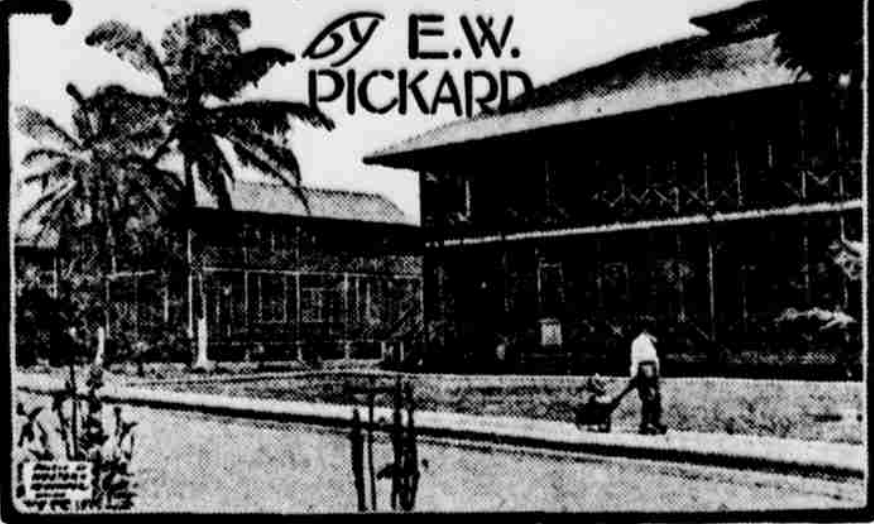


AMERICANS ON THE ISTHMUS

BY E.W. PICKARD



HOME OF ZONE AMERICANS

Colon, C. Z.—For the American resident of the Canal Zone life is not all beer and skittles. There is plenty of beer, but I have not seen a skittle here. Perhaps I would not have recognized one if I had seen it.

The American in a foreign land is not so tenacious of his home customs as is the Englishman, and in Panama he finds himself not only in a tropic climate but in the midst of a civilization much older than his own. Consequently he yields in many particulars to the customs of that climate and that civilization. The mid-day siesta of two hours, when he disrobes and dozes in a cool room, the dip in the ocean before dinner and the evening stroll in the plaza all appeal to him as to the native and have become a part of his life there.

At the same time the influx of northerners has had its effect on the Panamanians, especially, perhaps, in the matter of sports. Bullfights no longer are to be seen here and cock fighting has suffered a marked decline. In place of the native now enjoys frequent wrestling matches and prize-fights, indulges in tennis to some extent and has taken kindly to the national American sport of baseball.

It is the American woman on whom the changed conditions of life bear hardest, for housekeeping on the isthmus is attended by many annoyances. A good many people have the idea that a woman in the tropics lies in a hammock all day and at meal time picks her food from the branches of trees that shade her resting place. As a matter of fact she must do her household shopping as at home, and the domestic problem is with her here as there, only more so if possible. For clothing and standard groceries she usually goes to the store of the commissary department, where she can buy well and cheaply. But for fruit and many of the vegetables there is the daily trip to the market. In that spacious building—I am speaking now of Colon and Panama—are scores of booths and tables, attended by Jamaicans, Chinese and native Panamanians, and piled high with taro, breadfruit, soursops, guavas, papayas, bananas, plantains, alligator pears, mangoes, oranges, coconuts and a dozen other tropical products. The layout is tempting, but the purchasing is a task. Such a thing as a fixed price is unknown and one must bargain diligently or get the worst of it. And the insolence of the negro women is often commensurate with their ignorance. The native meat market is quite "impossible" for white people from the United States, for the meat, roughly hacked, is sold immediately after slaughtering, and the screening enforced by the American sanitary department is rendered ineffective by open doors.

The domestic servants employed by Americans in the zone are almost all Jamaican negroes. They are neat and clean, but their stupidity usually is monumental. Every detail of the household operations must be driven into their heads, and their minds seemingly are on the island home they have left, for their memory is almost nil and their eyes see little close at hand. Then, too, after a year or so of service and saving they begin to think of returning to Jamaica and grow "weary."

"Why, Blanche," said one shocked housewife, "here it is eleven o'clock and the breakfast dishes and kitchen things not washed, and the ants all over them!"

"Oh, marm, I couldn't do them, I'm so exharsted this morning," was Blanche's reply.

That's a mild sample of what must be contended with.

