

Argentina from a British Point of View eBook

Argentina from a British Point of View

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IMMIGRATION RETURNS 2

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Value in L sterling of the total exports of Argentina, 1900-09 22

ARGENTINA FROM A BRITISH POINT OF VIEW.

Argentina, which does not profess to be a manufacturing country, exported in 1909 material grown on her own lands to the value of L79,000,000, and imported goods to the extent of L60,000,000. This fact arrests our attention, and forces us to recognise that there is a trade balance of nearly 20 millions sterling in her favour, and to realise the saving power of the country.

It is not mere curiosity which prompts us to ask: "Are these L79,000,000 worth of exports of any value to us? Do we consume any of them? Do we manufacture any of them? And do we send any of this same stuff back again after it has been dealt with by our British artisans?" It would be difficult to follow definitely any one article, but upon broad lines the questions are simple and can be easily answered. Amongst the agricultural exports we find wheat, oats, maize, linseed, and flour. The value placed upon these in 1908 amounted to L48,000,000, and England pays for and consumes nearly 42 per cent. of these exports. Other goods, such as frozen beef, chilled beef, mutton, pork, wool, and articles which may be justly grouped as the results of the cattle and sheep industry, amounted to no less a figure than L23,000,000. All these exports represent foodstuffs or other necessities of life, and are consumed by those nations which do not produce enough from their own soil to keep their teeming populations. Another export which is worthy of particular mention comes from the forests, viz., quebracho, which, in the form of logs and extract, was exported in 1908 to the value of L1,200,000. The value of material of all sorts sent from England to Argentina in 1908 was L16,938,872 (this figure includes such things as manufactured woollen goods, leather goods, oils, and paints), therefore it is clear that we have, and must continue to take, a practical and financial interest in the welfare and prosperity of Argentina.

New countries cannot get on without men willing and ready to exploit Nature's gifts, and, naturally, we look to the immigration returns when considering Argentina's progress. To give each year's return for the last 50 years would be wearisome, but, taking the average figures for ten-year periods from 1860 to 1909, we have the following interesting table. (The figures represent the balance of those left in the country after allowing for emigration):—



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Yearly Average.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|---------|
| From 1860 to 1869 (inclusive) | ... | 15,044 |
| " 1870 " 1879 " | ... | 29,462 |
| " 1880 " 1889 " | ... | 84,586 |
| " 1890 " 1899 " | ... | 43,618 |
| " 1900 " 1909 " | ... | 100,998 |

Sixty-five per cent. of the immigrants are agricultural labourers, who soon find work in the country, and again add their quota to the increasing quantity and value of materials to be exported. Facing this page is a diagram of the Immigration Returns from 1857 to 1909.

Nature has been lavish in her gifts to Argentina, and man has taken great advantage of these gifts. My desire now is to show what has been done in the way of developing agriculture in this richly-endowed country during the last fifty years. One name which should never be forgotten in Argentina is that of William Wheelwright, whose entrance into active life in Buenos Aires was not particularly dignified; in 1826 he was shipwrecked at the mouth of the River Plate, and struggled on barefooted, hatless and starving to the small town of Quilmes.

[Illustration: *Diagram of immigration returns.*

Note:—In the years 1888, 1889 & 1890 the Argentine government assisted passages.]

Mr. Wheelwright was an earnest and far-seeing man, and his knowledge of railways in the United States helped him to realise their great possibilities in Argentina; but, strange to say, upon his return to his native land he could not impress any of those men who afterwards became such great "Railway Kings" in the U.S.A. Failing to obtain capital for Argentine railway development in his own country, Wheelwright came to England, and interested Thomas Brassey, whose name was then a household word amongst railway pioneers. These two men associated themselves with Messrs. Ogilvie & Wythes, forming themselves into the firm of Brassey, Ogilvie, Wythes & Wheelwright, whose first work was the building of a railway 17,480 kilometres long between Buenos Aires and Quilmes in 1863; afterwards they built the line from Rosario to Cordova, which is embodied to-day in the Central Argentine Railway. Other railways were projected, and this policy of progress and extension of the steel road still holds good in Argentina.

The year 1857 saw the first railway built, from Buenos Ayres to Flores, 5,879 kilometres long; in 1870 there were 457 miles of railroad; in 1880 the railways had increased their mileage to 1,572; in 1890 Argentina possessed 5,895 miles of railway, and in 1900 there were 10,352 miles.



The rapid increase in railway mileage during the last nine years is as follows:—

In 1901 there were 10,565 miles of railway. " 1902 " " 10,868 " " " 1903 " " 11,500 " " " "
1904 " " 12,140 " " " " 1905 " " 12,370 " " " " 1906 " " 12,850 " " " " 1907 " " 13,829 " " " "
1908 " " 14,825 " " " " 1909 " " 15,937[A]" " "

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12,000 of which are owned by English companies, representing a capital investment of L170,000,000.

In other words, for the last forty years Argentina has built railways at the rate of over a mile a day, and in 1907, 1908, and 1909 her average rate per day was nearly three miles. This means that owing to the extension of railways during this last year alone, over a million more acres of land could have been given up to the plough if suitable for the cultivation of corn.

When William Wheelwright first visited Argentina it was little more than an unknown land, whose inhabitants had no ambition, and no desire to acquire wealth—except at the expense of broken heads. There was a standard of wealth, but it lay in the number of cattle owned; land was of little value, save for feeding cattle, and therefore counted for naught, but cattle could be boiled down for tallow; bones and hides were also marketable commodities; the man, therefore, who possessed cattle possessed wealth.

The opening out of the country by railways soon changed the aspect of affairs. The man who possessed cattle was no longer considered the rich man; it was he who owned leagues of land upon which wheat could be grown who became the potentially rich man; he, by cutting up his land and renting it to the immigrants, who were beginning to flock in in an endless stream to the country, found that riches were being accumulated for him without much exertion on his part. He took a risk inasmuch as he received payment in kind only. Therefore, when the immigrants did well, so did he, and as many thousands of immigrants have become rich, it follows that the land proprietors have become immensely so. It was the railways which created this possibility, and endowed the country by rendering it practicable to grow corn where cattle only existed before, but many Argentines to-day forget what they owe to the railway pioneers; it is the railways, and the railways only, which render the splendid and yearly increasing exports possible.

In 1858 cattle formed 25 per cent. of the total wealth of Argentina, but in 1885 cattle only represented 18 per cent. of the total wealth, railways having made it possible during those thirty years to utilise lands for other purposes than cattle-feeding. Let it be clearly understood, the total value of cattle had not decreased; far from that, the cattle had increased in value during the above period to the extent of L48,000,000, and to-day cattle, sheep, horses, mules, pigs, goats and asses represent a value of nearly L130,000,000. The following table shows how great the improvement has been in Argentine animals:—

Per Head.

Cattle in 1885 were valued at an average of \$13[B]

" 1908 " " " 32

Sheep in 1885 " " " 2



| | | | | | |
|-----------|------|---|---|----|----|
| " | 1908 | " | " | " | 4 |
| Horses in | 1885 | " | " | " | 11 |
| 1908 | " | " | " | 25 | |

Notwithstanding these increased valuations per head, and the larger number of animals in the country, the value created by man's labour far outweighs the increased value of mere breeding animals.

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Next to the railways the improvements in shipping have helped the development of Argentina; the shipping trade of Buenos Aires has increased at the rate of one million tons per annum for the past few years, and the entries into the port form an interesting and instructive table:

The following statement gives the total tonnage that passed through the port of Buenos Aires from 1880 to 1909, and will more clearly show the increase and advance made in the last thirty years. These figures include both steamers and sailing-vessels, and local as well as foreign trade:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| Tons. | 1880 ... | 644,750 | 1881 ... | 827,072 | 1882 ... | 995,597 | 1883 ... | 1,207,321 | 1884 ... | 1,782,382 | 1885 ... | 2,200,779 | 1886 ... | 2,408,323 | 1887 ... | 3,369,057 | 1888 ... | 3,396,212 | 1889 ... | 3,804,037 | 1890 ... | 4,507,096 | 1891 ... | 4,546,729 | 1892 ... | 5,475,942 | 1893 ... | 6,177,818 | 1894 ... | 6,686,123 | 1895 ... | 6,894,834 | 1896 ... | 6,115,547 | 1897 ... | 7,365,547 | 1898 ... | 8,051,045 | 1899 ... | 8,741,934 | 1900 ... | 8,047,010 | 1901 ... | 8,661,300 | 1902 ... | 8,902,605 | 1903 ... | 10,269,298 | 1904 ... | 10,424,615 | 1905 ... | 11,467,954 | 1906 ... | 12,448,219 | 1907 ... | 13,335,733 | 1908 ... | 15,465,417 | 1909 ... | 16,993,973 |
|-------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|

In 1897, out of the total number of steamers that entered Buenos Aires, *viz.*, 901, with a tonnage of 2,342,391; 519, with a tonnage of 1,327,571, were British. Taking the year 1909 we find that 2,008 steamers and 137 sailing-vessels entered the port of Buenos Aires from foreign shores with a tonnage of 5,193,542, and 1,978 steamers and 129 sailing-vessels left the port for foreign shores with a tonnage of 5,174,114; out of these, British boats lead with 2,242 steamers and 37 sailing-vessels, or say 53-1/2 per cent. of the total. Germany comes next with 456 steamers and 2 sailing-vessels, or say 10-3/4 per cent. of the total. Italy with 307 steamers and 67 sailing-vessels is next, and then France with 264 steamers. The total number of steamers that entered and left the port from local and foreign ports is 13,485, with a tonnage of 14,481,526, and 20,264 sailing-vessels with 2,512,447 tons, which make up the amount of 16,993,973 tons, as shown above.

In the year 1884 the experiment of freezing beef, killed in Buenos Aires, and shipping it to Europe was first tried. That was successful, but an immense improvement was made when the process of chilling became the common means by which meat could be exported. The frozen beef trade in Argentina has had a wonderful development; it commenced in 1884, and the export of chilled meat has progressed steadily at the rate of 25,000 beeves yearly, until, in 1908, it reached the enormous quantity of 573,946 beeves, or 180,000 tons. Frozen mutton has remained comparatively steady, and has only increased by 38,000 tons in twenty-two years, or from 2,000,000 sheep frozen in 1886 to 3,297,667 in 1908, whilst "jerked beef," which was mostly sent to Cuba and Brazil, has fallen from 50,000 tons per annum to 6,651 tons. The value of frozen and preserved meats exported in 1908 was L5,233,948.



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The value of live-stock in Argentina in 1908 was made up as follows:—

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Cattle | L82,000,000 |
| Sheep | 25,000,000 |
| Horses | 18,000,000 |
| Mules | 2,000,000 |
| Pigs | 1,368,000 |
| Goats and Asses ... | 1,000,000 |

A few years ago it was common on an estancia feeding 50,000 or 60,000 cattle to find the household using canned Swiss milk. To-day 425,000 litres of milk are brought into the city of Buenos Aires each day for consumption, and no less than two tons of butter, one ton of cream, and three tons of cheese are used there daily. Argentina also exports butter. This trade has sprung up entirely within the last fourteen years, and in 1908 she exported 3,549 tons of butter, the value of which was L283,973.

Until 1876 Argentina imported wheat for home consumption; in that year, when for many years past agricultural labourers had been arriving at an average of 25,000 per annum, she began to export wheat with a modest shipment of 5,000 tons. Thirty years later the export had mounted up to 2,247,988 tons, and in 1908 the wheat exported amounted to 3,636,293 tons, and was valued at L25,768,520. Agricultural colonies had sprung up everywhere, and cattle became of second-rate importance; to-day the value of the exports of corn, which term includes wheat, barley, maize, oats, *etc.*, is more than double that of cattle and cattle products. It is interesting to follow the evolution wrought by labour, intelligence, and capital in the prairie lands of Argentina. First, let us note the developments on those wonderful tracts of splendid prairie lands lying between the River Plate and the Andes: fifty years ago these lands were of little account, and only a few cattle were to be found roaming about them, but upon the advance of the railway they came under the plough, and, without much attention or care, produced wheat and maize. After a time improvements in the method of cultivation produced a better return, and to-day a great deal of attention is paid to the preparing of the land, and thought and care are given to the seed time, the growing, and the harvest. When it is found desirable to rest the land after crops of wheat and maize, *etc.*, alfalfa is grown thereon. Alfalfa is one of the clover tribe, and has the peculiar property of attaching to itself those micro-organisms which are able to fix the nitrogen in the air and render it available for plant food. Every colonist knows the value of alfalfa for feeding his animals, but it is not every colonist who knows why this plant occupies such a high place amongst feeding stuffs. Alfalfa is easily grown, very strong when established, and, provided its roots can get to water, will go on growing for years. The *raison d'etre* for growing alfalfa is for the feeding of cattle and preparing them for market, and for this purpose a league of alfalfa (6,177 acres metric measurement) will carry on an average 3,500 head. When grown for dry fodder it produces three or four crops per annum and a fair yield is from 6 to 8 tons per acre of dry alfalfa for each year. A ton of such hay is worth about \$20 to \$30, and after deducting expenses there is a clear return of about \$14 per acre.

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The figures supplied by one large company are interesting; they show that, on an average, cattle, when placed upon alfalfa lands, improve in value at the rate of \$2.00 per head per month, so it is easy to place a value on its feeding properties. Thus, we will take a camp under alfalfa capable of carrying 10,000 head of cattle all the year round, where as the fattened animals are sold off an equal number is bought to replace them. Such a camp would bring in a clear profit of \$200,000 per annum, and the property should be worth L175,000 sterling. An animal that has been kept all its life on rough camp, and, when too old for breeding, is placed for the first time on alfalfa lands, fattens extremely quickly, and the meat is tender and in quality compares favourably with any other beef. No business in Argentina of the same importance has shown such good returns as cattle breeding, and these results have been chiefly brought about by the introduction of alfalfa, and a knowledge of the life history of alfalfa is of the greatest importance to the cattle farmer. All cereal crops take from the soil mineral matter and nitrogen. Therefore, after continuous cropping the land becomes exhausted and generally poorer; experience has taught us that rotation of crops is a necessity to alleviate the strain on the soil, and such an axiom has this become that in many cases English landlords insist that their leases shall contain a clause binding the tenants to grow certain stated crops in rotation.

This system is known in England as the four-course shift. Knowledge gained by successive generations of observant farmers has given us the key to what Nature had hitherto kept to herself, and to-day we know why the plan adopted by our forefathers was right, and why the rotation of crops was, and is, a necessity. Men of science are devoting their lives to the systematic study of Nature's hidden secrets, and by means of Agricultural Colleges, as well as private individual research, these discoveries are being given to mankind, and long before the soils of Argentina show any serious loss of nitrogen from continuous cropping, science will probably have established means of applying in a practical manner those methods already known of propagating the nitrogen-collecting bacteria which thrive on alfalfa, clover, peas, soya beans, and other leguminous plants. Almost every country is now devoting time, money, and energy to agricultural research work. In 1908 the Agricultural College at Ontario prepared no less than 474 packages of Legume Bacteria, and in 309 cases beneficial results followed from the application thereof to the soil; in 165 cases no improvements in the crops were noticed, this may, however, have been due to the want of knowledge of how to manipulate the bacteria, or to lack of experience in noting effects scientifically, but in any case the experiment must be considered successful when the results obtained were satisfactory in no less than 65 per cent. of the trials. No greater factor exists than the microscope in opening up and hunting out the secrets concealed in the very soil we are standing on.

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If soils were composed of nothing but pure silica sand, nothing would ever grow; but in Nature we find that soils contain all sorts of mineral matter, and chief amongst these is lime.

Alfalfa thrives on land which contains lime, and gives but poor results where this ingredient is deficient. The explanation is simple. There is a community of interest between the very low microscopic animal life, known as bacteria, and plant life generally. In every ounce of soil there are millions of these living germs which have their allotted work to do, and they thrive best in soils containing lime.

If one digs up with great care a root of alfalfa (it need not be an old plant, the youngest plant will show the same peculiarity), and care is taken in exposing the root (perhaps the best method is the washing away of the surrounding earth by water), some small nodules attached to the fine, hair-like roots are easily distinguished by the naked eye, and these nodules are the home of a teeming, microscopical, industrious population, who perform their allotted work with the silent, persistent energy so often displayed in Nature. Men of science have been able to identify at least three classes of these bacteria, and to ascertain the work accomplished by each. The reason for their existence would seem to be that one class is able to convert the nitrogen in the air into ammonia, whilst others work it into nitrite, and the third class so manipulate it as to form a nitrate which is capable of being used for plant food.

Now, although one ton of alfalfa removes from the soil 50 lb. of nitrogen, yet that crop leaves the soil richer in nitrogen, because the alfalfa has encouraged the multiplication of those factories which convert some of the thousands of tons of nitrogen floating above the earth into substance suitable for food for plant life. As a dry fodder for cattle three tons of alfalfa contains as much nutrition as two tons of wheat.

The cost of growing alfalfa greatly depends upon the situation of the land to be dealt with; also upon whether labour is plentiful or not; but, in order to give some idea of the advantage of growing this cattle food, we will imagine the intrinsic value of the undeveloped land to be L4,000, upon which, under existing conditions, it would be possible to keep 1,000 head of animals, whereas if this same land were under alfalfa 3,000 to 3,500 animals would be fattened thereon, and the land would have increased in value to L20,000 or L30,000.

Now, if the undeveloped land is to be improved, it becomes necessary either to work it yourself, with your own men, in which case you must provide ploughs, horses, bullocks, *etc.*, or to carry out the plan usually adopted, that of letting the land to colonists who have had some experience in this class of work. Usually a colonist will undertake to cultivate from 500 to 600 acres, and agrees to pay to the landowner anything from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. of his crops

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according to the distance of the land from the railway. The colonist brings his agricultural tackle along with him, and establishes his house (usually a most primitive affair), digs his well, and then proceeds to plough. In this work the whole family joins; the father leads the way, followed by the eldest child, and all the others in rotation, with the wife bringing up the rear; she keeps a maternal eye upon the little mite, who with great gusto and terrific yells manages somehow to cling to the plough and to do his or her share with the rest. Is it to be wondered at that work progresses fast under these conditions? There is but one idea prevalent in the family, namely, that time and opportunity are with them.

