

The Editor Writes Home From---

SOUTH AMERICA

(Number Fourteen)

At Sea, March 22, 1939

Today, March 22, is the ninety-fifth birthday of Mother Reineke, the mother of Mrs. Simons. The last letters we received at Bahia, Brazil, said that she was well and happy, and we trust that she is having a good time today with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was born in Kentucky, not far from the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

Just think a minute of all the changes that have taken place in the years spanned by her life. The Mexican war had not been fought, with its result of bringing into the United States a vast portion of her western empire, and a huge crop of Southern Colonels. An interesting subject for a part of an evening's entertainment would be to offer a prize to the one who would name the most outstanding inventions since 1844.

Last night we ran over the equator without even knowing that we hit it. Quite a difference from the elaborate entertainment furnished on our trip down. Tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock we shall pass Devil's Island, the French penal settlement, and here is hoping that we shall pick up no hitchhikers.

We have been wonderfully fortunate so far on our trip in having fine weather, and the past few days have been cloudy and windy enough to make it cool and pleasant in spite of being in equatorial waters. Today it has sprinkled a time or two, and it has been cloudy all day.

For ten days we have been hugging the coast of Brazil. It is a big country, with vast resources, but much of it as yet is unfitted for the occupancy of white men, altho they have made a great start. It is said that Brazil is as large as continental United States, plus another Texas. It is twice the size of India and is equal in territory to Europe. India is packed with a population of 360 millions, while Brazil has twice the territory and only one-eighth as many people.

The country is Portuguese in language and tradition and has no great love for the Spanish tongue. It is second only to Argentine in present political importance in South America. The vast back reaches of the country are unexplored. The great need is to create a distinctive culture and civilization, from the varied tribes with their variety of languages. Negro slavery practically began in America with the importation of slaves to Bahia and Recife, and the descendants of the original Africans now number millions. Already climatic conditions are modifying racial characteristics.

Instead of recounting the early history of Brazil we recommend that you refresh your knowledge of the country thru reading your histories or cyclopedias. We will simply state that Brazil was the only empire in the western world, a condition brought about by the ambitions of Napoleon, which were checkmated by Portugal and England. The slaves received their liberty thru several steps. Beginning in 1871 all children born to slaves in Brazil were free, and in 1888 general freedom was given to all slaves.

We touched Brazilian soil when we entered the large harbor at Santos. It is said that this is the greatest port in the world for the exportation of coffee. It has a large, land locked harbor, whose green hills resemble those near Council Bluffs, Ia. There are trees from top to bottom, excepting where there are cultivated fields. The city is beautiful and yet it is a busy, bustling place doing a large business in many lines.

We noted that "oleo" here means oil, the kind you burn, but don't attempt to eat. We saw large imports of coal, new automobiles and trucks. All around is jungle, with the trees topped with flowers. All roofs are of tile in red and brown, which contrasts with the verdure of the fields and jungles. The soil is red, but fertile.

We left the dock on a special train which went several miles thru plantations and fields, with tropical fruits, until we came to the famous cable railway, which lifts the train from sea level to an elevation of 3,000 feet in six miles. The train was broken into sections of two or three cars at the bottom, and re-joined at the summit. The view from the cars was beautiful, yet, here as elsewhere on our trip, some of the old ladies have been intent on their fancy work, and the only scenery they know about is what they hear from the conversations from others.

We were interested all the way in the simple homes, here and there; the little villages, fruit farms and finally the beautiful buildings in the outreaches of Sao Paulo, the greatest industrial city in Brazil, and one, altho much smaller, which vies with Buenos Aires.

It merits the appellation of "The Chicago of S. A.," which its friends proudly give it. Many names of American companies were seen on the large warehouses before we entered the Luz station, which may be adequate for ordinary traffic, but which was congested with the several hundred of our group.

After a good luncheon at Hotel Esplanada, well served by courteous waiters who knew a bit of English, we went out for an auto ride. We had a driver who did not know a word of English, and who drove altogether too fast for our comfort. We swished by the plazas, like the railway train which made mile posts seem like markers in a cemetery.

These South American countries may not always treat their heroes in life with great consideration, but it is a small man indeed, or one of exceedingly little importance who cannot rate a fine monument. Finally we stopped at the Independence monument, which is both mammoth and beautiful. The bronze figures depict the scene where the South American hero, like Patrick Henry said:—"Give me Liberty or give me Death."

We caught a word or two of English here, which let us know that the museum was open, and when we started away we pointed to the printed program and made the driver understand that we wanted to go to the museum. He tried to tell us that it was closed, but we insisted and finally landed where the other cars had collected at the entrance.

