

MINISTER TO SALVADOR

In January '26 President Coolidge appointed me Minister to Salvador and I left Berlin in late February. Dick Wigglesworth went with me a part of the way. ~~We first went to Nuremberg~~ ^{and the Trials} (now famous for the Nazi meetings) where we were interested in the "Torture Museum" and above all in the famous "Iron Virgin". Then to Munich; liked its distinguished old-world air; saw some good pictures in its museums. Went to the theater to see an excellent performance of Alt Heidelberg which has long been played every year in Germany in the spring, and of which the popular musical show "Student Prince" was an adaptation. We sampled the various kinds of the excellent Tor (Bock) beers which should be

consumed

consumed within the three-weeks' season in the spring in Munich; Bock beer, as is known, is a heavy beer, brewed in late autumn and aged for at least one hundred and twenty days. We then went on to Heidelberg, where we sampled more beer in the cafés frequented by the various student corps (now abolished I believe). Spring was breaking at Heidelberg; the fruit blossoms were out; and the valley was lovely. Then through Frankfort, where we had barely time to see the Cathedral. Then to the well-known resort of Wiesbaden, and to a second-rate cabaret. Wigglesworth then left me to return to Berlin and I went down the Rhine next day to Cologne. I was *a little* disappointed in the Cologne Cathedral: the Gothic doesn't look genuine. Went to the opera

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in the evening to see Boris Gudonov; and the next day to the Hague, where I stayed a few days with the Norwebs. Met more Limpurg-Stirums and other Dutch society; played bridge. Dined one evening at the Hotel des Indes: dinner excellent and enormous. Saw the many good pictures in the museums at Amsterdam and at The Hague; saw the famous diamond cutters at work; tables full of diamonds before us.

I set out for my new post at Salvador during the month of June, traveling from my home in Louisiana on the Southern Pacific to Los Angeles on the Sunset Limited. It was terrifically hot in New Mexico and Arizona: that was before the days of air conditioning. For the first time in my life I broke out in prickly heat. I

stayed

stayed a few days in Los Angeles and then went on to San Francisco, where I took one of the Grace Line's motor ships down the West Coast, stopping for a day at Mazatlan in Mexico, which has a fine harbor, and a pleasant hotel. Then to Champerico, Guatemala, where my colleague in Guatemala, Arthur Geissler, had a private car waiting for me, and I took the interesting train ride to Guatemala City where I stayed a few days in the Legation. Guatemala City, which is about five thousand feet high, has an unusually fine climate: it is like a perpetual early spring day. Then, the President, Orellana, sent me in one of his motor cars, with an Aide, to Antigua. Señora Orellana gave me a beautiful example of that superbly-colored and decorated bird, the quetzol.

Antigua

Antigua, which was ruined by an earthquake in the 18th century, is the most picturesque city in Central America. I was received by the local Governor and shown around the splendid ruins of palaces and churches and convents: then again by motor car (with more lunches with more Governors en route), and finally by train to the port of San José, where I was lifted in a basket back again on to my boat. At the port of Acajutla, Salvador, for a day, and at night I saw the flames of the active volcano Izalco: Izalco burst out of the flat ground in 1770 in the middle of a ranch and has been building itself up ever since; now it is quite a mountain; and then on to La Libertad where I was removed in a basket from my boat

to

to the shore. The trip took nineteen days and it was restful. There were few passengers and I had loads of books.

Salvador, a very thickly populated little country, is pleasant and smiling with a "simpatico" population. It was prosperous then; the coffee prices were good and coffee is the mainstay of the country. They produce sugar, also, but sugar at that time was not very profitable; and they were beginning to produce henequen. A good deal of the best land is owned by say a hundred families and they are rich and very hospitable. Life centered around the attractive Country Club, where I played tennis and went to many a party. The terrace was enchanting at sundown. Dr. Quiñones was President
when

when I arrived, and he was running the country very efficiently.

Salvador is only a pocket-size country, 13,000 square miles of area. I found compressed in that tiny country an unexpected diversity of scenery and color and life: tropical shores, green mountains, including a series of active volcanoes, clusters of tropical lakes, peaceful highly-cultivated countryside, Indian villages.

