was recognised by outside powers as a state independent of the republic. Even the estimates of the two years 1897 and 1898 showed an expenditure, inclusive of the service of the National Debt, exceeding the revenue by £708,003. There was clearly little chance of the state being able to meet even its ordinary expenditure, much less of its being able to afford anything for the bondholders. In 1899, when £2,500,000

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out of the £2,700,000 converted bonds had been issued, the payment of interest once more ceased with the advent of revolution.

With the conclusion of the Hay-Herran treaty regarding the Panama Canal, the hopes of the bondholders revived, only to be dashed again by the refusal of the Colombian Senate to ratify that arrangement, and by the breaking away of Panama three months later, with the consequent loss to Colombia of large cash payments, equal to two-thirds of her total external debt. The new republic of Panama was appealed to to accept liability for a fair share of the debt, as Colombia had accepted her share of the original loan, when Bolivar's great republic broke up in 1831. Panama would only agree to accept a share proportionate to her population, and would make no allowance for the fact that she was receiving the whole of the sums payable for the canal, and all the future advantages to be expected from its construction. Even so much she would not agree to unless her independence were first formally recognised by Colombia. She refused to submit the question to arbitration, and the President of the United States, who was suggested by the bondholders as arbitrator, refused to move in the matter.

Negotiations between the Council of Foreign Bondholders and Colombia recommenced in earnest on the accession of President Reyes, but only began to bear fruit when he got rid of his obstructive Congress. After the meeting of the National Assembly, in March 1905, progress was rapid, and

ended in an agreement which stated the ascertained amount of the foreign debt to be, under the agreement of 1896, £2,700,000 on account of capital, and £351,000 for interest; altogether, £3,051,000. The Government of Colombia undertook to resume payments with a coupon at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the 1st January 1906, and at 3 per cent. in future. The recommencement of Amortization was postponed, at the desire of the Government, till January 1910. As security, it was agreed that a percentage of the customs, varying according to receipts from 12 per cent. to 15 per cent., should be regularly paid over to the Banco Central at Bogotá for the service of the debt.

Half the balance due for interest up to July 1905 was to be paid by June 1907, by means of an assignment of another 15 per cent. of the customs. As for the remaining £175,500 of overdue interest, payment was to be contingent on the result of litigation and negotiation. £70,200 of it would be payable if the Colombian Government succeeded in getting the value of its shares in the second Panama Canal Company. The remainder, £105,300, was to be payable if the Colombian Government should succeed in getting a cash indemnity, for the Panama affair, in its negotiations with the United States. Provision was made for the eventuality of Colombia being worsted in one or both of these matters.

These are the more important provisions of this new agreement, which is recognised by the Council of Foreign Bondholders as being, on the whole, as

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favourable as could be expected. It seems fairly certain that, in the end, Panama must be saddled with at least the share of the debt she proposed to accept, and that should be all in favour of the bondholders, as they will hereafter be able to look to the £50,000 a year, payable as rent to Panama for the canal, as security.

Agreements, as the past has shown, are apt, in the case of Colombia, to be of no great practical value, but in the present case a good beginning at least has been made in prompt payment of the amount due in January 1906. General Holguin, the financial agent of Colombia in Europe, further states that the funds to meet the July 1906 coupon were in London in April 1906, and that the Government had handed to the Bogotá agents of the bondholders the customs bonds for the payment of arrears of interest.

In the meanwhile, it is stated in the President's manifesto that the negotiations with the United States are, for the moment, hanging fire. Panama, as a state, is of very little consideration, and it is certain that she must submit to the guidance, to use a mild expression, of America. She assuredly will not be allowed to disturb the peace of the isthmus with internal disputes; therefore, it is around the negotiations between Colombia and the United States that the interest must centre. When we were on the isthmus in August 1904, there was no doubt locally as to the position of subordination to American interests occupied by Panama. Later on, there was some talk of a union

between that microscopic state and Costa Rica, her next-door neighbour. Whether there was any truth or not in that story, it seems certain that the creation of a more important state on the isthmus would not suit the United States, and would not be allowed. With the canal zone in their possession, and complete control of the ports at either end, the United States have a grip on Panama which cannot be shaken off. After the conduct of that state in 1903, she is hardly likely to enlist much sympathy for the position of subordination in which she finds herself.