Speaking of ants, there is another of the annoyances of housekeeping in the tropics. The ants are everywhere, in unbelievable numbers and most extraordinary activity. Screens do not keep them out nor insect exterminators discourage them. They must simply be endured. If they take a fancy to a nicely growing garden of young vegetables, they cut and carry off all the leaves in a night. It is the so-called leaf ant that does that. All over the isthmus he is to be seen, moving in processions along well beaten paths, each individual carrying a leaf or other bit of foliage. One day I saw a long line of them moving through the sparse turf, all carrying tiny red blossoms cut from a small weed. It was a very picturesque miniature parade. No place and no age has been free from the cockroach, and in Panama he grows to an enormous size and spends some of his time and energy eating the covers of bound books.

Rust and mould add to the woes of the American housekeeper, and many articles she must keep in "dry closets" in which electric lamps are kept burning.

There are not in Panama a great many of the old pure-blooded Spanish

families, whose members possess education and refinement, and those that are there are not especially fond of Americans. Consequently there is not much social intercourse between the two races. The social activities of the Americans have three general centers—the Tivoli club, the Washington Cottillion club and the Young Men's Christian association. The first two are dance organizations and give balls alternate fortnights at the Tivoli hotel in Ancon and the Washington hotel in Colon. These affairs are quite formal and attract the best of the Americans from all parts of the zone.

As for the Y. M. C. A., its work on the isthmus really deserves a chapter to itself, for it has been one of the big factors in the successful building of the canal. At first it was found impossible to persuade men from the United States to remain long on the isthmus. The pay was good, the work interesting, but homesickness found easy victims and they resigned and went back to the States in discouraging numbers. Several remedies were tried, and finally the commission established a club house in every zone town of any size and wisely put them in charge of the Y. M. C. A. In these houses are billiard rooms, bowling alleys, gymnasiums, soda fountains, libraries, lounging rooms and a dozen other conveniences, and each house has a hall large enough for dances and amateur dramatics and musical entertainments. The secretaries in charge have been exceedingly active in the organization of bowling, baseball, billiard and other leagues, and the tournaments are continuous and of great interest. Of course no intoxicating drinks are to be found in these clubs, but in other respects they are conducted on lines so liberal as to be sometimes surprising. In one of them, for instance, I saw a number of young men and women dancing in the hall, to the music of a phonograph, immediately after the close of the Sunday evening religious service. This may have been an exceptional case, as it was in one of the more isolated towns.

In Ancon, Cristobal and some others of the larger American towns flourishing women's clubs have been maintained, and these were united in a zone federation which dissolved only this year, feeling that its work was done with the virtual completion of the canal. The clubs have done a great deal in the way of philanthropy and study, and many social functions are given under their auspices.

As may readily be comprehended, life for Americans in the zone is much like life in an American suburban town, and it has some of the disadvantages of the latter. Gossip and social jealousies are prevalent here, as there, and not a few women have been driven back to the States by them. Disputes over promotions and the assignments of living quarters cause bitterness and estrangements, and of course there are innumerable complaints of undue influence—"pull"—in these matters. In some cases it must be admitted there has been cause for these complaints, and, sad to say, often woman has been the cause. Her influence with certain of the high officials cannot be doubted, and sometimes it has results that are to be deplored.

Here is one instance of the power exerted by "pull." A man for some years has held a responsible position with the Panama Railroad company, and who has a wife, two daughters and a young son, has been waiting long for housekeeping quarters, which are at a premium. Two minor clerks of the railway had been attentive to the daughters, but, being objectionable to the father, were discouraged. But the clerks had some influential connections, and in revenge have so contrived things that the family in question has been passed by repeatedly in the assignment of housekeeping quarters. The father and son live in one building, the mother and daughters in another, and all must take their meals at the hotel.

Naturally, not many of the Americans on the isthmus will remain there after the completion of the canal. A few of the doctors may engage in general practice there—some already have done so—and some of the workmen may find the tropic climate so to their liking that they will stay. But nearly all are looking rather eagerly to the time when they can return to the states. The engineers and physicians no doubt will find that the experience they have had will be invaluable to them in the getting of positions and practice when they come home. But to readjust themselves to the old conditions of living may not be easy for the men and women who have been in the zone for years.

ACROSS THE ROAD

Timed His Proposals Most Inopportunistly, but Always to the Same Woman.

By SUSANNE GLENN.

John Kennen had always timed his proposals most inopportunistly. Such a statement might give rise to the supposition that he had proposed to many women, when the truth of the case is that he had merely proposed many times to one woman.

