

SOUTH AMERICAN TRAVELS.

FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC, VIA THE AMAZONS.

Early on the morning of the 7th of July, 1873, the steam-ship Ontario arrived off the mouth of the Para River, and after a dull and monotonous day's sail up its yellow waters, anchored at 6 in the evening, about two miles below the City of "Santa Maria de Belem do Gramma Para," better known to the world as Para. For a few moments we enjoyed the view of the distant city, which, lit up in the rays of the setting sun, with its spires and cupolas, its white-walled and red-roofed Government buildings, and its long row of warehouses, awoke in our minds visions of comfort and splendor. After exercising for nearly two hours that most estimable virtue, patience, which all travelers on the South American Continent are obliged, sooner or later, to cultivate, the Custom-house tug arrived from the city.

Mr. Gillet, agent of the steam-ship company, was on board, and informed us that rooms had been engaged for us at the hotel. Bidding a hasty adieu to our friends on the Ontario, we were soon winding our way through a fleet of schooners, ships, and steamers of various nations, toward the Government landing. Most beautiful was the view of the city as we approached it by moonlight, and well calculated to awaken romantic dreams in the minds of those who, fresh from the wintry North, were full of visions of tropical luxury and magnificence. In the course of half an hour we had landed, passed the Custom-house, and taken possession of our rooms at the "Hotel do Comercio."

Para, founded by Caldeira in 1616, is situated on the river of the same name, near the junction of the rivers Guama, Acama, and Moju, about seventy-five miles from the sea. Without a rival at the mouth of the Amazons and being the only commercial outlet of that marvelous river, it is, without doubt, destined to become a great emporium when time, emigration, and intelligent Government shall have done their work. Its population has, at times, been greatly reduced by disease and revolution, and now numbers 30,000. It is the largest city on the Amazons, and capital of a province more than six times as large as New-England. The greater part of the population is an amalgamation of Brazilian, negro, and Indian. Here and there among the wealthier class are found the pure Brazilian and Portuguese, with a few scattered representatives from Germany, France, England, and the United States.

The Portuguese far outnumber all other foreigners. In 1872 there were 5,000 in the province, being engaged principally as traders and mechanics, what little agriculture there is being in the hands of the Indians. For many years the prevailing opinion in regard to the climate of Para has been that it is extremely unhealthy. One of the causes of this opinion was undoubtedly the injudicious method of living adopted by the earlier settlers, and even now there are many foreigners, both in Para and on the Amazons, who have not yet learned to accommodate their habits to the climate. Another cause, as asserted by some, is that these reports of the unhealthy condition of the city have been carefully detailed and greatly exaggerated by monopolizing mercantile houses. We found the climate delightful. The mercury ranges from 74° to 87° Fahrenheit, the mean annual temperature, according to Prof. Orton's observations, being 80° 2' Fahrenheit. The heat of the sun during the day is greatly tempered by the trade winds, and the nights are comfortably cool, the natives all sleeping under blankets, being sensitive to a very slight variation of the temperature. During the three months we were on the Amazons, although almost directly under the equator, we never found the heat so oppressive as we have during a Summer's day in New-York. One reason for this is that, the days being only twelve hours long, the earth does not absorb so much heat as in latitudes where they are sixteen, and, moreover, the air is cooled by the almost constant evaporation from so large a surface of water, and the disagreeable dryness often experienced in more temperate regions is removed.

The province, governed by a President sent from Rio, elects Deputies every four years to the Imperial Parliament, every householder, without distinction of race or color, having a vote, and there is nothing to prevent a man from working himself up to positions of trust and influence. Prof. Orton, in 1867, writing of the Government of Brazil, says: "It is a happy blending of imperial dignity and Republican freedom. White, negro, half-caste, and Indian may be seen sitting side by side on the jury bench." Surely, "the nation cannot be a despicable one whose best men are able to work themselves up to positions of trust and influence."

One of the most intelligent and best educated men we met in Brazil was Dr. André Rebouças, having considerable African blood, but a man who had more knowledge of the country, and evinced a greater interest in every thing pertaining to its welfare and development, than most of the Government officials with whom we came in contact. He had traveled extensively in Europe, and was returning home by way of the United States. When in this City he was refused admittance, on account of his race, to one of our first-class hotels. Coming from imperial Brazil, the only nation on the American Continent that tolerates slavery, but where all such prejudices against color are unknown, imagine his surprise at such treatment in the United States. The principal exports from Para are rubber, cacao, copaiba-oil, Brazil-nuts, Tonka beans, hats, sarsaparilla, tobacco, piassaba, coffee, sugar, farina, and cachaça. In 1871 the value of these exports was \$6,701,561, of which \$5,323,135 was for rubber. The rubber goes to the United States and England, cacao to France, Brazil-nuts, copaiba-oil, and Tonka beans to the United States, hats, sarsaparilla, and tobacco to the southern provinces of Brazil, piassaba to England, and sugar, farina, and cachaça to Portugal. The figures representing the value of these exports would be much higher, and commerce and agriculture would be carried on on a much larger scale were it not for the export duties, which are exorbitantly high. Of these and the import duties I shall treat more fully in my next letter. The two together are a terrible curse to Amazonian enterprise and emigration.

