

Life and Travel on Chilean Side of Andes

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LOS ANDES, Chile.—I am high up on the Chilean side of the Andes, ready to cross over the mountains from the Pacific to the Atlantic slope of the continent. My next letter will be from Argentina, and will describe the greatest bread and meat lands of the future. I am now on the roof of the continent, right in the shadow of Mount Aconcagua and within plain sight of the highest peak on our hemisphere.—To the north of me this mighty range extends as far as the distance from Boston to San Francisco. It rises and falls in a mighty wall, whose average height is more than two and one-half miles, and whose width is greater in many places than the distance between Philadelphia and Boston. In some places there are two mighty parallel ranges that uphold plateaus as great in area as some of our largest states, and at the far north there are three ranges, from one of which branches off the spur which drops down into the Cullebra cut at the Isthmus of Panama.

The Andes run southward from here to the Strait of Magellan, and, jumping that strait, are found again in the mountains of Tierra del Fuego, ending at last in Cape Horn, a mighty rock which is as high as Mount Washington. In these southern ranges there are many low passes, and in a half dozen places Chile is planning to build railroads connecting the oceans. The mountains gradually fall as they near the strait, but the sea on each side of them are of great depth, and the Andes with their rocky heads still tower high above the waters.

During the last year my travels have been largely confined to the Andes, and in this and in other trips I have made to South America I have traveled through them from one end to the other. I have never set foot on Cape Horn, but I have seen the mountains of Tierra del Fuego, and in a coasting steamer have wound my way in and out among the glacial peaks of Patagonia and through the Strait of Magellan at the southern end of the continent.

A Pass Through Mountains.
 The Strait of Magellan is merely a pass through the mountains. Cape Pillar, which marks its western end, terminates in two massive rocks 1,200 feet high, and the great archipelago of Tierra del Fuego consists of mighty mountains, which are more than half under the sea. I know of no finer scenery than that of the islands which border the western coast of southern Patagonia. It is like riding in a ship amid the snowy peaks of the highest mountains. I wound my way through in a small vessel, going through passes at night. The distance was 300 or 400 miles, and we coasted slowly along through these mighty floods walled on the lower slopes with innumerable forests and crowned with glaciers, which here and there plowed their way through the green and came down to the water. Darwin compared the glaciers of Mount Fitzroy in Tierra del Fuego to 100 frozen Niagara.

The waters of western Patagonia made me think of 100 Lake Conon, Lake Geneva and Lake Lucerne tied together in an overland, ever-changing river. The mountains were compared with the Alps. Here a giant rock, cathedral-shaped, covered with moss, rose straight upward for 1,000 feet, and further on mountains with their heads lost in the clouds dropped almost precipitously into the sea. There were narrow gorges in which our steamer had to tug against way and that to get through. We plowed fields of floating ice, and went through canyons walled with ice several thousand feet deep.

Sea Several Icebergs.
 I remember we passed several floating icebergs during the trip, and that now and then we could hear the boom of a great ice huncher that had broken from a glacier. We had to sail carefully so as not to be struck by the bergs, and at one place we stopped and anchored beside one in order to break off a chunk of ice weighing several tons, which by means of a derrick we loaded on to the ship. This ice was of a beautiful opalescent green with a cover of frosted silver. We wrapped a big chain around it, and the steam engine hoisted it to the deck. Little later the butcher killed a fat pig which our vessel was carrying, and for the remainder of our voyage we feasted on sausage, pork chops, spare ribs and scrapple.

I have referred to the pine forests of the far south. The vegetation on the west coast of the Andes is peculiar. From the Strait of Magellan to almost 1,000 miles northward the mountains are heavily wooded. There is a dense jungle also at the north, running from Panama to the southern boundary of Ecuador. Between these two places it is all desert and the foothills of the mountains have a country as sandy and barren as the mighty Sahara between them and the sea. There the rain never falls, and it is only on the eastern slope that you find dense vegetation.

