

CHAPTER XIII

THE CITY OF PANAMA.



FOR an American not too much spoiled with foreign travel the city of Panama is a most entertaining stopping place for a week or more. In what its charm consists it is hard to say. Foreign it is, of course, a complete change from anything within the borders, or for that matter close to the bounds of the United States. But it is not so thorough a specimen of Latin-American city building as Cartagena, its

neighbor. Its architecture is admittedly commonplace, the Cathedral itself being interesting mainly because of its antiquity—and it would be modern in old Spain. The Latin gaiety of its people breaks out in merry riot at carnival time, but it is equally riotous in every town of Central America. Withal there is a something about Panama that has an abiding novelty. Perhaps it is the tang of the tropics added to the flavor of antiquity. Anyhow the tourist who abides in the intensely modern and purely United States hotel, the Tivoli, has but to give a dime to a Panama hackman to be transported into an atmosphere as foreign as though he had suddenly been wafted to Madrid.



PANAMA BAY FROM ANCON HILL

Latter-day tourists complain that the sanitary efforts of the Isthmian Commission have robbed Panama of something of its picturesqueness. They deplore the loss of the streets that were too sticky for the passage of Venetian gondolas, but entirely too liquid for ordinary means of locomotion. They grieve over the disappearance of the public roulette wheels and the monotonous cry of the numbers at keno. They complain that the population has taken to the practice of wearing an inordinate quantity of clothes instead of being content with barely enough to pique curiosity concerning the few charms concealed. But though the city has been remarkably purified there is still enough of physical dirt apparent to displease the most fastidious, and quite sufficient moral uncleanliness if one seeks for it, as in other towns.

The entrance by railway to Panama is not prepossessing, but for that matter I know of few cities in which it is. Rome and Genoa perhaps excel in offering a fine front to the visitor. But in Panama when you emerge from the station after a journey clear across the continent, which has taken you about three hours, you are confronted by a sort of ragged triangular plaza. In the distance on a hill to your right is set the Tivoli Hotel looking cool and inviting with its broad piazzas and dress of green and white.



SANTA ANA PLAZA

The fence is now removed. During the French days this Plaza was the scene of much gaiety and still shows French influence

To your left is a new native hotel, the International, as different from the Tivoli as imaginable, built of rubble masonry covered with concrete stucco, with rooms twice as high as those of the usual American building. It looks cool too, in a way, and its most striking feature is a pleasingly commodious bar, with wide open unscreened doors on the level of the sidewalk. The Tivoli Hotel, being owned and managed by the United States government, has no bar. This statement is made in no spirit of invidious

comparison, but merely as a matter of helpful information to the arriving traveler undecided which hotel to choose.

The plaza is filled with Panama cabs—small open victorias, drawn by stunted wiry horses like our cow ponies and driven by Panama negroes who either do not speak English, or, in many cases, pretend not to in order to save themselves the trouble of explaining any of the sights to their fares. There is none of the bustle that attends the arrival of a train in an American city. No raucous cries of "Keb, sir? Keb"! no ingratiating

eagerness to seize upon your baggage, no ready proffer of willingness to take you anywhere. If the Panama cabby shows any interest at all in getting a fare out of an arriving crowd it seems to be in evading the one who beckons him, and trying to capture someone else. One reason perhaps for the lethargy of these sable jehus is that the government has robbed their calling of its sporting feature by fixing their fare at ten cents to any place in town. Opportunity to rob a fare is almost wholly denied them, hence their dejected air as compared with the alert piratical demeanor of the buccaneers who kidnap passengers at the railway stations of our own enlightened land. The only way the Panama driver can get the best of the passenger is by construing each stop as the end of a trip, and the order to drive on as consti-

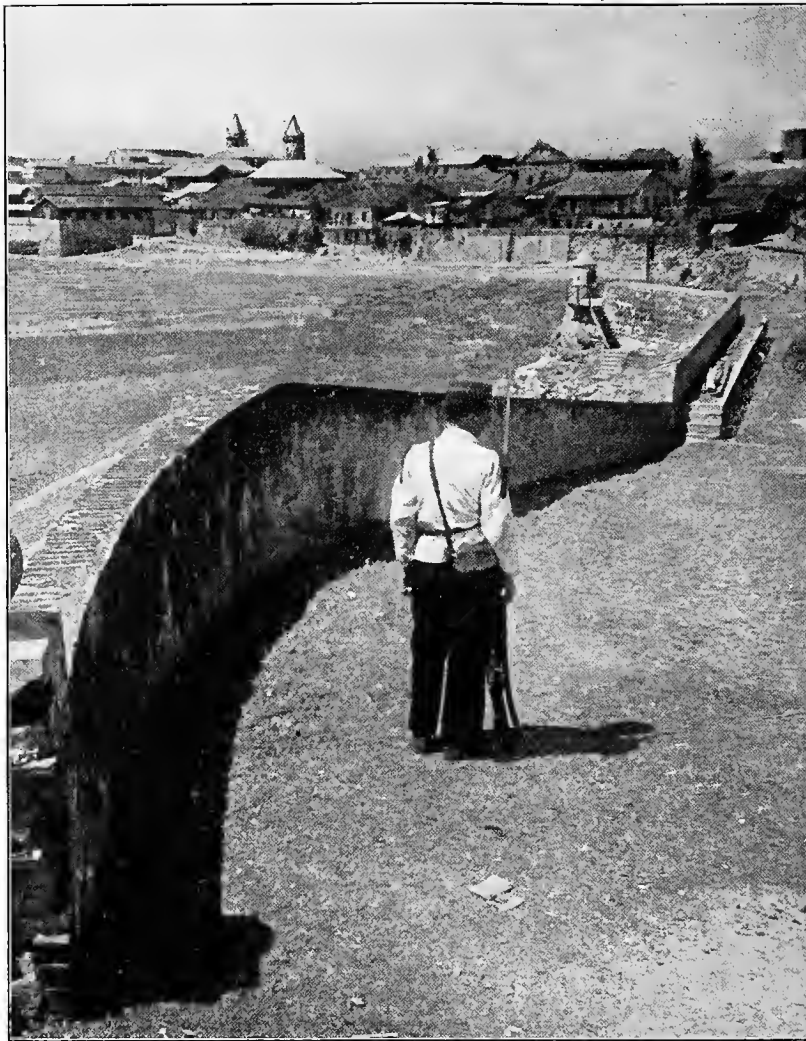


Photo by Underwood & Underwood

PANAMA FROM THE SEA WALL; CATHEDRAL TOWERS IN DISTANCE

tuting a new engagement involving an additional dime. Tourists who jovially drew up to the curbstone to greet acquaintances met *en route* several times in a half-hour's ride are said to have been mulcted of a surprising number of dimes, but in justice to the Panama hackman—who really doesn't have the air of rioting in ill-gotten wealth—I must say that I never encountered an instance of this overcharge.

Your first introduction to the beauty of Panama architecture comes from a building that fronts you as you leave your train. Three sto-

ries high it has the massive strength of a confectioner's creations, and is tastefully colored a sickly green, relieved by stripes of salmon pink, with occasional interludes of garnet and old gold. The fact that it houses a saloon, the proportions of which would be generous on the Bowery or South Clark Street, does not explain this brilliant color scheme. It is merely the expression of the local color sense, and is quite likely to be employed to lend distinction to a convent school or a fashionable club indiscriminately.

From the Railway Plaza—originality has not yet furnished a more attractive name—the Avenida Centrale stretches away in a generally southerly direction to the seawall at the city's end. What Broadway is to New York, the Corso to Rome, or Main Street to Podunk, this street is to Panama. It is narrow and in time will be exceedingly crowded,

for the rails of a trolley line are laid on one side, and some time in the leisurely Panamanian future the cars will run through the old town and so on out to Balboa where the Americans are building the great docks at the entrance to the Canal. Just now however it is chiefly crowded with the light open carriages which toward eventide carry up and down the thoroughfare olive-complex-



THE PANAMA WATER FRONT

ioned gentlemen who look smilingly at the balconies on either side whence fair ones—of varying degrees of fairness with a tendency toward the rich shade of mahogany—look down approvingly.

