Trip to Ecuador's Capital

etter by A. C. Richards, General Freight Agent of Guyaquil and Quito Railway, to his Son.

Hulgra June 25 06

Dear little Mankin:-Quito-June 9th. I took along a all the strange things I saw, so as to be able to write and tell my boy all about it, and I also make memos on the same pad covering a report I had to make to the management. Well after I had made my report, which was nine pages long, I tore up the memos, forgetting that the most important part of the whole business, outside of my expense account, had yet to come, i. e., my report to you, so I will have to trust to memory to not miss the many strange, queer and odd things I saw and experienced. I left Hurgria, at mile 73 from Duran, which place, Duran, you know is across the Guayas river from Guayaquill and the terminus of the railroad, at 1:30 in the afternoon and arrived at Cajabamba, Mile 131 from Duran two hours late or at 7:22 instead of 5:22. Mr. Cash of the Ardean meet me at the train and I went to his tent for the night, or such part of it as was left before the Rapida, stage started in the morning, he had supper all ready, but as the train vrew had asked me to eat with them at Colta, only three miles from Cajabamba, and by the way is the highest place on the now operated line being 10,815 feet above sea level, I was not hungry, particularly as now is the quail season and we had some delicious broiled quails, there was no toast or small "bot' however. Mr. Henderson, our general manager, and Mr. Forrester, secretary to Major Herman, were with Mr. Cash, as they were there to meet the president of the republic, General Alfaro, who was, with his party, occupying the private car, Elizabeth, which is named after Major Herman's wife there enroute with his daughters to Guayaquil to meet Mrs. Alfaro, who since the late unpleasantness - the revolutionwhich put General Alfaro again in power, has been living in Panama, I went around to the stage office and deposited my ticket, which cost miles from Cajabamba, as from there I was going to Quito, by easy stages, so as to study the country with the Inca Co's, paymaster, you know that the Inca Co. is building gave him a sucre, which is the same as 50 cents in gold, so we would not forget to call me, like the May Queen, "good and early" and he of the tent-my but it was dark and 277 feet lower than Colta: I manother and I in front with the driver us. and the herder. I wished a thouswere along, as you would have enthey trotted. I don't mean that the wheelers, and they for the 30 had imbibed the

driving, I mean herding, we only | That of Sanacajas to the Pacific bumped twice all the way to Am- and Cotopaxi to the Atlantic by way When I started on my trip to bato. The mules seemed to know the road, which by the way was a scratch pad so as to make memos of very good one, and could on a dead make their headquarters at San run miss all the chuck holes. A little Miguel we had left at Ambato so after 5 day broke and before us to the left was Chimborazo in all its glory. The sun tipped its summit of snow and that sight alone compensated for the cold and the thought that at any moment something might happen.

You know that Chimborazo is nearly 22,000 feet high. The highest extinct volcano on earth. The snow line extended half way to its base and I wish that I had the flow of language of Maurice Hewlett or that of McCauley that I might tell you of its beauty. It stands out all alone a sentinel over a great plain silent, grand, beautiful, to its left, east, I mean right not left, is Sanacajas Pass the highest point on the surveyed line of the road from Duran to Quito, 11,800 feet high and on the edge of the plain Trading Co. was good enough to was the second stage stand, very appropriately named Siberia. The road Carretera which runs from Alausa 88 miles from Duran to Quito, 287 miles as surveyed, is paved in many places and the pass is 8 miles long and paved and the way we flew over that part of the road was a caution. The Carretera was built by President Garcia Moreno in the 70's and is sure a monument to his enterprise, as it averages about 10 meters wide the whole way and is a very good road indeed. There is a saying, and we found it a true one, that one is never out of sight of human beings on the Carretera. It is simply lined all day long with Arrieros and their principal occupation seems to be, aside from reaching their destinations, to keep out of the way of the Rapida and the automobiles. As soon as they saw us coming they commenced to hustle their mules and burros off to one side of the road and as we were at what seemed to me to be at the rate of 45 miles an hour. Very often we came w'thin an ace of running into some animal or other. Once we did run into a man on sucre 10.00 as I was only going, in horseback but never stopped to see the Rapida, as far as Ambato, 30 whether he was hurt or not. From Sanacajas pass we could see the snow capped Alter, a volcano that the crater has seemingly blown out of and left lovely Antisana, and on a very clear day one can see Sangay the road for the Guayaquil & Quito and every now and then the smoke a telegram, received in response to Ry. Co. Well I saw the Chitro and that bursts from the crater every 15 minutes.

Well we got to Ambato at about 10:30 and I took my grip and said good bye to the very nice and consure did it, as at 3:45 he was knock- genial people who were my fellow ing at the door, or rather the fly, passengers. One of them was a young officer and he had come from cold- you see Cajabamba is only Guayaquil and had on cana pants, you know one could not call them aged to get a lamp lit and dressed trousers, as they evidently cost less and Mr. Henderson and Cash woke than sucre 4.00. He was laughing up and said good bye, Forrester about their thinness and said next had been reading half the night so time he came he would put on all did not wake up. It was awful dark the clothes he had, and I don't and I hollered at Ramon, Mr. Cash's reckon they would keep him boy and he got a lantern and we warm as the officers-the Equadorean walked around to where the stage army don't get much pay and I am starts and found three or four al- told not very regularly at that. I ready there, we managed to get the took my telescope, that Japanese proprietor of the hotel(?) if one one that your mamma let me get can call it by that name up, and we away from Durango with, to the got a drink of mayorca and a cup of headquarters of the engineers and coffee and at 4:15 were on the road, was kindly welcomed. We made I hardly mean on the road, as we such quick time that they did not seldom touched the earth, but we expect us for an hour or more so started 6 inside sitting opposite each were not at the stage stand to meet

