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ABOUT
COSTA RICA
1916



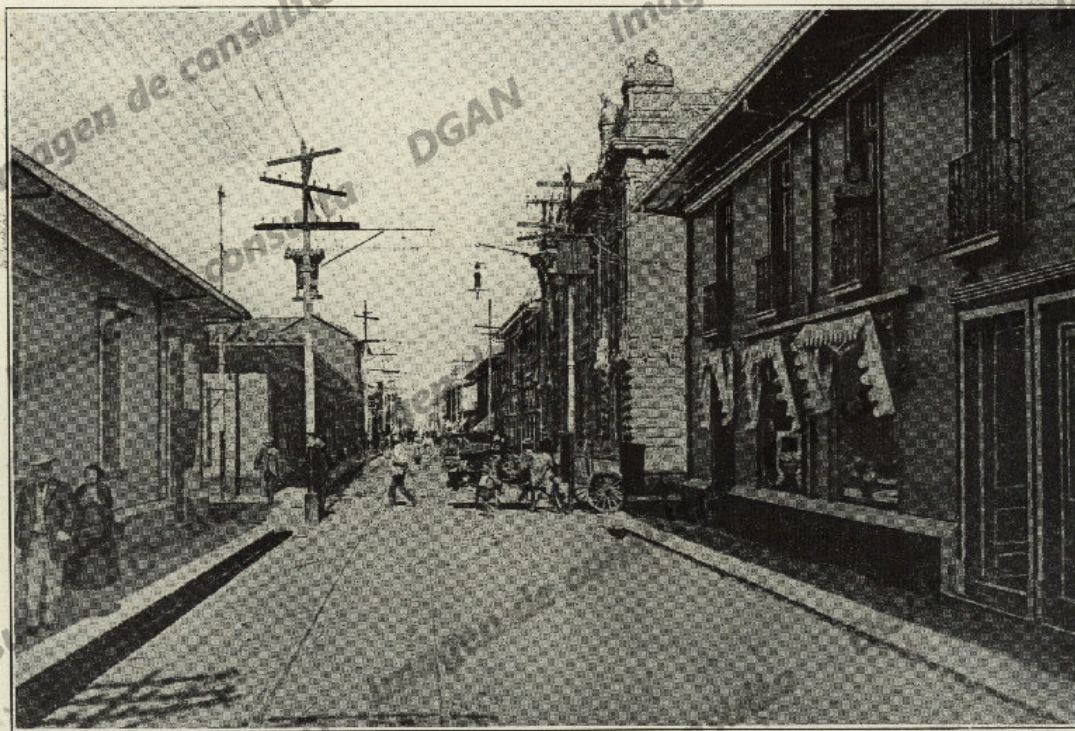
President of Costa Rica and Members of the Costa Rican Congress.

No. 1. President Alfredo Gonzalez.

No. 2. President of Congress Maximo Fernandez.



Another photograph showing Members of the Costa Rican Congress.
No. 1. President of Congress Maximo Fernandez



CENTRAL AVENUE, SAN JOSE.



COSTA RICA FINE COTTON TREES
5 TO 8 FEET HIGH - 5 MONTHS FROM PLANTING SEED

TWO BALES LINT COTTON PER ACRE

For forty years I have made a special study of Governments and compared nations and civilizations. Twenty-five years ago, I thought the Province of Ontario, Dominion of Canada, had, all in all, the most satisfactory government of any community in the world, everything considered. I have been to Switzerland many times, studying the government of its cantons with their laws and their effect on civilization. Perhaps, everything told, the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, has the most satisfactory government to be found. The result of its government on its people is such that I come to this conclusion. On the 29th day of April, 1916, I sailed for the Republic of Costa Rica on the United Fruit Line Steamer, Calamares of The Great White Fleet, a stop in Havana long enough for a visit, another at Colon, enabling me to see our great canal, and on Wednesday morning, the 10th of May, our ship tied up at the dock at Port Limon, in a short time we were riding over the Northern Railroad, owned by the United Fruit Co., from the Caribbean Sea to San Jose, the capitol of the Costa Rican Republic. This is a railroad ride that surpasses in scenery any railroad trip I have ever taken. I have crossed the Alps in various places and the Rockies. I have admired the magnificent scenery of the railroad between Denver and Salt Lake, but never have I seen anything that seemed to me to equal the scenery of the road between Port Limon and San Jose. It alone would repay the trouble and expense to anyone who had the time to visit it. The city of San Jose is the capitol of the Costa Rican Republic, which lies between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The nation has about 450,000 citizens. At the last presidential election, Dec. 7, 1913, there was polled 65,170 votes divided between three parties. The Republican party led by Maximo Fernandez polled 29,228 votes. The Duranistas, so named because they voted for Dr. Duran, polled 19,277 votes. The Yglesiasistas, so called because they voted for ex-president Yglesias polled 17,215.

