



Street Scene in Managua.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

NICARAGUA, scene of activity by American marines, is the largest of the Central American republics; many acclaim it the most beautiful. It has vast forests of precious woods, untold resources of valuable minerals and soil so fertile that it has been said, "If you tickle the ground with a hoe it smiles back with a yam."

There is a darker side—few regions of its size anywhere in the world have been so beset by revolutions and volcanic eruptions. After a century of almost perpetual civil war Nicaragua settled down to comparative peace a few years ago and began to reap the dividends in progress toward prosperity. Modern science can ameliorate the disasters from volcanoes by approximate predictions of their eruptions, while it also has taught the Nicaraguans that the eruptions of the past were blessings in disguise, because they fertilized the land to a marvelous degree.

The country is about the area of New York state and its total population is only a little larger than that of Buffalo. It has two mountain ridges which inclose the "Great Lakes of Central America," Lakes Nicaragua and Managua.

A glance at a Central American map tells the story of Nicaragua's backwardness in bygone years. Costa Rica, to the south, and Honduras, to the north, are accessible from the Atlantic ocean; all of Nicaragua's important cities are on the Pacific side of her coastal mountains. To the east of the mountains lie her lakes, and she presents to the Caribbean a very unimpressive "back yard" with the world's worst real estate designation, the Mosquito coast.

Pacific Frontage Helps Her.

Today, with Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle to tap her markets, Nicaragua's Pacific frontage is a blessing. But yesterday, when the Atlantic ports of North America and Europe were doing the world's shipping, she was severely handicapped.

Curiously, too, her Mosquito coast was appropriately named by error. The appellation was not intended for the insect, which abounds there, but is a corruption of the name of the 6,000 Indians, the Misskits, who survive there.

The country's northernmost Caribbean headland, Cape Gracias a Dios, is a headline of geography. Columbus explored the Central American coast on his last voyage and, cruising east from Cape Honduras, was compelled to take shelter from a storm at a point where the coast abruptly turns to the south. He named the cape "Thanks to God" and took possession of the country for Spain.

That was in 1502. A century before the Mayflower touched at Plymouth rock the Spaniards were established along the lake region in far western Nicaragua, despite the unwelcome volcanic outbursts. Especially vigorous was the eruption of Masaya, in 1522. The most sensational single eruption, however, occurred within a century from our day—when Coseguina blew off its head in 1835. For days a black pall obscured the sun, dust blanketed the fields and forests, animals died by the thousands from thirst and hunger.

Tradition says that it was into the crater of the above-mentioned Masaya that Friar Blas of Castle lowered a bucket in 1534 in the hope of drawing up molten gold. When he touched the lava the bucket melted and the good friar wrote home: "One cannot behold the volcano without fear, admiration, and repentance of his sins; for it can be surpassed only by eternal fire." At the foot of Mount Masaya is a lake of that name, and near the lake is the little town of Masaya.

Route of Proposed Canal.

Whether a Nicaraguan canal will be built is a question which only the future can answer; but it has been so continuously discussed and its possible site so thoroughly surveyed that the term "Nicaraguan canal route" is easily described. Interest has been reawakened in this route by the recent trouble in Nicaragua.

The Panama canal. If one leaves its locks and small artificial lake out of consideration, may be considered the American Suez; for it is relatively short and direct. The Nicaraguan route—again ignoring locks—must be compared with the Turkish straits; it is relatively long, and has in its course a great natural inland sea, from which narrow shipways are projected.

A Nicaraguan canal would be less a man-made affair than the Panama canal, where at every turn nature had to be thwarted and subdued by engineers. At Panama ships now move

every foot of the interocean way through great ditches that were dug, locks that were built, or a lake that was created by men. The Chagres river was turned aside to make a lake, and even its bed was discarded. If a Nicaraguan canal were built according to existing plans, it would entail much excavation and lock building, but work that nature has already done would be utilized to a marked degree.

From the Atlantic end a canal would have to be excavated, largely through lowlands, for some 50 miles, for the lower reaches of the San Juan river are clogged with sand brought down from the uplands of Costa Rica. Locks would then raise the waterway to the 100-foot level of the lake. Ships would be transferred into the San Juan river, dammed at this point, and would move up its slack water for approximately 45 miles to Lake Nicaragua.

