

COUNTRY LIFE IN COLOMBIA

Orchid Farming—The Most Wonderful Salt Mines in The World.

Special Correspondence.
Bogota, Colombia, Dec. 15, 1902.—In order to give you an idea of rural life in Colombia, permit me to tell you of a visit we have been making to the most famous salt mines in the world, which lie on the opposite edge of the great plain of Bogota, just beyond the village of Zipaquira.

Imagine a jolly party on horseback, led by our genial American minister, and followed by two mules (men servants), driving a donkey laden with hamper and luncheon, cantering gaily out of Colombia's capital on a bright December morning. In these regions of perpetual summer one finds it hard to realize that there is a dismal winter anywhere, and the tales that come to us concerning a coal-burned and consequent suffering in the United States seem to us less real than the myths of a winter that cluster around this historic plain. At this great elevation

profitable, remembering the "fancy" prices that are paid for the rarer varieties! We stopped at one of the orchid-ranches, whose English proprietor—a "younger son," who came here practically penniless—is recouping the family fortunes in England and enabling the titled brother to keep up an estate which his ancestors loaded with mortgages. His methods seem very simple, but with true British uncommunicativeness he did not tell us much about them. He showed us his nursery, where were several thousand small wooden boxes, in each of which is hatched a stick, the latter wrapped with sphagnum moss, among which an orchid-plant was tied. The lovely parasites grow wild all over Colombia. The growers send natives out into the woods and hills to collect them, paying from one cent to thirty cents for each plant, and selling the same in Europe at prices ranging between fifty and five hundred dollars per plant—sometimes even thousands of pounds sterling for a particularly scarce and long-sought species. Like opals, these curious freaks of the floral kingdom seem to

JUDGE WILLIAM R. DAY.



Former Secretary of State William R. Day of Canton, Ohio, has been appointed by President Roosevelt to succeed Judge Shiras on the bench of the United States supreme court. Judge Day has wide fame for his profound knowledge of the law.

(nearly 8000 feet), though almost on the equatorial line, the air is never hot nor cold, but warm and pure, and is invigorating that simply to be on top of this good green earth is joy enough.

Our road wound most of the way along the base of the hills that environ Bogota, rising one above another to Andean heights of eternal snow, unvisited by any living creature except at rare intervals a solitary condor. We passed long stretches of reedy swamps, completely blackened by myriads of wild ducks and other water-fowl, snowing here and there along the edges tall white cranes, or blue herons, or pink-breasted flamingoes, standing meditatively on one leg as if posed for scenic effect. Either the Colombians are not "mighty hunters," or no have never caught their beasts and birds the fear of man, or else the southern sun has imbued the latter with the same constitutional laziness and indifference to danger that characterizes the people; certain it is that one need not waste a shot on most of the so-called wild game here, but may deliberately walk up and knock it over with a club—if one can find it in his heart to be so cruel. Of course the instinct of the sportsman was aroused at the sight of so much easy prey and every male Anglo-Saxon's hand sought his pistol pocket. But why mar the perfect day with the murder of

have no set price, but are valued according to the passing fancy of the collectors. There are other quintas in the vicinity of Bogota, where fruits and vegetables are raised for the market of the capital; and small farms, green with wheat, corn, alfalfa and clover. Nothing tells more truly of the even temperature of the locality than the various stages of the corn-fields, proving that seed time and harvest are entirely in the hands of the cultivator. One field is being plowed and planted; another by its side has a fine crop of full-grown corn, on stalks higher than the head of a man on horseback; while perhaps the next field shows the green blades just shooting out of the ground. It is the same way with wheat. Here, for example, we take our luncheon al fresco on newly sown fields, like emerald velvet; close by each other in full head. Some are being cut by women, with short sickles. In many places the primitive threshing floor is in operation. The latter is odd enough to deserve a paragraph, especially as it is an established institution throughout all of South America. A level space is selected for the threshing, a circular wall of adobe is built around it and the floor is covered with stones. The wheat is then thrown in and

A SPAN OF HORSES driven around and around the enclosure, until their trampling has shelled out the kernels. Sometimes a flock of sheep are turned in and driven rapidly to and fro, until the same purpose is accomplished. Then women come in and separate the wheat from the chaff, sifting the wheat into little piles—afterwards putting it into bags.