Panama is an old city, as American cities run, for it was founded in 1673 when the Bishop marked with a cross the place for the Cathedral. The Bishop still plays a notable part in the life of the town, for it is to his palace in Cathedral Plaza that you repair Sunday mornings to hear the lucky

number in the lottery announced. This curious partnership between the church and the great gambling game does not seem to shock or even perplex the Panamanians, and as the State turns over to the church a very considerable percentage of the lottery's profits it is perhaps only fair for the Bishop to be thus hospitable. If you jeer a well-informed Panamanian on the relations of his church to the lottery he counters by asking suavely about the filthy tenement houses owned by Old

Trinity in New York. As a vested right under the Colombian government the lottery will continue until 1918, then expire under the clause in the Panama constitution which prohibits gambling. Drawings are held each Sunday. Ten thousand tickets are issued at a price of \$2.50 each, though the custom is to buy one-fifth of a ticket at a time. The capital prize is \$7500 with lesser prizes of various sums down to one dollar. The Americans on the Zone buy eagerly, but I could



THE BULL RING; BULL FIGHTS ARE NOW PROHIBITED



THE LOTTERY OFFICE IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE

not learn of any one who had captured a considerable prize. One official who systematically set aside \$5 a week for tickets told me that, after four years' playing, he was several hundred dollars ahead "beside the fun".

Though old historically, Panama is modern architecturally. It was repeatedly swept by fires even before the era of overfumigation by the Canal builders. Five fires considerable enough to be called "great" are recorded. Most of the churches have been burned at least once and the façade of the Cathedral was overthrown by an earthquake. The San Domingo Church, the Church and Convent of San Francisco, and the Jesuit Church still stand in ruins. In Italy or England these ruins would be cared for, clothed by pious, or perhaps practical, hands with a certain sort of dignity. Not so in Panama. The San Domingo Church, much visited by

tourists because of its curious flat arch, long housed a cobbler's bench and a booth for curios. Now its owner is utilizing such portions of the ruin as are still stable as part of a tenement house he is building. When reproached for thus obliterating an historic relic he blandly offered to leave it in its former state, provided he were paid a rental equal to that the tenement would bring in. There being no society for the preservation of historic places in Panama his offer went unheeded, and the church is fast being built into the walls of a flat-house. As for the Church of the Jesuits its floor is gone, and cows and horses are stabled in the sanctuary of its apse.

The streets of Panama look older than they really are. The more substantial buildings are of rubble masonry faced with cement which quickly takes on an appearance of age. Avenida Centrale is lined for all but a quarter of a mile of its length with shops, over which as a rule the merchant's family lives—for the Panamanians, like other Latins, have not yet acquired the New York idea that it is vulgar to live over your own place of business but perfectly proper to live two miles or more away over someone else's drug store, grocery, stationery store, or what



SAN DOMINGO CHURCH AND THE FLAT ARCH

not. There might be an essay written on the precise sort of a business place above which it is correct for an American to live. Of course the nature of the entrance counts, and much propriety is saved if it be on the side front thus genteelly concealing from guests that there are any shops in the building at all. These considerations however are not important in Panama, and many of the best apartments are reached through dismal doors and up winding stairways which seldom show signs of any squeamishness on the part of the domestics, or intrusive activity by the sanitary officers.



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE; A FINE TYPE OF PANAMA RESIDENCE

Often, however, the apartments reached by such uninviting gateways are charming. The rooms are always big, equivalent each to about three rooms of our typical city flat. Great French windows open to the floor, and give upon broad verandas, from which the life of the street below may be observed—incidentally letting in the street noises which are many and varied. The tendency is to the minimum of furniture, and that light, so as to admit easy shifting to the breeziest spots. To our northern eyes the adjective "bare" would generally apply

to these homes, but their furnishings are adapted to the climate and to the habits of people living largely out of doors. Rents are high for a town of 35,000 people. A five-room flat in a fairly good neighborhood will rent for from \$60 to \$75 gold a month, and as the construction is of the simplest and the landlord furnishes neither heat nor janitor service, it seems a heavy return on the capital invested.

It seemed to me, as the result of questioning and observation rather than by any personal experience, that living expenses in Panama City must be high, and good living according to our North American ideas impossible. What the visitor finds in the homes of the people on the Canal Zone offers no guide to the conditions existing in the native town. For the Zone dwellers have the commissary to buy from, and that draws from all the markets of the world, and is particularly efficient in buying meats, which it gets from our own Beef Trust and sells for about half of what the market man in Chicago or New York exacts. But the native Panamanian has no such source of supply. His meats are mainly native animals fresh killed, and if you have a taste for sanguinary sights you may see at early dawn every morning numbers of cattle and hogs slaughtered in a trim and cleanly open air abattoir which the Panamanians owe to the Canal authorities. However the climate tends to encourage a



Photo by F. A. Gause

CHIRIQUI CATTLE AT THE ABATTOIR



Photo by Gause

THE FISH MARKET

fish and vegetable diet, and the supplies of these staples are fairly good. The family buying is done at a central market which it is well worth the tourists' time to visit.

Every day is market day at Panama, but the crowded little open-air mart is seen at its best of a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning. All night long the native boats, mostly cayucas hewn out of a single log and often as much as 35 feet long, and with a schooner rig, have been drifting in, propelled by the never-failing trade wind. They come from the Bayano River country, from Chorrera, from Taboga and the Isles of Pearls, from the Bay

of San Miguel and from the land of the San Blas Indians. Great sailors these latter, veritable vikings of the tropics, driving their cayucas through shrieking gales when the ocean steamers find it prudent to stay in port.

Nature helps the primitive people of the jungle to bring their goods to the waiting purchasers. The breeze is constant, seldom growing to a gale, and the tide rising full 20 feet enables them to run their boats at high tide close to the market causeway, and when the tide retires land their products over the flats without the trouble of lighterage. True the bottom is of mud and stones, but the soles of the seamen are not tender, nor are they squeamish as to the nature of the soil on which they tread.



Photo by Gause

THE VEGETABLE MARKET



SAN BLAS BOATS AT THE MARKET PLACE

The market is open at dawn, and the buyers are there almost as soon as the sellers, for early rising is the rule in the tropics. Along the sidewalks, on the curbs, in the muddy roadway even, the diverse fruits and food products of the country are spread forth to tempt the robust appetites of those gathered about. Here is an Indian woman, the color of a cocoanut, and crinkled as to skin like a piece of Chinese crepe. Before her is spread out her stock, diverse and in some items curious. Green peppers, tomatoes a little larger than a small plum,



THE MARKET ON THE CURB

a cheese made of goat's milk and packed to about the consistency of Brie; a few yams, peas, limes and a papaya or two are the more familiar edibles. Something shaped like a banana and wrapped in corn husks arouses my curiosity.

"What is it?" "Five cents". "No, no! I mean what is it? What's it made of?" "Five centavo"!

In despair over my lack of Indo-Spanish patois, I buy it and find a little native sugar, very moist and very dark, made up like a sausage, or a tamale in corn husks. Other mysterious objects turn out to be ginseng, which appeals to the resident Chinese; the mamei, a curious pulpy fruit the size of a large peach, with a skin like chamois and a fleshly looking

pit about the size of a peach-stone; the sapolilla, a plum colored fruit with a mushy interior, which when cut transversely shows a star-like marking and is sometimes called the star apple. It is eaten with a spoon and is palatable. The mamei, however, like the mango, requires a specially trained taste.

While puzzling over the native fruits a sudden clamor attracts us to a different part of the market. There drama is in full enactment. The market place is at the edge of the bay and up the water steps three exultant fishermen have dragged a tuna about five feet long, weighing perhaps 175 pounds. It is not a particularly large fish of the species, but its captors are highly exultant and one, with the



CAYUCAS ON MARKET DAY



WHERE THE FLIES GET BUSY

inborn instinct of the Latin-American to insult a captive or a fallen foe, stands on the poor tuna's head and strikes an attitude as one who invites admiration and applause. Perhaps our camera tempted him, but our inclination was to kick the brute, rather than to perpetuate his pose, for the poor fish was still living. It had been caught in a net, so its captors informed us. On our own Florida and California coasts the tunas give rare sport with a rod and line.

Like most people of a low order of intelligence the lower class native of Panama is without the slightest sense of humanity to dumb animals. He does not seem to be intentionally cruel—indeed he is too indolent to exert himself unless something is to



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

PANAMA FROM THE BAY; ANCON HILL IN THE BACKGROUND

be gained. But he never lets any consideration for the sufferings of an animal affect his method of treating it. The iguana, ugliest of lizards, which he eats with avidity, is one of his chief victims. This animal is usually taken alive by hunters in order that he may undergo a preliminary fattening process before being committed to the pot. In captivity his condition is not pleasant to contemplate. Here at the market are eight or ten, living, palpitating, looking out on the strange world with eyes of wistful misery. Their short legs are roughly twisted so as to cross above their backs, and the sharp claws on one foot are thrust through the fleshy part of the other so as to hold them together without other fastening. A five-foot iguana is fully three feet tail, and of that caudal yard at least two feet of its tapering length is useless for food, so the native calmly chops it off with his machete, exposing the mutilated but living animal for sale.