In the southern Andes there is a heavy rainfall. This comes from the winds of the Pacific, which blow in that direction. A little farther north the winds come from the east. They are loaded with the waters of the Atlantic. They drop a part of their burden on their way across South America, and the rains pour all along the eastern side of the Andes. By the time the winds get to the top they are dry and there is nothing but snow water, which melts on the high peaks and flows down in a stream here and there through the great western desert. Farther north in Ecuador there is a heavy rainfall and the rivers that flow down the steep western slopes often flood the country for miles.

Get Plenty of Hail.
 I was surprised about the rain near the Strait of Magellan. In some parts of western Patagonia the ground is covered with moss as deep as your waist, and there are mighty ferns with fronds as long as your arm and longer. The most of the trees are evergreens. They are small, but are so thick on the ground that you can walk on their tops in snow-shoes. The ground there is saturated with moisture, and when I tried to make my way through the woods I sank in as though I were on one of the bogs of old Ireland. It rains there every few days. Indeed, I am told that it rains thirteen months every year.

And this brings me to the lakes of the Andes. The western slopes in southern Chile have bodies of fresh water that will compare in beauty with the lakes of the Alps. Lake General Carrera, which is about 1,000 feet high, is like a Norwegian fjord, with waterfalls flowing down the steep walls of the basin in which it lies. Lake Esmeralda is another beautiful sheet, and Lake Lanquileo is an island sea second only to Titicaca in size. All of these lakes lie in a ravine or along a pass which will some day be one of the routes over the Andes. They are in southern Chile and are sometimes called the "islands of the continent" because of their isolation. The Andes in north Chile have no water except alkaline deposits, some of which



The llama is numbered by millions



Typical people of the high Andes.

are so bitter that they would poison the man who tried to drink them. Among them are the great borax lakes, one of which is twenty-four miles in length. It skirts the railroad track which runs from La Paz, Bolivia, down to Antofagasta, and it contains enough borax to wash all the heads of the human race. I saw this lake on my way from Bolivia down to the coast, and the crust of borax upon it was so hard that one could have skated over it as though upon ice. The crust looked like ice and the borax I saw taken out was for all the world like the finest of white spun silk wadded or woven into lumps.

Mirages on Lakes.
 On other lakes in the neighborhood of that desert I saw mirages such as you find in the deserts of Sahara and Libya, and these bodies of salt water seemed to have green islands and ships floating on them, while llamas and alpacas and Indians walked through the air.

Lake Titicaca and its little sister, Lake Poopo, are both more, or less alkaline. I taste bitter, and the water of Lake Desaguadero is still worse. The borax lake is more bitter than the Dead Sea and the Desaguadero river water tastes very much like that of the Jordan.

The most wonderful lake upon earth is Titicaca. It is two miles and a half straight up in the air above the sea level and it is surrounded by silver-capped mountains from 15,000 to 20,000 feet high. You feel the altitude when you ride over the lake. You seem to be on the very roof of the world and know if you could climb over those mountains you would drop off into space. All of the mountains surrounding the lake are covered with snow and the lake itself is so blue that it makes one think of the grotto at Capri, which is famous all over the world. There are many islands in the lake, and in the distance they seem to float upon the water as though they were balloons or hills and not the outcroppings of the highest chain of our hemisphere. One island I remember rose out of the lake like a gigantic mushroom of soft blue velvet, and another resembled a mammoth whale whose head and tail stood high above the blue waves. There were optical illusions due to the atmosphere, but they were phenomena I have seen nowhere else.

There are many other lakes on the plateaus of the Andes in Peru and Ecuador, and also in Colombia, including Lake Guatavita, which the Indians worshiped and into which they threw offerings of gold and silver. I have already written of Lake Titicaca, which the golden chain of Cuzco lies upon, and there are probably Inca treasures in most of the bodies of water which lie between the two great Andean ranges.