The first crop grown on newly-broken ground is usually maize; the second year's crop is linseed, and perhaps a third year's crop—probably wheat—is grown by the colonist before the land is handed back to the owner ready to be put down in alfalfa. The colonist's cultivation of the land will have effectually killed off the natural rough grasses which would otherwise grow up and choke the alfalfa. Sometimes the alfalfa is sown with the colonist's last crop, and in such cases the landowner finds the alfalfa seed, and during the sowing of this crop it is very advisable that either he or his agent should be in constant attendance, because the after results greatly depend upon the care with which the seeding has been done. When the colonist's contract is completed he moves on to another part, and the owner, who has year by year received a percentage of the crops, takes back his land. Considerable outlay has now to be made in fences, wells, and buildings; the more there are of these the better, the land will carry a larger head of cattle and the control of them is easy when the camp has been properly divided.

The colonists are generally Italians. They are an industrious and kindly people, hardy and quiet, well content with their surroundings, careful and frugal in their living, and many thousands could go back to their own country with wealth which has been acquired by constant and assiduous attention to the economies of life.

It has often been said that an Englishman will starve where an Italian will thrive, and in some respects this is true; but it would be better expressed if it were stated that an Italian can adapt himself to circumstances better than an Englishman. At the same time, I doubt if an Italian would come off best were the two placed on a desert island where instantaneous action, grit, and endurance were called for.

Many things are said of an Englishman, and none fits his character better than that which gives him the privilege of "grumbling," and this characteristic becomes more marked when he is able to grumble with one of his own kith and kin. I have heard Argentines praise Englishmen, who, they say, manage their estancias far and away beyond all others, but at the same time they have told me that they would never allow two Englishmen on their place at once.

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It has been said that many of the immigrants do not intend to settle in the country. Probably this idea has gained ground on account of the large numbers of the labouring population, who are attracted to Argentina by the high wages ruling during the harvest time, and then find it pays them to go home and secure the European harvest, but generally these men come out again to stay. They have acquired a knowledge of the country, and often enough have also acquired an interest in some land, and they return, bringing their families, to adopt Argentina as their home—for a period at least.

A glance at the statistics prepared by the authorities in Buenos Aires shows that during the last fifty-two years 4,250,980 persons entered as immigrants, and out of this number only 1,690,783 returned, leaving in the country 2,560,197 individuals, or an average of 50,000 workers per annum. These figures have become even more marked of recent years. Taking the last five years, the country has received on an average 249,000 immigrants per annum; of these, 103,000 went back. In other words, 727,670 have made their homes within the borders of Argentina during the past five years, and of these at least 500,000 were agriculturists.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that the exports, chiefly made up of agricultural produce, have shown extraordinary progress. Facing this page is a diagram showing the agricultural exportation from 1900 to 1908.

[Illustration: *Agricultural exportation including wheat, linseed, oats, maize, etc.*]

[Illustration: *Cultivated area in hectares. (1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres)*]

Nothing can be more eloquent than the figures shown in this diagram. This remarkable progress, almost steady in its upward march, is not in one direction only. Argentina is an ideal country for agriculturists, and in every branch of that industry progress has been made. Greater care is being taken to-day in working up the by-products of the cattle business. More varied crops are being grown, and vegetable by-products are being economically looked after. The forests of Argentina are also being worked for the benefit of mankind. The Quebracho Colorado tree forms a very important item of export. It is sent out of the country either in the form of logs, of which no less than 254,571 tons were exported in 1908, or in the form of an extract for tanning purposes; 48,162 tons of this extract were made and exported in 1908, and a small quantity of the wood was exported in the shape of sawdust. The total value of Quebracho Colorado exported in various forms in that year was, as already stated, L1,200,000. This means that the Quebracho forests are being depleted at the rate of half a million tons per annum for export purposes alone, in addition to the enormous quantities used for sleepers, etc., in the country.



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The area in acres under cultivation for the year 1908 was 46,174,250, an increase of 265 per cent, on the land under cultivation in the year 1895.

The diagram facing this page shows the area in hectares cultivated from 1897 to 1908:

Wheat—The area under cultivation for wheat shows an increase of 89 per cent, in ten years from—

8,000,000 acres in cultivation in 1898, to 15,157,750 " " " " 1908

Linseed—shows an increase of 361 per cent, from—

831,972 acres in cultivation in 1898, to 3,835,750 " " " " 1908

Maize—increased by 250 per cent., and other crops, including Oats, 300 per cent. in the same period.

The United Kingdom purchased from Argentina and retained for its own use (in round figures) during the year 1908—

Wheat to the value of L13,000,000

maize " " 5,600,000

Frozen meat " " 9,300,000

Making a total of L27,900,000

Indeed, we buy from Argentina nearly 25 per cent. of our total food purchased abroad, and she supplies nearly 29 per cent. of our corn and grain requirements. These figures again clearly demonstrate that we have a vital interest in the well-being of our friends across the sea.

In every direction Argentina has progressed, and judging from the past we may look with confidence to the future; the total area of the Republic is 776,064,000 acres, and certainly it is within the bounds of reasonable forecast to consider that 100,000,000 acres of this land will be, when opened up by railways, and other facilities, available for corn-growing. To-day only one-fifth of this available area is being cultivated, and another 43,000,000 acres are being utilised for feeding purposes; thus, only 63,000,000 out of 776,000,000 acres are being occupied. The chief reason why more is not utilised is because there is not sufficient labour available.

Argentina has 5 inhabitants per square mile.
Russia " 18 " "



| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------|---|---|
| Canada, Newfoundland, <i>etc.</i> | " | 1-1/2 | " | " |
| Australia | " | 1-1/3 | " | " |
| U. Kingdom | " | 364 | " | " |
| Belgium | " | 625 | " | " |
| Germany | " | 290 | " | " |

Not only is there an enormous tract of land lying dormant, but the productive power of land now under cultivation may be vastly increased if farmers will devote their attention to improving the conditions of cultivation. 11.3 bushels of wheat per acre is not high-class farming, yet this is the average production for Argentina. Manitoba in 1908 produced 13-1/2 bushels per acre, Saskatchewan, 17 bushels. In



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the fourteenth century England only produced 10 bushels per acre, but we have improved this yield to 30 bushels, while Roumania has increased her yield from 15 bushels per acre in 1890, to 23 bushels in 1908. France has increased her yield from 17 bushels in 1884, to 20 bushels in 1908. Germany has increased her yield per acre from 20 bushels in 1899, to 30 bushels in 1908. So that we may not only look forward to a greater area being placed under cultivation, but we may reasonably expect heavier crops, if land proprietors will bring science to bear on their work of development. Indeed, with land rising in price, with an increasing influx of immigrants, and with more intelligent cultivation of the soil, the land must of necessity give a far larger yield than it has done heretofore.

The following tables, taken from the Board of Trade returns, show from whence England draws some of her supplies. They also show how prominently Argentina figures as a food producer. The first table includes corn and meat; the second gives corn alone, and the third meat alone:—

Food imported into and retained by the united kingdom in 1908.

Corn (including wheat, barley, oats, rye, buckwheat, peas, beans, maize, wheatmeal, flour, oatmeal, and offals) L71,103,487

Meat, fresh and frozen (including animals for food) 48,704,613

Total L119,808,100

Of this—

L Per Cent.

Argentina supplied 29,569,773 or 24.68

U.S.A. supplied 38,229,135 or 31.90

Russia supplied 7,394,607 or 6.18

Canada supplied 11,907,203 or 9.94

Australia (including Tasmania) supplied 4,520,244 or 3.77

Other Colonies and Foreign

Countries supplied 28,187,138 or 23.53

L119,808,100 or 100.00

* * * * *



Corn imported into and retained by the united kingdom in 1908.

Argentina. U.S.A. Russia. Canada. Australia
(including
Tasmania).

L L L L L

Wheat | 13,096,812 10,779,221 2,286,180 6,335,329 2,402,988

|

Barley | 22,943 733,446 2,622,005 205,697 —

|

Oats | 1,463,368 — 1,144,387 6,441 —

|

Rye | — 129,691 93,066 49,009 —

|

Buckwheat | — — 6,677 — —

|

Peas | — 38,545 42,279 105,495 2,345

|

Beans (not fresh, |
other than Haricot|

Beans) | — — 15,094 — —

|

Maize | 5,603,463 2,023,576 1,107,858



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| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 44,822 — | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Wheatmeal | | | | | |
| and Flour ... | 50,597 | 5,407,119 | 80 | 809,479 | 119,440 |
| | | | | | |
| Oatmeal and | | | | | |
| Rolled Oats ... | — | 183,334 | — | 207,516 | — |
| | | | | | |
| Farinaceous sub- | | | | | |
| stances (except | | | | | |
| Starch, Farina, | | | | | |
| Dextrine, and | | | | | |
| Potato Flour) | — | 99,112 | — | 59,302 | — |
| | | | | | |
| Bran and Pollard | 11,932 | — | — | — | — |
| | | | | | |
| Sharps and | | | | | |
| Middlings | 35,113 | — | — | — | — |
| | | | | | |
| Maize Meal | — | 129,543 | — | — | — |
| -----+-----+-----+-----+-----+----- | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | |
| L | 20,284,228 | 19,523,587 | 7,317,626 | 7,823,090 | 2,524,773 |
| -----+-----+-----+-----+----- | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | |
| Percentage | 28.53% | 27.46% | 10.29% | 11.00% | 3.56% |
| -----+-----+-----+-----+----- | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | |

Other
Colonies and
Foreign Total.
Countries.

L L
13,630,183[C] 71,103,487

-----+-----+
13,630,183 | 71,103,487 |



```

-----+-----+
19.16%  | = 100%  |
-----+-----+

```

* * * * *

Meat, including animals for food, and fresh, chilled, frozen and tinned, imported into and retained by the United Kingdom in 1908:

L Per Cent.

Argentina supplied 9,285,545 or 19.07
 U.S.A. " 18,705,548 " 38.41
 Russia " 76,981 " 0.16
 Canada " 4,084,113 " 8.38
 Australia (including Tasmania)
 supplied 1,995,471 " 4.10
 Other Colonies and Foreign
 Countries supplied[D] 14,556,955 " 29.88

 48,704,613 " 100.00

The lesson shown here is one worthy of attention. We see that Argentina supplies England with one-fourth of her imported food, and U.S.A. supplies nearly one-third. Therefore it behoves both England and Argentina to see that America does not so manipulate things that she acquires the control over our meat and food supplies.

Argentine authorities should not only exercise the law sanctioned February 4th, 1907, concerning the inspection of factories, but they should enforce greater care in seeing that all Argentine saladeros and packing-houses are manipulated with intense care, and cleanliness should be insisted upon; it would be a bad day for Argentina should ever such an outcry be raised against her saladeros as that which a few years ago was directed against the North American packing houses and for a time ruined the canning industry of the United States, and yet we find American methods being introduced into Argentina without let or hindrance. If our soldiers and sailors are to be fed upon canned meats, let those who are responsible for purchasing the food, at least see that the food is prepared under healthy and sanitary conditions.



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The corn-growing industry of the Argentine Republic is an intensely interesting subject. Before railways and steamships brought the foreign producer into close competition with our own farmers, Argentina did not produce enough grain to supply her home consumption, and cattle were bred only for their hides, tallow and bones. In the course of time, when steamers superseded sailing-ships and the world's carrying capacity thus became enormously increased, Argentina saw her opportunity of becoming a keen competitor in the food market. Corn-growing became a highly remunerative business, although much still remains to be learned concerning the handling of wheat. Both in the States and Canada grain is handled in a cheaper and more expeditious manner than in Argentina. An enormous amount of grain is dealt with in the Wheat Exchange of Winnipeg, but a further big impetus will be given to this industry when the wheat-fields of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are connected with a deep-sea port on Hudson Bay; this will be an accomplished fact in 1915, and as this route means a thousand miles less haulage by land, and eight hundred less by sea to the chief European ports than by any existing route, it is bound to become the popular one; the chief factor, however, in making it a useful wheat outlet is the established fact that Hudson Bay, although many miles north of Lake Superior, remains free from ice for a period of one month after Lake Superior is tightly frozen up.

Argentina may look forward to keen competition with Canada and Siberia for many years to come; on the other hand, the U.S.A. will steadily show a smaller quantity of wheat available for exportation, and the following table throws some light upon the wheat position:—

Argentina and Uruguay have increased
the area of their wheat-growing
land brought under the plough in
the last ten years by 124 per cent.
Canada in the last ten years by 120 per cent.
Russia in the last ten years by 27 per cent.
United States in the last ten years by 14 per cent.

No country in the world has shown such wonderful capabilities for growing linseed as the Argentine, and her average production for the following five-year periods show this expansion:—

| Years. | Production in Tons. |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 1894-1898 | 193,000 |
| 1899-1903 | 382,000 |
| 1904-1908 | 839,000 |



In ten years she increased her production by 335 per cent. In the same period India increased her production by 3.8 per cent., and North America by 105 per cent., whilst Russia was unable to keep up her supply.

The world's total linseed production for 1908 was made up as follows:—

Argentina produced 1,101,000 tons.

North America produced 694,000 tons.

Russia produced 470,000 tons.

India produced 360,000 tons.

Here again we find Argentina leading. Moreover, she exported nearly the whole of her production, whilst North America, Russia, and India exported less than half a million tons between them.



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It is more than probable that by 1920 Argentina will be able to export, as the result of agricultural work, more than L100,000,000 worth of produce per annum. It is interesting to note that, as the present figures reveal, allowing for a population of 6,500,000 and an agricultural produce export of L48,335,432, each individual in Argentina has sent abroad, after producing enough from the land to keep himself, goods to the value of nearly L8.

The diagram facing this page shows what has been accomplished by Argentina in the last ten years.

[Illustration: *Diagram of value in L sterling of the total exports of Argentina 1900-1909.*]

In actual money value the exportation of wheat, linseed, oats, maize, other grain, flour, bran, and middlings is, in round figures, as follows:—

| | |
|------|-------------|
| 1900 | L15,485,000 |
| 1901 | 14,319,000 |
| 1902 | 13,634,000 |
| 1903 | 21,050,000 |
| 1904 | 30,065,000 |
| 1905 | 34,047,000 |
| 1906 | 31,530,000 |
| 1907 | 32,818,000 |
| 1908 | 48,335,000 |
| 1909 | 46,100,000 |

Cattle.

The value derived from the cattle industry and its allied produce is of great importance to the Argentine Republic. The exports from this industry may be divided into four heads, namely:—

Live animals;

Raw products;

Manufactured or partly manufactured material and by-products.

Since the closing of English ports in 1901 to the importation of live cattle from Argentina, the trade in the export of live stock has fallen off considerably; the total value did not in 1908 amount to more than L568,966; Belgium took 65,224 sheep, Chili took 45,114 cattle and 14,394 sheep, Bolivia took 3,383 head of cattle and 10,676 sheep, and



16,000 asses and mules, while horses were imported into England, Africa, Portugal, Brazil, Uruguay, Chili, Bolivia, and Paraguay.

Exports of raw products, which include frozen and chilled beef and mutton, hides, sheepskins, wool, and such things as horsehair, tallow, jerked beef, *etc.*, represented a value of L19,549,231 in 1908.

Manufactured or partly manufactured material, including prepared tallow, meat extracts, meat, butter, cheese, lard, dressed leather, *etc.*, represented L2,454,760, whilst the by-products, including bones, dried blood, guano, waste fats, *etc.*, were valued at L430,734. Thus, Argentina's total export from the cattle industry (after supplying her own needs) was over L23,000,000.

Argentina's live stock on hand when the last census was taken in May, 1908, was as follows:—

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Cattle | 29,116,625 |
| Sheep | 67,211,758 |
| Horses | 7,531,376 |
| Mules, swine, goats, and asses | 6,098,802 |

representing in value L129,369,628.

The favourite breed of cattle is the Shorthorn, and they comprise 84 per cent, of the classified breeding cows; the Herefords only figure out as 6 per cent., but, undoubtedly, a more careful and complete classification will lead to modifications in these figures, for at the present time no less than five and a-half million cows are returned as Criollo cattle, in other words, unimproved stock.



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Not until the year 1885, when it became possible to send frozen meat to Europe, did estancieros pay serious attention to growing cattle for meat production, and now, with an ever-increasing quantity of land being placed under alfalfa, the Argentine Republic is fast becoming the leading factor in the production of meat to satisfy the world's consumption.

Cattle on the outside fringe of occupied lands are still very coarse and rough, with a distinct strain of the Hereford about them; they are, however, a useful herd and most suitable for the districts they occupy, where they often have to undergo the hardships of shortage of pasture owing to drought, and little or no water, indeed, it is a marvel how these animals exist at times; and assuredly no refined breed of cattle could live where the Criollos not only manage to thrive, but generally to return a satisfactory result to their owners. The cattle on ranches which are nearer to the seaports, manufacturing centres, or railway stations show distinct improvements. Greater care is bestowed upon them, and the main consideration is never lost sight of—it is the ambition of every estanciero to have his cattle graded up so that they are looked upon as “freezers,” which means that they are good enough to be purchased by one or other of the refrigerating companies, who take nothing but the best.

In 1888 cattle running the northern camps (which then represented the extreme outlying posts) were only valued at \$6 per head.

In 1890 the value had risen to \$10 per head. " 1900 " " " 15 " " 1908 " " " 28 " " 1910 " " " 40 "

The question of stock raising and the object to be obtained must rest with the owners: they must decide whether the land is to be utilised for fattening cattle or for breeding the high-class animals for which there is an ever-ready market. To show the enormous value of animals and the high standard to which agricultural lands can be brought, mention must be made of two estancias near Buenos Aires, viz., those belonging to Messrs. Cobo and Messrs. Bell, where splendid stock is always to be found. To give some idea of the high price paid for first-class pedigree animals, it may be mentioned that L3,800 was paid for a prize Durham bull which was sold to Argentina!

At the cattle show at Buenos Aires held in July, 1910, Herefords for killing realized from L850 to L1,000 per animal! These latter high prices were, however, evidently paid by the agents of Cold Storage Companies for advertising purposes. One representative explained that the freezing Companies desired to encourage breeders, and that his Company paid the high prices mentioned above so as to let the breeders know that they would always be paid high prices for first-class cattle.