To our northern eyes there is probably no animal except a serpent more repulsive than the iguana. He is not only a lizard, but a peculiarly hideous one—horned, spined, mottled and warty like a toad. But loathsome as he is, the wanton, thoughtless

tortures inflicted upon him by the marketmen invest him with the pathetic dignity which martyrs bear.

Fish is apparently the great staple of the Panama market, as beseems a place which is practically an island and the very name of which signifies "many fishes". Yet at the time I was there the variety exposed for sale was not great. The corbina, apparently about as staple and certain a crop as our northern cod, the red snapper, mullet and a flat fish resembling our fresh water sunfish, were all that were exhibited. There were a few West Indian lobsters too, about as large as our average sized lobsters, but without claws, having antennae, perhaps 18 inches long, instead. Shrimps and small molluscs were plentifully displayed. As to meats the market was neither varied nor pleasing. If the assiduous attentions of flies produce any effect on raw meats prejudicial to human health, the Panama market offers rich field for some extension of the sanitary powers of Col. Gorgas.

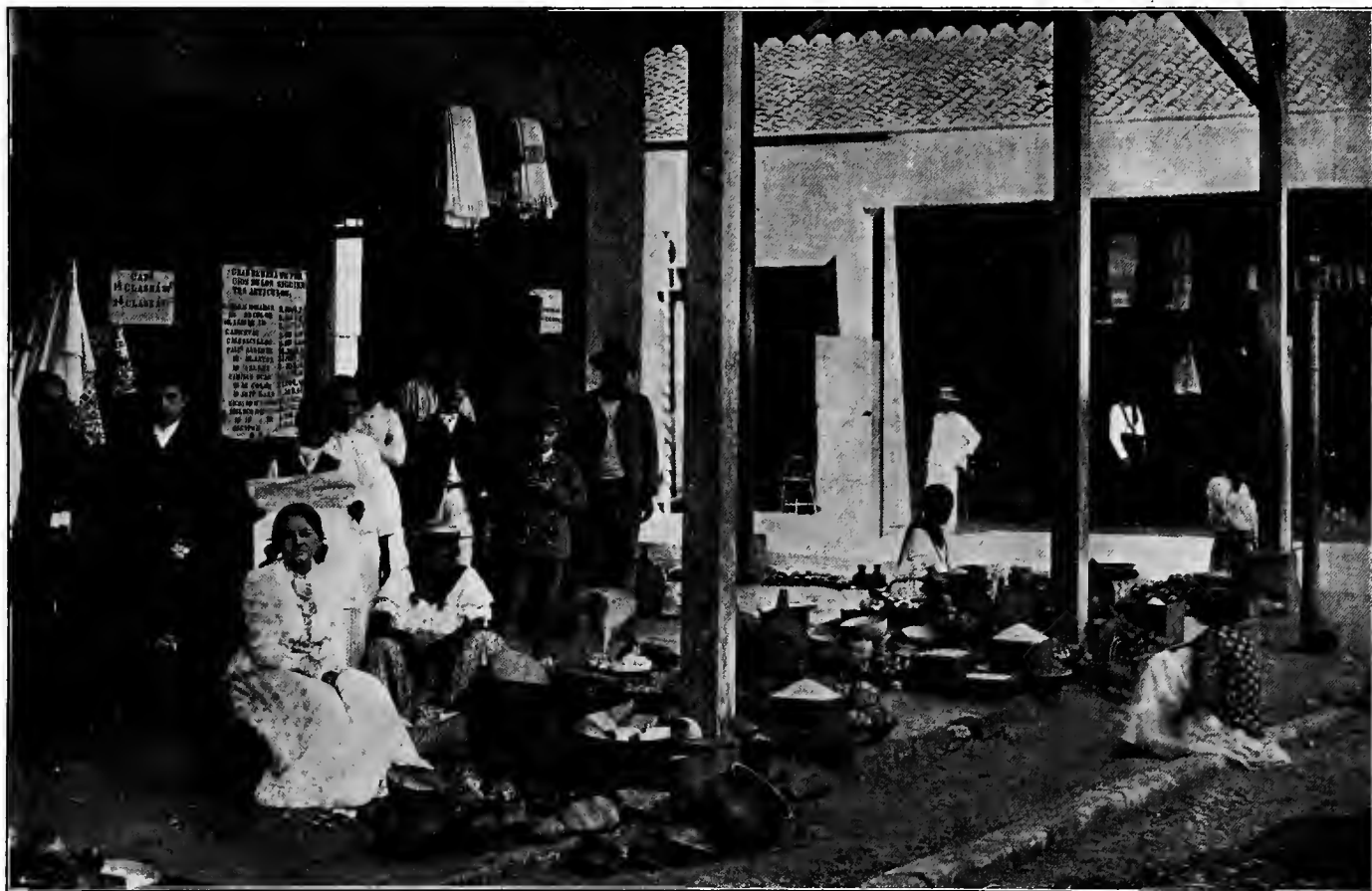
In one notable respect this Panama market differs from most open air affairs of the sort. The vendors make no personal effort to sell their goods. There is no appeal to passing buyers, no crying of wares,

no "ballyhoo," to employ the language of Coney Island. What chatter there is is chiefly among the buyers; the sellers sit silent by their wares and are more apt to receive a prospective customer sulkily than with alert eagerness. Indeed the prevalent condition of the Panamanian, so far as observable on the streets, seems to be a chronic case of sulks. Doubtless amongst his own kind he can be a merry dog, but in the presence of the despised "gringo" his demeanor is one of apathy, or contemptuous indifference. Perhaps what he was doing to the tuna and the iguana the day of our visit to the market was only what he would like to be doing to the northern invaders of his nondescript market place.

If you view the subject fairly the Panamanian in the street is somewhat entitled to his view of the American invasion. Why should he be particularly pleased over the independence of Panama and the digging of the Canal? He got none of the ten million dollars; or of the \$250,000 annual payment.

That went to his superiors who planned the "revolution" and told him about it when it was all over. The influx of Americans brought him no particular prosperity, unless he drove a hack. They lived in Commission houses and bought all their goods in their own commissary. It was true they cleaned up his town, but he was used to the dirt and the fumes of fumigation made him sneeze. Doubtless there was no more yellow fever, but he was immune to that anyway.

But way down in the bottom of his heart the real unexpressed reason for the dislike of the mass of Panamanians for our people is their resentment at our hardly concealed contempt for them. Toward the more prosperous Panamanian of social station this contempt is less manifested, and he accordingly shows less of the dislike for Americans that is too evident among the masses of the people. But as for the casual clerk or mechanic we Americans call him "spiggotty" with frank contempt for his undersize, his lack of education and for his



POTTERY VENDORS NEAR THE PANAMA CITY MARKET

large proportion of negro blood. And the lower class Panamanian smarting under the contemptuous epithet retorts by calling the North Americans "gringos" and hating them with a deep, malevolent rancor that needs only a fit occasion to blaze forth in riot and in massacre.

"Spiggotty", which has not yet found its way into the dictionaries, is derived from the salutation of hackmen seeking a fare—"speaka-da-English". Our fellow countrymen with a lofty and it must be admitted a rather provincial scorn for foreign peoples—for your average citizen of the United States thinks himself as superior to the rest of the world as the citizen of New York holds himself above the rest of the United States—are not careful to limit its application to Panamanians of the hackdriving class. From his lofty pinnacle of superiority he brands them all, from the

market woman with a stock of half a dozen bananas and a handful of mangoes to the banker or the merchant whose children are being educated in Europe like their father as "spiggotties". Whereat they writhe and curse the Yankees.

"Gringo" is in the dictionaries. It is applied to pure whites of whatever nation other than

Spanish or Portuguese who happen to be sojourning in Spanish-American lands. The Century Dictionary rather inadequately defines it thus: "Among Spanish Americans an Englishman or an Anglo-American; a term of contempt. Probably from Greico, a Greek". The dictionary derivation is not wholly

satisfactory. Another one, based wholly on tradition, is to the effect that during the war with Mexico our soldiers were much given to singing a song, "Green Grow the Rashers, O!" whence the term "Gringos" applied by the Mexicans. The etymology of international slang can never be an exact science, but perhaps this will serve.

Whatever the derivation, whatever the dictionary definitions, the two words "spiggotty" and "gringo" stand for racial antagonism, contempt and aversion on the part of the more northern people; malice and suppressed

wrath on that of the Spanish-Americans.