Aconcagua Kises Sky.
 I am writing this under the shadow of Mount Aconcagua. It is about 29,000 feet high and it kisses the sky far above any other point on our hemisphere. Mount Mercedario in Argentina is only 20,000 feet lower, and Tupungato and Sorata are each more than 20,000 feet. The same is true of Illimani, which, like Sorata, looks down on Lake Titicaca, and Chimborazo in Ecuador is very near the same height. The average range of the Andes throughout is more than 10,000 feet high. It is the highest range on earth, with the exception of the Himalayas, which are about 8,000 feet higher.

I have seen the great mountains of Africa. Mount Kenya is a mile under the top of Aconcagua, and Kilimanjaro is 2,000 feet lower. Kilimanjaro and Chimborazo are of about the same height, and if you could have a wireless station on their tops you might communicate with one another on the same plane of air. And this reminds me that we are now seeing wireless messages right over the Andes. Peru has a wireless station on one of her foothills which, like Sorata, looks down on Lake Titicaca, and the height of Pikes Peak. Nevertheless, they have sent messages right over the range and have had them received by wireless stations in Rio de Janeiro, notwithstanding the whole continent lies between Rio de Janeiro and on the level of the sea. Those

messages climbed up over 10,000 feet and then slid down to sea level, traveling a distance longer than from Boston to the Great Salt Lake. The highest of the Himalayas is Mount Everest. It measures 29,000 feet. If you could put Mount Washington on top of Aconcagua it would just about equal the height of Mount Everest, the highest mountain of the world. Mount Everest is over twice as high as Pikes Peak, or Mount Shasta. It is twice as high as Fujiyama, and 12,000 feet higher than Mount Ararat, on which Noah dropped the ark.

Snow Caps Perpetual.
 All of these big South American mountains are capped with perpetual snow. Even those of Ecuador, which lie on the equator, have ice all the year round. There are glaciers almost everywhere, and you can go by the railroad to within a stone's throw of them in Peru and see them hanging down over your train as you pass. I sent a rifle shot into a glacier from the baggage car door as I rode over the pass that leads to the Morococha mines, at an altitude of 15,865 feet above the sea. This is the highest railroad point of the world's and the glaciers lie within a stone's throw of the train.

The volcanoes of the Andes are numbered by scores, and many of them are still spitting out ash and flames and molten rocks. There is no other place in the world which offers so good a field for the study of geology. There are new formations at every step, and the skin seems to be torn from old Mother Earth and her inner workings laid bare. As I climbed up the Southern railway of Peru I rode for many miles through lava about the slopes of Mount Misti, which is 20,000 feet high, and on my way from Bolivia to Chile I saw great windrows of lava near the volcanoes of St. Peter and St. Paul, which often break out in eruption. In some places you see great fields of lava and again cascades of lava, where the molten rock has congealed and hardened in its way down the hills. Now the lava is in millions of fragments, the size of your fist. Now it is a fine sand and now the fragments have been rolled over and over until they are boulders. The plateau of Bolivia, which is as big as Virginia, is covered with boulders of many colors.

The rocks of the Andes are as picturesque as those of the Colorado canyon or the Yellowstone park. Now they are black, and now white as snow. Here they are composed of old red sandstone and there they are ivory, while further on they may be as yellow as gold. They have every formation known to man. There are great forts without number, there are apices which reach to the sky, and pinnacles fit for the pulpits of gods.

The life of the Andes is unlike that of any other region on earth. This is so of the plant and animal world. The semi-arid plains of the highlands have a vegetation like moss, there are strange wild flowers and the high plateaus are as barren of trees as the Sahara. Still they grow potatoes and corn, barley and quinoa and other crops the names of which I do not know.

People Have Quaint Ways.
 The people are different. There have never been any Indians like the Incas and there are none like their descendants today. They have their own customs and traditions and folklore ready for the scientist of the future. I might fill a page of this newspaper with stories of strange superstitions. I could tell you of the gods and devils of the high Andes and of fairies and witches. Last night I learned how the Aymaras believe that the flesh and blood of a certain lizard will give one perpetual youth. It will cure all sorts of diseases and even mend broken bones. As the story goes, the Indian kills the lizard and wraps it round the fracture and the break becomes well. It is also good for stomach trouble and the wife of an American miner tells me how she was cured by using it. The lizard came from an old Indian, who prescribed

the raw flesh chopped up with the blood in it. This was to be drunk with the addition of a little chicha, the common beer of the country. My lady friend tells me it cured her dyspepsia.