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When we consider the really important position which Argentina takes as a food producer, it appears incredible that the English nation (business men and the general public alike) is so extremely ignorant, as a rule, of prevailing conditions. I do not refer to those who have invested their money in the many channels known to the River Plate circle. But men holding high official positions speak of our commercial interests in Argentina as "something between a hundred and a hundred and fifty millions," and then in a whispered side-speech indicate the dangers of revolution.

Often it is suggested that the chances of death from small-pox, yellow fever, and even from murder are a serious drawback to what might otherwise be a country possible to live in. It makes one very indignant to hear these statements from the lips of those who probably have never left their own country. Let me assure you they may be swept aside, and were it not for their frequent reiteration it would be unnecessary to say that there is not one grain of truth in these suggestions as applied to the state of things to-day.

Nearly one-fifth of the population of Argentina is centred in and around Buenos Aires. It is a city of 1,200,000 inhabitants, many of whom are millionaires; but at the same time there exists much poverty within its precincts—poverty caused in no small degree by the viciousness of the rich, but to a far greater extent by the rooted objection of certain classes to go out to the camps where, during the harvest time at least, wages are high and labour is anxiously awaited.

When we compare the health of this city of Buenos Aires with that of other large cities, we can see what has been done in the way of improvements in the last few years. A glance at the following tables will give some idea of what has been accomplished. The natural increase of the population of Buenos Aires between 1898 and 1907 was 19.1 per 1,000, and no other city equals this.

The increase in London was 8.8 per 1,000.

" Berlin " 8.5 "

" New York " 5.7 "

" St. Petersburg " 4.6 "

The birth-rate of Buenos Aires for 1908 was 34.3 per 1,000.

" " London " 25.7

" " Berlin " 23.3

" " New York " 28.5

" " St. Petersburg " 27.5

Both these tables are, however, probably affected by the great number of immigrants finding their way to Argentina, many of whom remain in Buenos Aires.

The health of the City may be well gauged by the death-rate for the year 1907.



Buenos Aires stands well with 15.2 per 1,000 inhabitants.

London has a death-rate of 15.1 " "

Berlin " " 14.8 " "

New York " " 18.6 " "

St. Petersburg " 25.7 " "

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(Undoubtedly the high rate shown by the last-named city is greatly due to the foul condition of the Neva.)

To appreciate thoroughly the position which Buenos Aires now holds, and the strides which have been made in regard to the sanitation of the City, we have but to look at the past. Between the years 1889 and 1898 the death-rate per thousand was as high as 22.9 per 1,000; from 1899 to 1908 it was only 16.6, and now the record stands at 15.2 per 1,000.

The authorities are justly proud of what has been done, and will not diminish their efforts so long as there is work to do and problems to solve.

I should like to state once more the fact that the United Kingdom depends upon Argentina for nearly one-fourth of her food supply purchased abroad. I want to impress upon your mind the seriousness of the position, for this proportion of one-fourth will be largely increased in the near future, for reasons already stated.

The question has often been asked, "Is it safe to buy land in Argentina?" But the drift of this query too often is merely self-interest; in other words, it really means "Can I successfully speculate in land?" Clearly the matter is solely a personal one, no other consideration is thought of, so one is tempted to give an evasive answer. Should the questioner, however, be a young fellow, with God's gift of health and plenty of truth and grit in him, who wants not only to acquire the land, but to work it, then, indeed, there is but one answer, and that is in the affirmative—let him go, and let him ever remember that he is an Englishman and that England is judged by the conduct of her sons: but do not let him make the great mistake a newcomer so often falls into, which is, that because he is an Englishman all other nationalities must be inferior, and that by some sort of divine right he has been created lord of all. Let him realise that those whom he meets in Argentina are as noble and pure as those he left at home. Argentina offers to-day a splendid opening for the best of England's sons, but she does not want the loafer nor the ne'er-do-well. Can it be wondered at that England's prestige is seriously injured when so many of the "wasters," and worse, are sent from the country? It is but natural that from these, who go to foreign countries, England is judged. To my mind we should send abroad men who are bound to succeed, men who never forget that from their behaviour the Mother Country will be appraised. Argentina will embrace and reward them, but she will spurn and despise the dissolute and drunken.

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The advice I would give to all those thinking of trying Argentina as a field for agricultural work is to remember that to be successful one must begin at the bottom, the harder the school the better will be the result: you cannot detect and correct the faults which militate against success unless you have been through the mill. Not long ago I sent a boy out to Argentina and painted the first two years of learning in the new country in rather lurid colours. I explained and dwelt on the hardships—indeed, I described it as “a dog’s life.” Within a year, the lad wrote home to his parents and mentioned all that I had told him, but finished up by saying, “There’s plenty of ‘life’ about it, but not much ‘dog.’” The truth is that the boy had accepted things as they came along and had adapted himself to his surroundings, and, I predict, he will never regret having left his home, where opportunities were cramped by small surroundings, for the wider field of Argentina.

A great many Englishmen resident in Argentina, whose sons are looking forward to finding their life’s work in that country, send their boys home to England to be educated. Far be it from me to deprecate the training acquired by English public school life, but it might well be worth while to consider the other phase. The boy who has had his schooling in Argentina and goes through his training and passes into one of their Universities will have to his credit something which cannot be bought by money or influence by boys straight out from home. He will have been a fellow student, and worked shoulder to shoulder with men who will in due time occupy positions of power and influence, and it is just as well to weigh out these things before deciding where to educate your boy. A boy born in Argentina, whatever the nationality of his parents may be, is by Argentine law an Argentine subject, and should be brought up to appreciate that he is liable to be called upon to go through a military course: the Argentine boy, who has had just as gentle an upbringing as the English boy, is compelled to serve his time in the army if called upon, and generally the discipline engendered by this training has not only been good for him, but is a distinctly valuable asset to the country, and the English boy, as well as a boy of any other parentage born in the country, will be obliged to go through this military training if required.

I venture to think that were England to adopt compulsory military service in some shape or form, we should hear a great deal less of the unemployed and “don’t-want-work” demonstrations.

To attempt to give a picture of Argentine life is impossible in the short time at my disposal. Imagine to yourself, if you can, a country of 1,212,600 square miles whose borders extend from well within the Tropics to away down south to the everlasting snows, embracing all kinds of lands, from the very richest of soils to ice-capped and rocky peaks, and you must admit that to attempt to describe the various conditions of life therein is wellnigh impossible. Life is much what the surrounding conditions make it—on the extreme edge of cultivation it is distinctly rough, on the inner camps refinement steps in, and in the cities you will find just what society you wish. Amongst the

cosmopolitan population of Buenos Aires there are many men and women of the highest culture and education.

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There are many Argentines, who stand out prominently from the throng of busy pleasure-seekers, who are devoting their lives to improving the surroundings of those less fortunate fellow-creatures who have fallen upon the thorny path, and whose portion is often the cup of bitterness. Indeed, I have ever found the Argentine desirous of helping those who seek advice and assistance; but he spurns the foreigner who degrades himself and his country by acts of folly which would not be permitted in his native land.

Englishmen often fall into the great error of keeping themselves to themselves. Possibly this trait is engendered from birth and training by our insular position, but it is a great pity to carry it too far, for the Argentine people do appreciate the thoroughness of our countrymen, and are ready to welcome the right sort. We have taught the Argentines many of our national sports and games, and they have entered into them with such thoroughness that the teachers have often had to admit that the pupil has proved better than the master.

Travelling has become an integral part of the education of the Argentine family to-day, and it is quite general to find young children speaking fluently four or five languages.

I could wish that those who have Argentine friends would insist upon their seeing, when in this country, some of the Englishman's home surroundings, for hotel life, theatres, dinners, and music-halls are all very well in their way, but to see the real inwardness of English life you must follow the Englishman to his country home. My experience is that the Argentine will always refuse an invitation to your home at first, because of the trouble which he believes you will be put to, but don't take "no" for an answer; simply make him come, and he will thank you afterwards for his experience of English home life.

Just a word or two, for fear I have left an impression that Argentina is the El Dorado which lies beyond the seas. There are such things as locusts, floods, droughts, and frosts in that country.

The first of these—locusts—are indeed a plague which to-day it seems almost impossible to annihilate, for I have little faith in man's attempts effectually to stop or decrease this pestilence; on the other hand, Nature always seems to be on the alert to prevent an overthrow of the balance of things. Those who have spent their lives in the River Plate district have seen this appalling plague crushed by means which Nature, in her own good time, has thought fit to use.

With regard to floods and droughts, these can, at least, be modified by men, and means are now being adopted to conserve the floods and render their waters available in time of drought.



From frosts we seem powerless to defend ourselves, and it is only those whose work is in close touch with the growing and handling of crops who can fully appreciate the damage done by late frosts.

No country is free from drawbacks of some sort or another, and these troubles which I have just mentioned will not prevent the forward march of progress in Argentina.



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FOOTNOTES:

[A] These figures are approximate

[B] The dollar referred to throughout this paper is the Argentine paper dollar, which since 1899 has had a fixed value, and is worth approximately 1s. 9d. Previous to that date its value fluctuated considerably.

[C] A list of the other Colonies and Foreign Countries which largely contributed to this total will be found on the following page.

[D] The other colonies and foreign countries which largely contributed to the totals mentioned are as follows:—

Denmark—Barley L22,708 Meat 5,988,573

Roumania—Corn, etc. L2,564,538 Meat nil.

Turkey (including Crete)—Corn, etc L1,383,971 Meat nil.

Turkey, Asiatic—Corn, etc. L1,344,322 Meat nil.

Chili—Corn, etc L1,099,660 Meat 10,682

British India—Corn, etc L2,226,668 Meat nil.

New Zealand—Corn, etc L30,585 Meat 4,168,649

HISTORY OF THE SANTA FE LAND COMPANY, LIMITED.

In the years 1881 and 1882, Messrs. C. de Murrieta & Co. acquired a block of land from the Government of the Province of Santa Fe, and in December, 1882, sold one undivided half-share thereof to Messrs. Kohn, Reinach & Co. Messrs. Murrieta & Co. and Messrs. Kohn, Reinach & Co., having decided to develop the said lands, formed the Santa Fe Land Company, and the prospectus appeared in July, 1883.

The area sold to the new Company was said to comprise about 650 Spanish leagues, or 4,336,150 English acres, and the price to be paid to the vendors was L1,050 per league.

In order to provide a port of shipment on the Rio Parana the Company bought a further lot of 323 acres in the Colony of Romang.



In addition to the original block of land, the Company has since bought the following areas:—

The estancia of La Barrancosa, 10,801 hectareas, say 26,678

The estancia of Santa Catalina, 4,049 hectareas, say 10,002

A strip of land at Guaycuru on the eastern boundary of the Company's forest lands, 1,636 hectareas, say 4,041

A piece of land at Venado Tuerto, 37 hectareas, say 91

A piece of land at Arrufo, 100 hectareas, say 247

A piece of land at Tostado, 50 hectareas, say 123

41,182

Since the beginning of the Company the total area of land sold has amounted to 709,549 acres (up to 30th June, 1910). It is calculated that the land comprised in the Bazan claim, to which reference is made later on, measures 582,914 acres. Upon this supposition the Company now owns 3,044,100 acres.

The original price paid for the Company's lands worked out at about 3s. an acre.

The original capital of the Company was L875,000, of which over L675,566 was paid to the vendors, leaving a balance of L199,434 to meet the preliminary expenses and the initial cost of opening up the new properties. After some years it was found necessary to write off a portion of the capital, and accordingly, in 1897, the Company's lands were re-valued at approximately 2s. 9d. an acre.



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The present Directors of the Company are:—

Mr. Campbell P. Ogilvie (Chairman).

Mr. Ivor Bevan.

Mr. Gordon H. Brown.

Lord Hawke.

Mr. Louis H. KIEK.

Mr. T.E. Preston.

Capt. The Hon. F.C. Stanley.

The London Office is at 779, Salisbury House, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C., and the Secretary of the Company is Mr. David Simpson. The Head Office in the Argentine is at 761, Avenida de Mayo, Buenos Aires, and the following are the principal officers of the Company in Argentina:—

Mr. Hugh M. Rattray (General Manager).

Mr. W.B. Whigham (Manager of the Cattle and Lands Department at Sun Cristobal).

Mr. R.N. Land (Manager at Santa Catalina).

Mr. T. Scott Robson (Manager at La Barrancosa).

Mr. G.L.C. Gittins (Acting Manager of the Woods Department).

SHARE CAPITAL.

The original shares of the Company were L10 each. It was decided in 1897 to reduce them to L7 fully paid, which placed the capital at L612,500. Shortly afterwards each L7 share was converted into seven shares of L1 each.

In 1906 the shareholders authorised the creation of L200,000 of fresh capital, which was issued to them in two blocks of L154,000 in 1906 and L46,000 in 1907.

Fresh capital was authorised in 1908, viz., L187,500, of which L161,608 was issued in 1909, and further lots have since been issued, bringing the total amount of authorised capital to L1,000,000, and of issued capital at 30th June, 1910, to L982,347.

An issue of L50,000 Six per Cent. Debentures was made in January, 1904; and the whole amount was redeemed on the 1st July, 1909.

BAZAN LANDS.

Part of the area sold to the Company consisted of a block of approximately 88 Spanish leagues, or 530,000 English acres, which became the subject of negotiations and lawsuits between this Company, the Provincial Government of Santa Fe, and other



parties, lasting for more than twenty-five years. The area in question lay to the West of the Rio Salado, and, at the time when this Company was formed, was supposed to be included in the Province of Santa Fe. Soon afterwards the Province of Santiago del Estero put forward a claim to the lands on the ground that the boundaries of that Province extended eastwards to the Rio Salado, and it therefore disputed the right of the Province of Santa Fe to sell the lands to Messrs. Murrieta & Co. in 1882.



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By an Agreement with the Government of the Province of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Land Company took proceedings in the Supreme Courts of the Province to establish its rights to the land in dispute on the understanding that if the Company failed to establish its claim, the Government of the Province of Santa Fe would indemnify it for its loss. In the result the Company was evicted from the lands, and entered into negotiations with the Government of the Province of Santa Fe for indemnification. These negotiations went on for some years without coming to any practical conclusion, and at last the Company commenced a lawsuit against the Province and won it. After further delays and negotiations the Government agreed to issue bonds in respect of the Company's claim, and, in July, 1909, the Company agreed to accept \$3,212,000 paper Bonds of the Province, carrying interest at 3-1/2 per cent., with an amortisation of 1/2 per cent., the coupons being available for payment of land tax. The Government further undertook to ratify the original titles of the Company, and to make a survey at the joint expense of both parties, for the purpose of ascertaining the exact area comprised in the original transfer. Any lands found to be in excess were to be paid for by the Company to the Government at the rate of \$13.50, paper, per hectarea (about 8s. an acre). The price of such excess lands was to be recouped by the Government from the Bonds issued to the Company, and the Government retained \$712,000 Bonds for this purpose, pending the result of the survey.

[Illustration: *Cattle Train on Central Argentine Railway, bringing Cattle to Barrancosa.*]

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION.

At the time of the formation of the Company, the nearest railway was that belonging to the Central Argentine Railway, and the nearest railway station was Rosario, but some years later, the lines now belonging to the French Railway Company of the Province of Santa Fe were laid between Santa Fe and San Cristobal. Subsequently the Central Norte Railway, which stretches northwards from San Cristobal to Tucuman, was built by the National Government, and in 1907, the National Government built a line from Santa Fe to San Cristobal *via* San Justo.

The Company have built a railway from a point north of Vera running into their forests, and extend it from time to time as the development of the wood industry demands. They further own a line from Margarita to La Gallareta, where the extract factory of the Compañia Tanin de Santa Fe is situated. The Company propose to build a railway from San Cristobal to penetrate to their northern properties, and have applied to the Argentine National Government for a railway concession in connection therewith.

ADMINISTRATION.



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After various changes of centre the administration offices of the Company were, in the year 1902, divided between San Cristobal for the cattle and lands department, and Vera for the woods department, but, in 1906, the woods department was placed under the supervision of the General Manager of the Company, who lived at San Cristobal, and, in 1908, the central offices were moved from San Cristobal to Buenos Aires. Through the latter office all the work of the Company in Argentina passes on to the London office, the managers at San Cristobal, Vera, Santa Catalina, and La Barrancosa, having to concern themselves only with the technical and administrative work carried on under them respectively.

COMPANY'S BUSINESS.

The Company's business has been mainly divided into three branches, *viz.*: (1) land sales and rentals; (2) cattle industry, and (3) timber trade.

The first two branches are conducted from San Cristobal, situated at the S.W. corner of the Company's original lands, and for many years the site of the central offices of the Company in Argentina, whilst the timber trade is conducted from Vera.

SAN CRISTOBAL DEPARTMENT.

A township was started at San Cristobal in 1884, and now numbers 4,500 persons.

The Administration House and other buildings for the use of the General Manager and Staff of the Cattle and Lands Department were erected about three miles from the town, and the whole now forms a large and handsome establishment, equipped with the most modern requisites for carrying on the work of the estancia.

The cattle lands have been divided up into sections, which are managed by officials of the Company, under the control of the administration at San Cristobal. The office there and the offices on the various sections have recently been connected up by telephone. These sections are Polvareda, Michelot, Los Moyes, and Lucero (which lie to the North and North-East of San Cristobal), and Las Chunas, which forms the North-Western corner of the Company's lands.

[Illustration: *Loading Wheat at Rosario from the "Barranca."*]

[Illustration: *San Cristobal Estancia House.*]



SANTA CATALINA AND LA BARRANCOSA.

In January, 1897, the Company rented the estancia of Santa Catalina, which is situated about five miles from Los Cardos on the Central Argentine Railway and about 150 miles South of San Cristobal. Here the stock which was brought down from San Cristobal was fattened before passing on to the markets. At the same time the Company continued the sowing of alfalfa which had been begun by the proprietor, and ultimately decided to buy the camp and use it as an establishment for breeding fine stock. The terms of the purchase were that the price should be paid by way of an annuity, payable during the joint lifetime of the owner and his wife. In 1909 this method of payment was compounded and satisfied in full by an allotment of shares of the Company.



