

VENEZUELA AND HER DEBATABLE BOUNDARY.

IN the vast procession of black-hulled steamers which are always sailing out from New York to sea, many turn southward after passing Sandy Hook, and every few days one of them pounds along down the Atlantic coast and through the West India Islands and the Caribbean Sea to the northeastern shore of South America. At the outset of her journey during the last few months, people who have stood on her decks watching the receding shores have been clad in heavy coats and mufflers; they have

ceive their first impressions of one of the finest and most interesting of the South American republics. The very first impression, however, is that during their week's journey bleak winter has been left far behind, and now they are in the midst of balmy summer. The sea glistens in the warm sun. A soft wind, bearing the fragrance of the woods, fans their cheeks, and in front of them, a cluster of white houses among trees and rich foliage, lies La Guayra, the chief seaport.



THE CITY OF CARÁCAS, CAPITAL OF THE VENEZUELAN REPUBLIC.

seen a dreary landscape with bare trees standing out bleak and gaunt against the white background of snow, and they have heard the ice crunch under the ship's bow as she has pushed her way along. Six days later these same people, lounging on the deck in airy, negligé attire, have seen in front of them the blue outline of mountains whose slopes assume a deeper and deeper green as they sweep down to meet the sea. The coast of Venezuela rears itself up impressively before their eyes, and they begin to re-

An interesting town, in which tropical indolence and northern enterprise and commerce are curiously mingled, is La Guayra. Ships are being loaded and unloaded on the quays, presenting scenes of much bustle. Long lines of donkeys laden with coffee and cotton and other products of the country pass constantly through the streets and impede the progress of wagons and smart pleasure equipages of business men from England and the United States. But it seems to be a spasmodic kind of activity, which

soon expires under the blazing sun. After not more than five hours of business, most of the native commercial houses close their doors for the day.

But the traveler for pleasure does not linger long in La Guayra. Up in the mountains, only seven miles from the seaport "as the crow flies," but twenty-three by rail, lies Carácas, the capital of the country, a city famed for its charming situation, its fine streets, its gayety, and the beauty of its women. And so, after a brief survey of La Guayra, the tourist hastens on. It is a thrilling ride up the mountain;

the train crosses deep gorges and winds and twists until from the last car one can look through the cabin window of the locomotive, which all the while is climbing higher. The tops of mountains rise grandly above; at a great depth below lie their green foot-hills, and off in the distance stretches the sea in an immensity of blue. The azure sky, upon which there is not a fleck of cloud in the dry summer season, sweeps down to meet the waters, and the dividing line is lost. With the journey's end comes a mingled feeling of regret and pleasure,—regret that you will see no more for the present of the wonderful scenery, and pleasure that you are in Carácas.

The city is situated on a beautiful slope of the Chacao Valley in the Parima Mountains, and is three thousand feet above La Guayra. It was founded in 1567, by Spaniards who had penetrated the inland in search of the El Dorado. They failed to find the sought-for land of gold, but they did discover this ideal site for a city, and determined to settle here. This did not prove an easy task, as the native Indians resisted fiercely the invasion of the white men; but the nucleus of the city was established at last, and now Carácas is one of the most charming cities

in South America. Its streets are regular, the two main ones crossing each other at right angles, and others starting out from the center to all points of the compass, like spokes of a wheel. The arrangement is similar to that in the City of Washington. The thoroughfares are exceedingly well paved, and the principal ones have lines of cars running through depressions in the middle. They are lighted by electricity, and are lined with shops which compare favorably with those of New York. There are numerous parks or plazas, the largest and most attractive of



A VIEW OF MARACAIBO.

which is the Plaza de Bolívar, which is situated in the heart of the city. It was here, during the dark days of Venezuela's revolutionary struggle, that prisoners were led out and shot. Now, however, it would be hard to imagine that the plaza could ever have been the scene of sanguinary deeds; graceful tropical trees interlace their branches over charming walks, the acacias are brilliant with golden blossoms, and the sweet scent of flowers pervades the air.

New York, with its storms and bleak winds, which you left such a short time ago, seems hardly to exist as you sit here in the soft, cool, evening air, listening to the music of the band and catching fleeting glimpses of languishing eyes and beautiful faces beneath mantillas as the señoras, on the arms of their lords and protectors, stroll slowly past. You hear light laughter and merry conversation. Pleasure seems to hold the people in an easy thrall, and life seems to be a long holiday.