Chicha is the common beer of the Andes and the best is made by chewing up grains of corn in the mouth. The natives have chicha parties, where the young girls come together and sit down in a circle. In the center is a basin of wood. As soon as they are seated they begin chewing the uncooked grains of a certain kind of Indian corn. They masticate this until it is reduced to a pulp and is saturated with saliva, when they spit the end out into a basin. At the end of the party there is a great bowl of the mixture. It is left to ferment, and with the addition of water soon turns to an excellent beer. It may be that this beer, rather than the lizard, cured my friend's stomach.

Panna is Interesting.
 The fauna of the high Andes is interesting and the domestic animals are especially so. I never grow tired of studying the llamas, alpacas, vicunas and guanacos. They all belong to one family, whose home is in the high Andes. The llama is the beast of burden. It is numbered by millions and it carries the most of the freight of the highlands. The alpaca is of the same shape, only smaller. Its wool is among the finest, softest and silkiest known in the world. Alpacas are kept in great flocks, watched by shepherds and cared for as we care for sheep. They are clipped once in two years, when each should yield about five pounds of long wool. The animals are quiet and easily handled.

The vicuna looks not unlike an alpaca, except that it is smaller and more delicately formed. In habits it is more like a deer than a sheep, and its flesh tastes like venison. It cannot be domesticated, although it will sometimes come down from the mountains and graze with the alpacas. It is often killed for its wool and skins. The wool is golden yellow. It is finer than that of the alpaca, and so soft and firm that clothing made of it is practically waterproof. The supply is limited, and at the present time it brings \$2.50 a pound, whereas the common alpaca wool sells for less than 25 cents per pound, and llama wool and sheep's wool are much lower.

Vicuna skin rugs when well tanned with the fur on are like silk plush, and they bring from \$30 to \$100 apiece.

There are millions of sheep on the high Andes, but they are poorly kept and have been ruined by inbreeding. The native sheep does not produce more than a pound and a half or two pounds of fleeces, and some farmers shear their sheep only once in two years.

Quaker Gulls.
 When a doctor is irritable it may be because he is out of patients. It is an impossibility to make both ends meet by burning the candle at both ends. You never can tell. Many a man has been praised to the skies, only to come down with the proverbial dull, sickening thud.—Philadelphia Record.

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This institution is the only one in the central west with separate buildings situated in their own ample grounds. Yet entirely distinct, and rendering it possible to classify cases. The one building being fitted for and devoted to the treatment of non-contagious and non-mental diseases, no others being admitted, the other Rest Cottage being designed for and devoted to the exclusive treatment of select mental cases requiring for a time watchful care and special nursing.

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A GRAVE CRISIS CONFRONTS THE RAILROADS

WAR HAS CLOSED MONEY MARKETS OF EUROPE TO THEM INDEFINITELY

In view of the fact that one of the railroads of Nebraska has already filed an application for an increase of rates with the State Railway commission, it is the desire of all the railroads to utilize this opportunity for an intimate and frank discussion of the whole railroad question with the people of this state. To this end, the careful attention of the reader is invited to a series of articles which will appear in this newspaper during the next few weeks and which will contain the most far-reaching discussion of this great problem that has ever appeared in the public press. All that is asked in the meantime is that the people of Nebraska accord to the railroads the courtesy of listening to their side of the story and, then form such conclusions as, in their judgment, the facts may warrant.