The internal debt of the country is of trifling amount, not amounting, in May 1904, to so much as £15,000.

The budget for the biennium 1905 and 1906 stands as follows:—

RECEIPTS

	£ (at $5 = £1)
Customs	1,700,000
Salt	400,000
Stamps	350,000
Post and telegraph	44,000
Consular dues	60,000
National property	20,000
Emerald-mines	200,000
Lighthouses, &c.	24,000
Liquor revenue	300,000
Cigarette „	206,774
Matches „	140,107
Tobacco	173,441
Hides	300,000
Methylated spirits	10,000
Spirit monopoly	259,781
Miscellaneous	15,720
	£4,203,823

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Charges	
Ministry of Interior	524,975
Post and telegraph	200,000
Justice	243,228
Rectification of salaries	190,695
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	133,078
„ Finance	269,669
„ War	1,154,139
„ Education	167,583
Treasury	869,344
Public Works	451,112
	£4,203,823

Receipts and expenditure are evenly balanced according to this; but there is a further charge of £424,000, mainly on account of claims for damages done to property during recent disturbances, and for requisitions during the same period. On the other hand, revised estimates, framed by the President on the basis of actual receipts up to November 1905, give a revenue for the year 1906 (1st January to 31st December) of £2,637,146, which he hopes may be raised to £3,000,000 in that year, and to £4,000,000 in later years. If even the least sanguine of these estimates is realised, financial equilibrium will have been more than attained.

The President states that, for more than a year past, he has been vigorously preparing for the conversion of the paper currency into a metallic one on a gold basis. The Banco Central already holds a reserve of £200,000 in gold, which will be doubled should the question of the Panama Canal shares be decided in favour of Colombia. Gold and silver coins will be minted at Bogotá and Medellin, and it is now estimated that eight

millions of gold dollars (£1,600,000) will suffice for the conversion, seeing that it is believed that a large amount of the paper issued has been lost or destroyed. Under the new monetary law, which came into force on the 1st January 1906, 25 per cent. of the new sources of revenue has been earmarked for conversion purposes. That 25 per cent. is approximately equal, at present, to the estimated revenue from the duty on hides, which, therefore, has been set aside for the purpose of collecting the necessary gold. Should the financial position admit of it, the revenue of the emerald-mines of Muzo and Coscuez (estimated at £10,000 *per mensem*) will also be devoted to this object.

The new gold currency is to consist of the following coins:—

(1) The monetary unit of one gold dollar, weighing 1·672 grammes, and 0·900 fine.
(2) The double condor, worth 20 dollars.
(3) The condor, worth 10 dollars.
(4) The half-condor, worth 5 dollars.

The silver coins are:—

(1) Half-dollar.
(2) Peseta, worth 20 cents.
(3) Real, worth 10 cents.

Against every 100 dollars of gold only 10 dollars of silver will be issued. Copper, bronze, or nickel coins of the value of 5 cents, 2 cents, and 1 cent will also be issued, up to 2 per cent. of the gold coinage.

The new customs tariff is generally an enhancement of 70 per cent. on that in force in 1904, is

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frankly protective, and aims at excluding such products as tobacco and sugar, which the country can produce for itself. It will be further modified, as may seem advisable, with a view to encouraging local industries, and also in the direction of simplification. The duties are now payable in gold, or in paper at the rate of exchange of the day against gold. For the present the customs must continue to be the mainstay of Colombian finance.

Next in importance to this source of revenue is the manufacture and sale of salt. To raise its price would, it is recognised, be dangerous, both politically and financially; therefore, serious endeavours are being made to cheapen the cost of production, and thus to raise the revenue without enhancing the price. The new sources of revenue (tobacco, liquor, hides, &c.) will require careful administration, if discontent amongst the people is to be avoided. General Reyes has admitted the existence of some local difficulties in this respect, for, in a letter to General Holguin, from which extracts have been published, he writes: "Here is another instance of the new spirit of respect for order showing itself. As a result of the working of a native spirit monopoly, established for the first time in the department of Tolima, the people of Campoalegre made a public demonstration of protest. The governor, Rafael Puyo, who was at Neiva, greatly alarmed at this, applied to me for a battalion to proceed to the scene. I immediately instructed him to proceed thither with his secretary, and to call upon the three ringleaders to appear

before the Intendant to answer for their participation in the disorder, adding that if they disregarded his authority I would attend to the matter personally. I was not troubled any further in the affair. Three of the principal malcontents, escorted by only two police agents, presented themselves before the Intendant at Garzon with a satisfactory defence, and were then allowed to return home." This incident was thus satisfactorily settled, but it is an indication of the kind of difficulty likely to arise, amongst an ignorant people, during the early days of a new order of things.

