THE BACK WOODS OF CHILE

How Southern Chile is Being Opened Up to Commerce.

Article From the Chilean Frontier—The City of Temuco—Queer Government Auction, Where Land is Sold in Thousand-Acre Lots—How Chile Tried to Attract Emigrants—The Chances for Investment—Big Farms Which Will Soon Be Closed Out at Mortgage Sales—Some Street and Steam Railroad Schemes—The Chilean Coal Beds and Coal Mines Under the Pacific Ocean, Which Are Worked by the Electric Belt and Coal Mines Under the Pacific Ocean, Which Are Worked by the Electric Belt—A Visit to Madame Cousino's Town of Lota and a Word About Its Factories and Park.

Concepcion, Chile, Sept. 29, 1898.—I have just returned from a trip through the back woods of Chile, a region which perhaps seldom visit and of which many never have visited the part of the country would make the extreme Northern Chile is a desert. For one thousand miles south of the Peruvian frontier there are not enough trees to furnish timber for the public schools. I saw thousands of miles south of Santiago through irrigated farms where the only trees I saw were those planted along the borders of the ditches, and I was once in the neighborhood of Concepcion that I found weeds of any size. From here I have gone a day's ride in the woods to where is about as the frontier. I passed over some farms cut out of the woods, where the stump-filled fields reminded me of the newly settled regions of our middle northwest. South Chile is covered with forest. It contains some of the best land in the country, and it has been said that the farms do not require irrigation. This country has been a wilderness until within recent years. Now the government is opening up its wilderness. The railroads are being steadily extended further south, and new towns and villages are springing up almost daily.

IN A CHILEAN FRONTIER TOWN.

These frontier towns remind one of those of the southern states of the United States. Take Temuco, for instance, where I spent some days last week. It is a little place of about 1,500 people, but it has more than 10,000 people in its police census, which covers an area as big as Massachusetts. It has a few American stores, some frame and filled with black smith and tin ware and inventory houses with their stocks of goods, which are sold on credit and mean not them are some distance. Every house has a big well, and although the temperature is about as cold as that of Washington, not a house has a chimney. The people generally believe that there is no need of ventilation and like the Chinese try upon their chimney to keep them warm. The houses are mostly of one story, and the right place for the center of the town here is a park or plaza of about an acre, where the people walk about on Sunday afternoon and chat at each other.

In this town, where you find the blood English, German and Chilean people, if you visit a hotel you will find one German, all of whom are here because the Bonds of Germany of the same as the Americans. It has plenty of saloons where you alcohol is sold to the poor or laborers and the Indians, and there is also a Methodist church. If its character where the liquors are drunk is the same, it has Chilean churches and adherents. The Methodist churches are people, who have done as much for civilization as the Methodists have in missionary church and a school here. The street names of Temuco are different from those of our towns. Some of them are those your surnames. There are Lick, Frank Indian, Germans and well-known Spanish Chilenos. There are some places over their surnames, dark faces and the air of brigands, drive the streets where people walk in them. Each man carries a long Bowie knife long, and Jimmie the other by striking them on this side and that. Now and then you see beams of six and eight of these boards. The cards are the only straight animals, except a few of the recent horses which had the new rule between the railroad ditches and the road. It is in secrets that the Indians of Araucania have raised many fat ones brought to the market. Since everywhere in the growing, the hunting of cattle, the Indians and everything that heavy horses or mules do with a wagon, the method of yoking the ox to the cattle seems to all never change. The yoke rests on the neck just back of the horns and all of the pulling of the cart or wagon must be done through the yoke. The yoke is a heavy piece of wood, and I do not see how the cattle get along without the other, and as it is impossible to swing it from side to side, it is a wonder that the cattle are so tame and tractable. The frontier is as big as a telegraph pole. It is a part of the cart itself, and as the ox walks the yoke has the weight of this rubbing on their horns. It seems that with the oxen, and the oxen seem to use it without complaint, and it is a wonder to me how they carry their heavy loads on their heavy yoke.