And yet this gay and careless people fought desperately and heroically for ten long years to achieve national independence. You cannot forget the fact, because before you, in the plaza, is a great equestrian statue of Simon Bolívar, the liberator of Venezuela. His attitude on the prancing horse is a spirited and defiant one, just as the man himself was spirited and defiant. Born of a distinguished Spanish-American family, Bolívar was trained as a diplomat; but when his country declared, in 1811, that she would throw off the yoke of Spain, Bolívar put aside the soft graces of the courtier and threw himself body and soul into Venezuela's struggle for independence.

For a great part of the ten years of war, Bolívar and his men lived

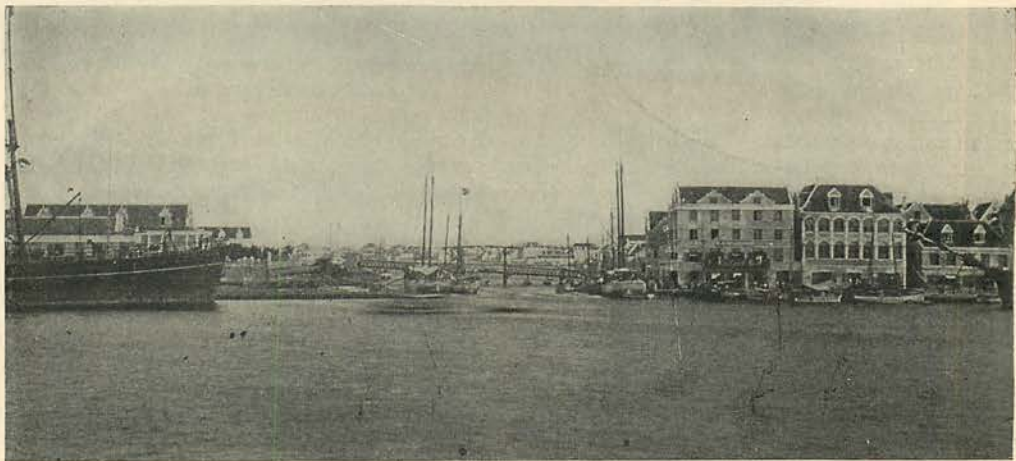


LAKE-DWELLINGS NEAR MARACAIBO.



THE PANTHEON, IN CARÁCAS.

in the mountains, without shelter, lacking often the bare necessities of life; but despite these hardships, exhausting to both spirit and body, they overcame difficulties which seemed insurmountable. They made incredibly quick marches over apparently impassable mountains, and when the time came for fighting they fought with astonishing valor and determination, and at last won their cause. Four other South American countries, which had been waiting for the outcome of the last and decisive battle, proclaimed their independence of Spain, and Venezuela was free at last; although it was not until long afterward, in 1847,



HOTELS AND PART OF THE HARBOR OF CURAÇOA.

men or women are so cold in temperament as not to glow with enthusiasm when the Liberator's name is mentioned.

In the Pantheon, in Carácas, where Venezuela buries her illustrious dead, is Bolivar's tomb, and on his birthday, which is a national holiday, the tomb is illuminated with a thousand lights. It is high above the others in the edifice, and it shines like a star in the eyes of the guard of honor and the vast assemblage of people who look up at it while listening to burning words of patriotism from the orators of the day.

Next to Bolivar in the hearts of the Venezuelans is —no, not another hero of their own country, but George Washington. There is a Plaza Washington, a delightful little spot, not far from the Plaza Bolivar. In



STREET IN MARACAIBO.

Carácas there are Washington shoe-stores and Washington dry-goods emporiums. This reverence for our great man is due to the resemblance the people of Venezuela see between his career and that of their own hero, and in the early struggles of the two republics. But Venezuela's was the more severe; and it is very natural that she should hold dear the territory she gained at so high a cost, and should resist foreign invasion and encroachment. It

