

THE LAND OF THE INCAS

PRESENT CONDITION OF THE PERUVIAN REPUBLIC.

Its Marvelous Natural Resources—Pictures of the Customs and Habits of Its People—A Possible Future for This Wonderful Country.

The name of Peru alone carries with it much that is romantic, and brings to mind a gallery of word paintings by Prescott's master hand. The name of Pizarro is familiar to every child, and the record of the deeds and marches of his great lieutenant, De Soto, one of the ablest cavalry officers of the world, is always read with deepest interest. We have no certain data as to the boundaries of ancient Peru, but they included a territory larger, no doubt, than the present state, and it was peopled by a semi-civilized race with an efficient government by the Incas. The country, at the time of the invasion by the Spaniards under the command of the illiterate and cruel Pizarro, in 1532, had many good roads and was under fair cultivation, having a population of forty or fifty millions.

Pizarro, with less than 200 men, was hospitably received by the Inca, whom he treacherously imprisoned without the loss of a man, and demanded of the people an immense ransom for their king. The natives collected and brought to Pizarro silver and silver utensils which, when melted down, were worth as bullion about eighteen millions of dollars. But, instead of releasing the Inca Atahualpa, the rascally Spaniard had him put to death. History does not furnish more horrible illustrations of human greed and barbarity than are portrayed in the conquests of Mexico by Cortez and that of Peru by Pizarro. But we must pass over the intervening centuries and the long misrule of Spain, and try and give a few pictures of the Peru of to-day.

AREA AND POPULATION.

Peru is bounded on the north by Ecuador, on the south by Chile and the Pacific Ocean, and on the east by Brazil and Bolivia, and it stretches 2,000 miles along the coast of the Pacific, which bounds it on the west. Peru is about ten times as large as the State of New York, and has to-day only about three and a half millions of people. Sixty per cent. of these people are Indians and twenty-five per cent. half-breeds, twelve per cent. are whites, and the remainder negroes and Chinese.

CLIMATE.

Though in the tropics the prevailing south winds temper the heat, so that no days at Lima, which is near the equator, are so warm as many summer days in Chicago. The trade winds and the range of the Andes Mountains cause an absence of rain, and, except in the extreme north and the extreme south, between the Andes and the ocean, rain never falls, and all agriculture depends upon irrigation, as in Colorado and Utah. Here umbrellas, overshoes, and over-coats are never needed. The weather is so uniformly delightful that it is never a subject of conversation; it is so spring-like that crops grow the year round. This continuous mild weather is said not to agree perfectly with some Europeans and North Americans. Under the Incas the very sides of the Andes were terraced to get more land, and the whole territory was cultivated as is the valley of the Nile, and the densely populated provinces of China. The three centuries of Spanish control changed all this. Spanish is the language of the country, and the Roman Catholic is the established religion.

AGRICULTURAL LAND.

These are found in the valleys of numerous streams which flow from the Andes to the Pacific, and where irrigation is easy and water abundant. These irrigated lands show an almost unexampled fertility. Peruvians claim that the snow of the mountains send a water to their fields which is rich in plant-food, and that it is only necessary to plow two or three inches in depth, or to barely tickle the soil, to make it smile with abundant vegetation. The plow in use is nothing but a forked stick, sometimes pointed with iron, and has only one handle, as the plowman finds it necessary to use one hand wholly in thrashing his oxen, two of which draw the plow which is attached to a beam fastened across the cattle's foreheads.



PERUVIAN BELLES.

These animals push with their heads instead of drawing with a yoke as with us. The Peruvians will not use our improved plows, and only buy plows of foreign make, which closely resemble their crooked sticks. Their plows are quite like those used in Oriental countries in the days of Pharaoh, and which are used in portions of Persia to-day.

The most portentous implement in this agriculture is the whip, which is often twenty feet long, and it is harder work to use it almost incessantly than it is to handle the plow. The fields are all easily flooded with water from the irrigating ditches whenever required.

Wheat cannot be raised to advantage, and bread is made from Chilian and California flour, and is always made in bakeries. Peruvian women who can make loaf of bread are as scarce as birds' teeth. Corn grows all the year round and is native here, and is the staple food of nearly all classes. The "tortilla," like oatmeal for a Scotchman, is standard, and is a sort of pancake

made of meal and seasoned with a dressing composed of lard and pepper, and rolled into lumps or loaves. Chicha is the national tipple of Peru, as pulque is for Mexico, whisky for Peoria, or beer for Bavaria, and the native Peruvian is never known to shirk his grog. The natural adaptation of the soil and cli-

nearly all the fruits and vegetables of the temperate zones can be raised in perfection. The alfalfa grass grows perennially, and is the chief food for horses, oxen and mules. When the grass is cropped from one field the cattle are merely turned into another. What must a farmer of this latitude think of rich green pastures for his flocks and herds for every day in the year?

THE CINCHONA TREE.

The bark of this tree was first gathered in Peru for making quinine, but the trees were wastefully destroyed, as natives and ignorant people always destroy such gifts of nature. The savage cuts down a tree of a century's growth in order to gather a few nuts. On this plan the cinchona tree was destroyed. Under the auspices of the British Government the trees were introduced into India, and from this cultivated stock the world's present supply of quinine is now largely derived.

Peru has deposits of salt almost pure and of sufficient magnitude to supply the whole world, yet the salt used by the people is of English manufacture. Peru will soon have the labor and skill with which to utilize these salt deposits, at least for the needs of South America. There are fields of gypsum and vast deposits of sulphur nearly pure. There are limitless deposits of asphalt, and no doubt vast reservoirs of petroleum. An American near Payta, in North Peru, has several sputtering oil wells, and it is now largely derived.

mate to the sugar cane will eventually cause vast quantities of sugar to be made here. The amount of sugar now made and exported amounts annually to only fifty or sixty thousand tons. The whole country has been poverty-stricken since its defeat in the late Chilean war, and it is difficult to find capital with



which to do work. Much cane juice is made into rum, which contains 50 or 60 per cent. of alcohol, and can be afforded for 10 or 15 cents a quart. As this article seems admirably adapted to the Peruvian and Bolivian digestive apparatus, it is used largely as a beverage, and is within the financial grasp of the humblest citizen. As with our composite citizens of Milwaukee avenue, such mild tipple as this rum and Kentucky sour mash are never diluted by drinkers, and seem to produce no deleterious effects upon the copper-lined anatomies of all who delight in this form of intoxication, and the census records few who do not.

COTTON AND WOOL.

The cotton plant, instead of a diminutive shrub as with us, is a tree in Peru. It begins to bear when it is two or three years old and continues to produce cotton for fifty years. In the warm country of the north of Peru two crops of cotton a year are picked, and it is all marketed in England; the amount annually exported is worth about five millions of dollars. This industry could be enlarged a hundred fold. Peru exports wool to about the same value as its cotton, and there seems to be hardly any limit to which sheep raising might be carried. It is almost idle to mention the large deposits of gold, silver, copper, iron, nickel, platinum, mercury, etc., which

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