

RIO DE JANEIRO

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THE THIRD OF A SERIES OF
ARTICLES ON SOUTH AMERICA

WE entered the harbor of Rio at sunrise. There is little use in making comparisons between one place and another, if only for the reason that what we call beauty is composed of a thousand elements, each of which appeals with varying force to the several onlookers. Yet it is hard for me to believe that there is anywhere in the world as beautiful a situation as that of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The great landlocked bay is surrounded near and far by mountains whose outlines are both very lovely and very bold. There are islands, there are promontories, there is a rich tropical vegetation. By far the most conspicuous among the trees are the towering royal palms, which are equally striking near by and far away.

There are some cities very beautiful from a distance, but noisome and shabby when once they are entered. Rio de Janeiro, on the contrary, is beautiful when seen from afar and is delightful, on intimate acquaintance. The streets are clean. The main thoroughfares are broad, and no other city has so many miles of smooth asphalted streets. Automobiles swarm and trolleys abound. The public buildings are handsome, the private buildings very picturesque and, in northern eyes, possess a most attractive foreign flavor. The water supply is ample, and not only healthful but delicious. The sanitation is excellent. For over half the year the climate is delightful, and during the remaining months there is close at hand a cool mountain retreat.

Altogether it is difficult to write of this city of over a million people without expressing astonishment that both its beauty and its greatness are not more widely understood. It should be a familiar object to all ordinary travelers. The people of the United States do not realize what a wonderful city this tropic capital is; wonderful not only in beauty, but in its extraordinary material activity and achievement. Fortunately, South America is becoming more and more accessible to the people of the United States. It is much to be wished that young Americans would visit their neighbors to the south of them before

they make a European tour—just as it is much to be wished that dwellers on the Eastern coast would, wherever possible, take some trip at least as far west as the Pacific before they cross the Atlantic Ocean. Fortunately the tide of travel has now turned. We are on the eve of seeing full recognition by our people of the varied interest that inheres in a trip to the lands south of us, and of the prime business need of establishing closer commercial relations with these lands.

The major part of South America has witnessed an extraordinary growth, both industrial and political, during the last dozen years. Brazil is one of the countries in which this growth has been particularly evident. Provided only that there is reasonable political activity, the twentieth century will be the century of South America; that is, there will be greater rapidity of growth, greater relative increase of prosperity, in the South American continent than in any other. Although Latin America is a century older than English-speaking America, the latter not only overtook the former, but during the nineteenth century developed with infinitely greater rapidity. This was largely due to the fact that the Spanish and Portuguese colonies had suffered under ecclesiastical no less than civil tyranny, industrial no less than political despotism, such as was never known in any of the colonies that afterwards became the United States. After the independence of the Latin-American colonies was achieved more than two generations elapsed before the effects of the three centuries of debasing oppression were in any large measure outlived.

The period of great and rapid growth was slow in coming. But it has come. Of recent years in the more progressive countries there has been a literally astounding development both of orderly stability and justice in government and of material prosperity. Brazil offers one of the striking examples of this growth. Nowhere in any nation of the world has a more enlightened policy been pursued than that pursued by the statesmen who have had the control of Brazilian affairs during the past fifteen or twenty years. The results are

everywhere evident. One of the places in which they are most conspicuous is Rio de Janeiro itself.

In all its essentials the city is now merely an unusually good example of one of the world's great capitals. The management of traffic by the police, the work of the street-cleaning department, the electric lighting, the excellent asphalted pavements, the trolley lines, the handsome buildings, public and private—all these things and hundreds of others could be instanced as showing that Rio de Janeiro is as progressive as any one of our great cities in the United States. In some points she is distinctly ahead of us—in the Municipal Theater, for instance, and in much that has been done for beautifying the city. Many of the streets are lined by double rows of the stately royal palms, making the finest of all imaginable colonnades. The long drive along the brave bay front is something quite unique. There are difficult problems and unpleasant problems in Rio, of course, but so are there in all our own great cities, and the matter of most importance is the striking success that has been achieved along so many lines, business and governmental. The beauty is no more evident than the business development. Rio is an old city, but of late years it has gone ahead, and it is now going ahead as fast as any young city in the Western United States, and its prosperity rests on a sound and healthy basis.