Lake Nicaragua Is Large. This lake is a really large body of water. It is 100 miles long and 45 wide at the broadest point, and is the most extensive body of fresh water in North America south of Lake Michigan. For 70 miles ships would use the waters of Lake Nicaragua. Then would come the descent to the Pacific through a canal and locks covering the dozen miles or more of narrow isthmus that divides the lake from the ocean.

The river and lake portion of the route above the dam, however, would not all be in readiness for use without the expenditure of labor. Of the 45 miles of river 28 would require improvement, while a channel would have to be dredged through a score of miles of the lake near the river outlet where silt has accumulated.

The Pacific side of the canal would present relatively few difficulties. The narrow divide at the point crossed by the canal route rises only 44 feet above the lake level. Altogether the canal route, from deep water to deep water, would be about 180 miles long. The passage of ships would require more than 24 hours as against 12 or more at Panama. Such a canal could be reached on the other hand, more quickly from ports of the United States.

One other contrast exists between the Panama canal and the Nicaraguan route. The former traverses a country of relatively little potential wealth. A canal through Nicaragua would doubtless be a strong factor in the development of that country, opening up its vast forests of both hard and soft woods and tapping its coffee and cacao plantations and its mines. Lake Nicaragua is already an important inland waterway, and near its banks are some of the chief cities of the republic.

Queer Edifice Built by French Postman

In the village of Hauterives, in France, may be seen what is probably the strangest edifice in the world. It was built by F. Cheval, a postman, and represents forty-five years of continuous effort.

Cheval saw a book containing pictures of wonderful mosques, castles and palaces, and decided to erect an edifice of his own. He collected gaily colored stones from a river, boulders, cement and lime and started.

For forty-five years he spent almost the whole of his spare time on his self-imposed task. He put in 70,000 hours upon the building, and used 1,000 cubic feet of stone and 4,000 bags of cement and lime, all purchased from his savings as a postman.

The strange castle he has reared is rectangular in shape and is a conglomeration presenting many different styles of architecture. There are parts of a Swiss chalet, an Algerian house, a feudal castle, a mosque, while other sections of the building are distinctly the builders' own invention. Sculptured animals, birds and giants adorn the various facades.

Knew What He Wanted

While a mother was looking for books for herself at the Shelby street branch library, her two small sons entertained themselves at the children's table looking at picture books.

They were especially interested in a book containing pictures of dogs. The older boy stroked the collie's picture over and over, while the younger one looked on.

Where the mother had her books charged at the desk she beckoned to the boys. The elder one obeyed, but the little fellow protested, saying: "Please, mother, I want to spread the dog."—Indianapolis News.

THE BROKEN EAR

By GEORGE E. COBB

(Copyright, by W. G. Chapman.)

RUFUS BURT was poor, miserably poor. He had a little ten-acre farm and a comfortable house on it, but it was not entirely paid for. Five children, the oldest one fourteen years of age, a boy, Robert, pretty well kept his nose to the grindstone.

With a cheery industrious wife and these five rollicking loving branches, Rufus could not be unhappy long at a time. Once in a while Netta, the mother, lamented that they could not get the burden of debt off their shoulders and enough ahead to give the children a good education. And she used to say:

"Why don't Uncle Zed give up his stony heartedness, with all he's got, and help us a little over the hard places?"

But Uncle Zed Mills, fifty miles away, had long since ceased recognizing his relatives, not even allowing them to visit him. There had been a family feud. Poor Netta was in no way to blame for it, but after a general row far in the past, Uncle Zed had closed his heart and doors to every living relative he had in the world, saying he intended to leave his fortune to charity.

They had heard of the miserly old recluse living in a lonely house all by himself. Near by was the hut of a man named Eli Starkey. This person the hermit hired to attend to his daily wants. He had filled that function for ten years. The last the Burts heard of their relative, he was blind and deaf. Several of his relatives had tried to break in on his solitude, only to be driven away by the three-visaged, implacable Starkey.

"Poorer than ever," announced Rufus one morning, coming in from the barn. "It looks as if misfortune has singled us out particularly."

"What is it, dear?" inquired his wife in her gently anxious way.

