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knew, but since I was not proposing to enter Bolivia, it had not seemed very important. My new friend assured me that, on the contrary, it was exceedingly important, inasmuch as no combatant country would ever allow an unknown foreigner to meander at large along the main line of communications, which was what I proposed doing in Paraguay. Anyone who attempted that, he said, would most certainly be arrested as a spy. That is, if they were exceptionally fortunate. He shuddered to think of my probable fate if ever, by some crazy mischance, I actually did manage to get so far. Uneducated peons and Indians, he said, armed with rifles and masquerading as soldiers were most unlikely to be impressed by a passport; and a pair of English boots would be of more value to them than a live prisoner.

This was getting interesting, and I begged my companion to tell me more. Dismissing further hazards in Paraguayan territory as not worth discussion, since I could never arrive there to encounter them, he enumerated a few of the more unpleasant features of river travel in the Brazilian stretch of the Rio Paraguay. He doubted my ability to understand the native patois which differed from the Portuguese spoken in the towns. I had no doubts at all, since my total knowledge of Portuguese, or Spanish, either, was limited to saying "Good morning," "How much?" "Is it too dear?" Being by this time somewhat reconciled to dealing with a madman, my new friend greeted this admission with only a comparatively mild outburst of scornful invective.

I then heard about the immense volume of flood-water which from December to April turns hundreds of miles of land along the Rio Paraguay into an inland sea; of the places where any one of half-a-dozen different channels may seem to be the right course; and of what happens to a person who unwittingly chooses the wrong one. He told me how the vain efforts of many days' travelling would lead nowhere—except further and deeper into trackless swamp and forest.

I learnt of storms which lash the waters into waves big enough to swamp a launch, let alone a canoe. Of the piranha, the scavenger fish, which attacks in shoals and picks a body clean to the bones in five minutes. Of mosquitoes, snakes, and alligators. Of the rains, and the impossibility of obtaining supplies. What a Job's comforter he was! But it was getting late, and we arranged to meet at the station before my train left next morning. Besides, had I heard more I might have become a little discouraged!

NEXT morning, having had time to consider the matter more fully, my friend was even more emphatic in his protestations. I, however, had not come to South America to be turned back by the first person I spoke to, and was equally determined to have a shot at it, or to find out for myself just how impossible a project it was.

But, good fellow that he was, I had become a responsibility to him and weighed heavily on his conscience. So he compromised by giving me a letter of introduction to one McLeod, who was to be found some 400 miles up the Rio Paraguay from Puerto Esperanza, and in whose cattle ranch his company had an

interest. Life there, he said, would be wild enough to satisfy anybody, and I should find all the adventures I wanted, probably without seeking them.

This, indeed, seemed a likely alternative should the canoe trip prove so outrageously impracticable, and I thanked him sincerely for his kindness. Little did I realise at that moment how very much more grateful I should feel towards him later on, and how I should bless the lucky chance of our meeting.

[III.]

SAO PAULO is only two hours' rail from Santos, and with its population of about a million is a fine, well-equipped, progressive city, the second in Brazil. Indeed, its rate of progress and development gave rise to the belief that Sao Paulo State as a separate entity would fare better than as a province of Brazil. In 1932 this was probably the primary cause of a widespread revolution, or, more correctly, of the insurrection of Sao Paulo State against Brazilian jurisdiction. There is little doubt that had the Paulistas been successful, they would have effected a separation. But several months of fierce fighting, with trenches, field artillery, aeroplanes, and all the implements of modern warfare, saw them forced to capitulate. Their defeat was due, not to their own faint-heartedness or indecision, but rather to the procrastination of certain neighbours who played the old game of sitting on the fence, and from whom the promised assistance was not forthcoming. So Sao Paulo remained an integral part of Brazil and continued to make contributions to the national exchequer. Santos bore extra taxes derived mainly from the export of coffee, and many prominent Paulistas left the country in preference to taking a one-way ticket to Fernando Noronha. One of these gentlemen subsequently proved a resourceful companion, whose friendship provided me with many inspiring moments.

One of the things to do in Sao Paulo is to visit the famous Butantan Institute, where snakes are received from all parts and where their poisons are extracted to make the antidotal serum. The enclosures resemble an apiary, for the snakes are housed in small shelters like beehives. One is impressed by the nonchalant way in which the keepers handle the snakes. These men reach into the shelters with their sticks or probe among clusters of snakes lying on the grass, and, until they get the particular one they want, the others are flung aside like so many yards of sausages. The keepers are protected by leggings up to their knees, since the deadly snakes cannot strike higher than that. But to the casual observer they appeared to take fearful chances by handling several reptiles at once with their bare hands.

Poison is extracted by opening the snake's mouth and pressing a small dish under the fangs. Horses are kept at the snake farm, and after a period of six months, during which time they are repeatedly injected with the poison, they are bled from the neck and from this blood the serum is collected. Afterwards their own blood is restored to them again, and at no time are the horses allowed to suffer any ill-effects from the treatment. Indeed, the authorities are at pains to point out how well the animals are looked after; and the clean, airy stables, with blue glass windows to discourage the mosquitoes, certainly support this claim.

(To be continued next week)

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DEPT OF HEALTH



YOUR FEET DESERVE SOME CARE

Healthy feet are a blessing we don't appreciate until things go wrong. They go wrong mainly because of two things:

(1) Ill-fitting footwear. (2) Lack of attention.

When buying footwear make sure:

- That the arch of the shoe fits the arch of the foot.
- That there is ample room for the toes to move naturally when walking.
- That the shoe is not too wide, or too narrow, or too long.
- In brief: See that it **FITS COMFORTABLY.**

Give your feet this daily hygiene.

Bathe every day. For dryness of the skin massage the feet lightly with a vegetable oil. For excessive perspiration use a good foot powder (Not the kind that cakes when moist). For foot tiredness and irritation caused by shoe rubbing make a sedative foot-bath by adding a tablespoon of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) or epsom salts to a quart of water.

ATHLETE'S FOOT: Cramped footwear, which jams the toes together, favours the growth and spread of the fungus which causes Athlete's Foot, a highly infectious and very common complaint, particularly in the summer. Athlete's Foot usually begins as a crack under the fifth toe. The skin becomes white and soggy and more cracks appear. Intense itchiness develops and blisters may appear and spread. For this condition medical advice is recommended.

**"SERVICE" YOUR FEET IF YOU
WANT THEM TO SERVE YOU**

FOR A HEALTHIER NATION

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