IN THE BACKWOODS OF BRAZIL.

Some Strange Features of Life in the Province of Matto Grosso.

The Queer Cities of Corumba and Cuyaba—A Town Where Boys Wash for Gold in the Street—Savage Indians Who are Born Without Hair and Grow Sore Except on the Head—Something About the Chaco and Its Curious Tribes—The Vast Forests and Pastures of Interior Brazil—How Cattle Take the Place of Horses as Riding Animals.

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Asuncion, Paraguay, Jan. 10, 1899.—The wonders of the Parana system grow upon me. I are now on the Paraguay, which flows 1,800 miles from its source in Brazil before it leaves itself in the Parana. The Paraguay has a network of tributaries above Asuncion, up which you can sail for thousands of miles. On some of these rivers you can go in caboes so close to the tributaries of the Amazon that you can carry your boat a short distance and go out to the Atlantic through that mighty stream.

The Parana proper, which I left about 300 miles south, at the town of Corrientes, extends more than a thousand miles further north, bounding south Paraguay and running on into Brazil. It is navigable for small steamers during a part of its course, but it has an echo of rocky rapids, and in future it may be one of the great picturesque routes of the world. It has waterfalls which are said to surpass those of Niagara. These are on the borders of Paraguay and Brazil, and are known as the Salto Guayra. They are, I am told, far more grand than the falls of Yguazu, which are sometimes called the Niagara of South America.

OPENED BY AN AMERICAN.

I have already written here in coming to Asuncion I sailed as far as from New York City to Omaha on large river steamers. I can go just as much further by steam into the very heart of the continent, or further than from Philadelphia to Salt Lake City. The limit of steam navigation is now Cuyaba, Brazil, the capital of Matto Grosso, and a metropolis of a vast country of undeveloped resources.

The first man to penetrate this region by steam was an American. He was Capt. Thomas J. Page. He was commander of the steam launch Alpha of our navy and upon this little ship in 1853 he pushed his way inland 2,100 miles from the Atlantic. Today Brazilian mail steamers go over the same route twice a month, and there are steamers leaving here weekly for Cuyaba. The Paraguay river for half the journey is everywhere twenty feet deep, while the average depth is said to be forty-five feet.

IN THE HEART OF BRAZIL.

In going from Asuncion to Cuyaba you pass through a region which is most picturesque. Crossing the boundary of Paraguay, you enter the great province of Matto Grosso, which is an empire in itself. As you go north the Paraguay river narrows, the scenery becomes wild, and you sweep in and out among mountains upon the bases of which grow iron trees and giant palms. The banks are covered with a wooded mass of vegetation. The trees are tall and bound together with vines and creepers. You could make your way through them with an ax or a knife.

There are all kinds of wild birds, and you get many shots from the steamer. There are alligators everywhere, and if you rise early you may see and then see them swimming across the river.

Further north, if you throw a dynamite cartridge into the water, the dead fish will soon rise on all sides of you and you can within a few minutes pick up enough to half fill your boat. Here and there you pass farm houses cut out of the woods. At some of these the boat stops for fresh meat, taking the bovine on board and killing them there. There are frequent forests of palms scattered along the river.

About two days' ride above Asuncion, just over the Brazilian line, a forest covered island, thirty or a hundred feet high, springs up ahead of you and seems to stop your progress. As you approach it you see that there is a channel at the west side wide enough for a boat to go through. This island is known as the mountain gate. The land about it is said to be so unhealthy that it is one of the authorities states, even the trees are petrified and dessicated. Some of the human beings in the neighborhood certainly are.

AMONG THE TRIBES.

As you proceed further the animal life increases. Deer are frequently seen and among them some almost pure white. The birds are of the most gorgeous plumage, the toucans flashing their splendid in the brightest reds and blues. The alligators now become more numerous, and you are frequently approached by Indians who have skins for sale. A good skin will bring from $5 to $10. In addition to this, there is sometimes a bounty paid for such skins. There is one man on the river who has made quite a little fortune by killing tigers. He has killed 108 and has received in the neighborhood of $1,000 for the skins. He got $10 apiece for the skins and the cattle owners paid him a bounty of $5 per tiger.

Other things offered for sale are parrots and monkeys. The prices are low, and you can have them almost for the asking. You can also buy bows and arrows, Indian baskets and hammocks. The hammocks are expensive, those are made of the brilliant feathers of tropical birds, and cost as high as $200 apiece.