Amongst the financial measures of the new President is the creation of the Banco Central, in place of the long defunct Banco Nacional. The new institution is an improvement on its predecessor, seeing that a substantial portion of its capital is in the hands of private persons in different parts of the country, a fact which must make for the preservation of peace, by enlisting the interests of men of influence in the maintenance of the central government. This bank receives the national revenue, and controls the financial administration of a large portion of it; it is charged with the remittance of funds for the service of the foreign debt, with the duty of issuing the new notes, recently printed in England, in exchange for old ones withdrawn and burnt, and with the operations for the conversion of the paper currency into metal. It has thus important State functions and privileges, which, it is believed, have excited some jealousy amongst strictly private concerns.

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Outside the region of finance pure and simple, the year 1905 was characterized by immense activity in reforms of all descriptions. The useless "navy" has been abolished; the army has been reduced to 4000 men, and, at the same time, over 53,000 stand of arms, and more than a million cartridges, which had found their way, during the revolution, from Government stores into the hands of private persons, have been recovered, thus removing a strong temptation to sedition. By economies in the superior administration of the army, its cost has been further reduced.

The Ministry of War still accounts for more than one-fourth of the expenditure in the years 1905 and 1906, but, probably, a considerable portion of this charge is due to the cost of paying off arrears and reducing the army. The President, in his message of December 1905, has claimed that, by employing the men on roads, railways, and other public works, he has made them practically self-supporting. Whatever he may think it necessary to say, in his public utterances, regarding the glorious profession of arms, military spirit, and such matters, the fact seems to be that he has turned the army primarily into a trained body of navvies.

The laws of 1905 alone form a considerable volume, dealing with reforms of all sorts, and this does not include the executive orders in amplification of the statutes. The entire civil service has been reorganized, and its salaries fixed on a suitable scale in gold. A glance at the schedule does not seem to point to any extravagance. It begins

with the President, whose salary is fixed at £3600, with Cabinet Ministers drawing £1200 each. Members of the National Assembly, and later of the Congress, are to draw at the same rate as Cabinet Ministers, besides travelling expenses. This certainly seems high pay, but it must be remembered that sessions are short, and distances to be travelled often long. The law relating to pensions has been amended. It is rather curious to note how much attention is paid to the subject of leprosy. The leper asylums (lazarettos) have been entirely reorganized, and arrangements made for the segregation of lepers, who are estimated to number about 6000.

Other laws deal with the redistribution of jurisdiction of the courts, with their reorganization, and with such matters as registration and the distribution of notaries.

The Ministries of Hacienda and Treasury are amalgamated, and a new Ministry of Public Works is created. The press law promulgated by President Rafael Nuñez is re-enacted. Penal colonies are established, and the prison administration generally is dealt with. Rules are laid down for the government of the Intendencies. The stamp law is reformed, as well as that relating to weights and measures. The conditions of grants of unoccupied land, to colonists or to railway companies, are fixed. Roads are classified, and the charges for their maintenance are distributed between the central and the departmental finances. The financial arrangements of the departments are reorganized,

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and those of the municipalities are to be dealt with shortly. Hypothecatory Banks and public Monts-de-Piété receive much attention. The Police has undergone considerable changes. A regular code, of thirty chapters and 256 articles, deals with the administration of State properties and treasure.

These are only a few of the more important measures, selected at random from the long list of reforms which the President claims to have carried out or initiated. On paper all this looks excellent; its practical value can only be determined by time and experience. The new policy in respect of railways has already been noticed in Chapter IX.

In the Department of Foreign Affairs, arrangements have been made with Ecuador and Peru for the eventual decision, by arbitration, of their disputes with Colombia regarding its southern border on the plains of the Amazon, the Putumayo, and the Caquetá.