In the Biennial Congressional election last held at which half of the Congress was elected, to wit, twenty-two members, the Republican party led by Maximo Fernandez elected twenty members of Congress and the opposition two. The president of the country, Alfredo Gonzalez, is a young man, thirty-nine years of age, a member of the Republican party, speaks English well, having spent some time studying in England and has also been in the United States. He is an able, sincere man, much devoted to the welfare of his country. The president of the Congress, Maximo Fernandez, the leader of the Republican party, strikes me as being one of the ablest men I have ever met. He makes one think of Richard Croker, and a side view of his face has a Matthew Stanley Quay expression.

The president said to me, "We have fourteen hundred school teachers and two hundred soldiers, we have bands, schools and music, peace, prosperity and order, never war, never revolutions. There are seven ex-presidents of Costa Rica and all of them working for a living. We have no rich, retired office holders," and after twenty-five days' study of Costa Rican life, I came to believe he spoke the truth, and to the conclusion that I never saw a higher civilization anywhere than I saw in Costa Rica, except as to the financial condition. Over ninety-eight per cent. of the people are educated.

The country is on a gold basis, the par value of the monetary unit, the Colon, is $46\frac{1}{2}$ c. American gold, but the average value while I was there was about 40c., because of the rate of exchange. One thing Costa Rica needs more than any other is the assistance of American bankers, enabling it to keep its exchange at par. This is true from the commercial and business standpoint for both their country and ours.

San Jose with its suburbs has a population of about 50,000, is thirty-eight hundred feet high, never hot, never cold. It has fine water works, good sewers, and a good electric light system. The water works are owned by the municipality, the