We had planned to stop for breakfast at the posada (wayside inn) of Santander; but found the place so crowded that we decided to go back a little way to a magnificent Peruvian

pepper tree, passed a few minutes beneath its spreading branches. Never were such beautiful trees as these "arbores de Peru," with their small dark green leaves in dense masses and long, pendant clusters of rose-pink pepper-corns. Such a conglomeration of dogs and donkeys, pigs and babies, fleas and fowls, all revelling in the dirt together, can be found nowhere outside of Santander! It is the general stopping place for all who travel this way and companies of muleteers, with their loaded animals filled the courtyard of the posada; while in the streets were

farmers on horseback, each man with enormous spurs on his heels, a wide sombrero on his head and a poncho enveloping the rest of his figure. The poncho is another South American institution which should by no means be neglected. It is nothing but a very large, square blanket, of varying degrees of coarseness or elegance, with exactly in the middle of it, through which the wearer thrusts his head. It fits close around the neck, of course falling down equally on all sides, so that a man on horseback is well protected from dust, rain or cold. The common ponchos are of sheep's wool, woven by the Indians in hand looms. Others are very fine, heavy and expensive, made of the long silky fleece of the llama, or alpaca. I have seen a few from Chilli that are really works of art—the outside of dark blue cloth, every thick and woolly like the heavyest and finest chin-chilla, lined throughout with the same texture in brilliant scarlet. Nothing could be better adapted for ocean or railway traveling, and nobody need be ashamed of the odd fashion of a garment that plainly shows its value. The cheap ponchos are generally gaily striped after the manner of Mexican sarapes, or are a dingy yellowish brown, the natural color of llama wool.

Close behind Santander the steep and rugged mountains of Tora jut down to the roadside, covered with low shrubs and scant grass, where lean cattle are feeding. That accounts for the existence of the village, which would otherwise have no excuse for occupying the barren spot. Wherever even this poor "policy" for grass grows among Colombia's hills, cattle can be raised for the city markets; and of course, there must be people to take care of the cattle.

The way grew wilder as the distance from Bogota increased. Tall ferns fringed the wayside, and no end of wild flowers flourished among the boulders, gray and mossy, that were pitched about better skelter, as if the

MOUNTAIN BROWNIES had been playing football with them. Little brown birds, in shape and size like English sparrows, twittered overhead; larks were heard in the meadows, and an occasional "phoebe" uttered his cheery call. And, most welcome sight of all, bright chinchilla, lined throughout with a different scent from those of the north, of which we gathered handfuls, in memory of far away days and places.

The famous salt mines are located in the desolate looking hills behind Zipaquira. Nobody knows how old the mines may be, nor how many millions

of tons of salt have been taken out of them. It is recorded that in the year 1525 the Spaniards found them "old and well established," having been worked by the aboriginal tribes since before the memory of the oldest inhabitants. And ever since, they have been continuously worked by the changing governments to this day, furnishing the public of Colombia with about one-eighth of its total revenue.

Walking up a steep hill to the most extensive workings, we witnessed both the English and American systems of condensing salt; the former is in one big iron tank, and the latter in numerous small tanks. In other large buildings the crude salt is condensed into solid blocks, and all the moisture squeezed out of it by rude machinery, with a lever at one end, forced down by men with ropes. Tub-shaped blocks of salt are thus made perfectly solid, and these are fixed over furnaces, and the salt is thus evaporated into cakes, the kettles having to be broken to get the salt out of them. In another establishment the kettles are made of clay, the same as that used for adobe bricks. Afterwards we followed a steep path up to the opening of the principal mine. On the way thereto we met carts

drawn by oxen; and women bearing heavy bags of salt on their backs. While awaiting for candles we had time to look about us and enjoy the unrivalled view. In front stretched the great plain of Bogota, the Chibcha's ancient elysium; to the left, shut in by high mountains, the important town of Nemacón; and dimly discernible a few miles to the right the village of Sopó, made famous by one feeble and crippled girl who does the most wonderful wood carving, representing characteristic Colombian scenes. Inside the earth, we followed the salt mine to higher and higher levels, instead of descending, as in other mines. The darkness, rendered more intense by our flaring tallow dips, was appalling and utter silence, of which one can form no conception above ground, enveloped us as with a shroud. The walls were supported by solid columns of salt, salt everywhere, above, below, nothing but salt.