FROM ASUNCION TO MATTO GROSSO.

The province of Matto Grosso is one of the largest in Brazil. It is as large as one-third of the whole United States, not including our outlying possessions. It forms the southern central half of the country. The greater part of it has never been explored, and it is as wild today as it was when Sebastian Cabot made his way up the Paraguay river only a few years after America was discovered.

Matto Grosso is a land of gold and diamonds, of rich pastures, of impenetrable forests of rubber and cacao, and, in fact, in its possibilities, one of the richest lands of the globe.

This territory is to be reached only by the Parana and Paraguay river systems. It has no railroads. It is cut off from the rest of Brazil, and its people rely for their supplies upon the steamers of the Parana system. Every bit of imports is brought down 2,000 miles by river boats, and the officials, who as a rule come from the Brazilian capital travel a thousand miles farther.

Leaving Asuncion on my way to Matto Grosso, you first pass Villa Concepcion, the biggest city of north Paraguay. There is a white marble house on the banks, and the back of this the town. Concepcion contains about 3,000 people. It is made up of stuccoed buildings and thatched huts. It is a business center, exporting large quantities of Matos or Paraguayan tea, and hides. There are more Indians in Asuncion, however than there are in Concepcion, and you find that the Indians and negroes increase as you go north.

At Coimbra, Brazil, 130 miles from Buenos Ayres, you see upon the west bank of the Paraguay the first village of any size for a distance of 700 miles on that side of the river. So far all the settlements have been on the east bank of the river, the country to the west being almost entirely wild. At Coimbra there is a Brazilian fort. Further on you come to the little village of Albuquerque, with the wooded mountains behind it, and about 15 miles further the steamer stops at Corumba.

THE CHIEF PART OF SOUTH BRAZIL.

Corumba is over 2,200 miles from the sea. It is as far inland by water as Salt Lake City is from New York by rail. It is the chief port of Matto Grosso. Here is located the only custom house of the province, and the officers come on board and open your baggage.

The steamer stops long enough for you to get a good view of the city. It is situated on a hill commanding the country for miles. There are some 10,000 people in the place. The streets are about the city, and the place is picturesque. It has the usual Spanish buildings of stucco and tile, with palm trees covering here and there in the gardens.

There is a beautiful plaza in the center of Corumba, about which are some of the principal stores. There is a great deal of thrift to be observed among the merchants. The city does a large business, the most of which is managed by French, Italians and Germans.

Goods are sent out from here to different parts of the interior. There is a mule route to Cuiaba, the capital, over being San Jose de Chamois, which is 20 miles a way. The journey takes fourteen days, and it is very expensive. Mules are costly, and you cannot get a good one for less than $100 in gold. You must lay in a good supply of canned goods for those who try to live off the country fare poorly. There are few horses. They are subject to a peculiar disease, which affects their hoofs, and their place has been largely taken by cows and bulls. Bullocks are used for carts and also for riding, a good riding bullock bringing a good price. The animal is not a bad saddle animal. Its gait is a shuffling one or ease, and, after you become used to it, it is not at all unpleasant. The animals are directed by rules which are tied to their horns. They are often used to pack goods, too. Indeed, take the places that horses have to our country.

THE BRAZILIAN TOWN OF CUYABA.

It is shortly after you leave Corumba that you pass out of the Paraguay river and enter the San Lorenzo. The San Lorenzo is not so big as the Paraguay. In the Paraguay proper steamers draw as much as nine feet, while those to which you change at Corumba do not draw over five. It takes about twelve hours to reach the San Lorenzo river from Corumba, and you cut a cut and a half miles in it before you enter the Cuyaba river, up which you steam to the city.

The steamers are always crowded, 200 often being taken in one little boat. The whole journey from Corumba to Cuyaba requires six days, and the fare is $7 in gold. It is one of the cheapest steamship trips of the world. This price includes your meals—coffee in the morning, breakfast at 10 a.m. and dinner in the evening.

The scenery of the San Lorenzo and Cuyaba rivers is very tropical. There are many palms. There are cotton trees which have balls of cotton upon them as big as oranges. Others have blossoms of a silky fiber which hang down in great cones of white. This stuff is used by the people for making pillows.