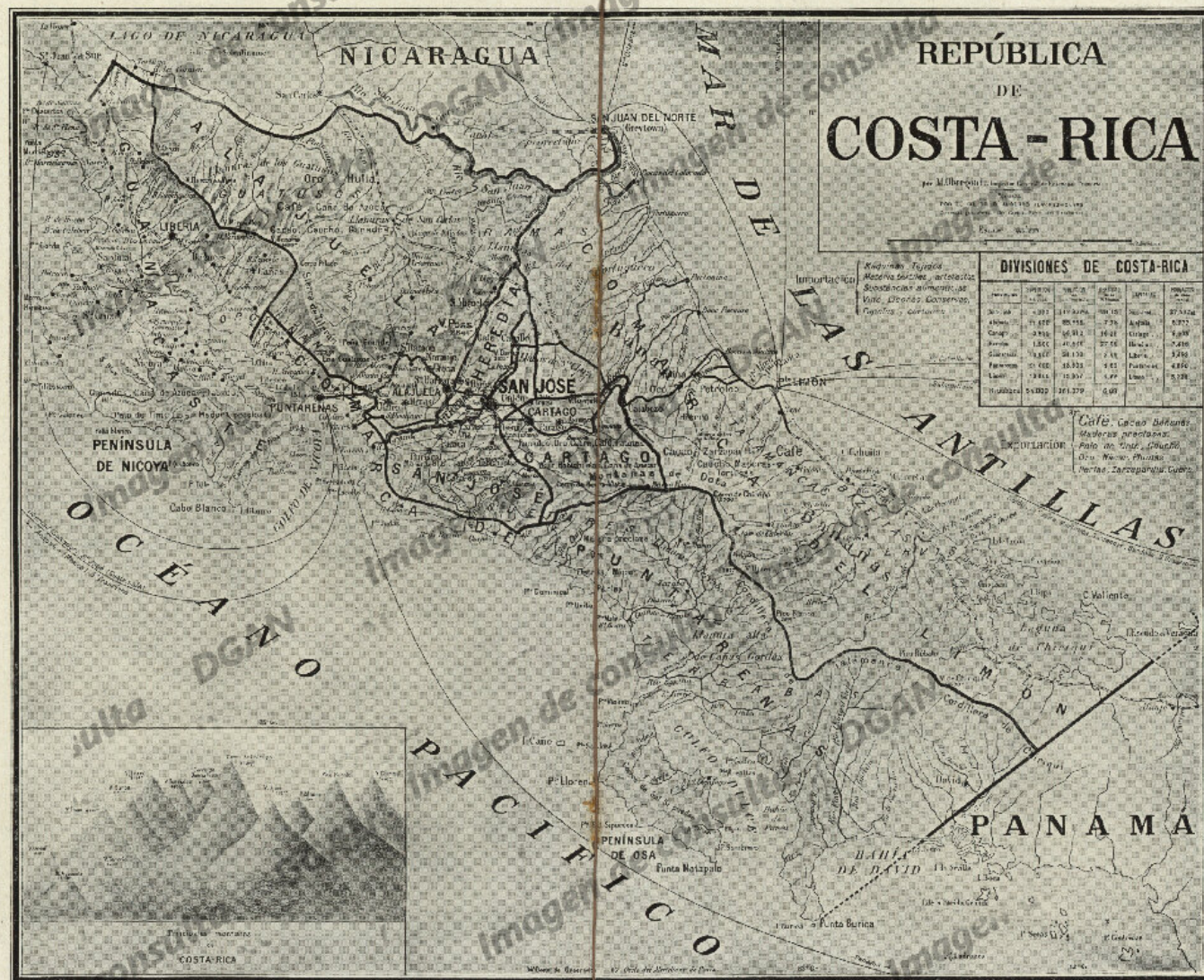
electric plants are privately owned. Its streets need paving very badly, they are too rough to ride over with any comfort. The National Theatre is said to be the third best in the world; it is a magnificent building. The shops on Central Avenue, San Jose, are as fine in quality as any in the world. In that respect, they have no superior. The Hall of Congress is a very fine room. A single chamber constitutes the Legislative body and they tell me that they are entirely satisfied with the form of Government. I found the best system of land titles there probably in the world and a farmers' bank system that can be a model for United States to follow. I saw as fine a company of boy scouts as you would see anywhere in the world and heard the Salvation Army singing in one of the parks one evening. There is absolute religious freedom. They have as fine music as you would hear anywhere. In one of the cafes I heard as fine classical music as it seems I have ever heard in my life. In the twenty-five days I was in San Jose, I never saw a man intoxicated or being arrested, or any noise or disturbance. I expect at times they may have some, but these occasions are very rare.