You will find this feeling outcropping in every social plane in the Republic of Panama. It is, however, noticeably less prevalent among the more educated classes. Into the ten mile wide Canal Zone the Americans have poured millions upon millions of money and will continue to do so for a long time to come.



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

FROM A PANAMA BALCONY

In the narrow streets the broad balconies bring neighbors close together

Much of this money finds its way, of course, into the hands of the Panamanians. The housing and commissary system adopted by the Commission have deprived the merchants

versal. The ordinary demeanor of the native when accosted is sulky, even insolent. The shop-keeper, unless he be a Chinese, as most of the better ones are, makes a sale as if he





THE MANLY ART IN THE TROPICS

where the liquid fuel for a fight was taken aboard. In due time the fight came. A Panama policeman intervened and was beaten for his pains. Other police came to his rescue. Somebody fired a shot and soon the police, running to their station, returned with magazine rifles and began pumping bullets into the unarmed marines. The latter for a time responded with stones, but the odds were too great and they broke and ran for the American territory of the Canal Zone. Meantime of course the noise of the fusillade had alarmed the

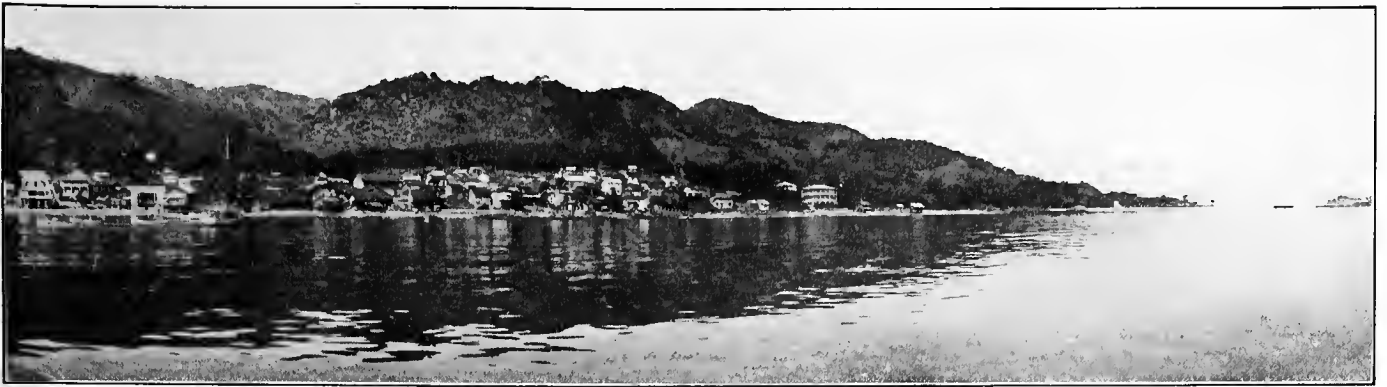
American authorities. At Ancon, separated from Panama City only by an imaginary boundary line, the Zone police were mustered for service in case of need, and at Camp Otis, an hour away by rail, the 10th Infantry, U. S. A., was drawn up under arms, and trains made ready to bring the troops to the riotous city at command. But the order never came, though the 10th officers and men alike were eager for it. It could come only through the American minister, and he was silent,

believing that the occasion did not warrant the employment of the troops on the foreign soil of Panama. So the marines—or as many of them as their officers could gather up—were sent to their post, Camp Elliott, by train while those arrested by the Panamanians were taken to the Chiriqui Jail, or to the Panama hospitals. In jail the unarmed captives were beaten and tortured after the fashion of the average Latin-American when he has a foe, helpless in his power. The day ended with three American marines killed and many wounded;



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

A GROUP OF NATIONAL POLICE



TABOGA, THE PLEASURE PLACE OF PANAMA

the Americans, soldiers and civilians, both gritting their teeth and eager to take possession of Panama; and the Panamanians, noisy, insolent, boastful, bragging of how they had whipped the "Yankee pigs" and daring the whole United States to attempt any punishment.

The United States seems to have supinely "taken the dare", as the boys would say, for though the affray and the murders occurred in July, 1912, nothing has yet been done. In answer to a formal query in April, 1913, the Department of State replied that the matter was "still the subject of diplomatic correspondence which it is hoped will have a satisfactory termination".

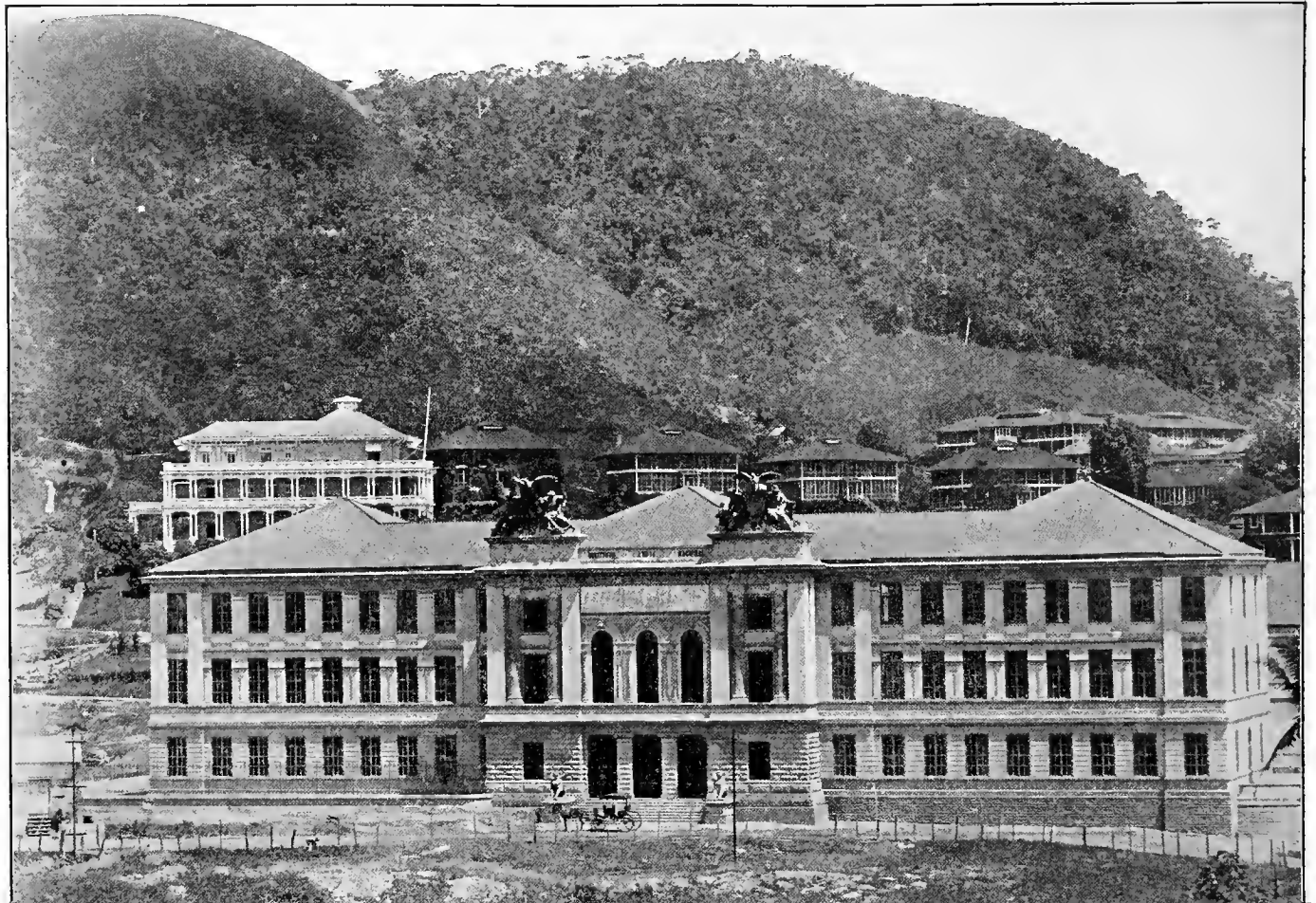
Americans on the Zone are depressed over the seeming lack of vigor on the part of the home government. They say that the apparent immunity enjoyed by the assailants of the marines has only enhanced the contemptuous hatred of the natives for the Americans. "Let them step on our side of the line", says the swashbuckling native with a chip on his shoulder, "and we'll show 'em". Among the Americans on the Zone there is almost universal regret that the troops were not marched into Panama on the day of the riot. Authority existed under the treaty with the Republic of Panama. The troops were ready. The lesson need not have been a severe one, but it was deserved and would have been lasting. Furthermore those best equipped to judge say that the event is only deferred, not averted. "Spiggotty" and "Gringo" will not continue long to make faces over an imaginary line without a clash.