Cuyaba has about 20,000 people. It is a surprisingly good city for its location and very much up-to-date. It has newspapers, hospitals and schools. It has water works, a street car line and a cathedral. In its college French, English and Portuguese are taught, and in its upper schools there are 200 boys. The town was founded in 1722, being laid out in Portuguese style with a very pretty plaza and park. It is situated about two miles from the river and you can ride to it on one of the tram cars or you may go on a street car drawn by mules.

WHERE THE BOYS WASH GOLD.

The country surrounding Cuyaba is rich agriculturally, and I am told there is much gold in the hills about the city. The cathedral is said to stand over a gold lode, and on the edge of the town there are placers which are still worked by the Portuguese. I have met several Americans who have been mining gold in this part of Brazil, but so far none of them have become very rich. It does not need very sharp eyes to see that gold exists in other and lower tropical soils the boys in the street playing for grains of gold in the street. It is said that they are often used pull for their trouble. There are also diamonds, rubies and topaz in the country, but I am told that the best diamonds have so far been found much farther south.

THE CHACO.

In going to Matto Grosso you skirt one of the least known parts of South America. This is the vast region known as the Chaco, lying west of the Paraguay river and south of Bolivia. The northern part of it belongs to Paraguay and the rest to the Argentine Republic. The part belonging to the Argentine lies south of the Pilcomayo river and comprises a territory bigger than California and Massachusetts combined, and enough to make three states as big as Ohio.

The only settlements in this vast region are along the Paraguay. They consist of here and there an estancia or farm and a few scattering villages. The chief town is the Paraguayan Chaco is Villa Hayes, which is in sight from Asuncion and which has now about ninety-one families of foreigners. They are chiefly Swiss, French and Italians, who are engaged in raising sugar cane and sweet potatoes and in manufacturing molasses.

There are two fresh rivers which run through the Chaco. The Pilcomayo winds about like a corkscrew from the Bolivian Andes to the Paraguay river. It is full of rapids and can never be navigable. The Vermejo or the Vermillion river enters the Paraguay further south. It is of just about the bottom of the country. Its waters are so red that they discolor those of the Paraguay for some miles. The Vermejo is about 1,200 miles long and is navigable for only a short distance.

Just what those countries outside in the way of resources is yet to be discovered. I have met men who have traversed most parts of them. They tell me that the forests have much dyewoods, and that there are good tracts of land among them. The land will hardly be developed before railroads are built, and today there are not, I venture, 10,000 white people in the whole territory.

THE HAIRLESS HUMANS OF THE CHACO.

The inhabitants of the Chaco are thus almost altogether Indians. They are said to be more than 100,000 of them. They are among the most curious of the Indians of the world, and some tribes are practically unknown to ethnologists. Some of the Chaco Indians go naked from one year's end to the other, and some are so opposed to any covering that they will not even cover their hair in great. They pull out every hair on their bodies except those on their heads. They have arms, legs, bodies, and in fact, all parts of their bodies, are kept as hairless as they were when they were born. I have heard it often stated that the people of a certain tribe are born without hair. It is said that they are born so, and the males never grow crops on their heads. This has been often reported, but until I see an Indian of that tribe I am in doubt the matter. I shall continue to doubt whether the reports are correct.

Some of these Indians are fine looking. Take the Tobas, for instance. I have seen many of them during my travels on the Paraguay river. They are as fine looking as any Indians of North America. They are as straight as our pine trees and as proud in their bearing as any Indian chief of the West. They have high cheek bones, copper-colored skins and straight, black hair.

The Tobas commonly wear no clothes except when they come in to the presence of white people or cross over to Paraguay to trade. At such times the women wear white sheets draped about their bodies.

At home they have nothing except a blanket about the waist, that is, when they are in full dress. The men are

THE INDIAN WOMEN.

The younger women are very fine looking, and the young braves are among the noblest of their race. Both men and women are tall, and after thirty the women look old.

Among most of the tribes polygamy is common, but I am told that the women are strong peaceable and that a new and young wife is welcomed into the family. This may be from the fact that the women do all the work, and the more women the less work. It is the woman who plants the crop, cooks the meals, makes the fishing nets and weaves the blankets.