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The practice has been that the male calves born on this estancia should be sent North to the general herds kept at San Cristobal and the adjoining sections, and that the progeny of these animals should in turn be sold as fat cattle.

To facilitate this business the Company found it necessary to acquire a camp specially adapted for fattening purposes in the Southern part of the Province, so that they might be brought into closer touch with the markets of Rosario and Buenos Aires. They accordingly bought the estancia La Barrancosa in 1906, and have been constantly increasing the area there under alfalfa, equipping it with a full complement of wells and fencing. This estancia lies half way between the towns of San Isabel and Venado Tuerto, from the latter of which it is distant about sixteen miles. But, during the year 1909, a new broad-gauge railway line was opened, leading from Rosario to Bahia Blanca. It passes right through the estancia, and by means of a station just outside the boundary the Company have fresh means of despatching their animals to Rosario.

VERA DEPARTMENT.

The headquarters of the Woods Department is situated about eight miles N.W. of the town of Vera, which stands at kilometre 250 north of the City of Santa Fe on the line of the French Railway Company leading from Santa Fe to Resistencia. Sawmills and offices were built, which involved the presence of a considerable number of work-people, for whom houses had to be provided. Consequently, a small village has grown up at the place.

A branch railway was begun in 1905, at a point 13 kilometres north of Vera town, on the French Railway, to penetrate westwards into the Company's forests, and has been extended to a point called Olmos, lying 30 miles away. Along the line two or three hamlets have sprung up, where people connected with the wood industry reside, as well as the Company's officials who control the timber in the neighbourhood.

In 1904 the Company entered into an agreement with Messrs. Albert and Charles Harteneck, Frederick and Charles Portalis, and Hermann Renner, to bring out a Company to work a factory for the manufacture of tannin extract from the wood of the Quebracho Colorado tree, and this factory was ultimately built within the Company's properties at a place called La Gallareta, which is situated 17 kilometres north-west of the Station of Margarita on the French Railway line. The Santa Fe Land Company have also built a branch line from Margarita to this tannin factory.

[Illustration: *Watering-Place at Barrancosa.*]

[Illustration: *Wood on the Company's Own Line ready for Loading.*]

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COMPANY FROM 1898 TO THE PRESENT TIME.



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Year Share Capital. Deben- Profit. Loss. Placed Balance Dividend ending. tures to Forward. (percent.)

Autho- Issued 6 per cent. Reserve. rised. and fully paid.

L L L L L L L

30th June, " 1898 612,500 612,500 ... 420 Cr. 420 ... " 1899 612,500 612,500 1,650 ... Dr. 1,230 ... " 1900 612,500 612,500 ... 11,757 Cr. 2,870 1-1/4 " 1901 612,500 612,500 ... 9,854 ... 2,000 " 3,068 1-1/4 " 1902 612,500 612,500 ... 20,746 ... 10,000 " 6,158 1-1/4 " 1903 612,500 612,500 ... 23,988 ... 10,000 " 7,896 2 " 1904 612,500 612,500 50,000 28,332 ... 6,000 " 8,790 3-1/2 " 1905 612,500 612,500 50,000 36,483 ... 6,000 " 8,648 5 " 1906 812,500 612,500 50,000 48,183 ... 6,000 " 11,018 6-1/2 " 1907 812,500 766,500 50,000 82,700 ... 12,000 " 20,398 8 " 1908 1,000,000 812,500 50,000 91,463 ... 86,628[E] " 20,611 10 " 1909 1,000,000 812,500 50,000 115,375 ... 20,000 " 22,549 10 and Bonus of 1-1/2

[Illustration: *Loading Timber at Wayside Station.*]

FOOTNOTES:

[E] Including L76,623 from Share Premiums.

THE VALUE OF LAND IN ARGENTINA.

When one goes to a foreign country, and more especially when he intends to settle there with the idea of making a fortune, he naturally turns his attention to the value of the land, as from this he draws his views of the prosperity of the country. Now, twenty-five years ago the Argentine had comparatively very few railways; consequently, the lands at any long distance from Buenos Aires (the capital) were at a very low value. The province of Buenos Aires, the largest in the country, has always been the most populated, and its lands have always commanded the highest prices, and these have risen tremendously, but not so much of late years in proportion as land in the northern provinces. During the years 1885, 1886, 1887, and 1888, there was a great boom in land. Foreigners were pouring in, bringing capital; great confidence was put by foreign capitalists in the country, several railways had run out new branches, new railways were built, new banks were opened, and a very large extent of land was opened up and cultivated, and put under wheat and linseed, harvests were good and money was flowing into the country. Then came a very bad year, 1889; the harvest was practically lost owing to the heavy and continuous rains which fell from December till July with hardly a clear day. This, together with a bad government and the revolution of 1890,

created a great panic and a tremendous slump in all land, from which it took a long time to recover.



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Where people had bought camps and mortgaged them, which was the general thing to do in those days, the mortgagees foreclosed, and, when the camps were auctioned off, they did not fetch half what the properties had been bought for in the first instance, some four or five years previously. This, naturally, had a serious effect on the credit, soundness, and finances of the country, but really, the crisis was not felt until some three or four years after, and it was 1896 and 1897 which were very serious years for the country.

To give one an idea of the value of land in four or five of the principal provinces of the country, I must begin with the Queen Province, as it is called, *viz.*, Buenos Aires. In 1885, property in the city centre was worth 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a yard, whereas to-day it has been sold up to L200 sterling per yard, while suburban lots of 20 yards by 60 yards realised L5 and to-day are fetching L150, and camp lands have risen from L10,000, to L100,000 the square league. Of course this is within a radius of 30 to 50 leagues of the city; lands away to the south and west may yet be bought at L10,000, and, still further south towards Neuquen and the far Pampa, at L2,000 per square league. The province of Buenos Aires is not considered good for alfalfa growing, but has good natural grass camps.

The province of Santa Fe is a large province, extending from the northern boundary of the province of Buenos Aires to Santiago del Estero, and contains what is known as the Gran Chaco. The southern portion of this province is largely dedicated to the production of wheat, linseed, and maize, for which it is admirably adapted. There are also large estancias carrying vast herds of cattle, sheep, and horses, while the northern portion has vast forests of very fine and valuable timber.

[Illustration: *Wheat ready for Loading at Station on Central Argentine Railway.*]

The first part of this province to be developed was the country around Rosario, the large port on the River Parana, where ocean-going steamers call. This, together with good railway accommodation in all directions combined with excellent land in the district, facilitates the cultivation of cereals on a very large scale. Property in Rosario itself is very valuable, and from L30 to L50 a yard is a common figure. In the immediate district of Rosario land is rarely sold in large areas, but may be calculated at L20 an acre, whilst 40 leagues further north it is to-day worth L50,000 a league. I know of one estancia of one league which was bought in 1885 for L2,000, resold, after being sown down in alfalfa and divided into paddocks, without further improvements, at L12,000 (this was in 1903), and again sold in 1909, certainly with further improvements as regards watering arrangements and more paddocks, house, and sheds, *etc.*, in fact, a fair model estancia in good working order, for L60,000. Land on the south-west of Rosario, and about 40 leagues distant, has in the twenty-five years risen from L2,000 a league to L40,000 a league. This is for virgin camp, and to-day in these districts the average price can be

stated at from L30,000 to L40,000 per league, yet 300 miles further north land—good land—can be had at from L4,000 to L6,000 per league.



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The next province, Cordoba, is one of the most hilly in the country, and has been one of the most developed during latter years. Some twenty years ago this was almost considered a desert, where one was told nothing would grow and cattle could not live. To-day it is one of the most prosperous; wheat and linseed are great products here, while alfalfa, when carefully treated, that is, not overstocked, lives for ever on account of the sandy soil, and water being so near the surface. These lands twenty years ago were valued at about L500 to L600 per league, while to-day it is difficult to acquire land under cultivation or alfalfa at less than L30,000 per league. In the Northern part of this province are very valuable stone quarries.

Another province that is advancing very fast is that of San Luis. Here, again, it has been found that alfalfa is at home, and thrives splendidly. This, again, is a very sandy soil, and consequently is much sought after, but this land has not yet touched the value of that in the provinces already mentioned; it will not stand so much cropping, and will not carry the same amount of stock, but still the average price for virgin camp is from L5,000 to L10,000 per league. In this province there is a very large extent of very poor land, covered with a small shrub, which is not worth more than L2,000 a league.

Mendoza is a more northerly province, and mostly dedicated to the grape and wine industry, while a lot of fruit is also exported from there. Wine is made in very large quantities, and a lot of very good quality. The value of land varies very much. The greater portion is worth at present very little. The great point is to get the water concessions for irrigating; without irrigation the land is useless. A good vineyard in its prime, with good irrigation rights, is worth as much as from L40 to L50 per acre, while the ordinary camp land is at about 7s. per acre.

[Illustration: *The Maker of Land Values.*]

REMARKS ON STORMS AND THE CLIMATE OF THE ARGENTINE.

The Argentine Republic, like all hot countries, is subject to very great hurricanes and storms. They occur most frequently in the spring and summer, when very sudden changes of temperature take place. The thermometer has often been known to drop 25 degrees within half an hour.

A great deal of damage is always caused, trees which have taken years of care and trouble are ruthlessly uprooted, roofs blown off, windmills blown down, haystacks turned over, and valuable animals struck by lightning. The terrible closeness and stillness which generally precede a "tormenta" are certain forerunners of bad weather and storms. A terrible hailstorm which took place some time ago will always be remembered by its spectators. The usual signs of it were evident; the atmosphere had become very close and it had been extremely hot for some hours before.



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Though only about 4 p.m., it got peculiarly dark and a strong gale began to blow, and distant sounds of thunder were heard. A sudden lull came, which meant that the storm was about to break; sheets of lightning of every description were followed by deafening peals of thunder, which made man and beast tremble. Then there came a downfall of huge hailstones; they were just like big lumps of jagged ice; some of them measured about six to eight inches round and weighed over half a pound. This storm did a fearful lot of harm; not a leaf was left on a single tree, and hundreds of birds lay dead all around. Though very violent, this hailstorm did not last more than ten minutes, in which time an incalculable amount of destruction took place.

In September, 1909, a very bad cyclone suddenly came on us. The sky turned black and blacker, and the clouds looked horribly wicked. Suddenly a terrific gale got up, which caused every window and door to rattle in a most alarming manner, though they had all been as well secured as possible. The dust seemed to filter in just the same, and in five minutes the house was an inch thick in it. We heard a loud bang and then another over our heads, and on looking out of a window we saw the roof of one of the outer buildings lying on the ground; part of it had been blown over our house and had carried away the chimney, a big iron one, on its way. We were told afterwards that the cook had had to use all her force against the kitchen window to keep it from bursting open, as, if the wind had got in, it would have carried away that roof as well. This hurricane lasted for about an hour and a-half; as soon as it had abated somewhat we went out to see the result. Everywhere reigned havoc and confusion, the whole place looked an old ruin, brick-bats, tiles, broken branches, loose sheets of corrugated iron lying all around; three roofs had been blown away, several windmills knocked down and carried 100 yards away, and lovely old trees had been completely uprooted.

The natives, frightened of remaining in their own quarters, had, in their terror, deserted them and taken refuge, with their wives and children, in the open camp, where they fondly imagined they were safer. Out in the camp the roofs of most of the "puestos," or huts, had been also carried away, leaving the occupants exposed to the cold rains and winds which followed.

A peculiar feature of this storm was that it was not at all general; at the neighbouring "estancias" it was not felt at all, and some of the "peons," who were riding in the camp at the time, said they could see this whirlwind coming a long way off at a tremendous rate and that it looked like a column of red smoke; they could not feel the effects of the wind either, although they were not more than half a mile away.

This storm was followed by very heavy rains which lasted for about ten days, during which our house was flooded, as the wind had lifted the tiles and the rain was driven in through every possible place.



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Another time, when driving home from the town of Vernado Tuerto, we were caught in a very bad dust storm. Things became so black that we could not see where we were going, so we had to halt. The wind was so strong that the men had to get out of the carriage, which was a heavy covered-in waggonette, and hold the wheels down to prevent it from being overturned. We all looked like seaside niggers, as the dust and rain falling at once came down like mud on us all. One gets quite hardened to these severe storms. On one occasion a very rough wind began to blow, but, as it was a steady gale, no one took particular notice of it. It was after dinner, and everybody was busy playing cards. The wind made such a deafening noise that you could hardly hear yourself speak; presently some of the occupants of the house thought they would have a look outside to see if things were all right; when they were surprised to see an outer building, used for stores and machinery, roofless, and the roof nowhere to be seen; it was discovered afterwards on the top of their own house, and they had never heard it happen.

The climate in the Argentine is very variable; we have great extremes of heat and cold. It is healthy as a rule, except in the swampy districts or during a very wet season, when a great many residents suffer from rheumatism.

People talk about the sudden changes of English weather, but we are treated just the same; one day it will be brilliantly hot and fine, and another day cold and miserable.

One part of the country or another is generally suffering from drought, when in another part they are being flooded out.

In the winter there is much more sunshine than there is in England; in the early morning it is bitterly cold, at noon on a fine day it is blazing hot, and then, as soon as the sun goes in, it freezes hard.

In the summer, of course, the heat is very great, but, as it is generally dry, it is quite healthy.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF WORKING ON ESTANCIAS.

I came out with my brother on a tramp steamer from Penarth. We took thirty-one days. However, time passed fairly quickly, chipping off rust and painting the decks, after we got over our sickness.

Rain fell heavily as we landed at Buenos Aires, two typical *gringos* (greenhorns), not knowing a word of Spanish. I went to a first-class hotel, whose proprietor I had met in England. My first attempt to speak Spanish was in a tram. I asked the conductor to stop; getting out I said, "Mucha grasa" (much fat), instead of "muchas gracias" (many thanks)—then called the man a fool for laughing.

We stopped in Buenos Aires a week and our bill came into hundreds of dollars, which took a big slice off our small means.

We then went to an estancia (farm) in the Province of Cordoba. The estancia was fifty-one miles square, owned by an Argentine family. The manager was a North-American, well known in camp life.



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The estancia consisted of three sections, one where I went, another where my brother was, and the other the headquarters.

I was under a young Scotchman. The camp was fifteen miles, with 3,000 cows, 2,000 steers, and 500 mares. There was my companion, one peon (man), a boy, and myself. My house was made of mud walls and floor, a zinc roof, with a little straw. It was cool in summer, but very cold in winter. There was one room for ourselves, where we slept and ate, one for the cook (when we had one), and a kitchen. Under my bed I had a snake's hole; a long black snake came out in the night, and, on hearing a sound, would go back. I did everything to kill it, but with no success. Also I had two kittens which slept in my bed. One night I felt something soft by my feet. I thought it was the kittens, but, putting my hand down, I found my feet covered with blood. I jumped out of bed, and found a young hare half eaten and my sheets covered with blood.

The first thing I had to do was to skin a cow, and it made me feel very uncomfortable to look at the horrid sight. The next day I was sent to fetch the fat from a dead cow. When I got there I could not see any fat and wondered what it was. I saw the intestines and carried them bodily on my new recado (native saddle). My horse got excited and I arrived dead beat. I told my companion I had the fat: then he burst out laughing and said I had got the intestines. Needless to say my recado was the worse for wear.

The food was different from what I was used to, and I felt ill for a time.

In the summer I was up at between three and four, having "mate-cocido" (cooked Paraguayan tea—the native drink) with a hard biscuit; at eleven, breakfast of puchero (big pieces of meat boiled in a pot), then maize with milk and a biscuit. Sometimes tea at four, but very seldom; supper consisted of an asado and mate at seven or eight o'clock.

I had charge of two valuable stallions—they had a stable of mud and straw.

At branding time the capataz (foreman) came up with his men for a week. Up before three o'clock, quite dark, we branded 6,000 calves, and I enjoyed it.

The Boss seldom came; when he did, his trap would be sure to run over a piece of wire, and then we heard of it; nothing missed him.

Then our cook began stealing provisions from the store box. We changed the locks three times, and each time she bought a key to the same. One night I asked her for some coffee. She said there was none. I could see she had some in a small bag, and I went to fetch it. She took up a knife and threatened me. I soon twisted the knife from her. Our food was bad, my companion was careless, and frightened of her. One day he had a row, and she got the sack, using strong language. We then did our own cooking for eight months: the first one home from camp had to begin cooking.

The meat we got was often green and bitter. All the time we had puchero and asado, and an occasional ostrich egg.



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Ostriches swarmed everywhere, and it was good sport lassoing them. I found one nest with fifty eggs, laid by different birds. My cooking was rather a failure at first, the smoke was so thick we could not see each other. I was told to cook maize for dinner. I made a big fire, and cooked for three hours, and was then told I had the stallions' maize. Another time it was very dark; our candles, made of old clothes and grease, had run out. I had made some good soup, and put the pot near the table, then, walking by, put my foot in it: the hot grease made me hop, and took the skin off my foot. Our table was an old greasy box; we had no plates, nor forks, just a big knife. Sometimes, coming in very tired from a hard day, we had no strength to chop wood and make a fire; we just went to bed. Many days we only had an asado and mate. Mate I am very fond of—it is so refreshing and sustaining.

My brother was only eight miles away: his section was under alfalfa, and he had a comfortable house. One dark night, going home from his place, I followed a fence until I came to a cross fence. I was going slowly, when, all of a sudden, my horse stopped dead, and I shot over the fence, the bridle and halter came off, and away went my horse, leaving me to continue five miles on foot.

Bizcachas (like a big badger) were numerous. One day we dug a two-metre hole, and next day found eight live ones. They have teeth one and a-half inches long.

Our nearest village was eighteen miles away, where I met some English friends, and played tennis or had some other amusement. I used to start back at 2.30 a.m. to be in time for work. One night I had to cross a big field, without a path or fence for a guide. It was dark, and lightning hard. I made for a light, which I thought was the house. Going for some time, I came to a fence—I was lost. I unsaddled and lay down to sleep, the rain was pouring hard, when I heard a donkey braying, so I shouted, and was answered by a man in a puesto (out-station). The light I saw was a village twelve miles away.

My companion was very slack, and the patrons came up and sacked him.