Brazil is being approached with reference to the free navigation of the Amazon and its tributaries in her territory. The question of the boundary between Brazil and Colombia will only be ripe for negotiation when the dispute with Peru and Ecuador is finally settled. With Venezuela, diplomatic relations are being resumed, after the breach which occurred during the revolution.

The negotiations with France regarding the Panama Canal shares are being vigorously pressed, and only those with the United States, regarding the Panama affair, are at a standstill for the present.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROSPECTS OF THE COUNTRY

WHATEVER may be the actual value of the reforms which General Reyes has, so far, attempted or carried out, it is certain that there is a very great deal more to be done, before Colombia can take a place in the comity of nations commensurate with her vast natural resources.

The one great thing that she needs, before all and above all, is good and honest government, and the establishment of permanent internal peace, with its accompaniments of security of person and property, and relief from the perpetual dread which has prevailed in the past lest revolution should sweep away the hard-won earnings of native and foreigner alike. No country can hope to prosper when foreign capital is attracted to it only by the hope of speculative profits sufficiently large to justify the risk of investment.

Much as Colombia has suffered from civil war waged for the gratification of personal ambitions, never really for the affirmation of principles or the establishment of forms of government essential to the body of the people, its recuperative powers, due to its enormous natural resources, have served, even in the short intervals of tranquillity, to rehabilitate it to a great extent, only to be hurled

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back into the abyss by the next revolution. So matters have gone on for nearly a century, with the result that the country is, in many ways, as Mexico was in 1876, very much where it was when it was visited, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, by Humboldt, Mollien, Cochrane, Hamilton, and others. Some of them then ventured to prophesy an early future of immense prosperity for the new republic, but, unfortunately, all those prophecies have been falsified so far.

We northerners, no doubt, find it difficult to judge fairly the southerner, and still more the southerner from Europe whose natural inertness, the product of a comparatively enervating climate, has not met with any corrective in his union with the races of the New World. On the contrary, the mixed race has lost much of the old fiery spirit which spurred on, at least to spasmodic energy, the Cortes, the Pizarros, and the Quesadas, who bore down, by their very vehemence, all opposition of man and nature. Nor can we, with our natural phlegm, understand the impulsive element which dominates the character of those in whose veins still flows the hot blood of the old "conquistadores." We do not comprehend the nature which rushes at its object with an *élan* apt to collapse in the face of initial failure. It is the old story of the difference between the fiery onslaught of the French soldier and the dogged, stubborn resistance, hour after hour, and day after day, of the Saxon, the Teuton, the Scandinavian, or the Russian. Once more, the sudden changes of the Latin character are beyond

our ken. We are unable to realise that the courteous Spaniard whom we meet in the society of Bogotá, who seems to-day the mildest, the most polite, the gentlest, and the most humane of men, may become to-morrow, stirred by motives by which our nature is uninfluenced, a raging madman—fierce, brutal, cruel. We do not understand it, but the fact is before us and must be acknowledged. That is not the nature which promises success in the patient building up of a strong state from rudimentary elements. Yet it is the nature of the men to whom has fallen the reconstruction of Colombia, as well as of other states, in the century which has elapsed since its emancipation from Spanish thraldom. The worst of it has been that these southerners have sought, not to work out their salvation by their own methods, conformable to their own nature, but must needs adopt the institutions of their northern neighbours, which are about as ill suited to their character as the climate of Russia is suited to the Southern Italian. The Constitution of the northern republic may be congenial to the Anglo-Saxon, the Teuton, or the Scandinavian, but it is too strong meat for the man whose motto is "Mañana" (Don't do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow). The whole history of Colombia since the War of Independence goes to show that its times of best hope have been precisely those when a strong man has practically put aside the Constitution, and become, in fact if not in name, dictator.

Another point on which it is difficult for the

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northerner to make allowance for the southerner is his different conception of the virtue of honour. The former has far less strong feelings on the subject, in so far as it implies a hypersensitive nature, always on the outlook to take offence, or to believe that some one is trying to wound the honour of the individual or the nation. He thinks political probity of supreme importance, whilst the southerner, whatever he may profess, is apt to practise a code of much less strictness.