The superintendent informed us that the stupendous mountain of salt must have been formed by the ocean which in prehistoric ages washed over the place where we were standing; but whether geologists agree with him or not, I cannot say. In some places the

salt was white as snow and sparkled like diamonds in the light of our candles; but as a rule it was a dirty slate color. Away up in the heart of the mountain where the air is close and oppressive, and the blackness and silence are more terrible than before, is a little chapel, hollowed out of solid salt, in which is an image of the Virgin surrounded by tall crosses. Night and day,

which are alike here, from year to year, whatever wars and changes may be going on in the outer world, candles are always kept burning in front of this strange shrine. Miners never fail to say their prayers here, fully believing that this act of devotion alone saves them from falling into the clutches of the evil spirits of the mountain.

FANNIE B. WARD.

EDITOR GONZALEZ'S MURDERER.



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Special February Price Inducements for Early Spring Sewing.

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FANCY WHITE PIQUES—Imported goods fine cord and beautiful white floral designs, per yard	25c
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FIGURED MADRAS—Combination striped and polka dot, fancy figured madras, per yard	40c
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FIGURED PIQUES—Floral designs or polka dot on fine dainty narrow wale pique, elaborate or neat effects, per yard	45c
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Finest quality Berkeley cambric, full yard wide, always sells for 25c, special, per yard	18c
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A Big Variety of These Street Dress Fabrics Now on Display.

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Extra grade India linon, 32 inches wide, per yard	12½
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Persian lawns, very good quality, per yard	25c
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Fine white Batiste, 45 inches wide, per yard	45c
Extra fine white Batiste, 48 inches wide, per yard	65c
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High class white wash chiffon, 48 inches in width, per yard	75c

OUR NEW 1903 EMBROIDERIES

Are now in and will be placed on sale for the first time Monday. They consist of brand new, direct importations from St. Gall, Switzerland, eclipsing all former offerings in point of beauty and price.

A broken line of cambric embroideries, in widths from one to two inches, per yard	3c
One lot of dainty Swiss, nainsook and cambric edges from one to two and one-half inches wide, in a large variety of patterns, per yard	5c
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Beautiful Irish point embroideries with insertions to match, exceptionally pretty designs, per yard	25c
Exquisite St. Gall Swiss embroideries and insertions to match, an immense variety to choose from, at per yard	25c and up.
18 inch fine Swiss and nainsook embroideries, especially adapted for pretty corset covers, per yard	50c and up.
New Swiss and nainsook beading from ¼ to one inch wide, newest open work effects at prices	5c and up.
Fancy applique beading, ¼ inch to 1½ inches wide, the very newest heading designs, per yard	15c and up.
A big variety of cambric and nainsook, all-over embroideries for yoking and shirt-waist patterns, per yard	\$1.50 and up.

We Carry a Complete Line of Rich, Dainty Reversings for Infants' Yokings, also the Edges and Insertions to Match for Complete Infants' Sets.

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Ladies' muslin drawers with a deep tucked lawn flounce, for	35c
Ladies' fine muslin drawers with umbrella flounce	39c
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A fine drawer with a heavy Hamburg embroidery trimming, for	50c
Ladies' fine muslin chemise, finished with a hemstitched ruffle	25c
A fine cambric chemise in all sizes, trimmed with lace insertion and edge, for	65c
Ladies' long skirt chemise made of fine material and trimmed with lace for	89c
Ladies' fine corset cover, made in a full French style, trimmed with torkon lace and drawn with baby ribbon, for	25c
A fine full cover with two rows of lace insertion down the front and edge with lace, for	35c
A fine cambric cover with wide lace insertion and fine tucked back, for	65c
Ladies' short skirt with a deep lawn flounce finished with hemstitched tucks for	65c
Ladies' knee skirt with deep flounce trimmed with embroidery insertion and edge, for	98c
Ladies' long skirt with a full flounce trimmed with lace insertion and edge, for	98c
Ladies' full length skirt with a fine Hamburg trimmed flounce	75c
A ladies' long skirt with a wide umbrella flounce with cluster of fine hemstitched tucks, for	1.25