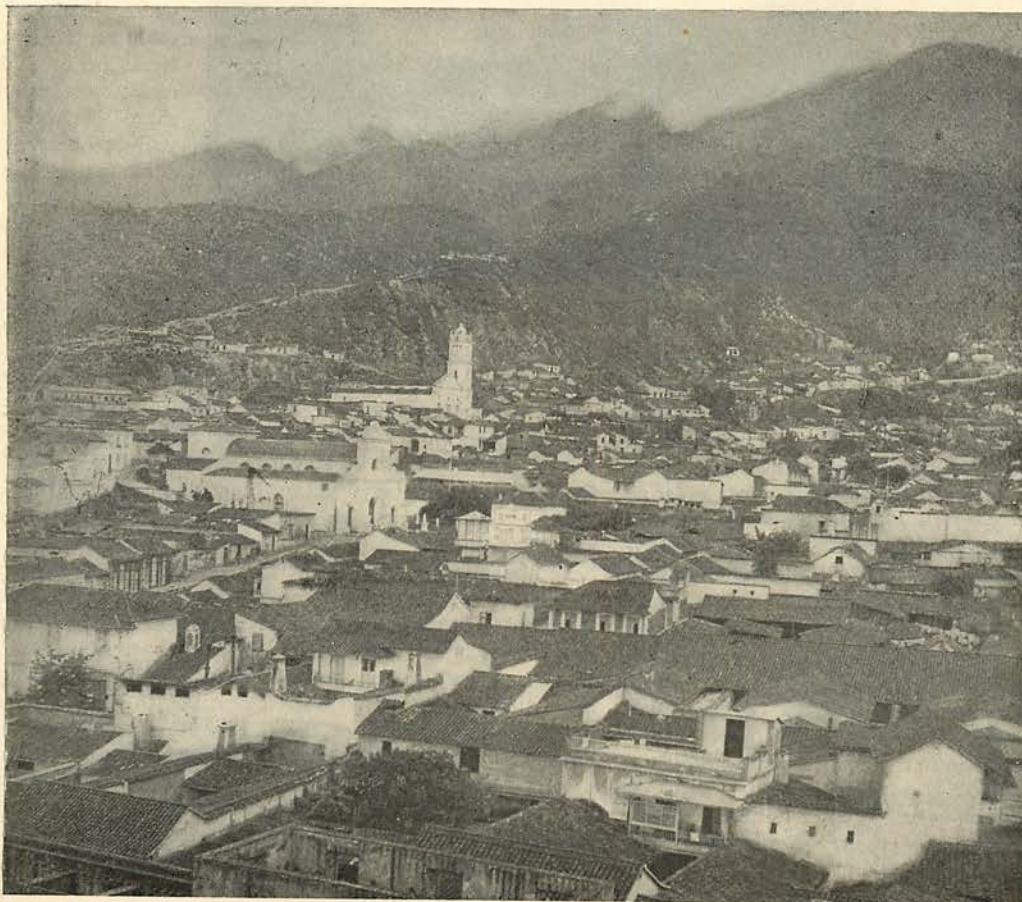


MAIN STREET IN CURAÇOA.

is natural, too, that the United States should sympathize with her, and even aid her if oppression rears its head against her.

The Pantheon is one of the three most notable buildings in Carácas, the others being the opera-house and the Federal

Palace. The latter is a beautiful building of Spanish and Moorish architecture, covering three acres of ground. It is built around a great court filled with tropical trees and flowers, among which bronze and marble statues are seen, fountains play, and brilliant-plumaged birds sing.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF LA GUAYRA.

These courts are to be found in the residences of all well-to-do citizens, and they form a charming feature of Venezuelan home life. The women spend much of their time here; and as you walk along the streets you get peeps of pretty vistas of green foliage, which form a background, perhaps, for the figure of a dark-eyed girl reclining in a hammock and fingering idly the strings of a guitar. It is chiefly in the morning, however, that you are treated to these attractive sights. In the afternoon the women make elaborate toilets and receive their friends or sit in

the windows watching the passers-by. A drive is also a part of the afternoon's programme in the summer. It is not surprising that this is the case, for among the charms of Carácas are its fine roads. As you roll smoothly along your eyes are treated to many delightful bits of scenery, and above all else, commanding, majestic, a mountain rises, sweeping away in a grand line to a noble height. Beyond you see the outline of other mountains, which, growing dimmer and dimmer as they recede in the distance, fade away in faint lines of blue.