The man who sells his vote, or takes a commission for doing an official act, is looked upon with very different feelings in the north and in the south. That corruption of this sort is a characteristic of South American republics is the general and, it is to be feared, not unfounded belief in England. It is perhaps equally true that such corruption is not seriously reprobated by men whose mouths are full of grandiloquent phrases on the subject of individual and national honour, which would lead one to believe that a corrupt politician, or a government capable of repudiating its just debts, was an impossibility in their country. In this latter respect Colombia has shown herself very much better than some South American states, and still more so than some of the small states of the isthmus. However, it is no good moralizing over such subjects, for we have to deal with conditions and natures in which no radical change can be expected in the immediate future, if ever.

Mexico has been raised by the strength and

ability of a masterful ruler, honestly working for the benefit of his country. He rules it with a rod of iron, and must often laugh in his sleeve at the simplicity of those of his countrymen who believe that the outward semblance of a republican government has any real control over the actions of a virtually absolute ruler. Colombia will be happy when she finds herself in a similar position. General Reyes has every chance that Diaz had in 1876. He has, on the whole, a less difficult situation to deal with. It remains with him to show whether he has the ability, the strength of character, and the fixity and honesty of purpose which alone can enable him to carry through the onerous task which he has undertaken. We have already described the reforms which he claims to have initiated, and it is certain that Colombia has a much better reputation and credit in 1906 than she had in 1904.

So far, peace has been maintained, though the plot of the winter of 1905–6, and the attempted assassination of the early part of the latter year, clearly indicate that the elements of unrest still subsist in the country, and can only be finally stamped out by years of firm and resolute government. That there will not be fresh plots during the next few years it would be most rash to prophesy, but, with each that is rigorously suppressed, the tendency to revolt will lose strength. They have nothing in common with popular uprisings against a tyrannical government, with such movements as that directed against the Spanish rule of

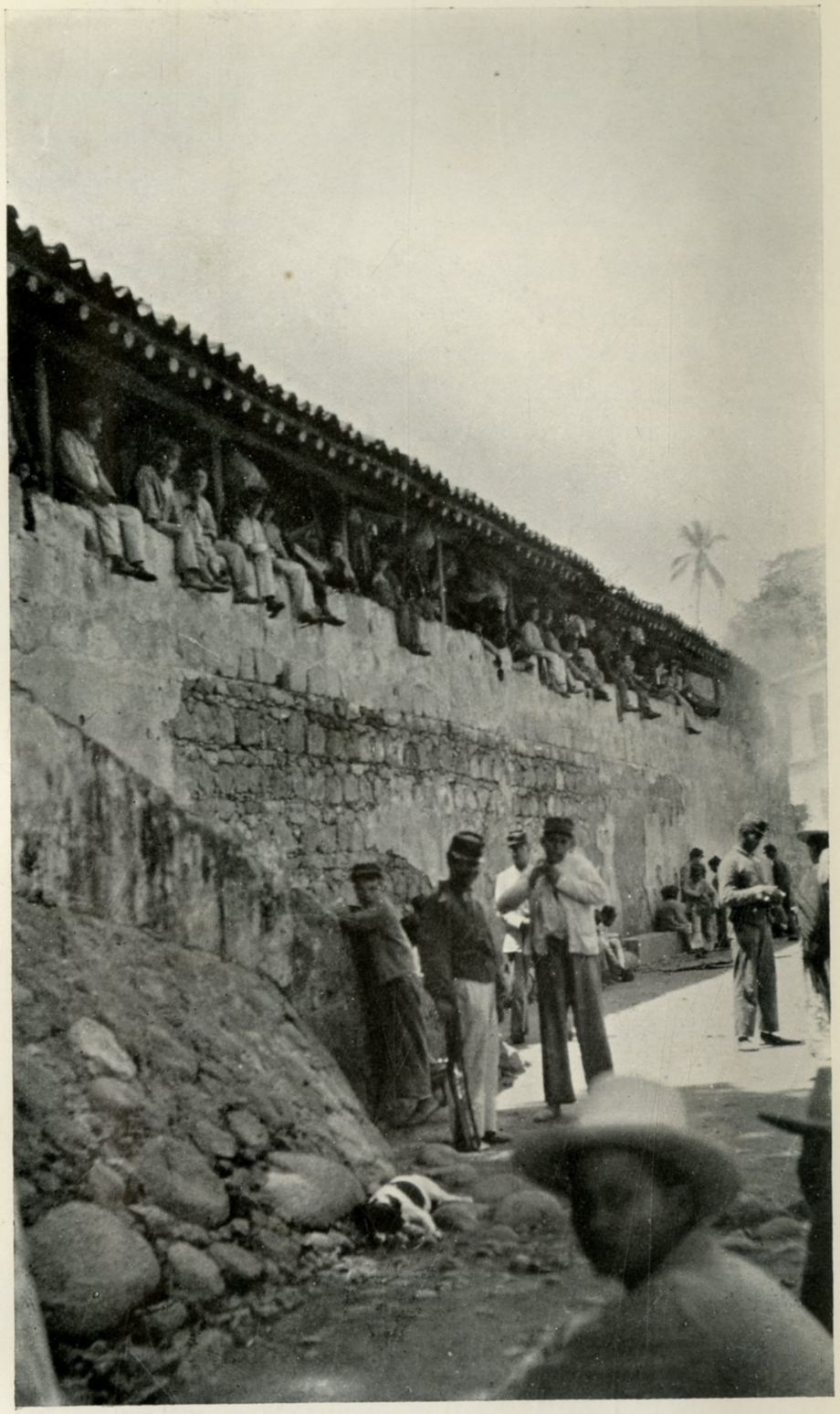
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the early nineteenth century. Men were butchered freely then, with the result that the revolt gained strength, owing to its popular nature, with every fresh massacre or execution. So long as the motives are not popular, but merely founded on personal ambition, strict repression, and above all prompt punishment of the leaders, not of the rank and file, can do nothing but good. The great object should be to avoid all measures tending to enlist the sympathies of the populace in favour of intriguers. For this reason it is especially necessary to exercise the greatest care not to raise hostile feelings by the severity of fresh taxation, or its mode of collection.