HOW LAND IS SOLD IN CHILE.

In company with Don Aurelio Rios, the government inspector of colonization, I made a trip into the woods about ten thirty miles south of new railroad, which is almost finished, and yet not ready for traffic. The road is well laid for the state to open up new lands, and it is part of a system which will extend from the end of our railroad in Chile to the city. The road is well built with 56-pound Bessemer rails and the English I feel it is going to last. The road is well ballasted, and it cost about $12,000 gold per mile. The entire road will be American, and it was by a Boston engineer and an American land rate that we made a part of the contract for the line. The steel bridges, and there are ten, are all of which cost more than a hundred thousand dollars, were bought from France, although any American did not get the contract I do not know a large sum. The land of the Chilean railroad belongs to the government. The railroad in the United States. The stations were built by a wide space found in about each of them. There are no farms there about the stations. The government, I understand, has made about 10 miles of the road. The rest of the road has been given to contractors who have taken land in payment. The government has made a rule that no one can get more than 1,000 hectares of land, and the contractors are guaranteed. Each one with a capital of $100,000 can get 1,000 hectares, and for every thousand dollars there is a hundred hectares. Note the wording and land speculation.

CHILEAN FARMS AS INVESTMENTS.

The papers of Santiago, Valparaiso and Concepcion are full of mortgage foreclosures, and at forced sale some of the best farms of the country are being sacrificed. Owing to the extravagance of the people, the pocketing of money by the officials, and the fall of silver and the money complications of the country, there were never so many mortgages as there are now. I was told that one house which paid as high as 30 per cent on a valuation of $10,000 a few years ago is now mortgaged for $6,000 and has been. Many of these farms are to be opened. The big estates near Chillan are being cut up into farms of about 100 acres. The land is good, and although the country has been settled for two or three hundred years there are plenty of good farms which are worth big money. I know of one of the best farmers who by the present financial conditions are anxious to sell his farm at a high rate of interest. One reason is that of a son, who owes at least $3,000 to the north of Europe. He wants a loan of $3,000 on it and will pay 10 per cent interest. He owns the best farm of the town, and he is surrounded with real property, and at the writing he owes no place. He is a leading man of the place, and he is a partner in the Chilean Exposition of New York. The banks have put 10 and 11 per cent for money, and the mortgage conditions is seldom offered for making loans.

STREET AND STEAM RAILROADS.

I had a talk last night with Captain William S. Wilson, an American who has lived in Chile for the past fifty years, on the chances for American capital in Chile. Captain Wilson comes of one of the old families of Washington and Baltimore. He is now over seventy years of age and has resided in Chile for the last fifty years. He is the noted sea captain of the Pacific. He was thrown with Admiral Farragut when the latter was trying to go to sea, and at twenty-three years of age, in 1848, he commanded the first ship that left the port of Baltimore. He joined our navy during the Mexican war. In 1849 he was in the employ of Commodore Perry, the skipper back Bella Vista, built in Baltimore, and for years had charge of this and other Pacific steamers of the company. Later on he became an officer of the Chilean navy, took part in the war with Peru, and was made a naval commander in Chile's war with Spain. He has also been connected with some of the best steamship lines in Chile. He is now a retired sea captain, and although he is too old to go to sea he is well posted on the world's trade. He is well posted in Chile, and he knows the strength of this country. The resources of the country are great and the population now are safe and prosperous, and improvements are many. What our capitalists, who are after such things, should do is to get a few hundred dollars to steamship tickets and come out here and look into the field. The Chilean is well equipped with them and they be able to tell just what the different properties are worth. Take the street railroads of the town of Concepcion. It contains 40,000 people, and is one of the best cities in Chile. It is connected with Talcahuano, a town of 10,000 on the best harbor south of Valparaiso. It has a fine level dry dock and five lines of Bessemer rails and its English I feel I know. The street railroad company, which cost $12,000 gold per mile. The entire work