That the railroads of the United States are today confronted by the gravest crisis in their history there is not the slightest question. For some years they have been desperately struggling with an ever increasing cost of operation in the face of reduced freight and passenger rates—but serious as this situation was before, the European war, which has indefinitely closed to them the foreign money markets, has suddenly brought them face to face with a situation which threatens not merely many new receiverships but the actual paralysis of the entire transportation industry of the nation. It is this state of affairs which compelled the closing of the New York Stock exchange some months ago. What will happen in the future alone can tell.

American railroads are valued in round figures at \$20,000,000,000, and of this vast sum nearly \$5,000,000,000 worth of securities are held abroad. Should Europe, in its frantic struggle for funds, seek to convert these securities into cash during the next twelve months, where is the money to come from with which to buy them?—and failing to protect these securities, what demoralization will follow not merely in railroad investments but in all other American industrial values as well? The recent statement of David Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer, that the inability of England to convert their American investments into cash is crippling Great Britain in its present emergency is ominously significant. Possibly the New York Stock exchange may be able to resume operations without farther for the time being, but that the finances of the world will be subjected to a strain without precedent in history during the next year or two is so apparent that it requires no extended comment. In a future article this phase of the question will be dealt with more fully.

President Wilson's Views.
 That the situation is profoundly serious is manifested by the recent utterance of President Wilson to a group of eastern railroad executives. In his letter to Mr. Trumbull of the Chesapeake & Ohio he said:

"You ask me to call the attention of the country to the imperative need that railway credits be sustained and the railroads helped in every possible way, whether by private co-operative effort or by the action wherever feasible of governmental agencies, and I am glad to do so, because I think the need is very real. They are indispensable to our whole economic life and railway securities are at the very heart of most investments, individual and small, public and private, by individuals and by institutions.

"I am confident there will be earnest and active co-operation in this matter, perhaps the one common interest of our whole industrial life.

"Undoubtedly men, both in and out of official position, will appreciate what is involved and lend their aid heartily wherever it is possible for them to lend it. But the emergency is in fact extraordinary and where there is manifest common interest we ought all of us to speak out in its behalf, and I am glad to join you in calling attention to it. This is a time for all to stand together in united effort to comprehend every interest and

serve and sustain it in every legitimate way."

Railroads Lost Millions.
 The net operating income of the railroads of the United States for the year ending June 30, 1914, was \$123,000,000 less than for the previous year. The gross earnings for the year were \$44,000,000 less than for 1913—while expenses and taxes were \$26,000,000 more. But heavy as this burden was before, the great struggle across the seas, carrying in its wake the destruction of untold hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of all kinds of property, renders the situation a thousandfold more serious. It means, in short, that for a number of years to come Europe will have no surplus money for investment in the United States or elsewhere and that American railroads will have to finance their future needs at home! How Herculean this task will be, saying nothing about protecting themselves against the dumping of foreign securities, may be judged from the fact that the loan and note obligations which will mature between now and the end of the next year, and which the railroads will have to meet in some way, amount to more than \$65,000,000—and this doesn't take a dollar's worth of new improvements or betterments into consideration. These are obligations which were incurred in the past and which must be met as they fall due if the transportation companies are to be preserved from wholesale receiverships and ruin.

Manifestly, therefore, American investors, big and little, will have to come to the rescue—and before they will consent to do this American securities will have to be re-established as a sound, respected and paying investment—and this, on the basis of present railroad earnings, is impossible!

For this reason the railroads of Nebraska believe the impending crisis demands that they lay this whole problem before the people of the entire state—that they have a heart-to-heart talk with the farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer, the banker, the laboring man, and all other citizens upon this great question which so vitally affects the future welfare of the commonwealth and the nation.

Why Railroads Are Helpless.
 In times of acute financial stress private industries are in position to very largely adjust their affairs to meet the emergency. They can advance the price of their commodities, cut their payroll in half, or shut down altogether, and thus permit the storm to blow over without actual shipwreck. The railroads, as quasi-public enterprises, however, are in an entirely different position. Their rates are regulated by law and cannot be advanced without the consent of the people through their law-making bodies. In order to please the convenience of the public and not to break down the commerce of the country they must operate their freight and passenger trains whether they carry a full load or only a quarter of a load—and in view of these facts it is manifestly unfair to put the railroads in the same class with private industries in the present crisis and ask them to shift for themselves as best they can. When the people look over the complete making and regulation of railroad rates they at the same time assumed the solemn implied obligation to see that the railroads get a square deal—for the people are the only power that stands between them and ruin.