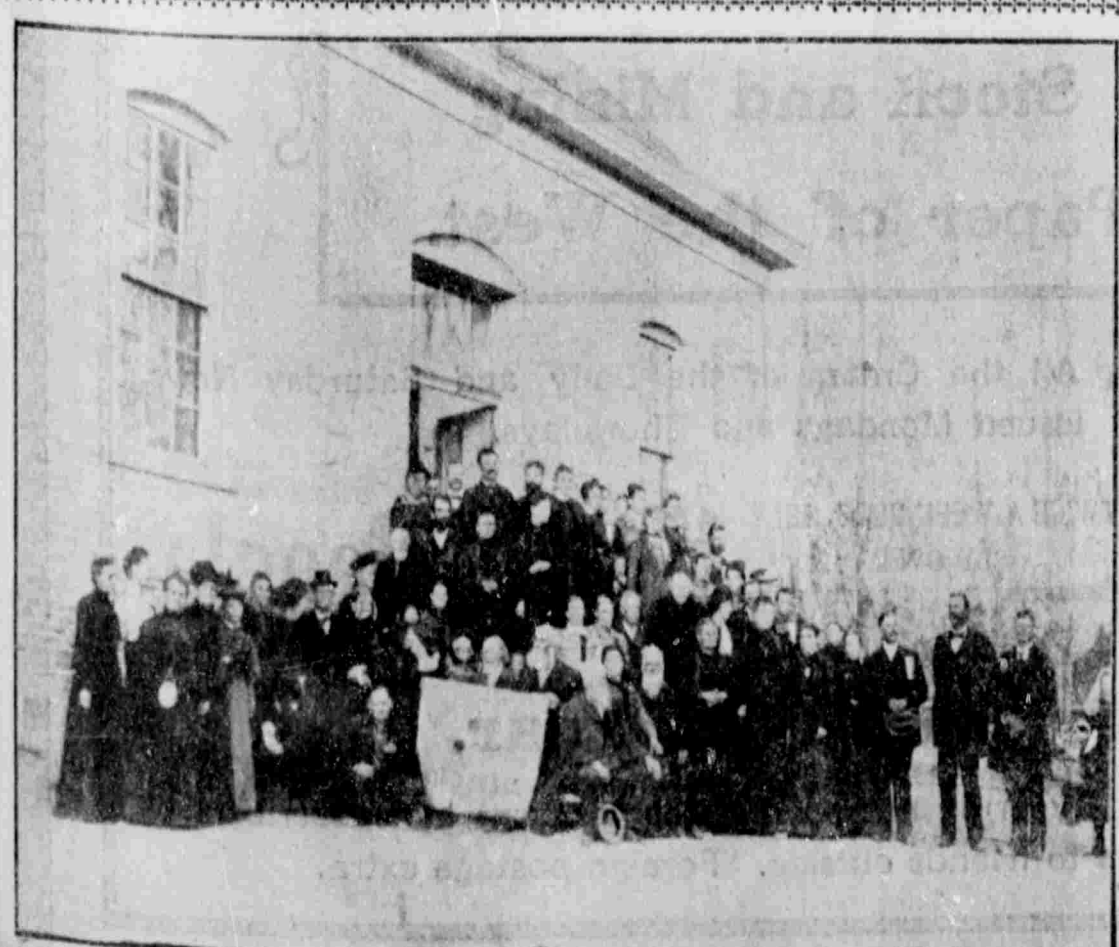


Photo by George Ed. Anderson.

GROUP OF OLD FOLKS AT RECENT CELEBRATION OF THE AGED AT PRICE.