Rio offers a bewildering number of objects for study, and it is quite impossible for a man making a hurried trip through it to do more than just touch on a very few of them. The condition of the poorer people, for example, is, I am assured, and as I thoroughly believe, far removed from the misery of the slum dwellers in the great cities of the Northern Hemisphere. There is no especial quarter for the poor, nothing in the nature of a slum district, and there is much effort of one kind and another to provide decent living conditions for the poorest. The manifestations of this effort vary from those which one would associate rather with the Brazil of a century back up to those which are characteristic of the most advanced modern capitals—a not unnatural contrast in a city where the thronging automobiles and trolley cars still have to exercise a good deal of care in connection with ox-carts. Thus in one place we saw a free fountain, a long stone building with some twenty or thirty taps coming out of it, from which water is obtained by the

poor people who live on the hillside above in the little shanties built by themselves on land loaned them almost rent free for the purpose by a religious order. In other places we saw excellent houses which had been put up by the municipality itself for workingmen. In other instances it was the workingmen's organizations which had put up these houses for their own members. In yet other cases, perhaps the most numerous of all, it was the factory owners themselves who had built the houses in order that their operatives might be well lodged.

I spoke above of the automobiles and trolleys. Not the most advanced city of the Western United States is better supplied with both. The street cars, by the way, were originally started here by an American. It was long before the days of the trolley, and the first cars were drawn by mules. He raised the money to start the line by an issue of bonds, and for some reason this issue of bonds became indelibly associated in the popular mind with the cars, with the result that gradually the cars themselves were called "bonds," and now throughout Brazil the ordinary name by which a trolley car is known is a "bond." Very recently, however, some especially big trolley cars have been put on the lines, and these were called, first jokingly and then seriously, "dreadnoughts," and are now known as such.

By the way, the coffee was delicious, and every one drank it at all times. I was informed that this habit of coffee-drinking had a very marked effect in preventing dram-drinking, and I can well believe it. Of course the habit of drinking coffee and tea, or anything else that is pleasant and harmless, is the best possible preventive of dram-drinking.

The foreign branch of the Young Men's Christian Association has for many years had its South American headquarters in Rio, and after much struggling and many painful and disheartening experiences has at last begun to win its way. There are very few institutions of any kind which do better work than the Young Men's Christian Association, and I was glad to go to the branch in Rio de Janeiro, expecting merely to say a word of greeting to the members themselves. However, I found the hall of meeting jammed with an audience for the most part composed of Brazilians, including members of the Government, judges, Senators, and Deputies. I had to make them a short speech. The

reason I mention the incident is because my audience was so obviously of a very high character. They represented a type both intellectual and forceful; they were men with whom we would be glad to associate in any movement for social betterment in the United States. I made them precisely the type of address that I would have made to a similar audience in my own country, and they responded precisely as an audience in my own country would have responded. Evidently the feelings to which I appealed, the ideals which I upheld, were the same in Rio de Janeiro as in New York City.

There is a very attractive social life in Rio. The political Constitution is modeled upon that of the United States—whereas under the Empire the Constitution was modeled on that of Great Britain. The intellectual stimulus comes chiefly from France; more French than Portuguese books are read. The social life is, of course, founded on that of the Iberian Peninsula, but with very distinct differences, being far more advanced and modern. The theaters, the clubs, and the people who go to the theaters and frequent the clubs, and the young people who go to the dinners and dances, are like those in the other great civilized capitals, whether of Europe or America.