Then I went to the estancia house for a month, breaking in colts for driving. I felt rather sad at leaving my rough work. It was hard work, but I never had better health.

My Boss then earned \$15 per month, and his wife cooked for the men. Now he is one of the richest men in the country.

There was no opening there, so the Boss sent me to a New Zealander who had half a league of camp, all fine stock, good alfalfa and splendid water. He had a big house and I expected I would live well. My first work was to dig up locusts' eggs for a week under a hot sun, with the ground very hard. The Boss was a man of forty-two, very red-faced and extremely rich, but as mean as possible.



Our meals took about six to eight minutes, fast eating; he would watch every mouthful. At tea he would take a lot of milk and give me a little; he finished soon, while I burnt my throat. He allowed me a slice of biscuit for each meal. His cook only got \$10 a month.



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In the winter we were in bed by six to seven.

His clothes were a disgrace to any peon. He had native trousers that button at the foot, with top boots, no socks, his heel and big toe were sticking out, no vest, only a shirt and an old hat, where the grease of many years was visible.

He was a splendid worker—I have not seen a better one. We used to catch locusts in a big zinc box pulled by two horses; the locusts were put into sacks, and after being left standing for four days, were carted to the village, where he got 10 cents a kilo. The smell in carting these dead locusts was simply terrible. Then I helped pick ten square of maize, which at first took a little skin off my hands. At branding time we lassoed each calf to cut off the horns. I had to sit on their necks, and got smothered in the face with hot blood. The Boss was very proud because his monthly account only came to \$12 for four of us: biscuits, sugar, tea, and other things. He sent his clothes once in three months to be washed. He had few friends, no one ever came to visit him, and every Sunday he shut himself in his room. He bought the place for \$90,000 and sold it for over double. He was a thorough campman, but so mean. One cold winter 500 cows died of starvation; rather than sell them at a low price he let them starve. The last thing he said was, he was “going to New Zealand to marry an ugly lady, but she has plenty of money.” His countrymen called him a disgrace to his country and the meanest in the Argentine.

Then a kind friend found me a place on a well-known estancia in the same province. The manager, the second-manager, and the book-keeper were all Irish, born in the country. I had a good horse, which I rode fifty miles to the estancia.

The second told me to have my food with the peons (men), which was rather disheartening. I tried to eat in the kitchen, but the French cook kicked me out, and for ten months I fed with the peons; they were very good fellows. The second and the book-keeper had meals together. The second-manager did no work: up at half-past eight, he went to the train, had a drink at the shop, then came back for dinner, slept until tea-time, then went to see the train pass again and have another drink, and came back at all hours. He had been there fourteen years and was only getting a hundred a month.

The chief work was loading cattle and sheep for the big freezing factories. The trucks were rotten. One night we finished at 11 p.m., after a hard day's work, three of us unloaded 300 quebracho posts in under three hours. I had a French gardener in my room who did nothing else but spit and talk politics.

The Boss took me to learn shearing. I had to shear, gather the wool, sort it and pack it up. Each man got five cents a sheep, but it was hard work, all done by hand.

Then I cut alfalfa for a fortnight—a nice easy job.



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A Catholic priest came to stay for eight days—Mass every day at 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., sometimes three a day. No work at all. Everyone had to go—the book-keeper did not, so he got the sack. I, as a Protestant, went to the sermons, which were very good. It was wonderful; these rough campmen went away quite tamed for a time. The last night the Boss got married at half-past twelve at night to a native lady. Another time, while we were at Mass, someone came to say the gardener was dying—we raced down, the priest in front ready to hear his confession, but when we got there the gardener was calmly smoking his pipe, greatly surprised.

An inspector of locusts stopped all the summer. He did nothing but eat, sleep, and drink whisky. We had locust-killing machines of every description, but we did not kill ten kilos.

The days I enjoyed were when we started out early to part some animals in a herd of over a thousand. At eleven we would have an asado and mate, and give our horses a drink, then finish parting, and get home at half-past seven. The horses look wrecks, and no good, but they work all day—mostly galloping—and are splendid stayers.

The Boss's brother, a very nice man of fifty, married a servant of the Boss, a girl of eighteen.

Great excitement is caused by races. The Boss was keen, and the men talked of nothing else for days. Every Sunday there are races. Once I rode my horse bareback in three races of 200 metres, and won a bottle of beer, a packet of tobacco, and a knife.

Then I was put in charge of fine stock. I had ten Durham bulls, two thoroughbred stallions, one Pecheron, eight rams and twelve pigs. I had a boy under me. I also had to saddle up the Boss's and the Second's horses, and harness the traps. Sometimes I had to wait till eleven at night, very tired, to unsaddle the Second's horse, as he had been making love to the Stationmaster's sister.

The work was very interesting and hard, even on Sundays or feast days, watering, cleaning the animals, and curing any foals that were ill.

I then moved to another room near the stable, with a newly arrived Italian who knew no Spanish nor English, also an Irishman just arrived. They could not speak to each other. The Irishman slept on the floor every night, and poured kerosene all over him to keep insects away. One day he poisoned five pigs, giving them the dip-water to drink. He had few clothes. He would turn them inside out, and often had three pairs of trousers and two shirts on.

One day the Boss was out: the men were taming some wild colts in the corral. I took French leave and went. I got on five. None had had a saddle on before or even been handled. We lassoed them, pulled them down and put on the bridle. Then five men held a long rope and one put on the native saddle, with stirrups big enough to get your



toes in. Then they tied a red handkerchief round my head. I mounted gently but quickly. Then the rope was taken off and away the colt went as fast as possible, with one man on each side to shove you either way, all the time bucking and plunging. I did not fall, but one stirrup broke. One laid down and would not move. It tried to bite everyone. When they go fast and buck at the same time it is very hard to stick on.



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On the 25th of May, the great holiday in this country, I went to an estancia to see some friends. On my way back we had to cross a deep river. The coachman drove across, but one wheel went into a big hole and the jerk sent me out on my head, where the wheel passed over my hair, missing my head by inches. I was senseless. A crowd of women came and began weeping—they thought I was dead—then I was taken in a procession to the chemist, who sent me to a hospital, where I found my collar bone broken. I did nothing for three weeks.

This estancia is a splendid one for learners, because there is a little of everything. Once I had a month with the threshing machine, sleeping out with the mosquitoes, and getting meat nearly raw for food; but a lot of money can be made from the harvest.

Then, after a few weeks' holiday to England, we came back, and I went down south with my brother to sow alfalfa seed. We had a caravan on wheels, and learned how to plough and sow. We went to a camp race-meeting, where every estancia has its own tent, there is racing all day and dancing at night.

I often look back upon these jolly times. Work was exacted with anything but kindness, but the life was simple and very healthy, and many pleasant reminiscences are talked over when it is my luck to join others around the camp fire before falling to sleep with nothing but a bullock's head as a pillow and a "recado" as a blanket and the glorious, starry sky above one.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF CAMP LIFE.

To an outsider, life in the camps or country might be considered very slow: the distance between the estancias being so great, the ordinary form of social life is quite impossible; for instance, when one goes to pay a call on a neighbour, even a first call, it means going for the day, starting in the cool of the morning and returning in the evening, and so allowing the horses to have a rest. Of course, if everyone had a motor-car, this might not be necessary; but as yet they are very few and far between. This is no doubt owing to the bad roads; in most districts, after a few hours' rain, the roads are flooded, and what is worse still, "pantanosa" (thick, sticky mud).

Most estancieros keep open house, and are only too pleased when people "drop in," which they do at all times and for any meal, almost without a "by your leave." An estancia house has to be very elastic, and ready to provide, at a moment's notice, board and lodging for unexpected guests. This is quite the nicest way of entertaining one's friends—no fuss of preparation, and, more often than not, a very jolly evening of cards, music, or games.



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It is a delightful country for men, a healthy, open-air life, with plenty of hard work and hard riding; each man has from four to six horses allowed him for working purposes, and then, as a rule (talking of the English mayor-domo), he has two or three polo ponies of his own. Sunday is the great day for polo; there is very little time in our busy Argentine even for a practice game during the week, so Sunday means a merry meeting of friends wherever there is a polo club in the district, people going in six or seven leagues (or even more) from one side of the town to meet friends who have come an equal distance from the other side, a thing they might not do for months if it were not for the polo club. Each lady takes her turn in providing tea on these polo Sundays, and there is great competition as to who makes the best cakes, especially as it often falls to the lady herself to make these luxuries.

Wherever there is a polo club the most exciting event of the year is the Spring Race Meeting, two days' racing, often followed by a polo match or tournament with neighbouring clubs, and always as many dances as possible, as it is the only time in the year when enough girls can be collected together; every estancia house has its own party, as many as can be crowded in, including friends from Buenos Aires and Rosario, who delight in these camp meetings, and she is a proud hostess who can count a few girls amongst her party. I may as well add here that girls are almost "non est" in the camp, many districts for leagues and leagues round not being able to boast of one English girl.

[Illustration: *Tennis Party at Vera.*]

Most clubs hold a Gymkhana Meeting in the Autumn, which makes one more excitement in the year: it is a very merry meeting as a rule, with always a dance or two if enough girls can be found. During the Winter season (from April 1st to September 1st) the shooting is very good in most parts, and many good shooting parties are given where there is enough game to make it worth while asking one's friends. The bag consists of partridges, martinetta (similar to the pheasant) and hares (which are not considered worth picking up); when there are a number of guns, dogs are not used, but two men on horseback drag a wire through the grass (several in a line, if a big party), which forces the birds to rise, and the guns walk behind. Peons on horseback, carrying sacks, keep close up to them and pick up the birds as they fall, and close on their heels comes a big brake, into which are emptied the contents of the sacks as they get too heavy. The ladies of the party follow in all sorts and conditions of vehicles, cheering on the shooters and dispensing much-needed refreshments. A shoot is always followed up by a jolly evening, after a hot bath and a good dinner. The men, forgetting how tired they are, are quite ready to sing, dance, or play bridge until the small hours. Another great event not to be forgotten is the visit of the



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Camp Chaplain: he goes from one district to another holding services, every Sunday in a different place. In a well-populated district he would hold one about every two months, but to some places, where there are next to no English people, he would probably only go about once or twice a year. Church Sunday is quite an event, and again gives one an opportunity of meeting friends from a distance. The parson is very lenient with us as a rule, and does not object to any form of amusement in the afternoon, such as polo, tennis, cricket, football, or golf, and encourages the young men to come to *Church* (usually a room hired for the occasion) in costumes suitable for such. Our poor Camp Chaplain does not have an easy time; distances are so great that more than half his time is spent on the train.

[Illustration: *Carnival at Vera.*]

CARNIVAL IN THE ARGENTINE.

Carnival falls every year during the week before the beginning of Lent. It is a general holiday, and much fun and amusement are crammed into the few days which precede the dull season of fasting.

Carnival is more observed in camp towns than in the bigger cities, where the custom of celebrating it is very much on the wane, and where the law forbids water-throwing and other such damp forms of amusement, which are winked at by the more lenient authorities in local towns.

It is really quite a pretty sight to see a camp town during carnival. The one main street, which does not boast of pavements, and is generally a yard deep in dust, is gaily decorated with bunting and festoons. Small stands are put up every ten yards or so, in which the "caballeros" take up their positions and pelt the "senoritas" with confetti and "serpentinatas" (blocks of different coloured paper which look like rolls of tape about 30 or 50 yards long). The elite of the "pueblo" drive round in the procession; ladies, some in the very latest creations, and some in beautiful fancy dresses, parade round in flower and ribbon bedecked carriages. A prize is generally given to the best decorated conveyance, and to the best fancy costume, which causes a lot of competition and jealousy amongst the fair sex.

On an estancia, carnival is celebrated in a much more drastic fashion. On one place, the giddy members of the household have a very rowdy time of it, and make things very lively for the unwary. On one occasion, they determined to give the mayor-domo his share of the general drenching which he had missed; so when he rode in at midday, after a long and busy morning's work in the camp, he was welcomed with a volley of

buckets of water, which were emptied over him from the top of the house, where the delinquents had taken up their advantageous position.



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Another time a certain young damsel, a guest in the same house, saw from the window her hostess entertaining one of the boys, a fresh arrival from England, who had ridden over from a neighbouring estancia. Prompted by her daring friends she was induced to take up a jug of water, and stealing up behind his chair, emptied the contents of the vessel over the visitor's head, and then bolted; the injured party, after recovering his self-possession, rose to the occasion and gave chase, and after a desperate struggle, and in spite of penitent apologies, she was borne off by her captor and deposited in the first tub he happened to see, which turned out to be a freshly painted rubbish barrel.

There is not much respecting of persons on these occasions, the girls generally combine against the boys, who, as a rule, come off best. The most binding promises are made on both sides, who vow not to throw anything larger than a "globo" (a small balloon filled with water, which bursts when it touches anything solid) or "poms" (leadensquirt full of scent); but in the excitement of the fray which follows all is forgotten, and buckets of water, the garden hose, and even the ducking of some in water troughs, are the final outcome.

The scene after an afternoon or evening's battle is very funny; girls, with their hair lying in dripping masses over their faces and shoulders, their dresses, generally the oldest of thin cotton ones, clinging hopelessly to their wearied forms, present a truly comic sight. When they are all tired of strife, they retire by common consent to the house, where, after discarding their soaking garments and taking a warm bath, they are ready to discuss the glories of the day over a much-wanted dinner.

HORSE-RACING IN THE ARGENTINE.

HORSE-RACING IN THE ARGENTINE.

In this country a great deal more racing goes on than in Europe, and it is not confined to the moneyed classes only. Even the "peones" hold their small meetings and match their grass-fed ponies. Estancieros and mayor-domos have camp race-meetings once or twice yearly at all the larger polo clubs, and at Palermo and Hurlingham every class of society in Buenos Aires may be seen on the stands.

At Palermo race-meetings are held frequently, almost weekly in fact, on Sunday afternoons; and the stands are generally well filled. On days of festival, when there is a special programme, the place is crowded, and these occasions correspond, more or less, with the more important meetings in England.

The course is of earth, and perfectly flat, so that the only thing which interferes with the view is dust. The stands are magnificent and the different grades of society are divided by railings, while at the back of each may be seen the row of offices of the "Sport," which is the betting system of the country.



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This consists of tickets, which are sold at a fixed price, with the name of one of the entries. After the race there is a great rush to the offices, made by those who have bought the winner, to collect their winnings, which are the total receipts, minus a small percentage, divided by the number of those who bought the winner. In this way a very hot favourite will pay very little more than the original purchase money, while an outsider who wins will pay his backers perhaps ten, or even twenty times their deposit. There is also private betting, of course, but no public bookmakers.

The horses are of very good quality, though not up to the standard of the classic races in Europe. A number of youngsters are imported yearly from England and the United States, and among them usually some good selling-plate winners, and one or two that have been placed in first-class flat races. The country also produces some excellent horses, and they are improving every year; the stud farms are already well known in Europe as some of the best in the world. Of these, the most important, perhaps, is the "Ojo de Agua," so-called from its famous spring, which waters all the stables as well as dwelling quarters. It is the home of the famous Cyllene, whose offspring we expect to see winning races in the near future; Polar Star, scarcely less known, and Ituzaingo, a native of this country, are his present companions; while the remains of Gay Hermit, Stiletto, Pietermaritzburg, and Kendal, all of whom are well known among turf circles at home, rest beneath its soil. There are several other equally famous stud farms, such as the "San Jacinto," the present home of Val d'Or, who won the Eclipse Stakes from Cicero, the Derby winner of that year; at another, Diamond Jubilee, whose list of victories is long, resided for the latter part of his life.

Nor are the jockeys unworthy of their mounts, and some very fine riding may be witnessed both at Palermo and Hurlingham.

In contrast to these races, run on a well-ordered course, and watched from luxurious stands, are the native "cancha" meetings, held, probably, at some country public-house, and run on a "cancha," consisting of a soft piece of road, or along a fence where there are no holes. The races consist of matches arranged between two ponies, over short distances. The start is made only by agreement of both the jockeys, and thus many hours are wasted in their manoeuvres to get the advantage of one another at the start. If the judges have money on the loser, the race is often given a dead heat, and has to be run again. The pony of most endurance has usually the best chance of winning, though the race itself is short, as his rival may be tired out by repeated false starts. Large sums of money often change hands at these meetings, as the native is a born gambler, and understands this primitive method of racing better than the more complicated systems of the regular course. Owing to this, and to the competitors' efforts to cheat one another, not infrequently knives are drawn during the heated discussion which follows the race.



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The ponies are, for the most part, taken straight off the camp, though in some cases they have been fed on maize and trained. They are ridden either bareback or with the native “recado,” and catch-weights: as may be gathered from the method, it is usually “owners up.”

Between these two extreme classes of racing in this country are the English camp race-meetings, which are held by all the larger polo clubs once or twice a year. Being of rare occurrence, and as some, if not all, of the races are open to members of other clubs, these are among the chief social gatherings in camp life: in many cases there is a small polo tournament attached, as it is the best opportunity for those who come from a distance, and could not come twice. Therefore it usually means a two or three days' holiday, and often a dance, or some entertainment in the evenings. Old friends exchange reminiscences, and new acquaintances are formed; while the ladies also make the best of the opportunity to put on their smartest frocks and hats.

The races themselves, too, are the source of considerable talk and excitement: both horses and jockeys are well known by sight or reputation to the chief part of the company, and any “dark horse” or new arrival, is inspected with care and anxiety by his rivals.

The class of horse entered varies between the three-quarter bred and the “criollo” with no pretence to breeding at all, who often carries off the short polo pony sprints. Occasionally there may be a thoroughbred entered who has been found wanting at Palermo or Hurlingham, but these are few and not always successful, as the longest races do not often exceed about a mile and a-half. As the weights correspond to steeplechase weights at home the jockeys are practically always amateurs, and a large percentage of “owners up” is always found. Young mayor-domos who have never ridden at a meeting before often find themselves ranged alongside of Grand National riders at the start, and some amusing incidents have occurred, though there is some very good amateur riding to be seen as well.

The betting is on a smaller scale generally than at the native meeting, and is often conducted by someone setting up as a public bookmaker; at other times a “sport” is formed after the fashion of Palermo. Also the auction of all entries before the start of the races in the American way is a great favourite; the total receipts for each race are divided proportionately between those who bought the winner and “placed” horses.

