

"Land of Tomorrow," In Which Next War May Be Fought



PERU'S MUNICIPAL PALACE. A Creditable Structure, as the Photograph Shows, and Indicative of Modern Methods and Ambitions.



A VIEW OF RIO DE JANEIRO FROM THE HARBOR. Brazil's Capital City the Center of Commerce for a Wide Area of South American Country.

This Is the Expressive Phrase Which Describes the Stretch of Territory for Which Peru and Brazil Are Contending.

"THE LAND OF TOMORROW."

This is the descriptive title the imaginative are in the habit of conferring upon Acre, the strip of land in South America, between Brazil and Peru, anent which these two countries are not at all unlikely to cross arms. If they do, a rubber famine will result, that will have more serious results upon this and other civilized countries than upon those actively engaged.

J. Orton Kerbey, a Washington man, who was for a time United States consul at the Amazon and an explorer of all of this country, has written an interesting book on the subject, which is now in process of publication. Its title is made up of the four words that introduce this article. The view that the threatened war will mean more to this country than to Brazil and Peru is that which Mr. Kerbey suggests.

"There will be no fighting," Mr. Kerbey says. "Brazilians are not built that way. They all, however, talk, talk, talk incessantly, and write long, tiresome dispatches, in the Portuguese phraseology, but never reach a decision. Considerable life among them and extensive travel in South America, combined with the study of their history, show that they are not of fighting stock. I once saw a squad of their cavalry, that was doing escort duty to an official, stamped because one of the surrounding crowd suddenly opened an umbrella, as a protection from the sun."

Peruvians Better Fighters. "The Peruvians are better fighters and enjoy, moreover, the decided advantage of being in possession. The Brazilians would have to ascend 2,000 or 3,000 miles of river in order to reach the territory in dispute, and would then have to encounter the plague of mosquitoes. The insect pests of the swamps are something terrible; the scorpions, centipedes, snakes, and mosquitoes are equal to an army of defense of 100,000 men. Instances have been known where a garrison has abandoned a fort and left it to the easy capture of the enemy, just on account of these invaders. Such an instance occurred at Obidos, where one of the most important forts in the country was forsaken."

Mr. Kerbey says this country can raise the rubber for its own needs and enough to supply a large share of the trade of the world in Hawaii and the Philippines, and he thinks the rubber plant should be transplanted to these new lands. He declares that Peru and Brazil will play precisely the same game of hold-up that Colombia did in connection with the Panama canal.

"The Land of Tomorrow" is a land of marvels. There is much in it to interest and enthrall the visitor, and it has never been more graphically portrayed than in Mr. Kerbey's delightful narrative of his travels through the country.

The Land of Tomorrow.

Here is a part of his story. An official passport is not at all a necessity; a stranger may travel in perfect security throughout the land of tomorrow even as a tramp, and be well treated everywhere. A simple letter of introduction, however, written on a large sheet of stiff paper, with display letter head, and a red seal at the bottom, addressed to an official, will secure more consideration than a letter of credit, or a treasury bond, a statement of fact that is not as much of a reflection upon these people as our civilization. It is not to be inferred, however, that the people do not want money, they all do, but the business part of a visitor is always an after consideration, easily settled to the satisfaction of the guest.

I had been well supplied with letters which a number of Spanish friends along the route volunteered to give me to others at the next stop. These became so numerous that the little hand-carry I carried for toilet articles became a mail bag. On arrival at a stopping place I simply handed over my bag of mail for the officials to pick out their own. As they handled some fat letters addressed to officials in Lima, the mail bag became of itself a strong endorsement.

Among my mail for Tarapota was a letter addressed to a young business man or planter in the nature of a letter of credit, or an order from his correspondent in Yurimaguas to supply me with mules and provisions to con-

tinue the journey. I considered this the most important of the lot, but so little attention was paid to it by the recipient that I feared my indorser was discredited.

The Rule of Manana.