One of the most interesting things I did was to visit the Bacteriological Institute, a few miles outside of Rio. Its head is a Brazilian, Dr. Cruzes, a man of the class of Pasteur and Gorgas, who in Brazil has headed the fight against those obscure insects and plants and those baleful microscopic organisms which are responsible for the most terrible diseases against which humanity, and especially humanity in the tropics, has to contend. The laboratory was admirable in its equipment, and even more admirable in the manifest spirit and intelligence of its men. Many scores of dread diseases, from cholera and the bubonic plague to yellow fever and malaria, are here studied with the utmost patience and success, and in many cases remedies are finally devised. The part that is being played by Brazil in the great warfare of applied science against the most dangerous foes of man is not generally appreciated abroad, and of itself entitles Brazil to stand abreast of the foremost civilized nations. There was one touch in connection with Dr. Cruzes which so pleased me that I cannot forbear repeating it. Everything about the building in which Dr. Cruzes and his

assistants work is of the newest and most advanced type. The library contains all the best publications of the day of a medical and scientific character. The thought is necessarily expressed in terms of Darwin and Huxley; evolution is accepted precisely as gravitation is accepted, yet this in no sense means the reign of materialism. The doctor took us through the little bedroom in which he sleeps when in the building. By his bed were three books. One was an excellent French publication in which I noticed a purely scientific article on the comparative evolution of religions. The other two were "The Imitation of Christ" and a life of Joan of Arc. Surely such catholicity of taste in things spiritual and intellectual marks the kind of scientist who ought to be typical of the science of the future. The incident bore out the assurance repeatedly given me that in Brazil there was genuine religious freedom, that there was complete tolerance of all shades of religious belief and non-belief, and at the same time none of the anti-clerical intolerance which in certain modern nations has at times risen to a height of fanaticism as objectionable as the theological intolerance which culminated in the Inquisition.

Among the many beautiful and indeed wonderful trips which the traveler through Rio should take, one of the most remarkable and best worth taking is at the city's very doors. On one side of the entrance to the harbor is a giant rock, a sheer-sided hill called the Sugar Loaf from its shape. An aerial trolley has been arranged during the last eight months to the top of this Sugar Loaf, passing over the top of another hill lower but equally precipitous. It was no small feat to establish this trolley in such a place, and it was done by active, energetic Brazilians, with no outside help of any kind—a further proof of the way in which the Brazil of to-day has awakened. It is the kind of thing that any American would be proud to see performed by his fellow-citizens in any part of the United States. From the top of the Sugar Loaf there is a wonderful view over the ocean and the mighty and beautiful bay. In no other city can such a view be obtained, especially at sunset; and it is as beautiful after dark, when the lights of the city shine, as during daylight.

One day we visited Tijuca Mountain, about an hour's automobile ride from the city. Like most of the mountains surrounding Rio

de Janeiro harbor, it is lofty and abrupt of outline, and covered by a most beautiful tropical forest. Palms, tree ferns, cypress, and a multitude of other trees are laced together by the lianas that twine around the trunks and hang in great loops and festoons from the branches. Here and there are lovely cascades, and wherever a spot has been cleared there is the usual wonderful view of some portion of the great harbor. We came back to the city by a road that led us close to the ocean shore, dropping down to it through a wild gorge and ascending from it through another pass between two mountains.

In the afternoon of the same day we went to a garden party given by the President in the Botanical Gardens. These gardens were a mass of brilliant green verdure, and every kind of tropical tree grew therein, including spreading clusters of bamboos, beneath whose overhanging shafts the road lay in dark shadow. As everywhere in the city, the royal palms made the most marked feature, stretching away in straight double rows, the crown shafts with their severe and simple outlines combining in curious fashion both delicacy and strength. There were some fifteen hundred people present, very well dressed, both men and women, and with charming manners, simple and dignified. The pretty girls with their pretty dresses made a striking spectacle under and among the beautiful trees.