Despite the feeling against the Americans, all classes of Panamanians must admit receiving a certain amount of advantage from the activities of the Canal builders. Moreover the \$10,000,000 paid

over by the United States for the Canal Zone has not been squandered, nor has it been dissipated in graft. We are inclined to laugh because one of the first uses to which it was put was to build a



SANTA ANA CHURCH, 1764



ever you are shown a piece of government work in a Latin-American country your guide always whispers "graft"—as for that matter is the practice in New York as well. But Panama seems to have received the worth of its money. The Government Palace, which corresponds to our national capital, stands facing a little plaza open toward the sea. It is nearly square, 180 by 150 feet, surrounding a tasteful court or patio after the South American manner. Built of rubble masonry it is faced with white cement, and is of a singularly simple and effective architectural style for a Latin-American edifice. The building houses the Assembly Hall, the Government Theater and the public offices. The interior of the theater, which seats about 1000, is rather in the European than the North American style with a full tier of boxes, large foyers decorated with paintings by Panama artists, and all the appurtenances of a well-appointed opera house.

Next to the Government Palace the most ambitious public building in Panama is the home of



THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING



THE NATIONAL PALACE AND THEATER

the National Institute, or University, which nestles at the foot of Ancon Hill. This is a group of seven buildings surrounding a central court. The Institute is designed in time to become a true university, but its accommodations are at present far in advance of its needs. Equipped with an excellent faculty it will for some time to come—it was opened only in 1911—suffer from a lack of pupils, because the public schools in the Republic are not yet fitted to equip pupils for a university course. The population of Panama is largely illiterate. The census in 1911 showed 60,491 children of school age, and only 18,607 enrolled in schools of all classes. Of those more than 16,000 were enrolled in the primary schools. The Government however is doing all it can to encourage education among the masses, and the National Institute will offer to all who fit themselves to enter its classes not only free tuition, but free board and lodging as well.

The third considerable public building in Panama is the Municipal Building which stands at one corner of the Cathedral Plaza. It contains, beside the council chamber and usual offices, the Columbus Library of about 2500 books, including many rare volumes on the ancient history of the Isthmian land and its people.

To return however to the physical aspects of the City of Panama. It is recorded of a certain King of Spain that when certain bills for the fortification of Panama City were presented to him he gazed



Photo by Gause

SALIENT ANGLE OF LANDWARD WALL

into vacancy with the rapt eyes of one seeing visions.

"Methinks I behold those walls from here", quoth he to the suppliant treasurer, "they must be so prodigious"!

Indeed what remains of the walls of Panama is impressive to American eyes that, accustomed to the peace and newness of our own towns, always rejoice in seeing the relics of the time when every city was a walled camp. Ruins and the remnants of by-gone days of battle are now and will become increasingly objects of human interest. For in the centuries to come our present edifices of iron sheathed with slabs of stone or brick will disintegrate into rust and clay, while as for the scenes of our most glorious battles they remain even today as barely discernible lines of earthworks. Gone is the day of turreted castles, frowning walls, bastions, ravelins and donjon keeps.

It is little wonder that even the remnants of Panama's wall are impressive. The new city was decreed by the Queen of Spain in 1672, or about a year after Morgan had despoiled and destroyed Old Panama. The site was chosen largely because of the opportunity it afforded for defense, and the good Bishop had scarcely selected the site for the Cathedral when the military officials began staking out the line of the walls.

Though almost 250 years have since passed a great part of these fortifications is still intact, and the plan of the whole is still easily traceable amid the narrow streets of the crowded little city. Most notable of the sections still standing is the sea wall, sometimes called Las Bovedas, from which on the one hand one looks down on the inmates of the flowery little Chiriqui Prison, and on the other out to sea—past the shallow harbor with its army of pelicans, past the tossing little native fishing and market boats, past the long Balboa fill where the Canal builders have thrown a mountain into the sea and made a vast plain, and so on to the three little islands, rising craggy from the ocean where the Great Republic of the North is mounting the cannon that shall guard the entrance of the Canal from any invader. Very different from the old Spanish fort of the 17th century are these military works of the 20th and not nearly so picturesque. Such as they are must be left to the imagination, for the military authorities rigidly bar the camera from the post.

The original city stood on a peninsula, and three sides of this were bounded by the sea wall, rising from about high water mark to a height of from twenty to thirty feet. About half way between the present plazas of the Cathedral and Santa Ana the wall turned inward with a great frowning bastion at each corner and crossed the Isthmus. A moat was dug on its landward side, shutting off all communication with the mainland save over the draw-



Photo by Gause

BOYS SKATING ON SEA WALL

bridge and through the sally-port on the line of the Avenida Centrale. With drawbridge up and sally-port closed the old town was effectually shut off from attack by land, while its guns on the landward wall effectually commanded the broad plain

grassy, and broad enough for a tennis court full thirty feet above the level of the town. The construction was not unlike that of the center walls of the locks designed by the best American engineers. Two parallel walls of masonry were built, about



VAULTS IN THE PANAMA CEMETERY

The small sepulchres are rented for a specified time, usually three years. Unless the lease is then renewed the bones of the tenant are cast out into a common pile.

on which now stands the upper part of the town, and the declivities of Ancon Hill where now are the buildings of the Zone hospital and the Tivoli Hotel.

A good bit of construction and of military engineering was the wall of Panama—our own engineers on the Canal have done no better. Round the corner from La Mercedes Church a salient bastion crops out among fragile frame tenements and jerry-built structures. The angle is as sharp as though the storms of two and a half centuries had not broken over it. Climb it and you will find the top level,

forty to fifty feet apart and the space between filled in with dirt, packed solidly. On this part of the wall were no bomb proofs, chambers or dungeons. The guns were mounted *en barbette*, on the very top of the wall and discharged through embrasures in the parapet. Rather let it be said that they were to have been fired, for the new Panama was built after the plague of the pirates had passed and the bane of the buccaneers was abated. No foe ever assaulted the city from its landward side. In the frequent revolutions the contending parties were



RUINS OF SAN DOMINGO CHURCH

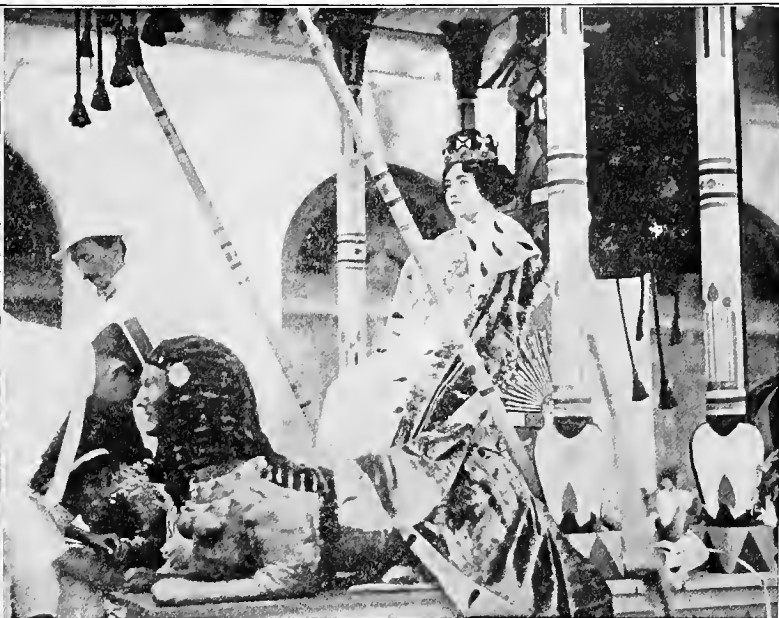
already within the town and did their fighting in its streets, the old walls serving no more useful purpose than the ropes which define a prize ring. Only the sea-wall has heard the thunder of cannon in deadly conflict. There during the brief revolution which gave the United States the whip hand in Panama, a Colombian gunboat did indeed make a pretense of shelling the city, but was driven away by machine guns mounted on the wall.