The principal obstacle to travel the traveler will encounter, is not the bad trails or lack of facilities, but the apparent indifference toward matters that we may consider pressing business. The officials retain the old Spanish feeling of dignity, which is always coupled with kindly courtesy, and the natives have learned the lesson by contact and are never in a hurry about anything, absolutely never. It is a delicate matter to press the officials, and maybe dangerous to crowd the Indians.

I had intended going through Tarapota in a day but the illness disconcerted my plans. When able to walk about the town I felt it was time to move on to the next stop, at Lamas, a day's ride. I gave the necessary order for the nabo (guide) to interpret. But the nabo had the Spanish laziness and the native stupidity, and during my illness was having a good time, posing as an "interpreter" among the other Indians, and was in no hurry to leave. I learned that the officials had concluded that my illness would result in my abandoning the trip over the Andes, but in this they reckoned without their host.

In order to add to his own dignity and importance, the nabo abused the privileges as interpreter, by exaggerating to the natives the position of the "Americano." I had no means of knowing the nature of the yarns he told in his Indian dialect, but I could see from the curiosity and actions of the Indians and his behavior toward them that I was being represented as a character entitled to as much consideration as the President. There was certainly a different bearing when we were together in the company of those to whom I was able to make myself understood.

South American Volapuk.

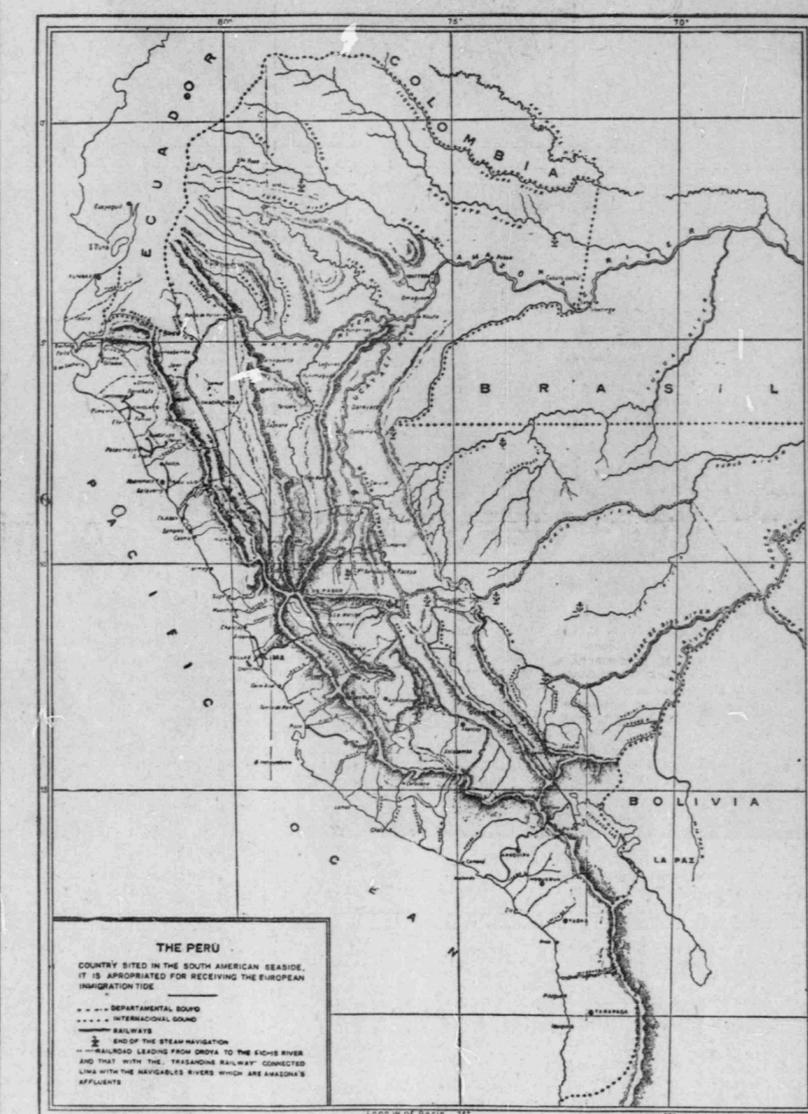
The Indians do not often speak the Spanish, each tribe using a separate dialect, but all seem to know the Indian universal tongue called the "Keetcha" as it is pronounced but sometimes spelled "Quincha" learned from the Inca, to which I have referred and may have occasion to mention again as we reach the land of the Inca. Though the Spaniards conquered and made Christians of them, he has failed to make Spaniards of them.