"Horse and wagon gone—stolen!" replied Rufus. "Well, I suppose all I can do is to try and get trace of the rig."

Rufus started out. There were guiding hoof marks and wheel tracks across a field and then along an obscure and unfrequented road. Rufus had gone about five miles when he started up with new energy.

"Why, there's the rig," he exclaimed joyfully.

Sure enough, faced in the direction from which he was approaching was old Dobbin. The animal stood by the side of the road unharmed from the vehicle. The wagon itself was stuck in a great muddy rut. A boy about the age of Robert was trying to pry an imprisoned wheel free with a fence rail.

Rufus viewed the lad curiously as he approached. He was a ragged but bright-faced youngster. The way he tolled and perspired at his task rather pleased Rufus. It showed that he was not afraid of work. The lad looked up and suspended his labor as Rufus came up to him.

"Say, mister," he spoke out, "won't you give me a lift here?"

"Well, you're a cool one," ejaculated Rufus. "Do you happen to know who I am?"

"I don't," answered the boy.

"I happen to be the owner of that rig."

"O-h!" observed the lad looking embarrassed and troubled. He hung his head and dug the gaping toe of his poor shoe into the earth. Then he looked up bravely.

"Mister," he said, "I'm sorry and I'm glad, both. I was on my way to take the rig back to you and I had to face you anyhow, so why not now. Maybe you wouldn't feel hard against me if you knew why I borrowed the rig."

"Borrowed" is good, rather," quizzically suggested Rufus.

"I'm going to pay you for the use of the horse and wagon," said the boy quickly and earnestly. "For the damage I've done to it, too. Not in money, for I haven't any, but in work. Yes, sir, I'll make it up to you, sure."

"What were you doing with it anyway?" inquired Rufus, but the boy shook his head obstinately.

"I musn't tell," he insisted. "No harm, mister, you can count on that. When I'm all square with you, maybe I'll tell you, but all I want you to think of just now, is how I can work out my debt to you."

Rufus studied the lad curiously. He asked him a few questions and learned that his name was Barton Hale. He supposed the bandage covering one ear and the side of his face was occasioned by a toothache and did not press him with inquiries.

They got the wagon out of the rut and started for home.

"You go into the kitchen," advised Rufus when they reached the little farm, "and get a meal. You look as if you needed it."

"Yes, sir, I do," replied his guest, humbly and gratefully. He acted like a new being after a hearty lunch prepared by motherly, smiling Mrs. Burt.

Rufus put him at chopping wood and he did it with a will. Then there was a field of hay to rake up. The lad seemed actually to enjoy the task. Rufus was telling him how his wife had fixed up a cot for him in the attic and hinted at hiring him permanently, when Robert dashed by on his way from school.

"Why, what's the matter?" inquired

Rufus, as he noticed the lad staring open-eyed after Robert.

"Is that your boy?" asked the companion in a strangely quivering tone.

"That's right," was the prompt reply.

"Half of one of his ears is gone, isn't it?"

"Yes—had it frozen when he was a little kid."

"See here."

To the amazement of Rufus the lad removed the bandage about his head. There was the perfect prototype of Robert's distinguishing mark—half an ear.

"Why—why, what does this mean?" demanded the bewildered Rufus.

"I didn't know myself till just this moment," replied the lad. "You called that boy Robert. It gave me a clue, Listen, sir."

Then the lad told a strange, strange story. Two years previously he had lost his father and mother. He was stranded on the world with two little sisters. The careless fling of a scythe had severed his ear. That accounted for the disfigurement.

He happened to wander with the little ones near the home of Eli Starkey. That individual immediately took a peculiar interest in him. He offered to give him a home and the little ones as well. Starkey took the lad to see blind, deaf old Zed Mills. The latter felt over his head and located the broken ear. That seemed to identify some one to him. Before the family quarrel the old man had taken a great fancy to Robert. Undoubtedly he had asked Starkey to bring Robert Burt to him. Starkey had substituted the other lad, in order that the money Mills regularly gave might not slip through his fingers.

"I knew there was a mystery, maybe fraud," explained the boy. "Besides, Starkey began to abuse the little ones. So I ran away. They gave me out on the jaunt and I used your wagon to get them to an orphan asylum. I put on that bandage to hide my broken ear, for I feared Starkey might try to find me. Oh, how strange things have turned out!"