Next after peace, the establishment of a convertible currency, and the creation of a feeling of confidence that the prices will not again be disorganized by inflation of the paper currency, is perhaps the most important matter. That was the excuse for the last revolution, and the sufferings of the people, owing to the rapid fall in value of the paper currency, probably made it more akin than most South American revolutions to a popular outbreak.

For the development of the country, as well as for the preservation of peace, the improvement of means of communication is of paramount importance. Railways and roads are urgently wanted, though reckless railway enterprise, in places where it can only lead to loss and failure, must be deprecated. That can only serve to discredit the State.

During the years 1873–97, the value of Colom-



BARRACKS AT HONDA

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bia's exports is estimated to have exceeded that of her imports by about £12,500,000, but there were years when the exports fell below the imports. Full statistics are not available for later years, but it is certain that trade was completely disorganized in the time of internal disturbance. A large proportion of the exports have consisted of coffee, and, as has been said, that is not a very reliable trade. To insure a balance of trade in her favour, Colombia requires to make herself much more self-supporting than she has been in the past. What has been said in former chapters shows what potentialities she possesses for this purpose, in the natural mineral richness, and the agricultural fertility of her soil. But, without proper communications with the outer world, she cannot hope to compete in its markets with countries more favourably situated in this respect.

On every ground it is clear that the great objects to be kept in mind by the rulers of the country are, first and foremost, internal peace and good government; secondly, financial reform; thirdly, improvements in communications, leading to the possibility of development of industries, and the supply within the country of many goods which are now imported.

Manufacturing industry practically does not exist in the country, though there is no reason whatever why cotton and woollen mills should not render the poorer classes independent of imported clothing, or why German beet-sugar should be allowed to

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usurp the place which should naturally be occupied by sugar grown and refined in Colombia.

President Reyes appears to have thoroughly grasped the situation, and to be working in the right direction. Of his power to maintain peace he seems to be confident. If he succeeds, the country's prosperity is assured, and the only question which is of real importance at present to outsiders connected with Colombia is whether his confidence is justified. Here is what he says himself, in the letter already quoted, to General Holguin: "I would not claim that the evil habit of 'pronunciamentos' or conspiracies has disappeared completely—bad habits are not got rid of in a day—but what I do assert is that the nation at large has learnt its lesson by painful experience, and resents any attempt to breed further trouble. The great majority of the people demand laws which shall prove sufficient to prevent, if possible, further public disturbances, or to punish the offenders. Every one in the country is now convinced that Colombia owes it to her civil wars that, in progress, she has fallen behind such countries as Brazil, the Argentine, and Chile. Our country requires not only peace, but repose: and believes that, with twenty years of peace, its progress and wealth will astonish the world. And I assert that peace is the wish and the will of the nation, that the best policy of the Government, the best army, is public opinion. And it is for this that I do not hesitate to affirm that peace is definitely assured in Colombia."