"And what he sees to be so 'gone on' in Louise Atwood beats me," the neighbors were fond of declaring. "She's always been an independent little piece, while John is the kindest fellow in the world. He had ought to know what she is like, living right across the road from her all his life, but they say love is blind, and I guess John goes to prove it!"

John was thinking about his proposals as he rested on his porch one evening, watching through a screen of fragrant apple blossoms the glint of Louise's white dress on the porch across the road. "That first one was about the worst," he decided between puffs from a pipe, "for I've never been so scared since, and Louise has never been quite so superior." I declare, I thought she'd say 'yes' long before this. I fall to see the sense of waiting till the best part of our lives are over, for marry me she surely will, some day. Guess it's about time I did something beside just propose."

When Kennen presently sauntered across to occupy the comfortable extra rocker on her porch, Louise Atwood felt no surprise. Grass had not grown in the path between the two houses since John was old enough to appreciate the attractiveness of his tantalizing neighbor. "It's so absurd of John to suppose I should wish to marry him after having seen him every day of my life in this tiresome way," she thought, watching him leisurely approach. "Men seem to be just clear conceit, anyway. Why should I marry any one, when I'm perfectly comfortable and happy here by myself?" She smiled patronizingly as he settled himself in the big arm chair.

"Louise, I've come over to ask you a question," he stated with a directness that had not characterized his previous declarations, "possibly several questions," he amended. Louise merely smiled.

"My first question is not a new one, but it is final—will you marry me, Louise?"

"Gracious, who do you expect would accept such a heartless proposal as that?"

"I did not much expect you would," smiled John serenely, "but I thought it safe to try once more, at least. It isn't lack of heart that is the trouble, Louise. You know I've put heart enough into the others to satisfy any woman. I had hoped you would see fit to accept me, some time, still it is comfortable to have it settled definitely. I hope we can continue to be friends just the same."

"We always have been friends," murmured Louise, with a lack of her customary superiority.

"We've been more than friends," he corrected; "that is why it is a bit perilous to drop back upon mere friendship. But we are both pretty sensible, so I guess we'll make it go." For some minutes he smoked in silence.

"There is one thing I hope you will always do, Louise," he continued presently. "I hope you will always feel free to ask me when you want help about the things I've been in the habit of helping you with. I've never made any secret of the fact that I was courting you, but now that that is at an end I shall not feel justified in coming over here with the freedom of the past. If you understand why, this will not disturb you—perhaps it will even be a relief," he added.

"I trust you will always feel free to come whenever you like," said Louise, ignoring his supposition.

"That's mighty kind and neighborly in you," agreed Kennen as he rose to depart. "And that reminds me, Lou, I've rented the cottage to a woman from Anderly who wishes to get out in the country for the summer—Mrs. Carlton her name is. I hope you'll like her. She seems a pleasant-spoken person."

His, John was fashioning a fine new model for Mrs. Carlton's roses. Long after neat rows of transplanted vegetables were putting out new roots in the cottage garden, Louise shed actual tears of vexation and weariness over the seemingly endless task of finishing her own.

Louise knew that the neighbors were not being kind. "They think I've been flitted, and I cannot tell them the truth about it," she said grimly to that inner self to whom lonely people commune. "Well, haven't you?" retorted that impertinent other self. "If I have, it is my own fault, and I shall have to endure it," she said aloud. "I expect this is good for that pride and independence of which people are always complaining!"

"Whoever dreamed of John Kennen acting in this way," people seemed to delight in telling her. "We never supposed an idea of marrying over entered his head, he has always been so quiet—never lunning round with the girls like most boys."

"Well, he is certainly making up for lost opportunities," smiled Louise as the little runaway whizzed past with the new neighbor in the place she once occupied by right of first choice.

Louise chanced to be on the front veranda where that extra rocker always flaunted its emptiness at her the afternoon they brought home the runaway slowly, with a limp figure crumpled up on the seat.

Somehow she forced herself to remain behind the blinds while they carried him in, and while the doctor arrived hurriedly and Mrs. Carlton bustled about. Somehow she forced herself to listen to neighbors who endlessly repeated how he had unhesitatingly run his machine into a treacherous ditch to save a child that had started heedlessly to run across the road in front.

No, he was not hurt seriously unless other symptoms developed, the doctor assured every one. He needed good care more than anything else at present, and he was likely to get that.

When they had all gone she sat on in the welcome darkness behind the vines watching the lighted windows across the road. She was not conscious of Mrs. Carlton's approach until she was very near. "Will you come over, Miss Atwood?" she requested. "Mr. Kennen has asked to see you."