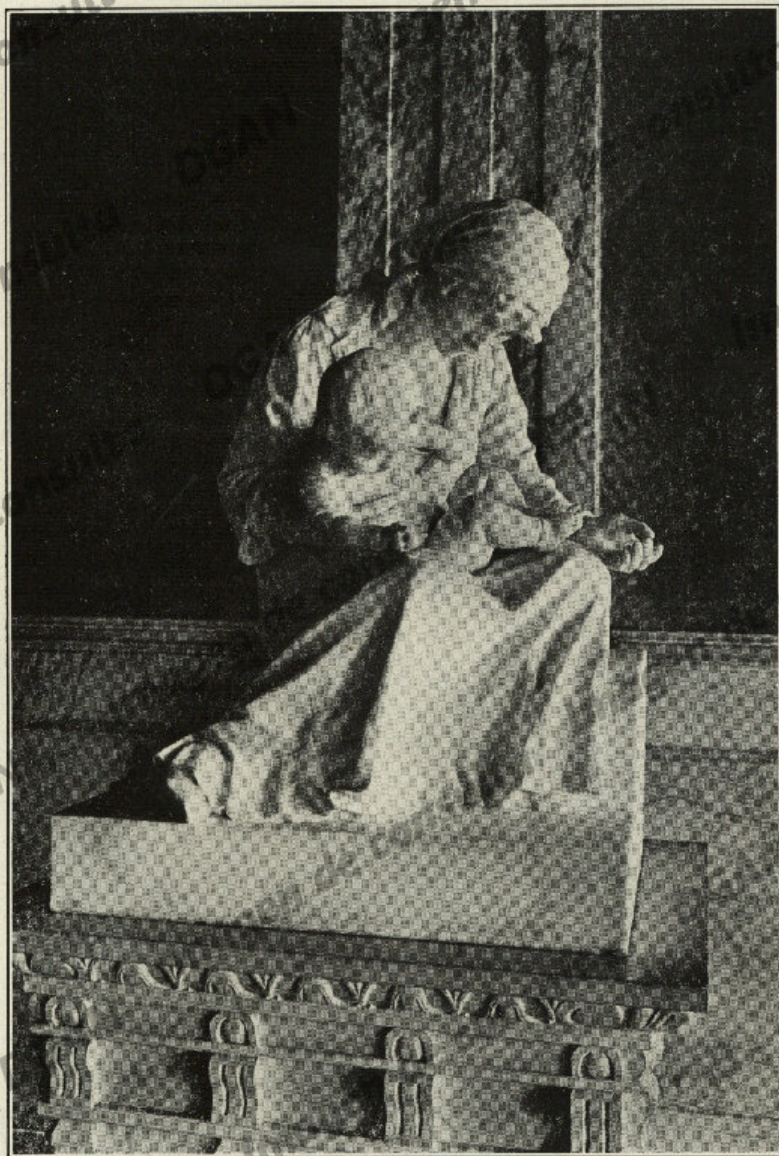
The horses of Costa Rica average thirteen hands to thirteen and one-half hands high, and have an average value of \$75. They are mostly used for horse-back riding, draying being done by oxen with small ox two-wheel carts. The price of cows in Costa Rica are from \$35 to \$50. The great resources of Costa Rica are in the agricultural lands, crops grow spontaneously. The finest cotton in the world will grow there, two bales per acre. Coffee is indigenous to the soil and is one of the principal productions; Costa Rican is pronounced as the finest by experts. Bananas are raised largely by the United Fruit Co. on the Atlantic Coast side. The total value of bananas annually exported is \$5,000,000, coffee \$4,000,000.

One of the great attractions to the tourists is the Poas Volcano, about 15 miles from Alajuela on horse-back. Alajuela is 10 miles from San Jose by railroad. On the trip to the volcano, some of the most wonderful views in the world are seen. It is always active. The mouth of the crater is about 100 hectares and the bottom about 8 hectares. In the bottom there is a deposit of sulphur water that looks like creamy milk, near the volcano there is a lake of sweet, pure, clear, cold water about 30 hectares. In the opera house carved out of Carrara Marble is one of the finest pieces of work I have ever seen, made by a native Costa Rican, named Juan Ramon Bonilla, of a mother and child. I have named it "Souls in Marble." The sculptor should be in some great capitol making beautiful creations for the world. The cathedral is a very stately building and the Episcopalians have a neat little church. No better trip in the world can be made than a trip to San Jose on the ships of The Great White Fleet, whose service is very fine and whose officers are very excellent and very efficient indeed. A trip from Port Limon to San Jose and the volcano will pay any American and the revelation which will be given him of Costa Rican civilization will be wonderfully instructive. This little country stands like a monument of order, peace and contentment on the Cordilleras. The United States of America and the Costa Rican Republic should be the best of friends and have the closest relations with each other, not as strong brother and weak member of the family of nations, but because their civilization is the most perfect of all the nations, south of the British American line, in America.

