

The Rockwood Review.

the Caribbean Sea. The water was quite warm, and it was hard to realize that this was in January.

As evening approached, we set out to walk to Laguyra, and found it soothingly cool under the shade of the mountain wall, with lithe palms above us, and auriferous stone as a road-bed. Before we reached our destination, a mist arose from the sea and enveloped us, and I who had been nearly suffocated with the heat of the day, was soon shivering with the damp and cold atmosphere. So are bred miasmatic fevers, and so has Laguyra come to be regarded as the incubator of the worst fevers the world has known. On Monday we took the train for Caracas, which lies on the mountains six miles from Laguyra. The railroad was built by a German company, and overcame engineering difficulties which at one time seemed to render its construction impossible. Imagine how these difficulties have been overcome, when I tell you that the distance of six miles from the port to Caracas is covered by a road thirty miles in length—so numerous are the sweeping curves. The train, which makes two trips a day, comprises a strongly built engine and three small coaches. There are brakes multiplied by brakes to prevent a catastrophe, and the track is built of rails forty-two inches apart. We set out upon a grade at an angle of 45 degrees, as steep as the roof of an average house. Astonishing as was this exploit, it was excelled only in the curvature. At no one moment could we fail to see the engine almost beside us, tugging and puffing, with its grunt of "Rip! Rip! Rip!" Below us a precipitous chasm of 3,000 feet, above us an incline which it seems impossible to ascend. The height is dizzy, the depth unfathomable. We hurry over it, we plunge into it, we reach the top of one grade, and are hurled scarcely dragged down another, at a maddening pace. We turn a tortuous curve,

shriek through a suffocating tunnel, roll into a narrow opening, pass a signal house into a bamboo grove, and then go on with the steam created grunt of "Rip," puffing, panting, tugging until we tire of the excitement, and look across the intervening valley to the towering peaks of verdant life. We are not yet atop. We wind six times around one peak, and then plunge into another tunnel. And yet the peaks show thousands of untravelled yards yet to be covered. We enter nine tunnels, though a dozen times we wind past the track we have just struggled over, and the chain seems endless. Suddenly steam is shut off, brakes are grimly and tightly set, and down into the valley of Cachoa we plunge, at seemingly endless speed, and stop only at the station of Caracas, whence we are soon rattling along a narrow dirty way, over street tram-tracks towards our hotel. We pass hideous houses of one storey, with no opening on the street, but entered by deep narrow doorways, and lit up after a fashion by barricaded windows. We pass too natives dark, gloomy of aspect, scantily dressed, barefooted, negro-shinned and dirty. And from these scenes of squalor there bursts upon our view the Plaza Bolivar, truly magnificent in every point, and filled with multitudes of fine carriages, many fair dames, and southern cavaliers.

For a few days we remained at the Hotel for which we were bound, and afterwards removed to a Boarding-house, where we found a varied company of first-class people, and had ample opportunity to become familiar with Venezuelan life. A few words as to Caracas. In 1815 it was destroyed by an earthquake, but one house having been left standing, and it although wrecked was repaired, is now a comfortable hotel, and is much respected for its age, having already survived a century and a half. The valley of Cachoa, in which the city is situated, is seven