Within the walls, or the portion of the town the walls once surrounded, live the older families of native Panamanians, or those of foreign birth who have lived so long upon the Isthmus as to become identified with its life. The edifices along the streets are more substantial, the shops more dignified than in the newer quarter without. There are few, if any, frame structures and these evidently patched in where some fire has swept away more substantial predecessors. This part of Panama is reminiscent of many small towns of Spain or Portugal. The galleries nod at each other across streets too narrow to admit the burning sun, or to permit the passage of more than one vehicle at a time. The older churches, or their ruins, diversify the city streets, and the Cathedral Plaza in the very center with

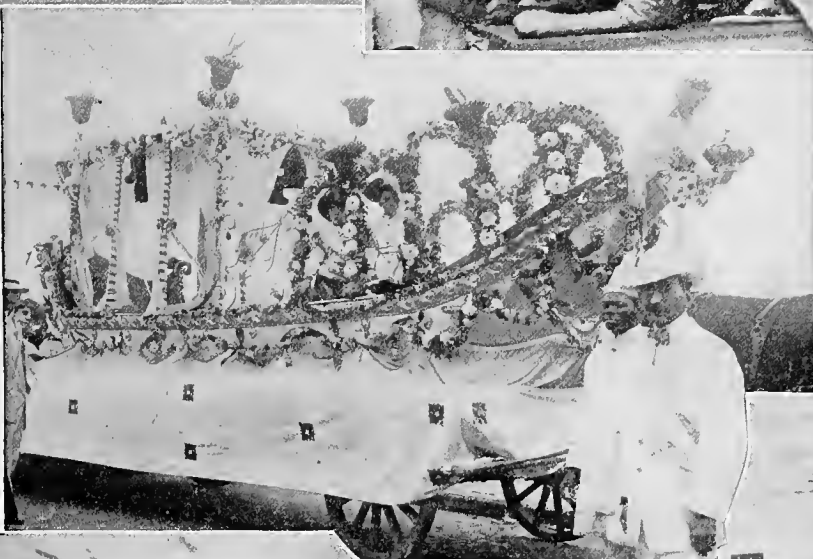
the great open café of the historic Hotel Centrale at one side has a distinctly foreign flavor. Here as one sits in the open listening to the native band and sipping a drink—softer, if one be wise, than that the natives thrive upon—and watches the native girls of every shade and in gayest dress driving or loitering past, one feels far from the bustling North American world, far from that snap and ginger and hustle on which Americans pride themselves. And then perhaps the music is suddenly punctuated by heavy dull “booms”, like a distant cannonade, and one knows that only a few miles away dynamite is rending rock and man is grappling fiercely with nature.

Carnival occupies the four days preceding Ash Wednesday, the period known in all Catholic countries as the Mardi Gras. For years its gaiety has been preceded by a vigorous political contest for the high honor of being Queen of the Carnival, though it is said that in later years this rivalry has been less determined than of yore. At one time, however, it was contended for as strenuously as though the presidency of the republic was at stake and the two political parties—liberal and conservative—made it as much a stake of political activity as though the destiny of the State was involved. Happy the young woman who had a father able and willing to foot the bills, for no corrupt practices act intervened to save candidates from the wiles of the campaign grafter, or to guard the integrity of the voter from the insidious temptations of the man with a barrel.

It would be chivalric to say that the one issue in the campaign is the beauty of the respective candidates, but alas for a mercenary age! The sordid spirit of commercialism has crept in and the Panamanian papa must look upon the ambitions of his beautiful daughter as almost as expensive as a six cylinder automobile, a trip to Europe, or a



yearning for a titled husband. But sometimes there are compensations. It is whispered that for one in retail trade in a large way it is no bad adver-



tisement to have a Carnival Queen for a daughter.

We have tried carnivals in various of our more cold-blooded American cities, but we cannot get



SOME CARNIVAL FLOATS

In the car shown in the upper right-hand corner is the Queen of the Carnival of 1913



THE ANCIENT CATHEDRAL

Its towers have looked down on carnival, revolution, revelry and riot

the spirit. Our floats are more artistic and expensive, our decorations are more lavish, but we sit and view the parade with detached calmness as though the revelers were hired clowns. In Panama everybody joins in the sport. The line of carriages around the park in the Plaza Centrale, thence by the Avenida to the Plaza Santa Ana and back is unbroken. The confetti falls like a January snow and the streets are ankle deep. Everyone is in mask and you can never tell whether the languishing eyes peering out upon you are set in a face of pearl or

of ebony. The noise of innumerable horns and rattles rises to Heaven and reverberates in the narrow streets, while the bells jangle out of tune, as is their custom. Oh, those bells of Panama! Never were so many peals and chimes out of harmony. Stedman, who heard them only in an ordinary moment, not in their Mardi Gras madness, put them to verse thus:

“Loudly the cracked bells overhead
 Of San Francisco ding
 With Santa Ana, La Merced,
 Felipe answering.
 Banged all at once, and four
 times four
 Morn, noon and night the more
 and more,
 Clatter and clang with huge uproar,
 The bells of Panama”.

Señoritas of sundry shades look down sweetly from the balconies, and shower confetti on gallant caballeros who stalk along as giant chanticleers, or strive to entangle in parti-colored tapes the lances of a gay party of toreadors. At night some of the women enmesh giant fireflies in their raven locks with flashing effect. King License rules supreme, and some of the horseplay even in the brightly

lighted cafés of the Centrale and Metropolitan rather transcends the limits of coldly descriptive prose. The natives will tell you that the Cathedral Plaza is the center of propriety; the Plaza Santa Ana a trifle risqué. After observation and a return at daybreak from the carnival ball held at the Centrale and Metropolitan Hotels you can meditate at your leisure upon the precise significance of the word propriety in Panama at Mardi Gras.

The clause in the treaty which grants to the United States authority to maintain order in the



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

THE POLICE STATION, PANAMA

Republic might very readily be stretched to include police power over Panama. This has not been done however and the city has its own police force, an exceedingly numerous one for a town of its size. Undoubtedly, however, diplomatic representations from the United States have caused the Panamanians to put their police regulations somewhat in accord with North American ideas. There are no more bull fights—"We never had very good bull-fights anyway", said a Panama gentleman plaintively acquiescing in this reform. Cock-fights however flourish and form, with the lottery drawing, the chief Sunday diversion. A pretty dismal spectacle it is, too, with two attenuated birds, often covered with blood and half sightless, striking fiercely at each other with long steel spurs, while a crowd of a hundred or so, blacks and whites, indiscriminately yell encouragement and shriek for bets from the surrounding arena. The betting in fact is the real support of the game. The Jamaicans particularly have their favorite cocks and will wager a week's pay on their favorites and all of their wives' laundry earnings they can lay hands upon as well. One or two gamecocks tethered by the leg are as common a sight about a Jamaican's hut as "houn' dawgs" around a Missouri cabin.

If there is any regulation of the liquor traffic in Panama, it is not apparent to the casual observer. Nowhere does one see so much drinking, and nowhere that people drink at all is there less drunkenness. It is a curious fact that these two phenomena—wide-open drinking places and little drunkenness—are often found together. In Panama the saloons are legion, and I regret to say the biggest of them are run by Americans. No screens obstruct a full view of the interiors, and hardened tipplers flaunt their vice in the faces of all beholders. Perhaps the very publicity impels them to quit before they are hopelessly befuddled. Possibly the moist and somewhat debilitating climate permits the innocuous use of stimulants to a greater extent than would be possible in the North. Beside the absence of any scandalous open drunkenness there seems to be some significance in the fact that the records of the Zone hospitals show a surprisingly small number of deaths from diseases induced by chronic alcoholism. But the casual observer strolling on Avenida Centrale, or along the streets tributary to it, might be excused for thinking Panama one great grog shop. It is curious, too, that despite



CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF MERCY (LA MERCED)



YOUNG AMERICA ON PANAMA BEACH

the Latin character of the populace the taste for light wines, in which some see the hope of national temperance, does not seem general. Whisky, brandy and rum are the regular tipples. On a still remembered night in Panama, before the American invasion, the Centrale Hotel bar was made free to all. No drinks were served to the thirsty, but to all who appeared a bottle was given and the line marched past for some hours. Yet, even at that, there was no considerable drunkenness observed. Apparently for the Panamanians drink is not a hopeless evil, but to the soldiers and marines of the United States stationed on the Isthmus and denied the rational social life of a well-regulated canteen the open doors of the saloons of Panama are as the open doors to a hotter spot. Their more strenuous temperaments will not stand the stimulant which leaves a Panamanian as stolid as before. The fatal riot of July 4, 1912, is one illustration of what Panama saloon hospitality may do with the men who wear the khaki.

