

The Editor Writes Home From---

# SOUTH AMERICA

(Number Ten)

S. S. Nieuw Amsterdam, Mar. 5, Heading North.

I am ten days behind in my writing, but I have been as busy as a cranberry merchant before Christmas, there are so many things to do to keep up with the program. Perhaps it would be intolerably dull, if we were left to ourselves, but it does seem at times as if we were entertained too much. Too many plans which keep us occupied. I expect those who linger long in the cocktail rooms, or stay up for parties, must sleep half the day. It is interesting to note that there has been absolutely no evidence of drunkenness on the boat, and apparently not one-tenth the drinking there was on our trip to the West Indies some years ago. Half of those in the lounge call for non-alcoholic drinks.

Careful as we have always been at home regarding game laws, a few nights ago we violated the game laws of England by eating, out of season, a bird called "Gelinotte" in English and "Hazelhoen" in Dutch. I don't think the spelling makes any difference to the bird. Our assistant steward has arranged several fine dinners for us. We try hard to keep our eating within bounds, but our table stewards are most insistent and tempt us with strange and delicious foods.

We arrived at Valparaiso, the most important port of Chile, about noon on February 28. The afternoon being open we arranged for a trip to Concon. We used an American Express car and picked as our guide the dumbest man intellectually and linguistically there is in Chile. We passed some beautiful, altho rocky and cold beaches, houses that were the barest sort of shelters from the sun and none from the dust. As for rain there isn't any. We saw growing corn that looked better than any we have had for some years, and saw a number of prosperous looking, well stocked ranches. Now and then we flicked thru a little village.

Where we made our big mistake was in not finding out beforehand whether Concon was a species of Chilean dance, a mountain, town, or something else. When we asked our guide at first, he said or indicated that Concon was ahead, and when we reached a town of considerable size, we asked, "is this Concon?" and then he indicated that we had passed it. So we have lived for ten days in ignorance, and just now I learned that Concon was another beach.

We whisked thru Vina del Mar, one of the most beautiful resorts in Chile, as if it were quarantined, and caught now and then fleeting glimpses of glorious gardens, but the face of our guide was set like a flint. The four hour drive was completed in three and we were thankful when we again found ourselves at the dock.

Our luck changed the next day. We happened to get as our guide a Mr. Sim, born of an English parent on one side and a Chilean on the other. Educated in England, he spoke with a pronounced accent of good English. He knew the city and the nation well and gave us much interesting information. The car we had wasn't what it used to be twenty years ago and the driver seemed perturbed. Well he might be, for Valparaiso goes Rome much better, with probably seventy-seven hills, which make Mount Oread look like a ground swell. There are some thirty Ascensors, similar to the old cable car which formerly took passengers from the old depot in Kansas City and poked them thru a tunnel to reach the upper level of the city.

We took a drive in a southerly direction, skirting the ocean, and passed some beautiful flower gardens and parks. It is astounding how ambitious Chile has been in trying to improve her country along modern lines. Surely, if New Deal laws are the keys to pent up prosperity, Chile should be basking in endless delight, for she has all we have enacted in recent years, and then some, which Corcoran and Cohen seem to have missed.

Finally our car stopped. Accommodating pedestrians pushed and pulled and we coasted down several hills, only to have it go dead in trying to climb the next. Just as our guide, greatly humiliated, was about to telephone for help, the virile director of shore excursions, pulled alongside and traded cars with us. Later with his nail file he worked on the distributing points, or whatever it is that makes a car run, and soon followed us, making the entire trip.

The same year, 1906, that San Francisco had its great earthquake and fire, Valparaiso also suffered great loss in life and property. We stopped at many places of interest, including the Naval Academy on Artilleria Hill where we had a won-

derful view of the city and the harbor. In the main room are the capstans taken from the wooden ship, Esmeralda, sunk by a Peruvian ironclad many years ago, with the loss of every man aboard. A few years ago an Englishman, having interests in Chile, sent a diver down to the ancient wreck and brought up the capstan heads.