If a traveler, curious to learn something more of Venezuela, should employ a guide and a mule and follow one of the narrow and rugged roads that wind into these mountains, he would find coffee, cotton, and tobacco growing on their slopes, and great fields of grain waving on the table-lands and in the valleys. This is the agricultural portion of the country, and consists of a stretch of seventy miles extending from the coast of the Caribbean Sea to the Parima range of mountains. He would also come to other populous cities, among them Maracaibo, Valencia, and Curaçoa. Beyond the agricultural district the traveler reaches a rolling country and hills with long slopes upon which rich grasses grow luxuriantly, and will

is the most valuable portion, and it is over this part that the controversy between Great Britain and Venezuela, of which so much has been heard of late, has been carried on for the last fifty years. The facts of the case may be briefly stated:

When Venezuela was fighting for freedom, in 1814, the Dutch sold their South American possessions, which were adjacent to Venezuela on the east, to the British. The boundary line had never been definitely fixed, and during the period of her struggle Venezuela took no means to ascertain it. Meanwhile the restless English settlers had crossed the narrow strip between the Essequibo and the Pumaron Rivers, the ownership of which was questioned, and were advancing further and further into Venezuela. Finally the Republic became aroused to the situation, and asked, in 1845, that the boundary question be settled by arbitration. England declined, and the matter hung fire.

As the question now stands Venezuela has her title from Spain, this title having originated with the discovery by Columbus; while Great Britain has her title by treaty from Holland, which transferred Essequibo, Demarara, and Berbice. The authorities of Venezuela have never acknowledged that by this treaty England acquired a foot of ground

west of the Essequibo River. English colonists, taking advantage of the unstable governments, have continued their encroachments, until at present the claim covers territory which is larger than the State of New York, and nine times larger than that originally in question.

In 1841 Sir Robert Schomburgk surveyed and marked an arbitrary line from the mouth of the Orinoco



THE CATHEDRAL OF VALENCIA.

see thousands upon thousands of cattle and sheep grazing here. This pastoral region, which is watered by many streams, reaches to the Orinoco River, which overflows in the rainy season and inundates the plains for many miles.

A mighty river is the Orinoco. Six hundred miles from its mouth it is three miles wide; the tides reach as far as Ciudad Bolivar, which is two hundred and forty miles from the coast, and it is navigable for over seven hundred miles. On the southern side of the Orinoco lies a vast territory of forest which reaches Brazil on the south and Ecuador on the west. Much of it has never been penetrated by man. It is the home of the beasts and the brilliant-plumaged birds and the reptiles of the tropics. In the habitable portions dwell untamed Indians, lake-dwellers, living in huts elevated on poles over ground which is covered with water in the rainy season. The country's name originated from this Indian custom of living on temporary lakes. It suggested Venice to the first explorers, and they named the country Venezuela, which is Spanish for "Little Venice."

The eastern part of this territory, bordering on British Guiana, and embracing the mouth of the Orinoco River,

south to Mount Roraima. This was intended to mark the line between Venezuela and the British colony. But Venezuela did not acquiesce in this division; instead of acquiescence she protested with such vigor that Schomburgk's marks were removed by the British, and Lord Aberdeen, then Foreign Secretary, had another line drawn. His line did not go anywhere near the mouth of the Orinoco, but started at the mouth of the Moroco and ran west across the Schomburgk line until it struck the west bank of the Cuyuni River; it then followed this stream to Mount Roraima. At present England has abandoned both these lines,—which she wishes to see lapse into "innocuous desuetude,"—and claims possession of country extending more than one hundred and fifty miles to the west, or nearly to the east bank of the Caroni River. When it is known that this includes immensely valuable gold-mines, among them the famous mine of Callao, from which \$25,000,000 in gold has been taken, thoughtful people see in this claim a parallel of the Transvaal troubles. It is entirely Venezuelan energy and capital that has developed these mines, and under so adverse circumstances that when the Callao Mining Company was organized its

shares were scarce worth the paper upon which they were printed. Since they began operations the district bordering upon the Yuruari River, of which Callao is the centre, has produced over \$50,000,000 of gold.

Very naturally the progressive, or aggressive, British subjects are anxious to assist, as masters, in the development of so promising a field of wealth. In consequence, Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, has said that his government will not abandon the British sub-

jects in Venezuela to the insecurity of the Republic's rule, and some months ago declined to arbitrate the question, as requested by the United States Government. The British attitude has undergone a change, however, since the appointment by President Cleveland of the Commission to examine into the merits of the question, and it is very probable that even if the Commission reports adversely to English pretensions in Venezuela the matter will be settled by an amicable compromise.

J. HERBERT WELCH.

A KNIGHT OF THE NETS.