Tarapota may be described as representing in reality one of those hidden valleys of rare loveliness that one sometimes reads about in the novels as the abode of the fanciful characters depicted by romantic writers. It is only one of the many beautiful valleys that may be found in the land of tomorrow. The traveler wearied and sore from the tiresome toiling over the mountains, may be carried into its restful shades, as I was, would be excused for imagining that this region, near the center of the earth, may have been part of the original garden of Eden.

The valleys are doubly secluded, in the sense that they are in the very heart of the South American continent, being hemmed in from the outside world by immense mountain barriers rising on all sides like rugged, precipitous stone walls, covered by a prickly cacti hedge, forming natural obstacles that may only be overcome by perilous climbing or by creeping around and cutting a path through the bush.

The valley immediately around Tarapota in outline is crescent shaped, probably three leagues across, and in length as far as the eye reaches, toward Moyabamba Valley. On either side are the mountains, spurs of the Andes, known as the "Cordilleras" or foot hills, their sides covered with the luxuriant foliage of the tropics. Through the valley the beautiful Mayo River flows toward the Huaplaga by a long, tortuous course through mountain gorges and rapids almost impassable for even a Chasuta canoeist to navigate in safety. Few go down, and none attempt to ascend the rapids. The Mayo receives a number of smaller streams from the mountains, of clear, cold water, tumbling down over the rocks in sufficient volume to drive machinery to consume the innumerable products of the rich soil.

In the rich soil of Tarapota, pine-apples grow wild. I have seen them in the cultivated gardens of the natives



HOW PERU WOULD LIKE TO LOOK. This map, which the reader will quickly see is quite different from those shown in the atlases, includes the section (to the east) which is the subject of dispute between Peru and Brazil.

reaching ten pounds in weight, and have heard of them weighing twenty pounds. When allowed to ripen on the plant, they furnish a fruit that for lusciousness may not be equal anywhere else on the earth's surface. They become mellow and rich, and are eaten with a wooden spoon or cut in two and held to the mouth while the juice is pressed out, furnishing a delicious drink of cool nectar fit for the gods. It is not only famous for the pineapples, or "peeneys," as they are called, but every miserable mud hotel may be surrounded by groves of orange and lemon trees, the delightful fragrance from which serves to make life endurable even in an Indian village—and that is saying a good deal for the climate.

Tobacco of a very strong quality and fine flavor is grown in Tarapota, and if cultivated might excel in reputation that from certain districts of Cuba. They have a peculiar way of preparing tobacco for market by wrapping the natural leaf tightly with split bamboo similar to the whistles we see tea boxes wrapped with. These take the form of cigars, 4, 5 or 6 feet long and about three inches in circumference, a form that seems to preserve the weed and make it handy for market, the tobacco being sold by the foot or yard.

Cotton grows wild all the year round, the plants becoming young trees upon which the young Indians climb to pick the bolls which the women spin and weave into a coarse cloth used for clothing. Practically everything may be grown on one farm or hacienda of this wonderful valley—fruits of the tropics

in the valley, cotton and sugar and tobacco on the lowlands, as also coffee, with potatoes, corn, and wheat on the foothills of the mountains, while the everlasting snow-capped peaks supply cold water, and if desired cold storage and power from the overflow to make use of products that cannot be consumed.

Natives Are Indifferent.

Yet practically nothing is cultivated except the few articles necessary to sustain the straggling natives. Though they could raise in this valley sufficient to supply the lower Amazon with breadstuffs, as well as mutton and beef, it is not attempted because of the inaccessibility and difficulty of getting over the mountains to the river, a day's portage to reach navigation and the market beyond.