It sort of makes me ashamed when I see how much these poor countries and cities have done along this line, while we of Lawrence have spent so little in erecting monuments, and have no place to house the things we possess of rich, historic value. The Sao Paulo museum has a magnificent building and it is well filled with heroic paintings, marbles, bronzes, and other treasures. From the front steps, or better still, from an upper balcony one may see the exquisite gardens, and graceful fountains of a beautiful plaza occupying probably more than five acres.

At one time our driver smashed with a bang into the car ahead of us, catapulting us into the back of the front seat, but we have become tough fibered hombres, and bounced back as gracefully as could be expected.

We saw a little of this and a little of that and finally found ourselves, where no drinking man wishes to be, at the famous snake farm at Butantan. Some of our folks got soaked in a small rain which fell here, but we were more lucky. Try as hard as I may I don't like snakes, and I don't want to be around them. I killed rattlers by the hundreds in western Kansas when I was a boy and it is a wonder that I restrained myself from jumping over the protecting ramparts in a one man crusade against the vipers. There were hundreds of them, deadly ones, and discretion was undoubtedly the better part of valor.

They squeezed the heads of the bloody reptiles until the venom oozed out, just to show how it is done, but I did not stay to see it. This snake farm has saved thousands of lives. A farmer may catch a snake of a deadly variety and send it to the farm in a fragile sort of a box, which would not confine a mouse. The farmer receives no pay for the snake, but he is given credit on the books of the institution and should he ever have need for treatment for himself or family, it is sent him upon request.

This was supposed to end the afternoon's drive, but it was two hours till train time, and we did not want to wait either at the hotel or station. I took out a bill marked 20 Milreis. In appearance it is a big and influential bill, but its value was \$1.08 in our money. I showed the driver the bill, pointed at the face of my watch, ran my finger around twice to indicate two hours, and looked questioningly. He warmed up, said "Si, si," whirled his hand around twice and we were off, but we had converted him. By the simple view of the bill he had been changed from a wild, rip snorting, son-of-a-gun on wheels, to a kind and considerate driver, who for two hours burst his diaphragm trying to tell us of the beauties of his town in simple and forceful Portuguese.

Now and then I could get over a word in Spanish, and finally said, "flores" and pointed to my wife. He caught on and soon we were at a florist's where the only word of English spoken to me was "One

dollar." I managed to point out some flowers, found that the word dozen in Portuguese was pronounced almost the same as in German and finally for a dollar bought a dozen large flowers, the identity of which has not yet been revealed, and for 25 cents more an orchid, a beautiful one with three blossoms.

Then we drove around some more and parted great friends at the station. It really is remarkable how many languages money speaks.

I nearly forgot to tell you that unintentionally I put on a one man show at Sao Paulo, which seemed to be greatly appreciated by the public. I wore a white helmet that I had purchased at Panama, and apparently the people here are unfamiliar with them. I walked several blocks thru the business section, and my appearance was a great success. How well I succeeded in looking nonchalant I don't know, but I tried hard.

No

Although we r
South America Su
April 2, we think t
write a little more
to our southern neig
eral unconcern of n
South America was
morning of March
of the passengers
Amsterdam decline
Bahia, Brazil, in t
there was nothing
be seen.

Bahia, or Sao S
capital city of the
of Bahia, and at o
capital of Brazil. It
cent land locked h
as Douglas count
five years ago, bet
Sao Paulo, it was
in Brazil in popula
years it was the v
diamond shipping p
away to South A
Kimberly mines.

Bahia was also
for many years f
tion of slaves from
great has been t
the negro in the
that today ninety
population is eith
or of mixed blood
the great number
colored blood, the
dubbed by some a
lattress."

Bahia is eight
northeast of Rio
five hundred miles
point of Brazil, w
easternmost point
ica. The whole coa
must be over 3,500

Personally, I w
ested in visiting
wanted to see wh
complished by a
largely negro. I h
where I was oppr
treme poverty of
I expected to fin
same conditions
was pleasantly su

I had read of d
streets there, an
have them, but I
such. On the cont
kept buildings, cle
tiful parks and s
ful beaches, and
teous people, wher
waved us an inter
welcome.

There are more
dred churches the
being said to b
Brazil, and we ha
of visiting severa
fine modern eleva
from the lower to
of the city, there
tric street railwa
paved streets, a
drives leading fr
the upper levels.

We were sorry
day because the s
and iron shutter
view of interiors.
passed a public
fruit, vegetables,
and handicraft
the better merc
the tourists fancy
where well mad
mocks, butterfly
boxes, native doll
articles, nearly al
were offered.

After our ride
our return to the
car, and were
moments later to
bring us our r
carelessly we had
the dock we saw
a little chattering