There is opportunity for a little horse-dealing too, and many good polo ponies to send home or play in the tournaments have been picked up in this way. The shorter races for ponies under polo height give an opportunity to the polo player, and the mayor-domo who cannot train his ponies for longer distances, to try the mettle of their mounts against outside and purer blood.

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Nowadays most of the entries are trained to some extent, though not many go to regular training establishments. To have a reasonable chance of running well in the longer races, however, it is necessary to have your mounts in stable exercised regularly and fed on corn. It is only quite lately, however, that even so much training has been adopted at all generally. In the old pioneer days of English estancias, when these clubs were formed, they raced ponies taken straight off grass and kept fit by riding the regular rounds of camp and stock.

There are many tales of the great “rags” that happened in those days, and curious incidents of racing, too. On one occasion a winner of a polo pony race was objected to as over height. The measurement was to be taken after the end of the meeting; and it must be remembered that all ponies out in the camp are unshod. The man who had come in second went round to the stables before the measuring and noticed in the winner’s stall a number of large pieces of hoof recently chopped off. The pony passed with an inch off his forefeet and nothing was said, though it had been obviously over height. That evening at bridge the owner happened to win considerably from the man who had lodged the complaint, who, when the score was to be settled, threw down some pieces of hoof on the table saying, “Take back your dirty chips.”

Nowadays, of course, things are not quite so rough and ready, and most of the clubs are affiliated, and run under Hurlingham or the Jockey Club rules, so that good sport and good feeling prevail. In fact the camp man looks forward to these occasions as the best bits of sport and amusement that he will get during the year.

SUNDAYS IN CAMP.

SUNDAYS IN CAMP.

In no place is Sunday more looked forward to and enjoyed than in camp. Holidays on the estancia come but seldom, and were it not for the welcome break that gives the campman a day of rest every week, his life would be a round of work, and probably make him the proverbial “dull boy.” All the busy working-days are so filled with the various duties that when evening comes and dinner is over the tired worker has little inclination for reading or any other relaxation, the thought of that early bell which rouses him before sunrise makes him take advantage of every hour’s sleep he can. At an hour when the townman is thinking of beginning the evening’s amusement at theatre or concert, the campman is sleeping the sound sleep that fresh air combined with hard work never denies. But on one evening an exception is made to these early hours, and that is Saturday. With the pleasant feeling of a week’s work completed and the morrow’s rest before them, our campmen begin their weekly holiday by an extra hour or two at billiards or music, or perhaps a rubber of bridge, turning in with a fervid “Thank goodness, to-morrow’s Sunday.” Then the pleasure of waking at

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the usual hour (4 a.m. or even earlier in summer) and remembering that it is the blessed Day of Rest, and having time to enjoy the extra hours, then the luxury of dressing at one's leisure, choosing the collar and most becoming tie and adjusting them with care, and coming out in spotless white duck or smart riding breeches, ready to enjoy whatever sport is in season; tennis is mostly played all the year round; and when birds are plentiful a shoot on the lagunas attracts the sportsman, the "bag" making a welcome variety to the dinner table; snipe, partridge, hares, and many varieties of duck are common in a season that has not been too dry. Then, to those lucky ones who have a polo club within reach, Sunday during the winter season is a day of real enjoyment.

The game, which in England can only be played by men of means, can on the estancia be enjoyed by all at little expense, the useful little Argentine horses being easily trained to the game. Sometimes one finds a few enterprising golfers who, with not a little trouble, make a few "greens" and do a couple of rounds just to keep their hand in, but it is not a general camp game. It will be seen, however, that the Day of Rest is not one of idleness, but rather a healthful and beneficial change of exercise.

Church service enters but seldom into the camp Sunday—such privileges are rare, although now camp parsons are more numerous than a few years ago—but at best one can only count on one or two services a year. When a Church service *is* held he would be a carping critic indeed who is not satisfied and pleased with the earnest attention with which the service is followed and the vigorous singing of hymns and chants in which all the boys join so lustily; it is a reminder of Home to them, and the familiar service is thoroughly enjoyed.

The Day of Rest, so essential to one's well-being, seems to come round with such surprising rapidity that we may say truly it proves that estancia life, with its long hours of hard work, so far from being monotonous or wearisome, is a happy life. Where time flies past quickly it means it passes happily, and amongst the most pleasant of the days we spend in this land of sunshine we must count the Sundays in camp.

[Illustration: "A Day of Real Enjoyment."]

THE SERVANT PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA.

THE SERVANT PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA.

We often hear complaints from friends at home about the trouble they experience over obtaining and keeping good servants, and there is no doubt that the servant problem is a serious one in England, and is getting worse every year; but it pales into insignificance

when compared with the trials and tribulations of those who live in the Argentine and have to keep house.

From all one hears, those living in Buenos Aires and the larger towns have a terrible time of it with their servants, especially if they are not overburdened with the good things of this world in the shape of hard cash; but my experiences have been confined to the camp, so that of the town side of the question I cannot speak.



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I have been three years in the province of Cordoba, and all the servants I have met with except one were Argentines from the foothills of the Cordoba Sierras.

They were without exception quite untrained as far as the English idea goes, and the first thing to do with them was usually to teach them the primitive ideas of cleanliness. The first servant I had was an ancient female named Andrea, about forty years old, and it proved quite impossible to get her to see the necessity of keeping anything in the kitchen clean, as she seemed imbued with the idea that it was great waste of time washing saucepans and frying-pans, as they would only get dirty again when next used, and the most she could be persuaded to do was to rub them round inside with a bit of old newspaper or a handful of grass. Needless to say, after a time I got tired of these methods, and so we parted.

My next servant, Angelina, was one of the best I had, as she was clean, which was a great consideration, and also she was quick to learn and soon picked up the rudiments of cooking according to our ideas; her great failing, however, was that she was anything but honest, and could not refrain from petty pilfering; and another drawback to her was her objection to wearing shoes or stockings in the hot weather; in spite of being constantly told that she must not appear without them, she would insist in doing so, and this was a continual cause of trouble.

After getting rid of No. 2 our real troubles began, and we had eight changes in ten months. At the time we were living in wooden huts about two miles from a village which was a summer resort for rich people from Buenos Aires, and this caused a dearth of servants during the summer months, as the place was full from the beginning of December to the end of March, and people who came up for the summer and rented houses usually were willing to pay anything to get servants, with the result that we outside would get none, or only the cast-off ones. Nos. 3 and 4 stayed but a short time. My fifth attempt was a terrible girl, too dirty for words; and though apparently willing to learn, too utterly lacking in intelligence to ever learn anything. She used to get herself into the most awful grimy condition, and one incident during her time with me is worth mentioning. I had with great difficulty one day got her to understand that a wood floor could not be properly cleaned with a grass broom dipped in cold water and just swished about over it, and, by going down on my knees with a scrubbing brush and hot water and soap, and giving a practical demonstration of how a floor should be washed, had started her away to clean it, and judged that I might safely leave her, to attend to the other household duties in the kitchen. I must tell you that the day previously I had given her a practical lesson in black-leading a stove by doing it myself while she looked on. Well, after an hour in the kitchen I returned to see how she was getting on, when I found



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to my great pleasure that not content with scrubbing the floor, she had also attacked the stove with hot water, soap, and scrubbing brush, with the result that my hard work of the previous day was all undone and the whole room well sprinkled with black specks and the stove a mass of rust. Two weeks of similar experiences finished our acquaintance, and she gave place to No. 6. After I had spent three weeks teaching No. 6 cooking, she quietly informed me that she was leaving at the end of the week to take up a place as cook in Rosario, as she now knew enough cooking for the position; so I had not only wasted all my time in teaching her, but had paid her into the bargain for learning enough to leave me.

The next servant, No. 7, Alexandrina, was, I think, the worst. She was a Spaniard from Barcelona. She was an awful individual, and would insist on wearing clothes of so light and scanty a nature that she was not decent to have about the house; also, whenever we happened to have a joke of any sort to laugh over at meals, she used immediately to come in from the kitchen to see what was going on, and I had the greatest difficulty to get her to return to the kitchen. I had to get rid of her, because her moral reputation was anything but good, and two days in the week she refused to get out of bed, and told me to do my own dirty work, as she was ill; so at the end of two weeks she had to go. No. 8, Maria, was a girl direct from the sierras, and was very stupid and silly, and did not a single thing. One day I was buying vegetables, and she asked me why I wanted to buy roots, and when I told her they were to eat, she said even poor people could afford to buy meat, and she would not eat them. One day I took this girl out with me to do some shopping, and called on some people who had a piano. It was twilight, and someone was playing the piano, and she rushed in the room and out again, with her face very white, and said someone was beating a big, black animal in the corner of the room, and it was screaming dreadfully with the pain. This girl's mother was a very talkative old lady, and would insist on coming with three children every day and taking up her position in the kitchen, and when once she commenced to talk, one could not get away from her. At the end of the month she came for the girl's pay, and wanted me to pay her more money, which I was not willing to do, as I had been unable to teach her much; so she asked if her daughter might go away for the day and night, as she had to bath. This I was only too willing to agree to, and let her go; but they returned in the middle of the night, and removed all her belongings. After a few days I managed to get No. 9, who was a widow with two children: but she only stayed two weeks. Our tenth and last attempt was made with No. 4 once more, as she was again able to come to us. She stayed two months, when we went away for four weeks' holiday. A week after our return I paid her in full for the



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month, though she had never been near the house all that time, and she promptly said she could not stay with us any longer, and left. We nearly got to No. 11, as we engaged a girl to come at \$20 a month to start with, and she was to come the next morning at eight o'clock to begin work. She arrived at 10 a.m., and informed me that, as we had paid our last servant \$25 the month, she could not come for less. I was so sick and tired of my experiences that this finished me, and I decided to do without any servant. Since then, for the last year, I have done the work myself.

POLICE OF A BYGONE DAY.

POLICE OF A BYGONE DAY.

Yes, times have changed since I went to San Cristobal just twenty years ago. For then the English were pioneers, so to speak; not in a country of savagery, but of semi-savagery, a very different and much worse matter. I wonder is A.J., the Chief of Police, still to the fore? Ye gods, how that man tried to break my heart, and how nearly he succeeded! I was a Mayor-domo then, and G. was my boss, standing in the place of the owners to me. The boss had a mortal dread of the police and their powers, seen and unseen. So that when the worthy Chief of Police suddenly decided to add the trade of butchering to his many lucrative businesses, I received orders to sell him cows at twenty-five per cent. less price than I sold to any of his competitors. Thus, whereas I was selling them at twenty dollars paper, then worth about one pound per head, I had to sell him at fifteen shillings, with the inevitable result that he almost immediately became master of the situation and the entire local market became his, enabling him to charge what he liked for meat, while I was forbidden to raise the price of the cows sold him.

Insatiable in his greed, he began to ask for cattle twice a week, always taking from ten to twenty animals, until one day, after exceptionally wet weather, I protested that it was not possible to round up the stock in the then state of the camp and destroy so much grass for a small bunch of cows. Unlucky thought and ill-judged protest! For when he urged that the inhabitants of the town were starving, and that a small point of half-breed heifers would do to go on with, I received orders to let him part out from our best herd. Twenty fine half-bred Herefords did he pick while I almost shed tears of blood, though all the time, of course, I had to show a smiling face.

This sort of thing had been going on for some time, when one of the boundary riders told me that the fence between the town and one of our nearest paddocks had been cut during the night.

"Then mend it up," said I.



“Sir, it is mended already.”

Not a week had passed before the same man brought me the same report. So I determined to “parar rodeo” (round up the cattle) immediately, and count them. Twenty heifers short in one square league, and in less than a month! This thing had to stop. I told the Capataz to take the boundary rider off that beat, without telling him why, and then the Capataz and I patrolled the fence night after night for a week, during which it was never cut.



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We put a new boundary rider on, and three mornings later he came to see me bright and early, saying that not only had the fence been cut, but that there were distinct traces of cattle having passed out recently.

After assuring myself that there was no doubt about the matter, for I found the hoof marks of what I calculated to be not less than twenty animals, I went post haste to my friend the Chief of Police, never doubting that after all the favours shown him he would prove a friend in need. I was young then.

“You don’t say so, Don Ernesto!” said his podgy, putty-faced little Highness. “Where was it? When was----- By heavens, somebody shall suffer for this! Just let me or any of my soldiers catch the thieves, and not one of them shall reach Santa Fe alive. Now, I’ll tell you what. Just leave it to me, and don’t you worry nor think any more about the matter, much less mention it to a soul. In less than two days I’ll have the thief or thieves here in the stocks.”

I told him plainly that that was not my programme, and that, whatever he did, I was not going to leave that fence unpatrolled until I could move the stock out of the paddock.

“Then this is what we’ll do, Don Ernesto. You shall be one of us. You come and dine with me at six o’clock this evening, and afterwards we’ll go out with the sergeant and five or six men and catch ’em.”

It was about the equinox, if I remember rightly—the springtime, when everything is lovely and lovable: the camp flowers all in bloom, the aroma of the trees burdening the air with delicious perfume, the fresh verdure and plenty of grass, the powerful, stout-hearted bounding of the horse (no longer “poor”) beneath one, and, above all, the great issue expected of the business in hand, the most important business to me in the world at the time—all these combined spelled but one word, “Hope!”

Carbine in hand, Colt in holster, I arrived at his residence. There he was, sitting at the door of his corner house, whence he could look down three streets at once. How like a spider, I thought.

His welcome was cordial, but he seemed to smile at my eagerness, and told me that he never dined before eight.

“But let us sit here in the cool of the evening,” said he, handing out a chair for me to sit by him on the footpath, “and let us take some refreshment to while away the time. But, tell me, where did you say that the fence was cut? But did you really see signs that cattle had passed? Preposterous! The sons of guns shall suffer for this. Eh well, I’m



glad of it in a way—glad to have a little work, and perhaps a little excitement. It doesn't do to have a too orderly district, for the Governor and his satellites in Santa Fe imagine I'm lazy and not looking after my business if they hear of no commotions. That black fellow you sent me the other day, Don Ernesto—the fellow that was molesting a mad woman in the camp—I've got him seventeen years in the line for that. I wish you would send me a few more, for hardly a letter comes from Santa Fe in which I am not asked to send in recruits, so hard up are they for Provincial soldiers."



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Just then a poor Italian colonist came up, hat in hand. He, too, and all his class were pioneers in those days, and God knows what they suffered.

“Well, what d’ye want?” asked my companion.

“Sir,” said the wretched man, stuttering in his nervousness, “one of my bullocks has been stolen, and I know the thief. I have been to the Justice of the Peace, and he told me to bring the thief to him; but, sir, the th-thief refuses to come.”

“*Bueno!* Ten dollars, and ten dollars *down*,” roared the majesty of law.

“But, sir,—”

“No! But me no buts! Ten dollars at once, or I’ll call the sergeant to lock you up until you can get it.”

I could see that the poor fellow’s heart was breaking as he drew the money from his pocket and handed it over. Smilingly the bully turned to me and said, as his victim walked slowly away, “I’ll bet you that that man doesn’t come around to molest me again. I’ll guarantee to you, Don Ernesto, that there isn’t a district in the whole province where so few appeals for justice are made.”

At last it was dinner-time, and, being ushered into a dirty room with a brick floor, dim light and grimy tablecloth, I seated myself at the table with my host, his secretary, the doctor, and a clerk. The dinner was in the usual native style of those days: ribs of beef roasted on the gridiron, beef and pumpkin boiled together, to finish up with “caldo,” which is simply the water in which the beef and vegetables have been boiled, with a good thick coating of grease.

No sooner had we begun dinner than it was noticed that we had no wine.

“No wine! How’s this? What d’ye mean?” as he angrily turned to the sergeant who was waiting.

“If you please, sir, So-and-so and So-and-so,” mentioning the name of a local firm of storekeepers, “say that they can supply no more wine until they can get some of their accounts settled.”

“How dare you bring me such a message as that! Take the corporal with a couple of men and bring a half-barrel at once—in less than three minutes, or I’ll know the reason why.”

The barrel was brought, and, with a bit and brace, quickly tapped, and the wine set flowing round the table.



The dinner dragged on and on, until I thought he meant us to sit there all night. Ten o'clock came, half-past, and then eleven. Then I began to smell a rat. I kept on urging the necessity for action, but it became more and more evident that the Chief was fooling. He pressed wine upon all and upon me in particular, while he drank little himself, although he pretended otherwise. At last, I could stand it no longer, and got up in no very good humour to go.

“No, but stop, Don Ernesto! Where are you going? Sit down again. The horses are not saddled yet: not even caught up. Sit down and have patience and we'll all go with you in good time.”



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It was after twelve when at last we made a start. There were the Chief, the sergeant, a corporal, four men, and myself. We rode slowly in a northerly direction until we came to a small gate in the fence, of which I had the key. All the way thither the Chief, while commending me for my forethought in bringing arms, had been impressing upon me the importance of not using them, no matter what happened, "Because, you see, you are not an arm of the law, and if you were to shoot anyone, I should be obliged to arrest you and send you to Santa Fe."

When we got through the fence, what was my surprise when the Chief said, "Bueno, Don Ernesto, you and I have had a long day. What I propose is that you and I off-saddle and doss down here, while the sergeant and men patrol with muffled bits and spurs at a short distance from the fence. Then the moment they hear anything they can come and let us know!"

In vain I protested that this was not my idea at all, and that I too wanted to do the patrolling, but when he told a man to take the saddle off my horse and shake down a bed for me, I thought it wiser to acquiesce, or, at least, appear to do so. I shall never forget that night. How we talked and talked and talked as we lay beneath the brilliant stars, I, boiling with rage and anxiety under my assumed tranquillity, while he, doubtless, was as much annoyed at having to keep me in conversation. It must have been nearly four o'clock when I told him that I really must sleep. "Bueno," said he, as he rolled over on his side, "hasta manana."

In five minutes he was snoring. Even so, I did not dare to move, for fear that he might be foxing. About an hour passed, during which he moved, coughed, expectorated, and had other signs of conscious animation, much to my disgust, until at last I thought the snoring sounded too genuine to be shammed, so I crept towards him and whispered in his ear that I thought I heard sounds of movement. But his snoring was rhythmic and swinish, so I gathered up my saddle and gear and stole over to my horse, which was picketed some yards off, and proceeded to saddle him up. In doing so, my stirrups somehow clashed and thought it was all up, for what a fool I should look if he woke and discovered me. But it was all right: the music continued.