A few mornings after our arrival we started out from our hotel about 6 in the morning to take a walk about the city and its surroundings. The Rua de Boa Vista and Grand Plaza. On the east side, and on the corner of the street leading down to the Custom-house and Government buildings, stands an old church, gray with the mould of years, its picturesque appearance greatly increased by the mosses, vines, and shrubs, which find a substantial support upon its yellow walls and red roofs. The Rua de Boa Vista extends on beyond the Plaza, and, although not the principal street in the city, it is here that most of the business houses of the foreign population are located. Crossing the Plaza, we entered the Rua dos Mercadores, the widest, best paved, and most important street in the city. Through this street runs the circular steam railway, built some five years ago by an English company. It passes through the city, round its outskirts, and out to the pretty little suburb of Nazaré, where the majority of the foreigners and wealthier natives reside. Following down the Rua dos Mercadores we came to another plaza, on

of the finest in Brazil, the architecture, according to Prof. Orton, being superior to that displayed in the churches of Quito.

On the west side is the new palace for the President of the province, at present in course of construction. The material used is a ferruginous sandstone, the only building stone found anywhere near the city. It is poor stuff, being very friable, and decomposes and falls to pieces rapidly. Bricks are rarely used in the construction of the houses, being very expensive—\$50 gold a thousand—most of the houses being built of small stones cemented in mortar, forming a comparatively durable edifice. Para, I think, would be a good place for some enterprising man to establish works for artificial building-stone. Taking seats in one of the cars of the circular railway, we started for Nazaré. It was a beautiful morning, clear and cool, and in looking back now, that morning ride stands out in our memory as the pleasantest part of our short stay at Para. On we went down a broad avenue lined on either side with the cotton-wood tree and palm, past the little chapel dedicated to our Lady of Nazareth, the most celebrated shrine in all northern Brazil, through the picturesque little town, and one mile and a half into the Brazilian forest. During the greater part of the ride we noticed on every side the pretty "rocinhas," as the country residences are called. Most of them are of one story, but with a broad veranda running round the house. Those of the wealthier class are faced with colored tiles, the others white-washed or painted, the prevailing colors being green and yellow, the national colors of Brazil. Returning through another part of the town, we passed the elegant residence of Señor Pimento Bueno, the Vanderbilt, Astor, and Brown Bros. of Para. Controlling steam navigation on the Amazons, largely interested in real estate, he still finds time to make his banking-house one of the most reliable in Para. We returned to the hotel at 11, at which time most of the inhabitants breakfast. The general custom is to rise at 6, and after coffee to attend to business till breakfast. From then till dinner at 4 but little is done, no one going out unless compelled to do so; for although the heat is often not felt there as much as it is in more temperate climes, still it is universally acknowledged to be a very dangerous proceeding, especially for foreigners. From dinner till 8 or 9 the temperature is generally delightful, and the streets are full of people. Living at Para is very high, as most of the necessaries and all the luxuries are imported, the duties being exorbitant. The city is lighted by gas, furnished by an English company at \$4 per 1,000 cubic feet. The country round about is all forest, and it is with difficulty that the jungle is kept out of the streets. Most of the houses and all of the churches and old buildings are covered with moss and grass, and some even with good-sized shrubs. Prof. Orton says it is a growing city. On making our arrangements on the following day to leave on the 12th, we found that a steamer leaves Para on the 4th and 18th of each month for Manaus, one thousand miles up the river, the steamer of the 2d making direct connections at Manaus with Tabatinga, the Brazilian frontier town, so that leaving Para on the 4th of any month one may arrive at Yurimaguas, the head of navigation on the Huallaga, about 2,500 miles from the Atlantic, on the 6th of the following month. On the 12th and 26th, steamers leave for Santarem and Obidos. Besides this there are private steamers continually ascending the river, in which passengers may always secure passage, generally at reduced rates. The regular fares are, from Para to Santarem, 500 miles up the river, \$25; Para to Manaus, \$50; Para to Tabatinga, \$100, and Tabatinga to Yurimaguas, \$75. Steamers ascend the most important tributaries about once a month.