The men only hunt, fish and fight. They are skilled in the use of the bow and arrow, it is said very brave in battle. They do not scalp, but cut off the heads of their dead and carry them in such a way that they can use the skulls for drinking cups. As a rule they kill the grown-ups of the tribes they conquer, but save the children for bravery and slaves.

The marriage customs of the Chaco Indians are strange. Giovanni Polizzetti, an Italian, who has traveled among them, says that when one of the Tobas wants to marry he paints his cheek bones, lips and the hollows of his eyes red. He then wrapped about the neck of his sweetheart, and later on brings all the sheep, chickens, skins and other property which he possesses to the young lady and offers them to her as a present. If she accepts them the marriage is on, and he can come in and live with her family, shortly afterward remaining to a hut of his own. If she refuses, he goes elsewhere. I am told that such marriages are happy, that the women are faithful, and that they make good mothers.

These Indians are not very intelligent. They cannot count more than four. They have no money and their trading is altogether by barter. A community of interests seems to prevail, and if one of the women gets a piece of finery from a Swagger she has to divide it with her sisters, her cousins and her aunts.

THE WIGWAMS OF THE CHACO.

The wigwams of the Chaco are different from those of our savages. A village often has its huts built together, so that one church can cover a number of dwellings. One of these common houses looks much like a great hay wagon, several families living in the different apartments under it.

One part of each hut is used for cooking and another for sleeping. The people sleep upon skins when they have them, otherwise on the bare ground. The huts are so well made that they are tight and warm. The men build the women and when completed one of the women crawls upon the roof and stamps about it to see if it is tight. If she finds a crack through it she makes the man who built it fix it. If he can't, the hut is all right, but if the roof gives, he has his wife to get up and do it work again.

The Indian women are said to be good cooks. They use pots and ants for cooking, and I am told they always wash their pots after using them. They use plates or gourds for spoons, forks are unknown and the man is happy who has his own knife.

QUEER CREMATION CUSTOMS.

Some of these Indians have odd ways of taking care of their dead. If a man is sick at the time of his death his corpse is put into a clay jar. This is buried in the hut only if the man died thereon, or it is consumed the same as the body dorsts. Whether the cooking is done on the same fire I do not know.

The Indians like to keep their dead with them, and in the case of the poor the corpse is buried in the hut and the family eats and sleeps until the body has so far decomposed that it does not cause a bad smell.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

BILLS FOR PURE FOOD.

Pure food bills failed to pass in Utah's Legislature, but will be considered very reasonable by the consumers of it. A spring tablet for when pressed, and by the Mt. Ivy Co., Tel. 46. F. A. Stearns, Mgr.

"Give me a liver regulator and I can regulate the world," said a genius. The eccentric handed him a bottle of De Witt's Little Early Risers, the famous little pills. F. C. Schramm, McCornick Building, corner Main Street, First South.

HOME LIFE A LA CUBANA.

Scenes and Incidents in a Typical Casa—Daily Routine of the Average Cuban Household—The Servant Girl Problem in Cuba.

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Special Correspondence.

Matanzas, Jan. 29th, 1899.—In order to give you an inside look at domestic arrangements a la Cubana, I invite you to spend a day with me, in the typical casa in which I am myself a guest. Be it understood, however, that we are not going to misuse the hospitality of our kind entertainers by unseemly prying or invidious comparisons. We will note only those things which lie on and the surface that he who runs may read them, remembering that every country under the sun has some peculiar customs of its own. While the ways of our Cuban neighbors appear strange to us, from the angle of vision to which we were educated, our ways may seem equally queer from their point of view; and perhaps a judicious mingling of both might be of mutual benefit.

One frequently hears in Cuba a Spanish proverb which runs:

Manana, mas, y la ventana
No la hemos de cerrar.

(Meaning, in effect, that music, heavy, and easing out of the window are pleasures which should not be indulged in in the early part of the day. Impressionable little ones, if, on taking a look from my casement this sunny mid-winter morning, while the thermometer is already climbing high in the eighties, I see a little girl, twelve or fourteen years of age, in an small carnival. Drop as the house walls (about four feet) and wide as the double doors of a northern home. Non-barred outside and shuttered within—it affords the cool kind of a work-"den" with plenty of room for my easy chair, table, typewriter, papers and big bowl of roses. The house is of the typical Cuban design, the apartments opening on a central court, the sidewalks the abodes of a southern home, with