I led the horse for some little distance, then mounting, I rode him down alongside the fence for about a mile until I came to a fresh gap in it.

Horror! Even though it was but what my suspicions had depicted, the realisation came as a shock to me. "The—! The—!" To repeat my expressions would edify no one.

Guided by the signal-lights at the station, I moved along at a smart trot and soon recognised the quick tramping of animals ahead. Then I drew back, and as the day was just breaking, I drew round to the west side of the cavalcade, so that I might see without being seen. Yes, sure enough, there were six military chacots outlined against the great sky and a troop of animals ahead of them.



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I halted to let them get well away from me, and then, with rage and hatred in my heart, swearing vengeance all the while, I galloped as hard as ever I could to the estancia, to impatiently await the uprising of my boss.

“We must wire, or one of us must go to the Governor in Santa Fe at once,” I urged. But what was my disgust to be met with but a quiet smile of amusement!

“Not if I know it,” said he. “Why, good God, man, do you want to have all our throats cut? This man is a personal friend of the Governor’s, and what satisfaction do you think we are likely to get out of that?”

“Then let us go to the Consul, the British Minister, or even to the President of the Republic?”

A quiet smile with a negatory shake of the head was the only answer.

A fortnight later I sought him in his private sitting-room and found the Chief of Police sitting in an easy-chair.

“Ha! ha! ha! Don Ernesto. So you caught us, did you? Well, it was worth the fun. I never laughed so much in all my life as when I awoke that morning and found that you had given me the slip!”

A VISIT TO THE NORTHERN CHACO.

After three years on an estancia in the vast monotonous, treeless, but most fertile plains of the Central Argentine, under scorching sun, driving rains, and biting wind, one feels that one would like to see a river sometimes, animal life and more congenial surroundings; and so I determined to visit the Northern Chaco, that enormous tract of land which lies North of Santa Fe and stretches right away for many hundreds of miles to North, East, and West.

Leaving Rosario by the night express, one crosses the great, slightly undulating plains, probably among the richest in the world for the growth of wheat, linseed, and maize, reaching Santa Fe early the following morning. This town, the capital and Government centre of the province, is rather an uninteresting place; chiefly noticeable in it are the great number of fine churches and the magnificent sawmills owned by a large French company. Santa Fe is supposed to be one of the most religious centres in the Republic. More than once it has almost been washed away in an eddy of the giant Parana in flood, the water rising four feet in the houses on the highest level in the town.

After spending a day of sight-seeing in Santa Fe, we embarked at nightfall for Vera, the headquarters of the Santa Fe Land Company’s wood department, arriving there in the early morning. The land around here from the train appears to be a dry, salty country,



devoid of herbage, and only valuable on account of the excellent forest trees and timber.

Our morning meal was taken in the station waiting-room (the only restaurant in the town), and consisted of cold coffee and what the Argentine understands by boiled eggs, which have in reality been in boiling water half a minute, and which, in order to eat, one has to tip into a wine-glass and beat up with a fork, adding pepper and salt, *etc.* This is the general way of eating eggs in South America; an egg cup is one of the few things one cannot get in the country without going to an English store in Buenos Aires.



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Leaving Vera at 8 a.m. the train goes at a snail's pace along the branch line to Reconquista, covering the distance of about thirty leagues in five hours. Arriving there in the sweltering midday heat, we were met by an English friend and his capataz, the latter dressed in his enormous slouch hat, deerskin apron, and silver spurs weighing probably a full kilo.

One cannot help noticing at once the different type of natives; from the slow, slouching, don't-care kind of men, which one sees in Cordoba and Southern Santa Fe, to the quick, straight, hawk-eyed half-Indian Chaquenos.

Reconquista on a hot summer's day is one of the dirtiest places on this earth, which is saying a good deal. One drives through streets two feet deep in light sandy dust, which hangs in clouds all over the town. There is an excellent hotel in the centre of the town, built on typical Spanish plans with fine large open patios, which are filled with splendid tropical plants and ferns. Having washed off the dust of three days' travel from our weary persons, and having changed into more suitable travelling gear, we sat down to an excellent spread.

In the cool of the evening we made a tour of the town, being most interested in the cigar factories, where we bought excellent smokes for \$2 a hundred, all hand-made from pure tobacco leaf by the brown-hued lasses of Reconquista.

The rest of the evening we spent in unpacking our native saddles, and preparing everything for our long horseback journey—not having forgotten to see that our tropilla of fifteen grey ponies were fit and ready to make an early start next morning.

Three a.m. next morning found us out in the “corrales” having our ponies allotted to us by the capataz—we found the tropilla on “ronda”—that is, in a corner with a lasso tied across in front of them, the height of their chests, and all facing outwards. This is the most general way of teaching horses to stand in the Chaco, as, if taught to stand singly, they would fall too easy a prey to the Indians and gauchos. In order to saddle these ponies we had to “manear” them, that is, tie their forelegs together, for without this they refused to let us put the blankets on their backs.

All being ready, we started off, four of us, two in front and two behind, with eleven loose ponies between us. By this time the sky was beginning to grow light, and evidently the fresh morning air had disagreed with my friend T.'s horse, which suddenly cleared down a side street with his head between his forelegs and his back arched like the bend in an archer's bow.

After some seconds of this amusing sight T. managed to get the pony's head up and came along again, looking very warm and beaming; his pink-nosed pony quite satisfied that he would have to carry more than his own weight for some distance further.



Leaving Reconquista on the north we crossed, over an old railway embankment, a large stretch of low country, through which a small stream glided with winding course, and jogging along league after league we gradually got into more interesting country: little clumps of trees with very thick undergrowth, clinging creepers, bright-coloured flowers, and gorgeously plumaged birds.



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All along the sides of the roads were little farms, apparently uncultivated, except for small patches of wonderfully grown maize and browning linseed. Practically all these farms are owned by Swiss and German peasants, each one with his small herd of cows and working bullocks.

We changed our ponies every three or four leagues, always going at the same jog-trot, stopping occasionally at a wayside inn to wet our parched throats with fresh well water (with a drop of cana in it to kill the microbes), and smoking hard all the time to keep off the swarms of mosquitoes.

After travelling ten leagues or so we began to leave these habitations behind us, and got into wilder country with no fences, only long stretches of undulating land, dotted with patches of splendid-looking trees and enticing shade.

The road occasionally crossed small streams, which gradually became more tropical looking, until we came to quite a large river, two or three hundred metres wide, looking beautifully peaceful and oily. Standing above on the bank, in the shade of some magnificent quebracho trees, we looked down upon this lazy stretch of perfect scenery, when suddenly there was a slight disturbance in the water and a small black dot appeared on the top of the water. The capataz at once pulled out his revolver, all of us doing likewise, only to have to put them back again, as the dot had disappeared as quickly as it came. This was the first sign of wild animal life we saw, the "jacare" or alligator. In the more civilised parts of the Chaco, these animals, as well as the carpincho or water-hog, are getting quite rare, and having been so much shot at and worried they need the most careful stalking.

As we got further away, we came upon many more of these streams, all looking much the same; some had bridges over them made of quebracho logs, laid endways on and covered with earth, very dangerous to cross after wet weather or floods, especially at night, as they are generally full of holes where the earth has fallen in.

At 10 a.m. each day we unsaddled for lunch, which was generally composed of "charque" or salted beef, biscuits, and coffee. The first night we slept at the last habitation which we saw, a small wayside inn. Arriving there late in the evening, we had the greatest difficulty in obtaining entrance on account of the chorus of barking, snapping dogs, and on account of the innkeeper's fear of drunken gauchos.

Another early start on the second day saw us well on our journey by siesta time, which we spent on the edge of a very fine forest. The afternoon was very hot, and we did not start off again until 4 o'clock. During the evening we swam across a small river which we found overflowing its banks on account of the local rains, and, as darkness fell, we found it almost impossible to see our way on account of the fireflies, which made such a glare in front of us that the slight track which we had been following was almost invisible.



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It was a very dark night, and once or twice we felt rain. We had to go very slowly, so that we should not miss the track. Thus we trotted on in Indian file, each of us now leading spare horses, in silence, except when one of us asked how many leagues it was to the estancia, only to jog on again for what seemed two or three hours, until almost midnight. With a cheerful yell we suddenly came on a barbed wire fence, and after hunting about for a time, a wire gate.

Immediately tongues seemed to be mechanically loosened and the conversation flowed freely, discussing the ride, horses, coming stiffness, and all the things that one has to talk about after two and a-half days in the saddle. On reaching the estancia about 2 a.m., none of us needed much bed, and throwing our things down on the grass outside, we soon were dreaming of alligators, broken bridges, swimming rivers, *etc.*

About 10 o'clock the next morning I awoke to find myself on a most neat little estancia high up on a hill, overlooking, across a slight valley, magnificent forests where one could see the glint of running water.

The house was brick floored and had four very nice rooms, which had been colour-washed by my friends with excellent success. The ceilings at once attracted attention, being of a deep-coloured black wood, well oiled and seasoned. "Timbo" it is called, and is the best carving and furniture wood in the country.

Out in the garden were oranges, lemons, citrons, pomegranates, limes, and all kinds of luxurious fruits and vegetables. In a small fenced paddock at the end of the garden, were sweet potatoes, pea-nuts, cotton, tobacco, and some magnificent maize.

The men's huts were made of mud over a cane network, and the roofs were made of split palm trees, hollowed out and made in the form of a large ~~~~~ the palms being placed concavely and convexly alternately, making fine drainage for the heavy rains. The whole place was surrounded by a ring of fine chaco paraiso trees and "ombu." The horse corrals were all *palo a pique*, that is, made of solid posts, stuck in close together side by side, and about two metres high, with no wire.

The camp was more or less on the real banks of the Parana, sloping away to the river four leagues away, and forming one of the most fertile spots in the Republic. This low-lying land is the finest and cheapest grazing in the north, but it is unreliable because it is quite inundated in time of floods, when the cattle have to be withdrawn to higher camp.

During various excursions on the following days we saw tracks of "tigers" (leopard) and "lions" (puma); the kill of the latter, a small gazelle buck, "guasuncho," we found neatly covered up with grass and leaves, and easily distinguishable from the tiger's kill, which is always left uncovered. A very fine tiger's skin was brought in one night, measuring



1.84 metres from the tip of the nose to the root of the tail, and 1.56 metres across. The man had suddenly come across it while on foot in the monte, and after wounding it with his Winchester had run it down with his dogs and killed it.



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One evening we caught sight of a tapi (tapir) coming down to drink, but were unable to shoot on account of the bad light. Each day we saw many wild pigs ("chancho moro") and various kinds of wild cats, including the splendid "gato ounce" or ounce cat, whose skin is one of the finest, and only to be compared with the "lobo" or golden otter, which has a most magnificent fluffy pelt with a golden tint on the tips. The latter is unfortunately getting very rare now.

The great wolf or "aguaras" is still common, and is a very stately beast, as he slopes along with his hind-quarters well under him, with pricked ears and shaggy black mane.

The forests here are mostly in long strips and clumps, with excellent pasture land between them; and they contain, among other commoner chaco trees, lance wood, four crowns, and tala. Amongst the strange trees there is one enormous broad-leafed tree called "guapoj," which has long creeping roots, which cling on to neighbouring trees and gradually pull them down and absorb all their goodness, killing them, and in some marvellous way apparently eating them up. One finds occasionally one of these trees embracing another bigger than itself, and gradually rooting it out of the ground.

On all low ground one generally finds "Zeibos"—a tree with very soft wood and very pretty branches of scarlet flowers.

The wild apricot or "ijguajay" grows everywhere, and looks a very tempting fruit, fatal, however, to most Europeans, as it is a very powerful purge. The Indian children eat the fruit with joy, and it apparently has no bad effect on them.

The forests are full of all kinds of animals, and, in addition to those already mentioned, there are red deer, black and brown monkeys, and bear, and the ring-tailed coons, which latter make noises like the grunting of pigs.

Of ground game there are foxes, tattoo or mulita, armadillo, and ostriches.

Amongst the birds the most common are various kinds of hawks, including some very much like the great bustard, English brown buzzard, and osprey falcon, and two or three kinds of parrots and cockatoos, the green parrots being the curse to agriculturists, eating all the maize, as the locusts do in the South.

There are many different kinds of "carpinteros" or woodpeckers, most of them having most wonderful plumage of brown, green, scarlet, blue, and yellow.

A strange bird which is not often seen is the "tucan," a small black bird, with a beak almost as big as his body, and of a splendid orange colour with a scarlet tip; he is a top-heavy looking little chap when seen seated on an orange tree, his favourite haunt.



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Amongst table birds there are grey pheasants, martinetta, and partridges. Of wild fowl, there are enormous varieties, including the "pato real" or great tree duck, whistling mallard, various kinds of teal and shovellers, widgeon, muscony and hooded duck, black-headed geese, grey geese, and swans. Amongst water-birds are the black, grey, and white "garza" or heron. The latter are especially valuable on account of the splendid feathers on the back of their necks. Of the smaller birds there is the gallinetta, a kind of landrail, the curse of hunters shooting wild duck, their wretched screech warning every bird in the district. The beautifully coloured and almost transparently winged golden moorhen covers every stretch of water inland, and the "chaja" or wild turkey, one of the most useless birds in the Chaco, and quite uneatable, sends forth his dismal cry "chaja."

The kingfishers are, perhaps, the most noticeable of all the river birds, and are of all sizes, from the small European variety to one almost ten times their size. Gorgeously plumaged, they skim, like flashes of light, over the water, which is full of all kinds of fish including "Dorado," a splendid fighting fish, excellent eating, which can be caught with rod or fly, and goes up to 10 kilos in weight; "Suravi," a great mud fish, which is seen sometimes basking out of water, weighing up to 50 kilos, with enormous head, and good eating; "Savala," the mud-eating cruiser, which one sees nearly always with its tail out of water, and which makes excellent revolver shooting; "Palmieta," the curse of the Chaco streams and rivers, making bathing inadvisable on account of its hostile assaults on the extremities of all foreign bodies; and the "rallo," or sun fish, a large flat fish with a long tail.

Thus was spent a week of happy days of excursions and explorations, where sometimes we had to walk through great distances of undergrowth and the everywhere-abundant prickly cactus, cutting our way with large cavalry swords, always with our eyes skinned to catch sight of some strange bird, beast, or flower. Sometimes we waded for miles through swamps, which, in some places, abound with enormous water snakes up to 6 metres long.

We put up all kinds of water-fowl, as we struggled on, splashing through rivers, clambering up and skeltering down slippery banks, reaching home tired and weary every night to recount all the day's doings, sitting out in the patio in the cool evening, eaten up by mosquitoes.

So ended my holiday, with hurried packing, much toast-drinking, and a final little farewell dance to the accompaniment of guitar, gramophone, mouth-organ, and accordion. The journey south was of no great interest, half on horseback, half in "galera," or public mail coach, with, as fellow passengers, a German traveller, a cure (most jovial of beings, who had brought enough food with him to feed a whole regiment), a head of police and his men, and two coach boys.



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The coach, with five young horses tied in abreast, went bumping and jolting along hour after hour, until we came to a big river, unfortunately in flood. The horses were unhitched, tied together and swum across; a boat coming from some unseen corner, took passengers and luggage across, leaving the coach itself alone, with a long wire tied to the end of the pole. The horses were fastened to the end of this wire on the other side of the river, and then, with a whoop and a cheer, the coach tumbled head-over-heels into the raging flood, twisting and turning in all ways, first one side up and then the other, until at last it reached the near bank. And so we travelled on, back to civilisation; a tiring journey in dust and heat by rail, bringing us home to the same old flat, treeless, priceless plains of the Central Argentine, to dream for many days of birds, fishes, animals, flowers, trees, good friends, and the fine natives of the Northern Chaco.

WORK IN THE WOODS.

WORK IN THE WOODS.

The worker in the forests is of necessity an early riser, the nature of his task requiring that he should be up betimes. His preparations for breakfast are simple, and he is ready to start out after half an hour spent in imbibing a few mates full of yerba infusion. The cartmen tie in their bullocks, kept overnight in a corral, and drive off to bring in wood prepared by the axemen, the bullock-herd takes his charges to pasture and the men's employer mounts his horse to visit the camp of his axemen, or goes to the store to fetch meat and provisions. The axemen generally live in tents or temporary shelters, convenient to their work, and some distance from the contractor's rancho. They have to work hard, stripped to the waist in summer; they fell the trees, and either square the logs for baulks and sleepers, or cut the bark and outside layer of white wood off to make logs for export, working by moonlight when the heat of the day is excessive. Their food consists of biscuits, called Galleta, dried to the consistency of flint; these they soften in soup made from fresh meat or dried "Charki." To this soup is added rice, maize, or "Fido's," which is coarse macaroni.

The favourite roast, called the "Asado," is made from ribs of beef impaled on a stick and placed near the fire till sufficiently cooked. This delicacy, usually as hard as nails, is enjoyed by the men, who cut off portions, which they hold in their teeth, while, with a jack-knife, mouthfuls are sawn off close to the nose, at the risk of shortening that organ. Water is drunk, or coffee sweetened liberally with moist sugar. This coffee is made in the country, chiefly from beans or maize, with a large percentage of chicory to give it body.

It is picturesque to see a long string of carts enter a deposit to the sound of pistol cracks from long whips, and to watch the cartmen unload the heavy logs.

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A cartman will load his cart with logs of a ton and upwards, each with the aid of his team of bullocks, placing the chains so that the animals, at the desired moment, by advancing a short distance, roll the log from the ground on to the cart. In the case of very heavy logs the cart is placed upside down on the log, which is then bound to it, and the bullocks pull the whole thing over. The distances which have to be covered by these carts are considerable, fifteen miles in the day is not unusual, changing bullocks once en route, but a great deal depends on the roads being dry, as in wet weather the wheels sink up to the hubs in the mud and the roads are soon dotted here and there with loads abandoned till better conditions enable them to be reloaded and delivered at a depository.