The President has proclaimed himself the leader

of no political party, his ministers have been selected from the Liberal as well as from the Conservative ranks. He alleges that the consequence has been the breaking up of great political parties and groups, leaving, as elements of disturbance, only isolated cliques of no serious importance, and daily decreasing in influence. His policy towards the Church has been one of conciliation, without, on the other hand, aiming at increasing its political importance outside its proper sphere of activity. As we have already said, the Church is a power which no man who aspires to command the popular vote can safely disregard. Personally, General Reyes, without being in any way a bigot, is not in the least likely to wish a quarrel with a Church of which he is a dutiful adherent.

The President vaunts his adherence to the laws and Constitution of the country, and says: "Under the laws of the country I have hitherto governed, and shall continue to govern, without giving any one just grounds for laying to my charge a single illegal act, or to denounce me as a Dictator." That may be correct if the word Dictator is used in an evil sense; but we maintain that the President is in fact, if not in name, a beneficent Dictator, and that such a position is the best he can occupy in the interests of a people of which so large a portion is still steeped in ignorance. General Reyes' reforms include serious efforts towards promoting general primary education, towards creating an efficient body of teachers, and towards providing schools of technical, agri-

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cultural, and mining knowledge. All these are laudable and excellent objects, but it will require at least another generation before the people are sufficiently advanced to take a really intelligent share in the government of their country. Till then, they require guidance by men of better education, and, above all, protection from those whose evil influence in the past has led them to lend their physical power to assist in pernicious disturbances of the peace. It has been unfortunate that, in 1905, an unpropitious season led to some failure of crops, the results of which the Government has done its best to remedy.

If peace is really assured, the population should increase rapidly in a country of such vast agricultural resources. But it is hardly possible that the question of the shortage of labour should be solved except by immigration. That is a very difficult subject, which will have to be seriously and systematically taken up presently. Argentina has shown the influence of railway extension in promoting immigration. Labour is spoken of as being cheap. That may be true when comparison is made with prices in European countries, but it is hardly correct when the comparison is made with East Indian or Chinese labour; for the daily wages of an unskilled labourer in Colombia are nearly double those on which the Indian coolie lives in Trinidad, not only in what he considers comfort, but also with a margin which enables him to save. In one of his railway concessions the President has reserved the

right to pay the cash subsidy in the form of grants of land at the rate of $3 per hectare. That indicates an effort towards encouraging immigration, and he has on several occasions shown that he is fully awake to the importance of the subject. How far it may be possible to solve the labour difficulty, in the working of mines and the construction of railways, by the temporary importation of cheap labour, it is still more difficult to say. The Spaniards were certainly not fortunate in their resort to black slave labour. There is always the Chinaman, but whether he would prove a satisfactory solution it is difficult to say. The labour difficulty on the Panama isthmus equally faces America, and it is possible that the methods she employs there may furnish a hint for Colombia.

Latin America, generally, seems to be entering on a period of regeneration, after centuries of misrule from Europe, and nearly another century of internecine struggles. Several of its states already occupy a very different position in the estimation of Europe to that which they held thirty years ago. Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia are now looked upon as respectable states, countries worthy to attract European and American capital, without an undue speculative risk. Uruguay and Paraguay have not yet reached the same degree of stability, though they also have progressed.

Of the remaining greater states, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia, the greater part of

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Bolivar's original republic, have as yet made but little progress. Of the three, Colombia is the most bountifully endowed by nature, and has the best opportunities of advancement. In this respect, she is more favourably situated than several of the states which have already led the way. Whether she will take advantage of the great opportunities which are open to her must depend on her people, and still more on the ability and honesty of purpose of her rulers, and of the educated classes from which they are drawn.

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AMAZONAS · LORETO

North Latitude · South Latitude

75° 70° Longitude West of Greenwich 65°

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