They turned out grandly for the Burts, for the real Robert was taken by his father to Mr. Mills and Starkey exposed and a reconciliation took place.

And, amid their new fortune, the Burts invited the strange lad and his little sisters to make their permanent home in their happy midst.

Scientists Now Turn

Out Fabricated Sponge

Sponges always have played an important part in the science, practice or art (whichever you choose to call it) of cleansing. The word sponge has come to have a wider significance than it used to have.

Formerly a sponge was a sponge. There was just one kind and it came from the bottom of the sea. There were little ones and big ones—there the classification ended.

Now there are more than a score of so-called sponges; many of them fabricated. Some of the artificial sponges, according to Jay H. Zuecker, who is connected with a chemical manufacturing company, are made of wool. The most important in the artificial group are the rubber sponges.

The softest natural sponges come from Cuban waters, Mediterranean "sheepswool" sponges and "elephant ears" are among the larger types. In the sponge family also come grasses that are used for cleansing, the Florida anelote and Florida wire grass.

Geographical Points

The geological survey says that the easternmost point of the United States is West Quoddy head, near Eastport, Maine. The westernmost point is Cape Alva, Wash. From West Quoddy head due west to the Pacific ocean the distance is 2,607 miles. The southernmost point of the mainland is Cape Sable, Fla., 49 miles farther south than the most southern point in Texas. From the southernmost point due north to the forty-ninth parallel, the boundary between the United States and Canada, the distance is 1,508 miles.

When Wilson Walked Floor

While Woodrow Wilson was a professor of history and political economy at Wesleyan university from 1888 to 1890, his daughter, Eleanor, now Mrs. William G. McAldoo, was born. One morning not many months after her birth Professor Wilson entered the history class with a sleepy look on his face and prefaced his lecture with the remark:

"Gentlemen, if I do not lecture with my wonted brilliancy today, it is because since three o'clock this morning I have been walking the floor with my baby."

Famous Summer Resorts

The Thousand Islands are a collection of small islands, numbering about 1,700, situated in an expansion of the St. Lawrence river, about 40 miles long and from 4 to 7 miles wide, between Ontario, Canada, and Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties, New York. They are favorite resorts for summer tourists on account of their picturesque beauty. Many are private property and contain the summer homes of wealthy Americans and Canadians.

When to Laugh

Get all you can out of life with good health, good conduct and good work. But when a laugh isn't due, don't laugh. I knew a man once who lost an important promotion because he was too much devoted to sunshine on cloudy days. Don't be merry when other things are clearly indicated.—E. W. Howe's Monthly.

Improved Uniform International Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

(© 1927, Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for February 20

SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH.

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 5:13-16; Acts 2:42-47.

GOLDEN TEXT—We are laborers together with God.—1 Cor. 3:9.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Praising God in Church.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Serving in the Church.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Meaning of Church Membership.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Living and Working Together in the Church.

There is an utter lack of connection between the subject chosen by the lesson committee and the passages of Scripture selected. The first exhibits the responsibilities of the subjects of the Messiah's kingdom, and the second pictures the graces which were upon the members of the primitive church. Definite recognition should be given this in our interpretation of the passages.

I. The Responsibilities of the Subjects of Messiah's Kingdom—(Matt. 5:13-16).

The whole mass of mankind is shown in the Scriptures to be corrupt—the whole world in moral and spiritual darkness. It is the high privilege and solemn responsibility of the subjects of the kingdom to exert a saving and uplifting influence on the world in which they live. They are to live such lives as to purify and enlighten. This can only be done in the measure that they personally know Jesus Christ, the King, and strive to make known His glory and power to others.

1. "Ye are the salt of the earth" (v. 13).

The properties of salt are: (1) Penetrating. This means that the disciples must not separate themselves from the world, but thrust themselves into its activities. Salt must be brought into contact with the substance to be affected by it.

(2) Purifying. The influence of the disciples of Christ is to uplift and purify.

(3) Preserving. Salt has the tendency to arrest decay. The influence of believers tends to save the world from perishing in its own vices.

2. "Ye are the light of the world" (v. 14).