There was one touch at the gardens that illustrates an element of the Brazilian character which it would be well for us more often to imitate. The royal palms are not Brazilian trees, but were brought here over a hundred years ago from the West Indies. The first palm which was then planted, the mother palm, is still erect, and not only does a tablet in front of it commemorate its origin, but opposite it is the statue of the King under whom it was brought hither. The Republic shows both self-confidence and magnanimity by the unhesitating manner in which it commemorates any deed done or service rendered by one of the Emperors. Not only has Dom Pedro's name been kept to designate streets and buildings, but a statue has been erected to him under the auspices of the present President. This is not only a remarkable contrast to what has been done in the French Republic, but to what has at least occasionally been done by ourselves. When Brazil was made a republic, there was no effort whatever to sever the continuity of relations

between the past and the present; and the result has been healthful in every way.

The most beautiful of all the trips around Rio is that to the Corcovado Mountain. From the top of the mountain there is the best view of the city and the bay that can be obtained anywhere. The onlooker realizes for the first time how spread out Rio is. The city extends along the shore of the bay, which is deeply broken by harbors and promontories, and, furthermore, it stretches out until its front extends far along the ocean itself. Mountain after mountain rises directly out of the city—perhaps they should be called hills rather than mountains, but they are so high and sheer that it is inexact to term them only hills. Some of the smaller ones have been cut down, in whole or in part, to make room for streets and buildings. The others have been left untouched, and the city spreads round them like a lake round its islands.

The most strikingly beautiful part of Corcovado Mountain is a walk which stretches for three or four miles along the steep, forest-clad slopes that front the ocean. It is a broad, shady pathway, smooth and well kept, and on its inner side runs a gray, moss-covered aqueduct built by the Portuguese in the seventeenth century, still in excellent repair, for its age has merely given it beauty. This aqueduct is open, and a clear stream of water runs along it, delicious and healthy to drink, as the water of Rio invariably is. The path follows the winding buttresses of the mountain slope, bowered in the wonderful luxuriance of the tropical forest. For the most part one walks under a shaded archway, but here and there there are breaks from which one can see far over the ocean and up and down the mountain-side through the teeming luxuriance of the virgin forest. I have never seen, and I have never heard of, so beautiful a walk so close to a great city. There is nothing more beautiful in the most beautiful parts of Italy; and in Italy there is too apt to be some revolting lack of cleanliness to mar even what is most beautiful, whereas around Rio the cleanliness and wholesomeness surpass that of even our northern cities.

One day we went to Petropolis, a town founded by Dom Pedro, high among the mountains some thirty miles from Rio. These mountains are very bold and sheer in outline, with immense cliffs, and are densely covered by the wonderful tropical

forest. In Petropolis the weather is always cool and pleasant, and during the hot summer months all people who can spend the nights there.

Rio itself is unusually pleasant for a tropical city in the hot months. Beaches of white sand stretch along the edge of the ocean. Everywhere in the neighborhood of the city the water is so clean that bathing is a delight. I have never seen a city in which improvements were being more rapidly pushed forward, and the plans already under way include wooded avenues and pleasure grounds as charming as those of Paris—not to mention a great bathing and pleasure resort which is to have all the popular attractions of Coney Island! I was told that the widening of the streets, the beautifying of the old parks, and the creation of so many new parks and playgrounds had worked a very marked change in the lives of the inhabitants. They now live out of doors far more than formerly.

An interesting feature of this out-of-door life was the amount of football that was played. In the various parks and playgrounds there were football fields, and if the space was too limited for regular match play, then small plots with goal posts were provided for practice. Every day we saw hundreds of men and boys playing football. It was not the Rugby, and still less the American college game, but Association or soccer football, as played in England.

Altogether, I felt that Rio need fear no comparison with any modern capital, from New York to Berlin; I had never realized, and I doubt whether many of our people realize, the extraordinary, the bewildering advance that has been made by Rio de Janeiro—and by Brazil—of recent years; an advance largely due to the creation of the Republic—a fact worth calling to the attention of pessimists concerning popular government.