

# AN ANCIENT BRAZILIAN CITY

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ARTICLES ON SOUTH AMERICA

*During his visit to South America Mr. Roosevelt is preparing a number of articles on the countries through which he passes and their peoples and problems. Though connected by a common subject, these articles will not be dependent on one another, but each will have independent interest.—THE EDITORS.*

ON the fourteenth day after leaving New York we entered the harbor of Bahia, in northern Brazil, a few degrees south of the equator. Forty-eight hours previously we had sighted the Brazilian coast and for a day had steamed along it close enough to the shore to make out sand dunes, and tropical vegetation, and the mouths of rivers, and dim glimpses of far-away towns.

Bahia offers a lovely sight from the water. It is a large city of over a quarter of a million inhabitants, placed on a steep hillside and following the curve of the bay. Tier after tier the houses climb the hillside from the water's edge, and on the crest against the sky-line are etched the tops of beautiful tall palm trees and the double spires of the innumerable churches—it is appropriate that they should be so numerous, for Bahia's real name is Bahia de Todos os Santos, the Bay of All the Saints. It is a very old city. Civilization came to these shores long before any of our own ancestors settled on the New England coast or along the banks of the James, the Hudson, and the Delaware. But it is not only old. It is also very new. It is now feeling the thrill of the forward movement which has made itself so powerfully felt in so many parts of South America. Therefore there attaches to it the peculiar interest one always feels when an ancient city moves forward with a rapidity of progress which we are apt to associate only with very young communities.

Like all of Brazil, Bahia was first settled by the daring Portuguese adventurers of the sixteenth century. At one time it was taken by the Dutch. They were afterwards driven out; at the seaward edge of the city stands the fort they once built. There is a considerable immigration from Latin Europe, and there is a very large Negro population; but the great majority of the men I met, the leaders, were of pure European race and of the old Portuguese stock.

We were more than hospitably received. The Governor of the province, Senhor José Joaquim Seabra, and the Intendente, or Mayor, of the city, Senhor Julio V. Brandão, received us in person, and our few hours on shore were very busy. We were first driven through the town to see the points of most importance, both in its ancient life and in its new life which promises such abundant vigor. Then I was taken to the City Hall, was greeted on behalf of the Municipal Council, and made a short speech in return. Then we were given a breakfast by the Governor and the Mayor.

The Governor and the Mayor embody in themselves the new spirit of Brazil. It is the Governor who has been chiefly responsible for pushing forward the various works which are making the province so much more accessible to the outside world, and swinging its people into the full current of the modern commercial and industrial movement; a movement which cannot be permanently successful unless among Government officials there is a high degree both of integrity and efficiency. The Governor realizes very keenly the absolute need of unity among the Brazilian provinces, of loyalty to the great Brazil of the future, and of determination to bring the management both of the governmental activities and of private business to the very highest standards of civilized communities. He is also a firm advocate of closer relations between Brazil and the United States, seeing clearly the truth that if Brazil both fulfills its promise of stable governmental growth and of abounding materialistic development, and at the same time establishes solidarity of relations with the United States of North America, an immense stride forward will have been taken in securing the well-being and peace of the entire New World. Two of the Governor's sons have resided for some time in the United States, and the Governor himself received part of his education in Paris.

Having myself been Governor of one of the States of the Union, I was particularly able to appreciate the difficulty and the importance of the work that the Governor was doing. I say in all sincerity, speaking as a one-time American Governor, that any State in the Union is fortunate whenever it has at its head a man of his force, determination, and practical grasp of the essentials of progress.

With the Governor I had to talk in French, but the Mayor spoke English admirably. And here again I wish to say, as a man who has not only studied municipal problems in the United States, but who has taken a certain practical part as an official in dealing with them, that any American city would be fortunate in having a Mayor of the type of Intendente Brandão. He had studied at the University of Chicago—most of the South Americans I have hitherto met who have studied in American universities have been at Cornell or the University of Wisconsin, and while doubtless my coming across these men has been partly accidental, it is equally undoubted that the South American who comes to the United States to study wishes to go to the universities that develop to a high degree the technical and practical training. After leaving the University of Chicago, Senhor Brandão spent two years working in the General Electric shops at Schenectady, New York. He was not born in Bahia, but came there in pursuit of his profession as a civil engineer, doing work of importance; and after eight years, when his work was through, he had made such an impression on his fellow-citizens that they made him Mayor.