We were to have luncheon at Vina del Mar and all the way out we passed fine homes, all behind closed gates, with each yard filled with flowering shrubs and plants. Geraniums grow to a height of six feet or more and cover entire walls, or fences.

Chile has been enriched by her nitrates and one industrialist had the good sense to develop Nitrate Park, where trees and flowers of many kinds flourish under the benign influence of nitrates.

The Casino at Vina del Mar is said to be the largest in South America and it is the rendezvous of Argentinians who like to gamble, as many forms of gambling are prohibited in their own country. It is a tremendous place and could care for the passenger list of the Nieuw Amsterdam without crowding. On the first floor there are gambling rooms, the great dining room, parlors, corridors and so on thru a long list, and up the broad, winding, marble stairs on the second floor there was exhibited hundreds of canvasses, which evidently had been submitted in competition. It was a surprise to me that the magnificent rocky beaches, with their great breaking waves, and resplendent colors, had been almost entirely overlooked by the artists, who preferred to paint beautifully modeled nudes, in both white and the darker tints of the Chilean.

Maybe when people are drinking lots of wine or spiritous liquors they are not mindful of little things, but I am convinced that the greatest need at Vina del Mar, is not more beautiful gardens, a finer beach, or a more wonderful race track—but some good tight window screens and screen doors for the kitchen. I was hit twice and the effect was disheartening. See note 1

We had some good music by an orchestra, which was dressed in dark trousers, vest, of blue both front and back, and flowing sleeves of a sort of pearl gray.

The rest of the afternoon we had for shopping. We found the stores uptown a little disappointing. The stock of native products being about the same in quality and price as those displayed at the dock, but all a wee bit cleaner. My weakness is neckties and for the first time since leaving Lawrence I found something that is not stocked at the home stores. Generally speaking I believe one can find a finer selection of neckwear in several Lawrence stores than he can find in similar stores in New York.

Tuesday, the last day of February, we boarded a train at the dock for Santiago and after a pleasant ride of three hours; at times passing fertile fields and again snow capped mountains; we arrived at the capitol city and were taken to Hotel Crillon for lunch. Some of the youngsters, who were over the day before, complained of the food, but we found it good. Just to show that we are really temperate away from home, I'll let you know that at both luncheon and dinner I bought bottles of water at fifty cents American money per bottle. Perhaps they penalized me because I did not buy wine.

One can tell only a little regarding what may be seen in a few hours ride, but when you say you touch the high spots in Santiago it has a double meaning. Cerro Santa Lucia, crowned by an ancient fortress is almost in the center of town. This was the hill, rising from the plain, against which Valdiva and his Spaniards, placed their backs, while they drove swords and spears thru the attacking Indians, and won the western coast of South America for Spain.

There is another great mountain within the environs of the city, perhaps two thousand feet high,

which is approached in front by a cog railway, and also by an encircling road which winds around for miles, until it finally reaches the summit. It was there that I bought post cards from a Chilean lassie, who knew as little English as I do Spanish, but we got by with the few words we knew, and with the use of spreading fingers.

To prove that price is no obstacle with me when it comes to enjoying art, I have before me two tickets to the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, upon which is printed Valor \$1.00. That looks pretty stiff for a few minutes peek at a really fine collection of marble statuary, but it is not a reckless expenditure, when you realize that a Chilean peso is worth 3 1/3 cents, or thirty for one American dollar.

Our driver knew no English, but we got along fine. A word or two now and then in Spanish, and various motions, enabled us to get a lot out of the tour. Public buildings, congressos, schools, cathedrals, are all much alike, but when you go to the Hipico club you see one of the finest race tracks in the world. The building itself is imposing with its well furnished rooms for various purposes, and its elevator which reaches the fourth floor, but the track itself defies description. It is a dream of beauty.

Mrs. Simons had been wanting some flowers, so I left the station for a moment, went across the street, and bought one hundred deep red, and highly scented carnations for fifteen pesos, or an American half dollar. W. C. S.