

# SCIENCE

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## COSTA RICA AT THE EXPOSITION.

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THE visitor in the Anthropological Building experienced a real delight and relief in coming upon the exhibit from Costa Rica. The displays in its neighborhood (from Mexico, Brazil and Paraguay) contained much of interest, but were inartistic and lacking in unity. The Costa Rica exhibit was in some ways a model.

The pavilion itself is quaint and attractive. A space of perhaps fifty feet by thirty is enclosed by a rather high board wall. Two doorways, facing each other, are in the middle of the longer sides. These doorways reproduce ancient flat-topped stone arches, decorated at their top corners with coarsely carved heads and squat figures. Large oil paintings hang on the external walls, one on each side of each doorway. They are set in wide gilded frames which are decorated with fret patterns copied from the stone ruins of Central America at the sides, while the upper border consists of enlargements copied from the grotesque bird and other figurines of gold which are found in the ancient graves. The pictures represent: (a) an Indian hut from Talamanca, (b) a view on the Uren River, (c) a chief's summer hut, in the Suerre Valley, dating back to 1544, (d) an Indian hut in San Bernardo, Sipurio, Uren Valley.

Entering the pavilion the visitor finds at the middle of the narrower sides gilded medallions, one of Vasquez de Coronado, the other of Isabel la Catolica. Each is the centre of a trophy composed of spears, bows, drums, nettings and fabrics of the modern Indians of Costa Rica. Upright frames, copper bronzed, with ornamentation derived from the old figurines contain full length and about life-size paintings of (a) a Talamanca Indian, with necklace of teeth, red ribbon hair-band, staff and breech-clout; (b) a Talamanca Indian woman with a little boy standing by her: the child is naked, while the woman wears a narrow red ribbon in her hair, a necklace of narrow strands, and a skirt cloth about her waist; (c) Indian of Guatuso, seated on a stone with hands on knees and wearing a breech-clout; (d) an Indian woman of Guatuso with waist cloth and cap. On the broader walls are also pictures, in horizontal frames, green bronzed and with ornamental patterns of frets and figurines. These pictures are in pairs, are on each side of each doorway and represent old Guetar graves, walled up with either rough rounded stones or narrow slabs. The details of construction are shown and the methods of archaeological exploration. All of these oil paintings are by one artist—S. Llorente. The pavilion containing four handsome upright cases of oak, with plate glass doors, constructed for display on all four sides, and with a crimson or maroon background. In these and in flat cases about the sides of the pavilion is a choice series of archaeological specimens. Objects too large for the cases are arranged on individual supports in various parts of the room.

The ancient art of Costa Rica is very near, if not identical, to that of Chiriqui, so well described by Mr. Holmes. In the series here shown there are many *metates* or stones on which corn is ground. Some of these appear to be quite recent and are no doubt used by the present Indians. They are made from a grayish, porous, volcanic rock, and usually present a rounded cornered, slightly basined, squarish upper surface, on which the grinding is done, supported by queer animal carv-

ings. Stools of similar material are numerous. These present fairly flat wind tops, supported by a carved openwork base, in geometrical patterns or representing animals; sometimes a band about the upper edge is carved with a line of faces or grotesque heads. Very common are human heads, carved in the volcanic material, displaying considerable variety in feature, and some with tattooed patterns on the cheeks, or with headdresses. Less common, apparently, are the heads of mammalia, some of them admirably done. Full length human figures, about a foot in length, representing both sexes, the sexual organs being, at times, strongly marked, are not uncommon. These are commonly in the same position, the hands stiffly clasped upon the waist, the arms to the elbows closely against the sides. Yet more numerous are the quaint little figures, some six to ten inches high, squatting, with knees drawn up in front and the elbows resting on these. In some cases both hands are held to the chin or mouth; in others one hand is at the mouth and the other is on the knee. In almost, if not quite, all of these the head is exaggeratedly long and frequently bears a headdress or curious hair arrangement. Many hold a somewhat long cylindrical or barrel-shaped object to the mouth, with one or both hands. This object resembles somewhat an ear of corn, but the Costa Rica archaeologists, I believe, consider it a cigar. In the flat cases is a large series of celts, or polished stone blades, mostly of the usual Antillean or Central American type. Many more special forms of stone objects might be mentioned, but we must pass to the fine series of pottery.

Here there are vases and jars of many forms in colors, commonly red or brown. Some are painted, others decorated with grotesque animal or human devices in relief; others quite plain. Many of the jars are tripod supported, and the legs are frequently hollow and with a little rattling ball of clay inside. Terra cotta whistles are plentiful—some simple, some in bird forms, some human figurines. Among these last are a few elaborate female figures, several inches high, with a considerable number of apertures to give a range of notes. Some plain ones are distinctly *ocarinas*. Rare, apparently, are the terra cotta rattles, copied after gourd rattles, and body and handle made in one piece. Very numerous are the little, flat, round, spoon-shaped censers, with handles wonderfully varied in ornamentation. Scores of pottery rings, like napkin rings, contracted usually about a middle zone, are plain, incised, or decorated with reliefs. In all the pottery, and of course we have not mentioned all the variety, there is similarity or identity with the Chiriqui work described by Mr. Holmes.

We find the same identity in the gold figurines, a fair series of which are displayed in two little wall frames. There are quaint and grotesque figures of birds, beasts, frogs and nondescripts. With these are a few of the little bronze bells (something like sleigh bells) and some thin, rather broad disks of gold, three of them with designs worked out upon them.

It must be plain to the readers that the little republic has done herself credit. The exhibit was at Madrid last year, and there an excellent catalog in Spanish was printed. The collection is displayed by the *Museo Nacional de Costa Rica*. Space does not permit tracing the history of this young institution, but we must say that the credit of the present exposition on its behalf is in large part due to three gentlemen: J. Arellano, M. M. de Peralta and A. Alfaro.