Shopping in Panama is a decidedly cosmopolitan enterprise. The shopkeeper of whom I bought a Panama hat, made in Ecuador, did business under a Spanish name, was in fact a Genoese and when he found I could speak neither Spanish nor Italian coaxed me up to his price in French. Most of the retail prices are of so elastic a sort that when you have beaten them down two-thirds you retire with your package perfectly confident that they would have stood another cut. Nevertheless the Chinese

merchants, who are the chief retail dealers in the tropics, compel respect. They live cleanly, are capable business men, show none of the sloth and indifference of the natives, and seem to prosper everywhere. The Chinese market gardens in the outskirts of Panama are a positive relief for the neatness of their trim rows of timely plants. The Panamanian eats yams and grumbles that the soil will grow nothing else; the Chinaman makes it produce practically all the vege-

tables that grow in our northern gardens.

Avenida Centrale ends its arterial course at the sea wall of the city, or at least at that part of the sea wall which is the best preserved and retains most of its old-time dignity. It is here something like the Battery at Charleston, S. C., though the houses fringing it are not of a like stateliness, and the aristocracy of the quarter is somewhat tempered by the fact that here, too, is the city prison. Into the courtyards of this calaboose you can gaze from sundry little sentry boxes, the little sentries in which seem ever ready to step out to let the tourist step in and afterward pose for his camera, with rifle, fixed bayonet and an even more fixed expression. The



READY TO CONTROL THE PACIFIC

greater part of one of the prison yards is given over to flower beds, and though sunken some twenty feet or more below the crest of the wall, is thoughtfully provided with such half-way stations in the way of lean-to sheds, ladders and water butts that there seems to be no reason why any prisoner should stay in who wants to get out. But perhaps they don't often yearn for liberty. A wire fence cuts off the woman's section of the jail and the several native women I observed flirting assiduously with desperate male malefactors from whom they were separated only by this fence, seemed content with their lot, and evidently helped to cultivate like resignation in the breasts of their dark adorers. A white-clad guard, machete at side and heavy pistol at belt, walks among them jingling a heavy bunch of keys authoritatively but offering no interruption to their tender interludes.

On the other side of the row of frame quarters by which the prison yard is bisected you can see at the normal hours the prisoners taking their meals at a long table in the open air. Over the parapet of the sea wall above, an equally long row of tourists is generally leveling cameras, and sometimes exchanging lively badinage with some criminal

who objects to figuring in this amateur rogues' gallery. To the casual spectator it all savors of opera bouffe, but there are stories a-plenty that the Panama jail has had its share of brutal cruelty as have most places wherein men are locked away from sight and subject to the whims of others not so very much their superiors. Once the Chiriqui Prison was a fortress, the bank of quarters for the prisoners formed the barracks, and the deep archways under the sea wall were dungeons oft populated by political prisoners. Miasma, damp and the brutality of jailers have many a time brought to occupants of those dungeons their final discharge, and a patch of wall near by, with the bricks significantly chipped, is pointed out as the place where others have been from time to time stood up in front of a firing squad at too short a range for misses. The Latin-American lust for blood has had its manifestations in Panama, and the old prison has doubtless housed its share of martyrs.

But one thinks little of the grimmer history of the Chiriqui Prison, looking down upon the bright flower beds, and the gay quadroon girls flirting with some desperate character who is perhaps "in" for a too liberal indulgence in rum last pay day. Indeed



THE FLOWERY CHIRIQUI PRISON

Where native women prisoners may flirt without interruption with male malefactors, separated only by a wire fence



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

THE MARKET FOR SHELL FISH

The black spots on the roof are vultures, the official scavengers

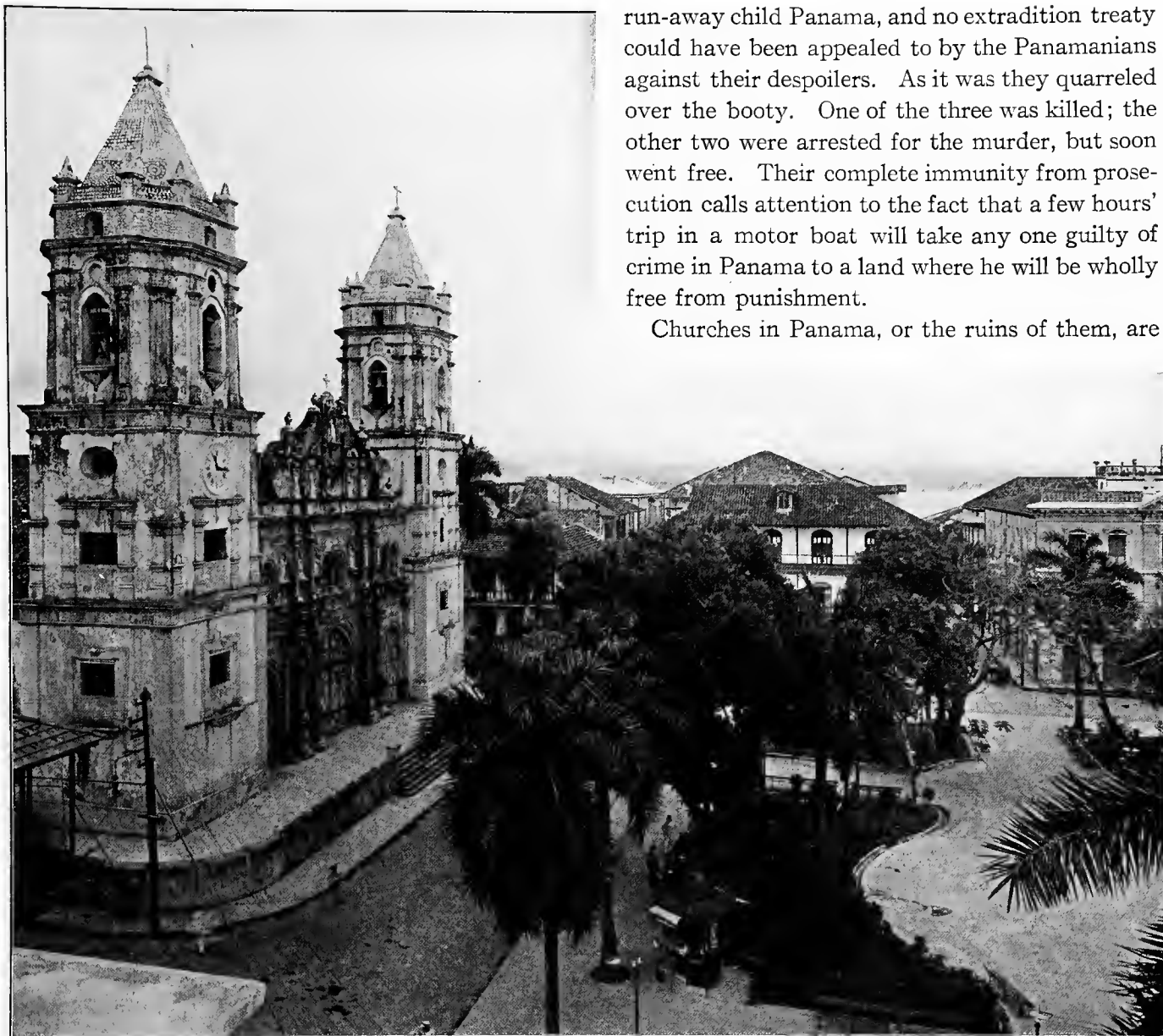
the guard wards off more sanguinary reminiscences by telling you that they used to hold bull baitings—a milder form of bull-fight—in the yard that the captives in the dungeons might witness the sport, and perhaps envy the bull, *quien sabe?*

The present town of Panama does not impress one with the air of being the scene of dark crimes of covetousness, lust and hate. Its police system, viewed superficially, is effective and most of the malefactors in the Chiriqui Jail are there for trivial offenses only. One crime of a few years ago however bids fair to become historic. One of the banks in the town was well known to be the repository of

electric lights in it. Being hot, under that tropic air, they installed electric fans. All the comforts of a burglar's home were there.