During the course of our morning's drive we stopped at the School of Medicine, going through the buildings and meeting a few of the professors and students. This is not only one of the best schools of medicine in South America, it is among the really distinguished medical schools of the world. It has been in existence over a century, and its high standing and the great value of its productive work have been recognized again and again by all competent authorities both in Europe and in the United States. Those persons who believe that men living in the tropics are unable permanently to perform useful work would do well to study with some attention the admirable contribution to the growth of real civilization which has been made by this great school of medicine and surgery in Bahia.

At the Municipal Council one of the lead-

ing citizens of Bahia, a doctor and graduate of this school of medicine, made the address to me in English. Here in Brazil, as home in the United States, there is no other profession, hardly even that of the civil engineers themselves, which produces so many men of ardent and intelligent sympathy with the movement for sane and genuine progress. The doctor in his address showed a clear appreciation of just what all of us in all parts of the world mean who are striving for genuine democracy in government and industry. He also showed a refreshingly sound common sense as to the practical limitations in the application of our principles. I was especially struck by the applause with which the audience greeted his allusion to the Governor and the Mayor as having done first-class work, and having done it with absolute honesty. During both of the two short addresses I made in Brazil I found that what the audience cared for most was my insistence upon the need of the elementary virtues, and especially of the virtue of honesty in public life, and my further insistence upon the fact that the man of mere words was a curse in a democracy, that the only man who can serve a democracy is the man who says nothing that he does not mean, and who always tries to translate his words into actual deeds.

Few cities in our own Western United States are being improved more rapidly than Bahia. The business and residential streets are being widened; trolleys are running everywhere, and automobiles are jostling the queer pack-animals laden with country produce. Old buildings are being ruthlessly torn down—sometimes almost too ruthlessly—to make room for whatever improvements are necessary. In one part of the city there are big mills, chiefly cotton mills; the labor is mostly native. The Mayor mentioned to me that the building of some of the new streets was being conducted by an American firm, and that the trolley cars had come from America; but he expressed his regret that there were so few American business men who seemed to realize the possibilities of Bahia, and Brazil generally. Personally I not only regret this, but wonder at it. There is already easy and pleasant communication direct from the United States to Brazil. In a very few years the voyage will be done in ten days or less. If American business men will take the trouble to do as the Germans do, and study Brazil, and the desires, needs, and likings of the Brazilians, they will find them

first-class customers. Of course first-class customers stay such only when the goods and the service are also first-class, and it is necessary to consult not merely the needs but the preferences and even the prejudices of the customers—a fact which our business men should bear in mind at the outset of all international dealings.

In the very brief time at our disposal we saw chiefly the busy Bahia of to-day and of the future. We also got a glimpse or two of the past. One church, that of St. Francis, is a very interesting specimen of Portuguese *barroco* architecture. It was built in the sixteenth century. The rather florid carvings are for the most part elaborately gilded, but the demands of a less pronounced taste are met both by the imported tiles and paintings and by the beautiful carved woodwork. It was this carved woodwork which especially interested me because it was a native product and not imported. The wood is a kind of ironwood, nearly as hard as a metal, and practically as lasting.

By the way, there were two of the copper coins with inscriptions which typify the modern Brazilian insistence upon the same commercial traits and virtues which we also have recognized as elementary; one copper piece which has on one side the Southern Cross has on the other the legend "*A economia faz a prosperidade*" (Economy makes prosperity), and the other bears the inscription, "*Vintem poupado, vintem ganho*" (A penny saved is a penny earned). These Benjamin Franklin-

like mottoes are as essential to the men in the Southern Hemisphere who live under the Southern Cross as to us in the Northern Hemisphere under the Dipper!

The public breakfast we were given was like an unusually well-managed public breakfast of this kind in one of our great cities at home. There were several courses, all different from those one would see in America or England, but very good, and well cooked and well served. There was the same grouping of well-dressed men, in their essentials of the same type—as a Senator who sat near me remarked, in speaking of the social and industrial problems of our two nations, humanity is much the same everywhere. There was one very pretty addition, however. The central table in the room was filled with ladies, the wives of the men present, charming in looks and in dress, and at a table covered with beautiful flowers.

Altogether the impression left upon me by Bahia was not only one of beauty and picturesqueness, but of eager determination to succeed in manufacturing and in commerce, and of full realization by the leaders that there could be no success of the kind unless there was a stable, orderly, and honest government, unless justice was meted out without favor, and unless energy, thrift, hard work, and intelligent enterprise were shown in the business world. If, as I not only hope but believe, Brazil can continue developing all these qualities, she has before her a future of limitless prosperity and development in the twentieth century.