There is sufficient water-power wasted every hour, in the numerous mountain torrents, to generate electricity sufficient to operate double-track systems of narrow-gauge railways to carry all produce to navigation in a couple of hours.

The town of Tarapota is a dilapidated, deserted village, nearly all the available male population having gone to the rubber forests, where they find profitable employment for a few months, abandoning their beautiful homes because of the temptation offered for making a little money rapidly in the unhealthful rubber swamps. They are generally disappointed in the realization of their hopes, for though the earnings are considerable they are induced to part with

them readily for cachaca, or rum. Instead of sudden wealth and independence, they become the slaves of the traders by reason of their debts brought on by riotous living. Many of them perish in the fevers always prevailing in the lowlands, which are fatal to the native who comes down from his mountain home.

There has probably been an army of five thousand of the bone and sinew, or the young men, out of this vicinity of the valley of Tarapota alone who have gone to the forests, armed with their machetes, becoming enemies of their country, ruthless invaders, and destroyers of the Cauchó tree, of Peruvian forests.

The Source of Rubber.

The cauchó, though a species of the rubber, is different from that which is found on the lower part of the rivers, known as Para or Hevea, which is more gregarious in habit, usually found in groups, enabling the gatherer to collect the milk at certain seasons. The Brazilian gatherers pursue a method which does not destroy the rubber tree. The Peruvian native treats alike the rubber and the cauchó.

The cauchó being widely separated in the forest, the trees when found are felled; from the bleeding trunk of which its blood or milk is drained into pools in the earth prepared for it, where it is allowed to coagulate by evaporation, or it may be facilitated by adding alum or common soap, which makes a vile smelling compound, worth about 50 cents, which represents the value of a tree.

Curious Customs Which Obtain in This Little Known Country Described by a Washington Man Who Was Recently There as Consul.

There is a refuse or dripping mixed with earth, leaves, or other foreign matter, that is called sernamby, pronounced "surnam-bee" (accent on bee), which is a third grade of rubber. There is a sernamby of both rubber and cauchó. Cauchó is formed in slabs resembling in appearance thick black buds from which the fur has been taken. Sernamby is usually in the shape of shavings formed by the gutters or channels carrying the milk from the tree to the pools.

In a romantic vein, I would say to any inquiring friend as to the opportunities for immigration or the inauguration of business enterprises, that in extensive travel all over South America I have not seen a more inviting field than is afforded in the delightful valleys of the upper Amazon, provided always that the emigrant makes up his mind to be content with practical isolation from the world. Being hemmed in the interior by three ranges of the Andes on one side and 5,000 miles of Amazonian forests on the other, is worse than being isolated on an island of the Pacific.

Chance for Young Men.

A party of young farmers and mechanics might follow the route of this narrative, and if well provided with implements and energy, take up large tracts of land, which may be had for the asking upon which they could live comfortably in a glorious climate while awaiting the development of the land of tomorrow, which must come.

I might add parenthetically, that American boys—blondes preferred—if possessed of blue eyes and a vigorous constitution, will have no difficulty in finding helpmates from among the many beautiful señoritas who have been left alone in that paradise by reason of the exodus of the male population to the rubber forests.

There are señoritas and señoritas, even in that part of the way region, and the American accustomed to good society at home might be surprised to find some families in this remote land who are quite exclusive and aristocratic in bearing and as exacting in their intercourse as are some of our own people, who probably have not as much to stand on.

The settler need not be a pioneer woodsman compelled to fell trees; he will find miles upon miles of the richest pampa or prairie soil in the valleys, waiting for the agricultural machinery, to replace the ridiculously crude implements of the natives, which have been used for the centuries to good advantage, but the increase would be doubled by modern appliance with the expenditure of less labor.

The Land of Promise.