We all went around to the Italian and times that you and your mama hotel and had a very good dinner and I went to see an old friend of joyed it greatly and she would have mine Sr. Lafitte, a Frenchman, who screamed all the time and helped has a flour mill and is rich and has the mules along. There were six lived in Equador for 36 years, but mules and in the 30 miles we who is soon going with his family rain. It was an hour and a half change five times. The way they back to France to bring them up herded those mules was a caution, and to end his days. I was asked Don't think that they drove them by Mons. Lafitte to dinner but we for they did not. The steeper the decided to start and make San hill and faster we went the mules Miguel, where the engineers have had to just fly to keep out of the another house, that night and we way of the coach so, it would not did. We had a buckboard which run over them. I don't mean that made us sort of homesick for they walked. I don't mean that Arizona and I could not but remember the trip your mamma and I took they ran. I do mean that they ran in one befroe you came away. The brake and the reins on earth, through Arizona and the were ornaments and not for use, many and kind prople we met on Both men had long whips, one for the trip. I found very soon that the leaders and a shorter one for young Mr. Baker, the paymaster, miles kept themselves and the mules driving as the stage people and warm by the most violent exercise away we went just as fast as the in the way of hollering, whistling mules could run, not gallop mind and whipping the mules. Cursus you but run. You know that the did not count. The shurper the Carretera follows a basia, as it curve the faster they tried to round were between the eastern and west-There were two mules on the era Cordilleras. The valley is about pole and when it was light enough five miles wide and has three comto sec, I found that the mules at paratively low passes in it from each side of the pole had no bridles Cajabamba to Quito. First Sanaon, only traces and a rope collar, cajas, then Cotopaxi and then Santa They being tied by the neck to each Rosa and a curious thing is that of the pole mules. Now there was each pass or basin sends its waters one curious thing with all that fast to the Atlantic and to the Pacific.

of the Amazon and Santa Rosa to the Pacific. The two engineers who we had their rooms and a very good dinner and breakfast. They claim to have the very best cook of any of the engineers and it was real good. We changed mules at San Miguel and off we started. It was good and cold, at about 7 a. m. We soon got to Latacunga, the capital of the Province of Tungurara. and stopped a little while as I wanted to see about some building stone which ultimately, I hope, will give the railroad a considerable freight movement to the coast. towns are all about the same. Latacunga is all built of stone, a pumice, and if they kept the place clean would not be unattractive, but they don't. Dirt seems to be Art has done second nature. nothing, while nature has unsurpassed herself. The road from Latacunga to Manchachi, another town of about 20,000, is splendid and it was on this stretch that we had our only trouble. The breast strap of the nigh mule broke and the gentleman started off, going if possible faster than we were driving him. We finally got them stopped and I got out and caught him by the head. Baker got at the head of the off mule. He said that he would get a piece of rope that I had tied my telescope on with and the moment he let go of the bridle off went the two mules with the neck yoke dragging on the ground and dragging off they went with the buckboard and my valise on the dead run, but within 100 yards they collided with a telegraph pole and skinned themselves from the buckboard and away they went. You know that I have said that one is never out of sight of someone on the Carretera so in tive boy leading them back. Two traces were broken, and both neck yokes. The hooks had pulled out of the singletrees but fortunately there was a relay station. Baker changed mules three times between Ambato and Quito. Quito was only about a mile and a half away so we hired the boy with his companion, to push the buckboard to the station and we led the mules. My contract with Baker, based on my request that he wait at Ambato for me, was that I was to buy all the drinks on the road. So right along side of the relay station was a sort of cantina or tiedahone, that is not the way to spell that, and there happened to be just four bottles of Guayaquil beer in stock which we immediately preemptied at one sucre per. Well we got the young lady who was looking after were away at another hacienda, to get us something to eat and after that we bought a rope and used

the one I had and finally patched

up the affair and started. We soon

came to Cotopaxi Pass but it was

cloudy and we could not see Coto-

paxi, the highest active volcano in

the world, and which was off to

our left 19,613 feet high. It rained

and sleeted on us while crossing

the pass but we both had coats and

Baker had a rubber ponce to put

over our legs. We soon got to

Machachi, a dirty looking place,

and still had about an hour and a

half before dark. Baker said the

next place was Tambillo and that he

did not know what kind of a hotel

they had there. I said "Well we

can't do much worse than here, so

lets go on," and on we went in the

after dark when we got to Tambillo

but we did not slacken the pace any.

and finally drew up in front of the

Grande Hotel Victoria. We had a

relay of mules at Tambillo and as

we passed the stationon the way to

the hotel we hollered at the keeper

mules out. He had a time getting

them unhitched as the harness and

singletrees and neck yoke were all

tied up in all manner of knots. J

pretty and bright eyed young lady,

hollered to Baker who was still

enough it proved to be about the

very best hotel on the whole road

We had a delicious supper, as sup-

pers go down this way, and good

beds with clean sheets and for a

(Continued on page 6)

drink?"

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