We believe every intelligent citizen will agree that agriculture, commerce and industry cannot get along without the railroads. On the other hand, the railroads cannot get along without the patronage and, what is equally essential, the good will of the people. That some of those who have been entrusted with railroad management in the past are somewhat responsible for the apparent gulf between the public and the transportation companies is perhaps true. Busy and harassed by the herculean tasks entrusted to their care, there has been too little contact be-

tween them and the people. Again, it is undoubtedly true that the world of railroad finance as well as other lines of industrial activity has had its share of inexcusable abuses—but just as the public does not hold the banking world or the ministry responsible as a whole for the shortcomings of an occasional black sheep, so the hundreds of honest railroad officials throughout the country should not be condemned because of the misdeeds of the few.

Who Owns the Railroads?
 In this connection it may be said that the railroad world is encumbered with a lot of phantoms which exist only in the popular fancy. For instance, because there have been some half dozen so-called railroad magnates whose names have figured prominently in Wall Street, many people have come to believe that the railroads of the country are largely owned by a few rich men. As a matter of fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. Out of the colossal sum of \$20,000,000,000 invested in American railroad securities less than 5 per cent is now or ever has been, in the hands of these men who have figured prominently in the newspaper headlines—while the other 95 per cent is in the hands of nearly 2,000,000 investors, large and small, who, in many instances, have put the modest savings of a lifetime into these securities in order that they might lay away a competency for old age.

When, therefore, the value of these securities is depressed, or perchance destroyed, the hardship is tenfold greater upon thousands of every-day citizens—upon the frugal mechanics in a New England factory, the widow with her life insurance funds, and the countless other citizens in every avocation and walk of life than upon the handful of millionaires, good or bad, who have figured prominently in railroad circles. Thus, for instance, the great Pennsylvania system has over 70,000 stockholders, while the Santa Fe has over 40,000, and the same ratio holds good in nearly all the other lines.

Many Other Investments Affected.
 But that isn't all. For many years railroad bonds were considered the safest and soundest investment in the country, and hence hundreds of millions of assets of our great life insurance companies, banks, benevolent associations and colleges were invested in them, and the moment, therefore, that the soundness of these securities is affected the financial solidity of these myriad institutions is greatly menaced at the same time.

Carrying it a step further, it means that every holder of an old line life insurance policy and millions of depositors in savings and other banks, and those interested in many educational, benevolent and other institutions are directly concerned in the present situation, which threatens to largely destroy the high regard in which an investment in railroad bonds was held.

In the impending crisis, therefore, not merely the fate of our transportation system is at stake, but along with it the very financial integrity of our entire investment world—and this only goes to show how vast and overshadowing our railroad industry has become—how they are not merely the giant arteries of agriculture and commerce, but how closely their welfare is woven into the wool and fabric of the entire nation. Among other things, it should remind us how interdependent we have come to be in this mighty republic of ours—that each is in truth becoming more and more his brother's keeper, and that we need to think and act carefully lest in our mistaken zeal we destroy those who, like ourselves, need whatever of this world's goods the toil and sweat of years has produced to them.

That the time has come when the citizens of Nebraska and the country generally should do some serious thinking in connection with this great and vital question, there is not the slightest doubt, and hence we appeal to the people to read the forthcoming articles carefully and thoughtfully—and since all the essential facts and figures quoted will be taken from the public records they will be easily capable of verification. Especially do we hope that farmers whose market facilities and land values are so critically affected by the railroad problem will follow the article closely—for agriculture and transportation are easily the nation's two greatest and most fundamental industries. (Paid Adv. To be continued next week.)

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