Light illuminates and warms. In order to perform its mission, light must not be hidden. The city built on a hill was not intended to be hid. This world is dark and cold. Many are the pitfalls and snares set by the devil. Believers in Christ should so live that the unwary ones be kept from falling into them.

II. Characteristics of the Primitive Church (Acts 2:42-47).

The behavior of the members of the early church was as marvelous as their gifts of speaking with tongues and performing mighty miracles. It was the result of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

1. They sought instruction from those who knew the Lord (v. 42).

This is always so. The unerring mark of the spirit-filled believer is eagerness to receive instruction from those who have been taught by the Lord.

2. They abode in fellowship with one another (v. 42).

Spirit-filled believers have an affection for their kind.

3. They observed the memorial sacrament of Christ's death (v. 42).

Those who have entered into fellowship with Christ will faithfully observe this memorial.

4. They continued in prayer (v. 42).

A sure mark of the spirit-filled believer is a life of prayer.

5. They were together (v. 44).

This unity was the result of their having been baptized into the one body of which Christ is head (1 Cor. 12:13).

6. They had a community of goods (vv. 44, 45).

They sold their possessions and distributed them to all men as they had need. This proves that they were under the power of the supernatural. It is not a natural thing for one to abandon his title to earthly possessions.

7. They were filled with gladness and singleness of heart (v. 46).

Those who are really born from above are filled with great joy and will devote themselves to the doing of good to others.

8. Praising God and having favor with all the people (v. 47).

Such unselfishness gained the attention of the people and induced them to yield themselves to God and such as were being saved were added unto them.

Fullness of the Spirit

God cannot give fullness of the Spirit to him who does not have such fullness of trust as to yield his life to Him.—Echoes.

Self-Will

The queer thing about self-will is that it kills the very thing its wants—freedom.—Southern Methodist.

Christ Opens the Door

Christ opens the only door for the ascent of man.—Southern Methodist.

Adrift With Humor

A HAPPY ENDING

It was their first quarrel, and it lasted longer than post-honeymoon spats generally do. But finally it was over, and the wife was confiding to a friend:

"It was terrible while it lasted," she said, "but it was worth it. Just look at the fur piece John gave me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the friend, surveying the gift, "a cloud with a silver fox lining."

SHE OUGHT TO KNOW



Wife—John, in the use of English what does the Active Voice mean?

Hubby—Great heavens, don't you know?

Old and New Troubles

Grim trouble lasteth but a day. Cheer up! Cheer up, ye blue ones. Your sorrows soon will pass away. And then you'll have some new ones.

A Wise Choice

"I will grant you one wish," said the good fairy.

"Can you make me a millionaire?" asked the youth.

"I can, but with the usual accompaniments of dyspepsia, worry over your investments, indigestion over your income tax and that tired feeling."

"Glumme a ticket to the football game," exclaimed the youth, "and call it square."

Practical Accomplishment

A pacifistic gentleman stopped to try to settle a juvenile row.

"My boy," he said to one of the combatants, "do you know what the Good Book says about fighting?"

"Aw!" snorted the youth, "fightin' ain't one of them things you kin get out of a book, mister."—American Legion Weekly.

A Quick One

"And how long were you engaged to Fiffne?"

"I don't know—I forgot to look at my watch."—Buen Humor, Madrid.

Precious

Stock Clerk—Why do you say your pay envelope reminds you of a map? Delivery Man—Because it's all the world to me.—Good Hardware.

NOT FOR A LUNCH



Hobo—Will you give me a quarter for a little lunch, madam?

Stout Female Party—I'm reducing, my man, and couldn't think of eating a lunch.

Bull Creek Pleases

I've never seen the ocean. I've never seen the sea. Just livin' down on Bull creek, is good enough for me.

Wanted Specific Charge

Lawyer—You say your wife has received a letter informing her of some misdeed in your past. Perhaps the best thing would be to confess.

Client—I would, but I don't know what to confess. She won't let me see the letter.

Descriptive

Hardware Merchant—I slept like a log last night.

His Wife—Yes—a log with a saw going through it.—Good Hardware.

Their Difference

Mary—I like the dean better than I do the bishop.

Mother—Why, Mary?

"Well, the dean says, 'Finally,' and stops; but the bishop says 'Lastly'—and lasts."

Boorish!