It seemed to Louise that she could never force her feet along that path where the grass was already beginning to creep in.

"Why, Louise, did I frighten you, sending for you like this?" cried John cheerfully, if weakly, when he saw her face. "There is nothing to make you look like that. I just thought I could go to sleep better if you'd come over and say good-night to me, and Cousin Martha said she did not mind calling you."

"Oh," whispered Louise, with a sob. "Why, Lou," he said, holding out his unbandaged hand entreatingly. Louise dropped to her knees beside him. "John, do you suppose you will ever again ask me to marry you?" "I don't believe it will be necessary, my girl," answered John Kennen, simply. (Copyright, 1913, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

YIELDED ALL BUT ONE POINT

Even Approach of Death Could Not Make Man Give Up Every Claim of Distinction.

"Yes, this is an emblem of mourning for one of my relatives," said the man with the black band around his sleeve. "Yes, he was an uncle. He wanted to live awhile longer, but he was taken two weeks ago."

"Wanted to see another Washington's birthday, eh?" was asked.

"Yes, that was it. He was an old man, and he claimed that once he saw and talked with Washington. We knew that he wasn't old enough for that, but he stuck to his story and was often written up for the papers. Three days before he died, but when he knew he must go, he said to me: 'Homer, I'm not exactly sure the man I talked to was Washington. It might have been someone else.'"

"Next day he was uneasy for a while and then said to me: 'Homer, I don't think I was ever within a mile of Washington. I've said that I was, but I'll take it back.' The next day, and three hours before his death, he called me to his bedside and said: 'Homer, I've been thinking about Washington.'"

"Yes, uncle." "I've finally made up my mind that I never met him."

"Well, don't worry about it." "But I once came pretty near it, Homer."

"There, there, uncle." "I'll be darned if I didn't see his tracks in the mud and follow 'em all of 40 rods!"—Baltimore American.

Cotton Ropes Do Not Tire.

Cotton ropes used for power transmission purposes do not seem to be so exposed to mechanical "fatigue" or weakening through long continued use as one would naturally suppose this is not very strong material to be. At least this appears to be proved by experiences with such ropes, where, in one instance, twenty-four cotton ropes one and three-quarters inches in diameter employed for direct transmission of 820 horsepower from a twenty-eight foot flying machine.

Down the Line. "To operate a department store successfully, you gotta understand women."

"I s'pose so." "For instance, a lady who comes in for a paper of pins begins operations by looking at refrigerators or lace curtains."

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OLD ADAM STRONG IN HIM

Bad Time for Mother When She Realized Her Pet Had Passed Beyond the Angelic Period.

Mother's darling, age four, was not to be like other boys and learn to use naughty and slangy words. He was not allowed to play with the older boys in the neighborhood for fear his sensitive nature might be shocked at the language they used. One day, while mother was busy, he slipped over into the next street and played for half an hour with a crowd of older boys. In that half hour he took a complete course in modern language.

On his return mother said: "Where has my precious been?" "You should worry and get a wrinkle," he cheerfully replied.

"Dearest, tell mother where you learned such horrible language!" mother exclaimed.

"Aw, good night, shirt," came sweetly from the cupid bow mouth.

Then mother commenced to weep, for she realized that her angel child was just a boy after all.

FACE BROKE OUT IN PIMPLES

Falls City, Neb.—"My trouble began when I was about sixteen. My face broke out in little pimples at first. They were red and sore and then became like little boils. I picked at my face continually and it made my face red and sore looking and then I would wake up at night and scratch it. It was a source of continual annoyance to me, as my face was always red and spotted and burned all the time."

"I tried ——— and others, but I could find nothing to cure it. I had been troubled about two years before I found Cuticura Soap and Ointment. I sent for a sample of Cuticura Soap and Ointment and tried them and I then bought some. I washed my face good with the Cuticura Soap and hot water at night and then applied the Cuticura Ointment. In the morning I washed it off with the Cuticura Soap and hot water. In two days I noticed a decided improvement, while in three weeks the cure was complete."

(Signed) Judd Knowles, Jan. 10, 1913. Cuticura Soap and Ointment sold throughout the world. Sample of each free, with 32-p. Skin Book. Address post-card "Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston."—Adv.

Quite So. "I think children's nurses are extortionate in their prices." "Well, isn't it naturally a hold-up business?"

5 Improved Iowa farms for sale at auction, Sept. 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10th. 1-10 cash and half the crop yearly until balance is paid, or in ten payments. J. Mulhall, 420 6th Street, Sioux City, Iowa. Adv.

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