There are no frosts, no droughts, no grasshopper and other insect plagues, at that altitude, and no uncertainty as to returns, because there are two and sometimes three crops in a year. The settler will grow his own corn and potatoes, and while resting from his daily toil, he may, literally, smoke in his pipe of peace his own tobacco and sip delicious coffee made fresh from the berries grown on the plants in his own yards; or, if he prefers, his dark-eyed señorita will serve her lord with a cup of the richest cocoa grown on his own land, and sweetened with the sugar crystallized from the cane which grows so wildly abundant that it is not cultivated or gathered except for the manufacture of the pure rum of the country. Milk, which does not seem to be used much in those lands, may be obtained from the herds of goats, or cows could be bred for milk, as with us.

There are disadvantages, aside from isolation, that are in a way as great obstacles to American colonization and as difficult to overcome as are the mountains themselves. The Peruvian government is most liberal in its concessions or grants of land and homes to actual settlers from all countries, Americans being especially

welcomed, ostensibly without regard to race, color or creed. Yet it would be impolitic to attempt to locate anywhere in that country a class of people who desired to be recognized as antagonistic to the established religion of that country, which is that of the Roman Catholic. Neither should foreigners go there, and insist upon the natives adopting their manners and customs, nor to criticize and reverse conditions that have existed for three centuries. Substantially the church and the state are one and the same in Peru. As the existence of each depends upon the other, they may be relied upon to stand firmly together, not only in Peru, but in all that land. The state officials are not at all zealous in defense of their church; in fact, I do not recall ever hearing an official express an opinion on the subject, beyond an admission of his Catholicism, when questioned.

The Courteous Padres.

The padres, or priests, are seldom bigoted, but as a rule are most courteous to travelers, offering without question the hospitalities of their houses, and as they are of the best and well stocked for good living, I made it a point to look up the padre at every stopping place. The people of some of the interior villages are fanatical, and disposed to excesses, but are easily controlled by the padre.

It should not be inferred that one reared a Protestant is inclined to criticize the Catholic religion, especially the practice as I have seen it in the lives of some of the priests of those countries, but, as a disinterested journalist who has enjoyed their hospitality, and lived safely among these once savage cannibal Indians, I am glad of an opportunity to record my testimony to the facts, that to the missionary efforts of these padres, during three centuries, has resulted the redeeming of this beautiful land and the people from barbarism to a condition of civilization, which may be incomplete, but in many respects equals that of our own boasted civilization.

In discussions of this subject I have frequently been reminded by friends that the teachings of the Catholic Church do not develop or advance a country remaining under its influence; perhaps this is more largely a question of latitude or climate and of previous race conditions than of religious influence. The Spanish people will answer that if the Anglo-Saxon had occupied this southern continent and they the north the conditions would be the same, and that we do not give our superior climate the proper credit for its influence on our lives. These people claim that they have done better for the Indians of this continent than we have; that they were not killed off to make room for our advancing civilization.

They say the Jesuits did not kill, but through centuries of patient self-sacrificing toil, unassisted by home missionary societies, they have laboriously, successfully, and disinterestedly for the improvement of the Indians. Under the circumstances, liberal Christians of other sects, can scarcely censure these people for protesting against the importing of over-zealous missionaries who tell the Indian that their previous religious training has been false.

A Spanish Sub-Prefect.

A frequent caller during my illness was the sub-prefect of the district, a middle-aged Spanish Don, well posted on the doings of the outside world, whom I found most congenial. He supplied me with a good bit of valuable information about the mineral wealth of the surrounding mountains. But this not being in sight, like the natural products of the forests and the agricultural possibilities, I can only recite the testimony of these gentlemen of repute, who insist that the gold and copper ores which they exhibited are more valuable than can be estimated, and the location possesses the advantage of being easily accessible, with good natural drainage and abundant water power to operate. It is certainly an extra bonanza to find gold in a country that supplies everything else that is needed to make life happy. I record the sub-prefect's note from my notebook, in his own handwriting, referring to the location: "Snamí Pampa situada al Cerro de Santa Domingo;" also the names and addresses of two Spanish miners, in their own writing; namely, Elias Linares and Luis Felipe del Castillo Cerro de Fraconca.