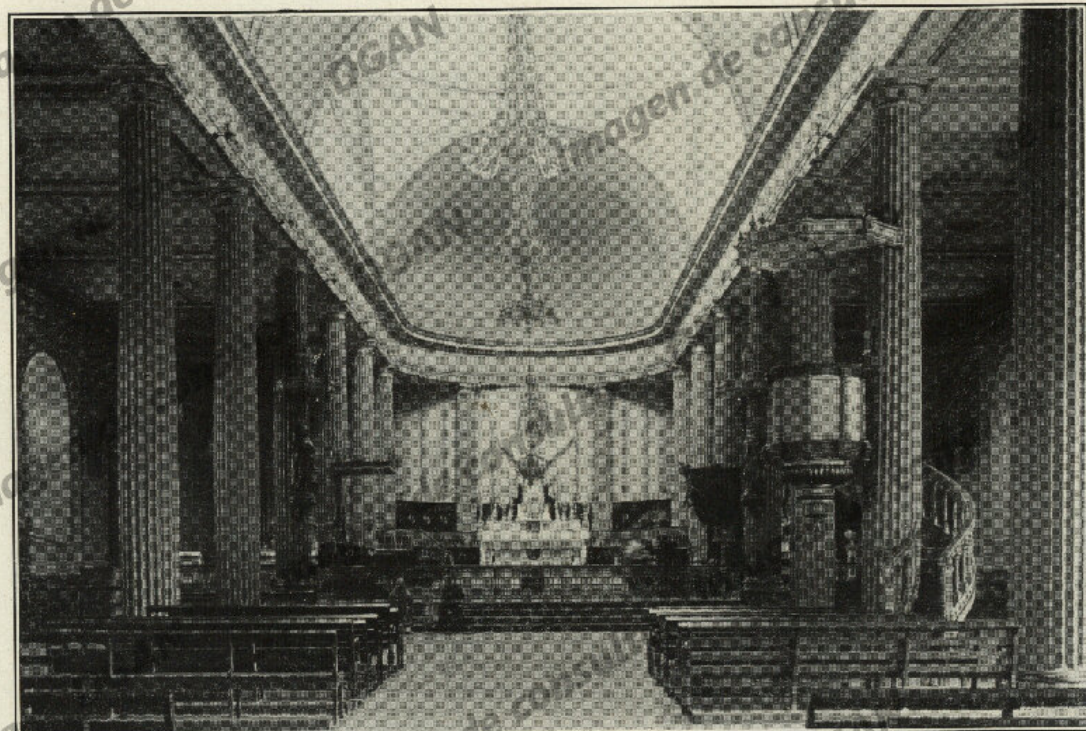
The Great White Fleet has weekly sailings for Costa Rica from New York and New Orleans. Only twelve hours from Costa Rica to the Panama Canal.

—AMASA THORNTON.