By AMELIA E. BARR.

Copyright, 1895, by Irving Bacheller.

IT would be easy to walk many a time through "Fife and a' the lands about it" and never once find the little fishing-hamlet of Pittencraigie. Indeed, it would be a singular thing if it were found, unless some special business and direction led to it. For clearly it was never intended that human beings should build homes where these cottages cling together, between sea and sky, a few here and a few there, hidden away in every bend of the rock where a little ground could be leveled, until the tides in stormy weather break with threat and fury on the very doorsteps of the lowest cottages.

Yet, as the lofty semicircle of hills bends inward the sea follows, and there is a fair harbor where the fishing-boats ride together while their sails dry in the afternoon sun. Then the hamlet is still; for the men are sleeping off the weariness of their night work, while the children play quietly among the tangle, and the women mend nets or bait the lines for the next fishing. A lonely little spot, shut in by sea and land, and yet life is there in all its passionate variety,—love and hate, jealousy and avarice, youth, with its ideal sorrows and infinite expectations, age, with its memories and regrets, and "sure and certain hope."

The cottages also have their individualities. Although they are much of the same size and pattern, an observing eye would have picked out the Binnie cottage as distinctive and prepossessing. Its outside walls were as white as lime could make them, its small windows brightened with geraniums and a muslin curtain, and the litter of ropes and nets and drying fish which encumbered the majority of thatches was pleasantly absent. Standing on a little level thirty feet above the shingle, it faced the open sea, and was constantly filled with the confused tones of its sighing surges, and penetrated by its pulsating, tremendous vitality. It had been the home of many generations of Binnies, and the very old and the very young had usually shared its comforts together; but at the time of my story there remained of the family only the widow of the last proprietor, her son Andrew, and her daughter Christina.

Christina was twenty years old and still unmarried,—a strange thing in Pittencraigie, where early marriage is the rule. Some said she was vain and set up with her beauty, and could find no lad good enough; others thought she was a selfish, cold-hearted lassie, feared for the cares and labors of a fisher's wife. On this July afternoon the girl had been some hours stretching and mending the pile of nets at her feet; but at length they were in perfect order, and she threw her arms upward and outward to relieve their weariness, and then went to the open door. The tide was coming in, but the children

were still paddling in the pools and on the cold bladder-wrack, and she stepped forward to the edge of the cliff and threw them some wild geranium and ragwort. Then she stood motionless in the bright sunlight, looking down the shingle toward the pier and the little tavern, from which came in drowsy tones the rough, monotonous songs which seamen sing.

Standing thus in the clear, strong light, her great beauty was not to be denied. She was tall and not too slender, and at this moment the set of her head was like that of a thoroughbred horse when it pricks its ears to listen. She had full, soft brown eyes, with long lashes and heavy eyebrows, an open-air complexion, dazzling, even teeth, an abundance of dark, rippling hair, and a flush of ardent life opening her wide nostrils and stirring gently the exquisite mold of her throat and bust. The moral impression she gave was that of a pure, strong, compassionate woman, cool-headed, but not cold, capable of vigorous joys and griefs. After a few minutes' investigation she went back to the cottage and stood in the open doorway with her head leaning against the lintel. Her mother had begun to prepare the evening meal,—fresh fish was frying over the fire, and the oat-cakes toasting before it,—yet as she moved rapidly about she was watching her daughter, and very soon she gave words to her thoughts.

"Christina, you'll no require to be looking after Andrew. The lad has been asleep ever since he eat his dinner."

"I know that, mother."

And if it's Jamie Lauder you're thinking o', let me tell ye it's a poor business. I have a fear and an inward down-sinking about that young man."

"Perfect nonsense, mother! There's nothing to fear you about Jamie."

"What good ever came through folk saved from the sea? They bring sorrow back wi' them, and that's a fact weel known."

"What could Andrew do but save the lad?"

"Why was the lad running before such a sea? He should have got into harbor; there was time enough. And if it was Andrew's duty to save him, it is na your duty to be loving him; you may tak' that much sense from me."

"Whist, mother! he hasna said a word o' love to me."

"He perfectly changes colors the moment he sees you, and you are just making yourself a speculation to the whole village, Christina. I'm no liking the look o' the thing, and Andrew's no liking it; and if you dinna tak' care o' yourself you'll be in a burning fever o' first love and beyond all reasoning with."