I found a Government-owned Legation; small but comfortable, with a terrace looking over a little walled garden in the back. The house was covered with flowering vines. One part of the year it was a mass of golden bells and another season a mass of purple and red bouganvilla.

The garden walls were covered with a half-dozen

different

different varieties of flowering vines, also. I had roses, too, but we had a constant fight against ferocious ants which ate up rose bushes in a night. The last thing the gardener did was to go around with a light and pour petroleum on the swarms of ants that came out in the evening. I had a swimming pool, too, where I swam every morning; and occasionally gave swimming parties.

Life was pleasant, with plenty of bridge and cocktail parties and dances; but I didn't have enough work to do. I did have some political difficulties about recognizing and/or not recognizing other Central American Governments; and some other matters of local Central American importance; but all in all they took up little time.

time. I did a prodigious amount of mountain climbing, beginning with the extinct volcano of San Salvador which overhangs the city, which has been active in fairly recent years. The entire countryside is covered with decomposed lava which in former times had poured out of that crater. The crater is a well-nigh perfect one: a perfect circle with a perfect little cone in the center of the bottom. The climb is an easy one. I climbed also up the slightly active volcano of Santa Ana, near the city of Santa Ana, also an easy climb, and eventually a mountain, the highest in the country on the Honduran frontier, which at that time did not even appear on the map. The country is full of beautiful volcanic lakes; there is, for instance, Llopongo, in which there is a volcanic island which arose in

1880 and attained the height of nearly 200 feet.

Among the extremely hospitable people, was especially Don Bartolo Daglio, who had come to Salvador at an early age from Italy and had prospered there, and Miguel Dueñas who was one of the principal citizens. Bartolo Daglio liked good food and good wine and was very generous with it.

We had plenty of earthquakes in Salvador, too, but they seemed very minor ones to me after my experience in Japan.

The Salvadorean Indian loves church festivals; the greatest are held in July and August - from July 25th to August 6th - the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Holy Savior (El Salvador).

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In colonial days the celebrations were purely religious but now they include parades of allegorical floats (non-religious) and traditional Indian dances as well as the religious processions and ceremonies.

Black beans, as they are prepared in Salvador, are a delight: they must be boiled all night on a slow fire and then fried next morning and served with sour cream for breakfast.

We had an opera season one year: I shall never forget Aida because during the triumphal march the gallery gods were recognizing their friends disguised as Egyptians and shouting "Olé, Pedro"; "Como está Carlos" etc., etc.

Had various visitors to stay with me; the most important being Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., the former President's widow. She stayed a

week

week. She wanted to see everything and did see most. We spent the day at coffee haciendas; went to the markets; saw the sights; and finally one of my Secretaries accompanied her to Guatemala to her boat at Puerto Barrios. (During the

~~I have stayed on~~
past fifteen years, I have often stayed on Long *I have*
~~stayd visited in those years or Logans~~
Island at Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay). *Will, Oyster Bay*

I went home on leave at the end of '27, and came back in a round-about way. By train to Key West (before storms destroyed the railroad; I have often since flown over the wrecked line); on the ferry from Key West to Havana; then by United Fruit boat to Puerto Castilla, and then ashore at Tela, where I went to see the snake farm; then by single motor United Fruit plane, with a forced landing at a village called San

Antonio

Antonio de las Flores where they had never
seen a plane; and eventually arriving very late
at Tegucigalpa where my colleague, George

Summerlin, was awaiting me. I stayed a pleasant

week with him. Herschel Johnson, *later my successor*
at Rio de Janeiro ~~now Counselor~~

~~at London~~, was the Secretary. Then by motor car,

scaring many an iguana and gila monster on the

way to the coast; in the President's motor launch

to La Union; stayed there in a house belonging

to the Railroad Company; and then by private car

back to Salvador.

While on leave in the United States I

stayed with some friends at Radnor, Pennsylvania,

and went out to see Valley Forge. Had tea with

former Secretary of State Knox's daughter.