From a strictly professional standpoint they made not a single blunder. Their one error—almost a fatal one—was in not being good churchmen. For they had planned to enter the bank late on a Saturday night. Tuesday was to be pay day and on Monday the full amount of the pay roll would be drawn out. But Saturday night it would all be there—several hundred thousand dollars—and they would have all day Sunday to pack it securely and make their getaway. Midnight, then, saw them creeping

the funds needed for the payroll of the Canal force. It was the policy of the Commission to pay off as much as possible in gold and silver, and to a very great extent in coins of comparatively small denomination in order to keep it on the Zone. The money paid out on pay drafts comes swiftly back through the Commissary to the banks which accordingly accumulate a very considerable stock of ready cash as a subsequent pay day approaches. Now the banks of Panama do not seem to even the casual observer as strongholds, and probably to the professional cracksman they are positive invitations to enterprise. Accordingly, three men, only one of whom had any criminal record or was in any sense an habitu  of the underworld, set about breaking into one of the principal banks. They laid their plans with deliberation and conducted their operations with due regard for their personal comfort. Their plan was to tunnel into the bank from an adjoining building, in which they set up a bogus contracting business to account for the odds and ends of machinery and implements they had about. The tunnel being dark they strung



THE CATHEDRAL AND PLAZA

run-away child Panama, and no extradition treaty could have been appealed to by the Panamanians against their despoilers. As it was they quarreled over the booty. One of the three was killed; the other two were arrested for the murder, but soon went free. Their complete immunity from prosecution calls attention to the fact that a few hours' trip in a motor boat will take any one guilty of crime in Panama to a land where he will be wholly free from punishment.

Churches in Panama, or the ruins of them, are

into the bank. The safe yielded readily to their assaults, but it disgorged only a beggarly \$30,000 or so. What could be the trouble? Just then the knowledge dawned on the disappointed bandits that Monday was a Saint's day, the bank would be closed, therefore the prudent Zone paymaster had drawn his funds on Saturday. The joke was on the cracksmen.

With the comparatively few thousands they had accumulated the disappointed outlaws took a motor boat and made for Colombia. Had they secured the loot they expected they would have been made welcome there, for Colombia does not recognize her

many, and while not beautiful are interesting. Everybody goes to see the famous flat arch of the San Domingo Church, and its disappearance will be a sore blow to guides and post-card dealers. Aside from its curious architectural quality the arch derives interest from a legend of its construction by a pious monk. Twice it fell before the mortar had time to set. The third time its designer brought a stool and sat himself down below the heavy key-stone. "If it falls", he said, "I go with it". But that time the arch stood firm, and it has withstood the assaults of centuries to come at last to the ignoble end of incorporation in a tenement house.



IN A PANAMA PARK

The arch, which certainly looks unstable, is often pointed to as an evidence of the slight peril on the Isthmus from earthquake shocks. Such convulsions of nature are indeed not unknown but are usually feeble. That great shock that overthrew San Francisco was not even registered by the seismograph on the Canal zone.

Practically all the churches are of the same plan—two towers at the front corners with the façade built between. The towers of the Cathedral rise high above the roof and the tapering steeples are covered with slabs of mother-of-pearl, which make a brave spectacle from the bay when the rosy rays of the setting sun play upon them. Within all the churches are poor and barren of ornament. They have been stripped of their funds by various authorities beginning with Spain itself, one of the Spanish generals in the revolutionary days having seized all the available funds to pay for transportation for his army. Perhaps the church resented this, for in later days it voluntarily contributed largely out of its remaining treasure to the revolutionary cause. Later still its gold and silver ornaments and altar pieces were confiscated by some faction temporarily in power. Indeed the church has been the football of politics, always entangled with the State and thus far suffering in prestige and pocket by the association.

The Cathedral owes its completion to a negro

bishop, the son of a charcoal burner who had determined that his boy should rise to higher station. By hard study the lad secured admittance to the priesthood and ultimately rose to be Bishop of Panama, the first native to fill that post. Out of his own salary he paid much of the cost of building the great church, the corner-stone of which had been laid when the city was founded, and by his zeal in soliciting funds secured its completion.

A systematic tour of the churches of Panama is well worth the visitor's time. More that is curious will be found than there is of the beautiful, and to the former class I am inclined to consign a much begrimed painting in the Cathedral which tradition declares to be a Murillo. Perhaps more interesting than the Cathedral is the Church of San Francisco, in the Plaza Bolivar: The present structure dates back only to 1785, two former edifices on the same

site having been burned. The ruins of the beautiful cloister of the Franciscan convent adjoin it, but are concealed from view by an unsightly board fence which the tourist, not having a guide, will not think of passing through. The ruins, however, are well worth seeing.



SALVATION ARMY IN PANAMA

Clubs share with churches in the social life of Panama. Perhaps indeed they rather outshine the latter. At any rate such buildings as the Union Club and the University Club, both of which abut upon the bay would be a credit to a city twice the



COSTUME DE RIGUEUR FOR FEBRUARY

size. The former club, as its name implies, was intended to be a meeting place where liberals and conservatives could lay aside political differences in social unity. However, politics in Panama, as in all places where there are not real vital issues dividing the parties, breeds bitter personal feeling and the Union Club is said to be far from being the home of political unity. It has, however, an excellent building, with a spacious ball-room, a swimming tank and a magnificent view of Panama Bay with its picturesque islands. The University Club is more an American club than a Panamanian, and it no longer observes the restriction as to membership which its name would imply. It too has a spacious ball-room and is a social center for the Zone dwellers who form the major part of its membership.

The Cathedral Plaza is socially the center of town, though geographically the old French Plaza of Santa Ana is more near the center. Directly opposite the Cathedral is the Hotel Centrale, built after the Spanish fashion, with four stories around a central court. In the blither days of the French régime this court was the scene of a revelry to which the daily death roll formed a grim contrast. However the occasional gaiety of the Centrale Patio

did not end with the French. Even in the prosaic Yankee days of the last carnival the intervention of the police was necessary to prevent a gentleman from being wholly denuded, and displayed to the revelers in nature's garb as a specimen of the superior products of Panama.

On a nearby corner of the Plaza is the old French administration building, afterward occupied by the Isthmian Canal Commission. In 1905 it was a central point of infection for the yellow-fever epidemic, and though repeatedly fumigated was finally abandoned by the American engineers who moved their headquarters out to Culebra.

Life in Panama City is mainly outdoor life, in the dry season at any rate, and even in the wet season the Panamanians move about in the open like a lot of damp and discontented flies. The almost continuous line of balconies

shields the sidewalks from the rain, and nobody in Panama is too busy to stop a half hour or so at street crossings for the downpour to lessen. Sunday nights the band of the Republic plays in the Plaza, and there all the people of the town congregate to listen to the music, promenade and chat. It is the scene of that curious Latin-American courtship which consists of following the adored one with



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

BUST OF LIEUT. NAPOLEON B. WYSE

This bust stands on the sea wall. The picture shows it guarded by a United States soldier and a Panama policeman

appealing eyes, but never by any possibility speaking to her. The procession of girls and women is worth watching, whether the eyes be adoring or not, and the costumes have a sort of strangeness befitting the scene. The practice has grown up of leaving the outer walk for the negro and negroid people, the inner paths being kept for the whites—but as the walks merge into each other so too do the

colors. If one wearies of the moving crowds without, a step will bring him into the patio of the Hotel Centrale where an excellent orchestra plays, and a gathering chiefly native sips tropical drinks and disposes of the political issues of the day with much oratory and gesticulation.

As you make your way back to the hotel at night—if it is after eleven, the driver will lawfully charge you twenty cents—you will vainly try to recall any North American town of 40,000 people which can present so many objects of interests to the visitor,



ON PANAMA'S BATHING BEACH

lent as Wall Street after dark. But in a more sequestered section of the town, where the public hospital looks down significantly on the spectacle from one side, and the cemeteries show sinister on the other, revelry goes on apace until the cool dawn arises. There the clatter of pianolas which have felt the climate sorely mingles with the clink of glasses in cantinas that never close, and the laughter

of lips to which, in public at least, laughter is a professional necessity. Under the red lights at midnight Panama shows its worst. Men of varied voyages, familiar with the slums of Singapore and the purlieus of Paris declare that this little city of a hybrid civilization outdoes them in all that makes up the fevered life of the underworld. Scarcely a minute's walk away is the American town, quiet and restful under the tropic moon, its winding streets well guarded by the Zone police, its houses wrapped in vines and fragrant with flowers all dark in the



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

QUARANTINE STATION AT PACIFIC ENTRANCE TO CANAL

and a spectacle of social life so varied, so cosmopolitan and so pleasing.

The night life of the streets is as a rule placid, however, rather than boisterous, nor is Panama an "all night town". The rule of the tropics is "early to rise" in any event and as a result those parts of the city which the visitor sees usually quiet down by midnight and presently thereafter the regions about the Cathedral Plaza are as quiet and somno-

hours of repose. But in the congested tangle of concrete houses between the hospitals and the cemetery madness and mirth reign, brains reel with the fumes of the strange drinks of the tropics, and life is worth a passing pleasure—nothing more. Men of many lands have cursed the Chagres fever and the jungle's ills, but the pest place of Panama has been subjected to no purging process with all the efforts of the United States to banish evil from the Isthmus.