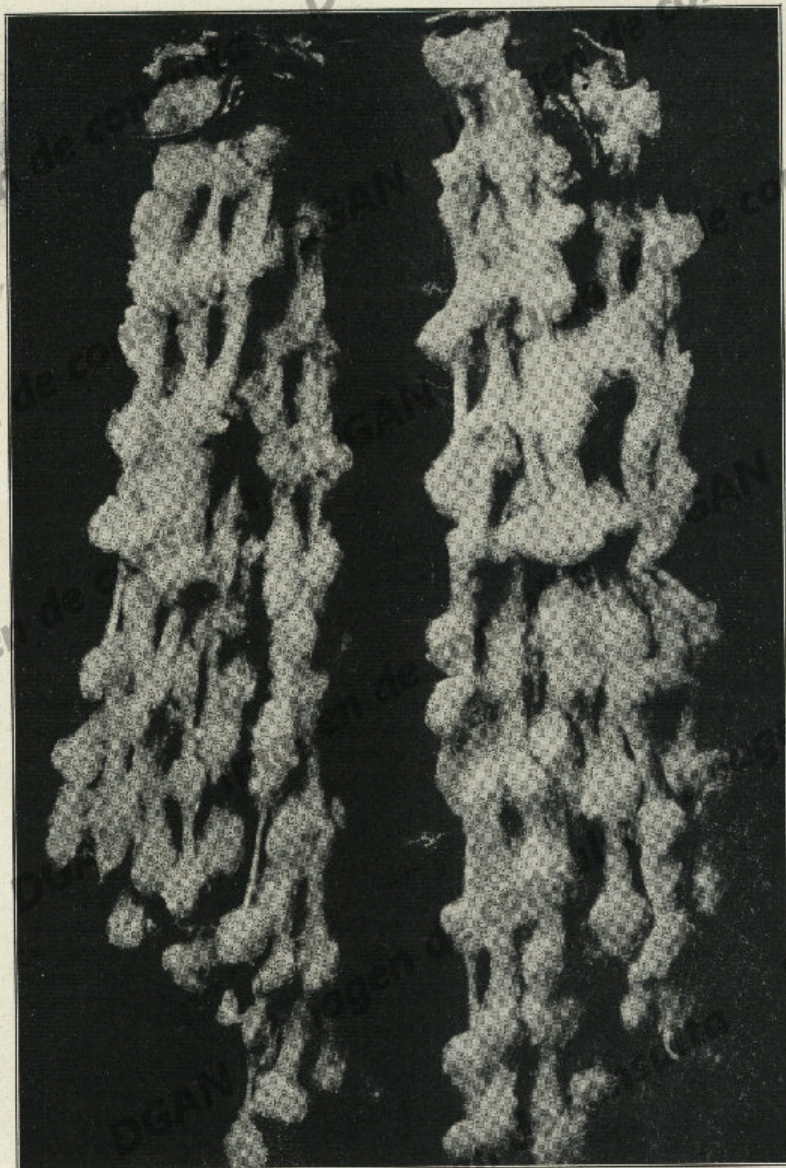
"SOULS IN MARBLE"
By Bonilla, National Theatre.



