

Costa Rica Land of Strange Contradictions

(Copyright 1912, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

AN JOSE, Costa Rica—Let me give you some pictures of the little land of strange contradictions. They are merely impressions, which I see in passing. Every one tells me Costa Rica is the best of the Central American republics...



A Family of Rich Costa Ricans

Costa Rica has rich soil. It raises some of the best coffee on earth; and is a land of mighty banana plantations. It supplies more bananas to our country than any other part of the world.

Costa Rica's Fine Theater. This is one side of the picture. The other is that the nation is widely extravagant. The people are full of emotion and want to do things in the large.

The national theater is directly opposite some low, one-story government buildings, which are roofed with red tiles.

Passing through this lobby, wide, marble stairs lead to the foyer or great salon, where the spectators walk about during the longer intervals of the plays.

This parlor is almost as long as the east room of the White House. It is 100 feet wide and has a ceiling about thirty feet high. It is lighted by electric chandeliers, designed for the occasion.

It is now Nero who set Rome a-fire that might see a big conflagration, and as the story goes, he fiddled during the burning. It was for the few rich and well-to-do of this town of San Jose that Costa Rica was loaded with a theatrical debt.

Green Gables DR. BENJ. F. BAILEY. SANATORIUM Lincoln, Neb. This institution is the only one in the central west with separate buildings situated in their own ample grounds...

and is kept up by a government subsidy. All the money has come from a tax which, until this spring, has been 1 1/2 cents Costa Rican per kilogram upon all goods imported.

Why the Insane Asylum. In my talk with the president of the republic I referred to this beautiful theater and also to the insane asylum. He replied: "They are both grand, but it seems to me that the remark of an American tourist who came here this year was not far out of the way."

Another institution of which the country is proud is the national museum. This contains a good representation of the natural history and archeology of Costa Rica and of its resources.

A Big Debt and High Taxes. The national debt is a little over \$13,000,000. This is according to a recent refunding agreement which makes the obligations pay 4 or 5 per cent interest, but which as the bonds were sold at much below par makes the actual interest rate considerably greater.

As it is now the taxes are out of all reason; and, as they are mostly indirect, the burden falls upon the poor. There are no land taxes whatever, nor any taxes on incomes, but everything else pays. The prices are high and anything that costs 10 cents in the states is sure to cost 20 or 30 cents here.

mortgage their crops at 1 per cent a month and upward in order that their wives and daughters may make a show during the social season. I do not know that they are any worse than our citizens who are now borrowing money on their homes in order that their families may have joy rides in automobiles.

The fiesta was held in the Central park, which is used for band concerts. This had been fenced off so that the common people stood on the outside, with a lot of young men and girls, some of whom were no better than they should be sitting between them and the more fashionable crowd within.

Then, when the band played, the men and boys of the city walked around throwing confetti and squirting at each other and at the girls with syringes filled with water. The greatest of license prevailed, and they were no respecters of persons.

Diners at Fifty Dollars a Plate. The Costa Ricans are proud and their pride runs in advance of their pockets. Take, for instance, their entertainment of a delegation from Salvador which was here not long ago.

Tuesday is Beggars' Day. In a country like this you would expect to find poor people; and Costa Rica has them and to spare. I do not know the average wealth of the people, but it must be small, although the best classes seem to have plenty.

Asked for a Band. President Taft was waked up about 5 o'clock in the morning by the ringing of the telephone bell at his home at Parramatta, Mass.

What He Voted For. A colored dandy was watching the progress of an election from a convenient fence corner.

Are the Fly and Mosquito Dangerous? The fly, with spongy feet, collects the invisible germs of disease, spreads them over our food and poisons us with typhoid and cholera.

Are the Fly and Mosquito Dangerous?

The fly, with spongy feet, collects the invisible germs of disease, spreads them over our food and poisons us with typhoid and cholera. The mosquito with its bite injects into our veins malaria and yellow fever.



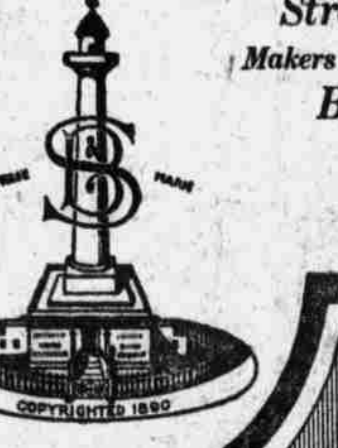
DR. PIERCE'S PLEASANT PELLETS for liver, bile and stomach. About forty years ago while in Newark, New Jersey, I had chills and fever. I was at the time in the service of the U. S. Army.



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