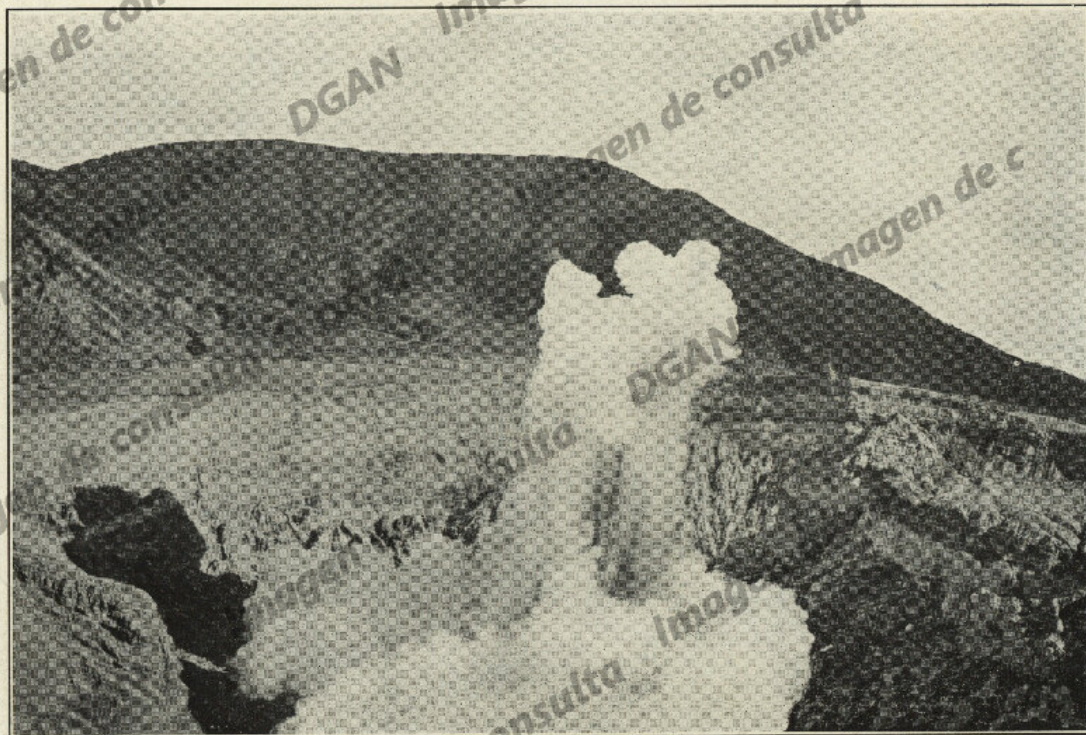
INTERIOR OF CATHEDRAL, SAN JOSE



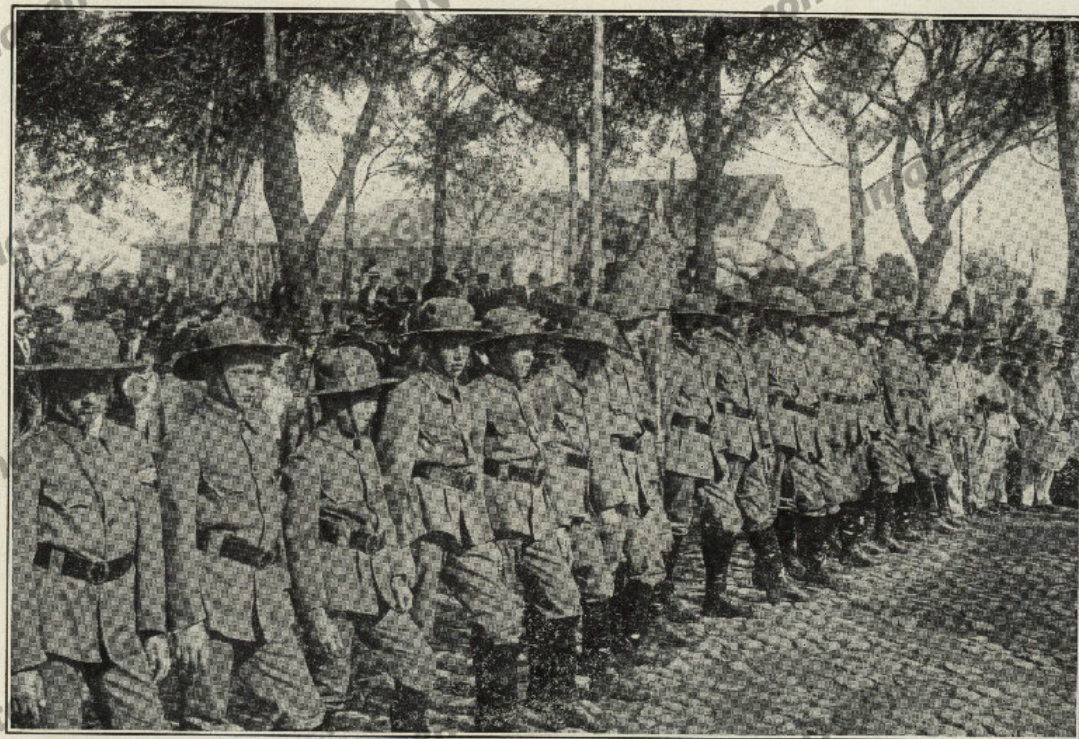
NATIONAL THEATRE, SAN JOSE.



COSTA RICA CULTIVATED COTTON
Less than half actual size.



VOLCANO "POAS"



SAN JOSE BOY SCOUTS

THE CLIMATE OF COSTA RICA IS ONE OF THE
FINEST IN THE WORLD.

Where Crops ripen the whole year round.

Where frequently there are two and three crops per annum.

Where Coconuts often weigh 3 lbs. each without the husk, and in many instances the trees yield over 100 nuts per annum.

Where Cotton yields over 2,000 bolls per tree, and 2,000 lbs. and upwards, of very fine long staple Cotton per acre, value 30 cents (U.S.A.), and over, per lb.

Where Coconuts, Cocoa, Coffee, Bananas, Rubber, Sugar Cane, Tobacco, and all tropical produce will grow more luxuriantly and yield greater quantities and higher qualities than in any other part of the world.

Where the rainfall is ample, yet gentle and regular.

Where there is neither frost nor drought to contend with.

Where Cyclones and Blizzards are absolutely unknown.

Where Labour is plentiful at reasonable rates.

Where there is a direct communication and easy transit to all the leading markets of the world.