These cartmen are hardy fellows and work wet to the skin, covered with mud up to their knees, or, again, hidden in the dust from the roads, which envelopes the moving carts in a choking cloud.

It is little to be wondered at if the axemen and cartmen, when pay day arrives, go in for a spree, which for them usually takes the form of gambling, enlivened by dancing and drinking till daylight.

The result of sojourning in the woods does not, as might be expected, have the effect of making these men unsociable, and they embrace every opportunity of attending a race meeting or dance. When the men are excited by drink quarrels are frequent, and the police search them for arms before admitting them to a Re-union.

Arms are carried ostensibly as a precaution against meeting with Indians and bad characters in the lonely recesses of the forest, and the men like to carry a knife and a good revolver, or, better still, a Winchester, to enable them to get a shot at any wild animal they may come across, the skins of these being much prized. They take a pleasure in presenting a visitor with a puma skin or other trophy of the chase.

Among these people one looks for, and finds, the primitive idea of hospitality, an unaffected welcome and willingness to give of the best they have. Here are men independent by virtue of their labour, which gives them sufficient for their daily wants. They have no thought for the morrow or what will be their lot when too feeble to work.

The axemen, who are natives of Italy and Austria, are very good workmen, but compare unfavourably with natives of the country, being extremely dirty in their persons, to such a degree that it is a disagreeable experience to have to interview them in an office, whereas the Argentine native puts on his best apparel when he goes to an estancia.

The forest workers are nomads, and, as the woods get cut out, move on to fresh camping grounds, leaving the woods to revert to their former solitude, a haunt for the wild animals, who creep back once silence has returned.

CACHAPES, AND OTHER THINGS.



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CACHAPES, AND OTHER THINGS.

To a man coming from the Southern Camps to the forest belt of Santa Fe, the cachape must appeal as something peculiar to the district, and most essentially local. He has had a surfeit of carts with two wheels, each 12 feet high, and dragged by anything from sixteen to twenty-eight horses; Russian carts, like Thames punts on four wheels, no longer amuse him, while American spring carts are much too European to warrant unslinging the Kodak. But the cachape—here is something not to be lightly passed over. Lying idle it may not strike him at first sight as a cart, but rather as a remnant of some revolution, when, tired of waging light operatic war, the army disbanded, leaving their gun-carriages to serve more peaceful purposes.

Two pairs of short, squat, enormously powerful wheels; between, and joining them, a roughly hewn pole and various chains in an apparently hopeless tangle. Yet see them in work—every niche doing its work, every chain taking ten per cent, more strain than it was ever intended to take, creaking, groaning, crashing into holes, crawling laboriously over snaps and trunks to fall again with its load of four tons with a jerking, swaying, and straining as though struggling to free itself from its load, and you recognise the *raison d'être* of the queer little cart.

The cachape is not without its humorous moments. Supposing the cartmen find a log too heavy to load in the ordinary way; they do not return and inform the boss that the log must be hoisted by mechanical means or propose high-priced cranes. Seeing that obviously they can't put the log on the cart, they accept the alternative and put the cart on the log, chain it on securely, then haul everything right side up again with the bullocks and proceed to the unloading station. Once there, it might be supposed that they would tumble the cart over again, but here the intelligent foreigner is misled. The correct proceeding now is for the cartmen to lie on their backs and push with their feet, after the manner of the gentlemen in music halls, who, reclining on sawed-off sofas, twiddle gold-spangled spheres with their toes; only our cartmen lie in water and mud and the gold-spangled sphere is changed for a three-ton log. The force the men can exert in this position is little short of marvellous. Out one crawls, reviews the situation, then back again under, a creak, a combined push, and over the wheels comes the log, throwing up the mud and water for 50 feet around. Then back they go again for another load six miles through the forest. Wet through, their clothes hanging in ribbons from shoulders and belt, one day's mud caking on another's, and with a long sword stuck through their belt in front, they present a figure comical enough were it not that one knew the other side of the picture.



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Reeking with inherited consumption, they live the one life which is certain to kill them before they are forty. Wet through and chilled, they are called upon again and again to suddenly exert enormous strength, since no man can desert his cart. He must "get there." He must get out of his trouble. He eats largely when and how he can, and when he has saved any money the merry "Taba" bone charms it from him in a way too universal perhaps to call for any remark. Sometimes he finishes his carting days through too decided opinions as to the other man's integrity in playing "Taba"; sometimes on his canvas bed in a hut of mud and branches, his brown yellow face and sunken eyes asking no pity, betraying no emotion; in either case he is rarely over thirty-five and often leaves a wife and children.

I say "wife and children," since it sounds the usual thing; but, as a matter of strict fact, the ceremony of getting married is deprecated among them, as it signifies "Putting on side," and is only resorted to when they are in a village and there is a chance that the presents that are given will more than compensate the tremendous expense they have to go to. Speaking to a gentleman of this kidney, I was informed that when the cross-eyed blacksmith Strike got married, it cost him three dollars and a-half (say 5s.) in fire crackers alone, and my informant went on to say that the only case he knew of where marriage had been really successful was that of the fair-haired carpenter, who was married and asked all the bosses on the place, who each gave something, with which he was able to buy a sewing machine for the eldest girl, then aged six.

But, mark you, lest you should judge them lightly, remember that their unwritten pact is just as binding to them as our formal marriage tie is to us, and that in their way they are probably better husbands and fathers than your Balham clerk. In their young days they may chop and change, which changes are generally marked by little iron crosses in the woods, but, once they have settled down, desertion is far rarer than in civilised countries. I have seen a native workman with his shoulder blade in his arm-pit, his face cut to ribbons, and with pieces of casting sticking to his back through the carrying away of a crane, cavil against the idea of being taken into the township where the doctor was, lest his old woman, unused to a town life, should find the surroundings uncongenial. This in a broken, muttered whisper, twelve hours after the accident had happened, during which time every new arrival had been called upon to witness the peculiar nature of his injuries.

Much has been said about the terrible wickedness of the lower-class native, his gambling, his immorality, his almost fanatical desire to murder everyone he sees; and for complete and detailed lists of crimes and monstrosities appeal to any newcomer, who will be delighted to hold forth on the subject; but when one has lived with them and worked with them under varying conditions, and has suffered in some degree what they suffer, one hesitates to condemn them offhand.



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Blackguards they are—but manly, humorous blackguards. Immoral, one must confess them to be, according to our lights, but even in England “Custom from time immemorial” is held as law.

The vast majority will steal raw hide gear as a cat steals fish, but will not touch your money, much as in a community of young men property is common to all with the same exception. They will lie if scared, or rather will substitute for the truth something they think you would like to hear, and they will do as little work as you will let them.

But, have a bad case of sickness in the house and ask a man to go out at midnight with the carriage to get the doctor, or to go on horseback on his own horse twenty miles for medicine, and he goes as quietly and pleasantly as though he were going about the most commonplace work. He expects no tip, no extra wage, nor is he lauded as a hero. He may have come down, horse and all, in the dark, but is happy if he has not smashed the bottle of medicine, and he resumes his work on return, just as if he hadn't been up all night riding at a hard canter over broken ground full of holes and snags.

No, he is by no means an ideal worker, neither is he half so bad as he's painted, and I'd rather meet him in the next world than lots of men who boss him in this.

MY FRIEND THE AXEMAN.

MY FRIEND THE AXEMAN.

Eighty square leagues of dense forest. One is inclined to feel a trifle small and overcome when this fraction of Mother Earth is put into one's hands (metaphorically), with orders to know all about it and to be able to answer all questions as to what is going on in it.

The work is like most other occupations: not quite so romantic as it sounds at first, but as interesting as one cares to make it.

One's main employment can best be illustrated by a leaf out of a mental diary.

Fulano de Tal, axeman, wants credit for provisions at the almacén or general store—Has he sufficient wood cut to warrant it? It is the Mayor-domo's business to find out.

With this end in view, he rides along “The Mangy” watercourse till he comes to the lowland of “The Blind Cow.” The barking of half a dozen mongrel curs leads him into the edge of the forest, and he comes upon the residence of Fulano de Tal. The man has perhaps recently moved to this spot, and has not had time or energy to build himself a “rancho,” and therefore the homestead consists of about four yards of canvas stretched across the branch of a tree like the roof of a tent.



Beneath this is a “New Home” sewing machine, a Brummagem bedstead, and a small trunk, made burglar-proof by innumerable bands and fastenings of bright tin, or even gilt wall-paper. Scattered around are the little Fulanos, in costumes varying from nothing to very little.

Their mother ceases her cooking operations, wipes her hands on the nearest child's head, and invites the visitor to dismount.

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He answers that he is looking for her husband, and she directs him with a sweep of the hand which covers a quadrant of the compass and includes several square leagues of thick forest. Taking a likely track, however, he soon hears the ring of axe-strokes, and finds his man patiently chipping away at a felled tree, which is rapidly taking the form of a baulk, with the sides as smooth as if sawn.

His horse is tied up near, and he takes the Mayor-domo through his “corte,” showing him the wood prepared for the carters. Give him a chance and he will count every log twice (most likely he has already plastered mud over the marks which show the rotten patch in the wood, and is wondering whether he has cleared the black sufficiently off a piece of “campana” to persuade a reasonable man that it is really fresh wood).

It is part of the inspector’s stock in trade to know these and a myriad other tricks, too numerous to take separately.

The typical axeman in the Santa Fe Chaco is more genuinely “childlike” than, and quite as “bland” as, the famous Celestial. He never quite grows up; he will spend his last dollar on a mouth-organ when he is forty, and give a wild war-whoop of delight as a stack of newly piled sleepers falls crashing to the ground.

He loves sweets and the bright clothes which he wears with childish dignity on feast-days and holidays.

His *amour propre* is tremendous, and influences his code of honour to a great extent. The first ten commandments he will break most cheerfully, but the eleventh—“Thou shalt not be found out”—he respects to the best of his power.

Stealing, for instance, he regards as a pastime, but call him a thief and you must be prepared for trouble. A perfect instance of this can be quoted in the case of an estanciero who found a peon wearing one of his shirts.

[Illustration: *Square Quebracho Logs worked by the Axeman, showing Resin oozing therefrom.*]

“You are wearing my shirt,” said the master. “No, Senor; I bought it in the store.” “But you stole it from me,” insisted the estanciero, pointing to the tab at the front, where his name was written in marking ink; “there is my name on it.”

The man, being quite illiterate, had not reckoned on such damning evidence, but he recovered himself and replied with dignity: “Very well, Senor; if it is yours, take it; *but don’t call me a thief.*”

Honesty is with them, admittedly, a matter of degree. A man will always say if questioned about some small deficiency, “Do you think I would swindle you for a matter of two dollars?” or “Do you think I would risk my credit with the Company for the sake of



one calf?” To be honest in a case where a larger profit is involved is a height of integrity to which he does not even pretend. “I am going to be frank with you”—that is an expression which puts the wise man on his guard, for it is generally followed by a cascade of lies.



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Business must be done on a completely different basis to that which obtains in England. To return to our friend Fulano, for instance: he wishes perhaps to ask for an increase of fifty cents per ton on his wood, and introduces the subject by a short conversation about the points of his horse, passing on to the bad state of the bullocks and enlarging on the chance of a rainy winter. You have just decided that he has nothing more to say and are preparing to leave him, when he makes his request with as much circumlocution as possible. To have come straight to the point would have been contrary to all his ideas of correct procedure.

I have heard two natives make one another's acquaintance with a bout of verbal sparring which an Englishman would obviate by a single sentence, such as "Good morning; Mr. Brown, I believe?" "Yes," the other would answer, and the business would be entered upon immediately.

The Spanish blood, however, calls for some such dialogue as the following, which is taken from real life.

A.—"Good day."

B.—"Good day."

A.—"How are you, Senor?"

B.—"Very well, thank you, Senor; how are you?"

A.—"Very well, thank you."

B.—"I am glad."

A.—"Equally."

B.—"Don't mention it."

A.—"I am speaking to Mr. Juan Sosa?"

B.—"At your service."

A.—"At yours."

B.—"Equally."

A.—"It gives me great pleasure to know you."

B.—"Equally."

They are flowery always, whether in greeting, praise, commendation, or in denunciation.



In illustration of the last point, I once heard a cartman give vent to a quite Olympic challenge.

His cart had stuck in a deep rut up to the axles, and he commenced operations by addressing his bullocks with tender words and soft names swiftly followed by lurid curses. This proving useless, he invoked higher powers, and called on his pet saints by name—"Help me, San Pedro, San Geronimo, Santa Lucia, San Juan." Still no result:—

Then his patience failed entirely—"If you won't help me, San Pedro," he shouted, "come down and I'll fight you;" "Come down, San Juan, and I'll take you both on together."

Still no reply.

Taking his hat off he placed it on the ground, made the motion of clawing his guardians from the skies and placing them in his hat.

"Stay there, San Geronimo; Stay there, San Juan; Stay there, San Marco."

When his hat was full enough for his satisfaction he leapt into the air, came down on it with both feet, and continued to dance on it for about three minutes.

Thus, for a real or imagined slight, the streak of black blood will show up and convert a friend into a relentless enemy.

It is not surprising when one considers the lack of civilising influences which ought to be exerted from the top downwards, but which have no root in the highest power they know, which is the arm of the law. It might be interesting to note a few proofs of the corruption which exists among those who wield the local weapons of justice—among the commissaries, police, and justices of the peace.



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The Chief of Police of——, for instance, a town of only about 7,000 inhabitants, refused L2,000 a year for the local gambling rights.

Again, a gardener, whom I knew, was put in jail for being drunk and disorderly. On going to the place some time later I found the man still imprisoned. “Why,” I asked, “for such a small offence”? “We found,” was the answer, “that when sober he was such a good workman that we could not spare him from the job of cleaning the stables.”

On the other hand, a friend of mine was dissatisfied with the policeman he had, and sent the sergeant into the township to exchange him for another. The man returned with a particularly villainous-looking specimen, and when asked where he had got him, explained that the Chief of Police had told him to look among the prisoners for a suitable man, give him a uniform and take him.

“I thought this was the best of them; but they all wanted to come,” he concluded ingenuously.

Another commissary in the north of this country flattered himself on his revolver-shooting, and used to perform the feat of shooting the hat off a man’s head without hurting him. He was in the local bar one day when a peon entered with a brand new white hat; it was an opportunity not to be missed. Crack—and the man fell with a bullet through his temple instead of his hat.

Did the Comisario stand stricken with remorse, or burst into self-reproach? No. He moved the body with the toe of his boot and remarked: “Carramba, I am getting a very poor shot nowadays.”

A story which was told me in the province of Rio Negro, and which was well vouched for, contained serio-comic elements of which I believe the perpetrator, whom I knew personally, quite capable.

An old man who owned a considerable quantity of land, died intestate. A man who lived with him, Garcia by name, had no idea of letting the property go to distant unknown relations, and concocted the following plot (obviously with the connivance of the neighbouring Justice of the Peace, who was a friend of his).

The law allows that a sane man “in articulo mortis,” and past the power of speech, may make statements by signs: so when the Justice was summoned to the house, Garcia told him that the man was not yet dead, and wished to make his will.

Garcia seated himself at the foot of the bed, while the Justice at the side addressed questions to the deceased on the following lines:—

“Do you wish me to record your last will and testament?”



The corpse nodded.

“Do you wish your property to pass into your cousins’ hands?”

The head moved from side to side.

“Do you intend to make Garcia your sole legatee?”

The deceased nodded several times.

Two witnesses were brought, and the business was settled with commendable promptitude.

I think it was Garcia himself who explained, some time afterwards, that as the dead man wore a full beard and whiskers, it was easy enough to hide the strings passing from his ears and chin to the foot of the bed under the coverings.



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In this connection I have since heard that one of the legal ceremonies in a coroner's inquest in Central America is to solemnly ask the deceased who killed him.

To return to the point, however; if such things exist among those in the highest positions of trust it is not surprising to find wholesale chicanery among the lower orders; that they realise their shortcomings is evidenced by the fact that if they wish to impress you with the truth of a statement, they add "palabra de Ingles," *i.e.*, "on the word of an Englishman."

Their Indian descent is answerable for a great deal, the white and black blood being so mixed that it is almost impossible to note the dividing line. Their dusky ancestors were blessed with an extremely limited intelligence, only being able to count up to four. The following incidents were related to me by an old estanciero. He once saw a trainload of Indian prisoners who had had oranges given them throwing the skins against the windows and showing great surprise when they fell inside.

In another instance a woman came with her daughter to place her in domestic service at the estancia, and as the mother did all the talking, the estanciero's wife asked if the daughter could speak Spanish.

"Oh, yes," answered the mother, "but she is barefoot, and would not presume to talk Spanish unless she had shoes on."

This same girl at first insisted on turning up the carpet whenever she entered a room and walking along the boards at the side.

I fear that I have given a black character to the people I work among, but there are lights as well as shades, and I have had many a weary hour's ride wiled away by the philosophy and anecdotes of some peon or small contractor, without mentioning the enjoyment of that hospitality which is a characteristic of the nation.

Beside a camp fire, under the stars, while the mate pot passes from hand to hand, or when huddled under a horse cloth with the rain dousing the last embers, I have found the Correntino, or Santa Fecino, a cheery and uncomplaining companion, who compares well with the recently arrived Englishman, who, under the same circumstances, is generally sleepy or bad tempered.

Treat him well and he will treat you well, but if it is necessary to chasten him for his soul's good, keep your hand a little nearer to your revolver than his is to his knife.

DUST AND OTHER STORMS.



DUST AND OTHER STORMS.

Life in South America has many and varied experiences, though not so uncomfortably exciting perhaps to-day as they were, when more than three years seldom passed without a revolution of some kind, either national or provincial. The year 1893 was marked by two revolutions in Rosario, the first provincial and the second national, with perhaps little more than two months between them. It sounds terribly alarming to hear that a revolution has broken out, and pictures



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of the French Revolution immediately rise before one, but, fortunately, those of South American cities are not of that calibre; reports and rumours fly about of the terrible things that are going to be done, but these generally end in rumour, and after a few persons, those who have nothing to do with the movement, have been killed, probably by soldiers letting off their rifles up some street just on the chance of hitting something (often that at which they are *not* aiming), the revolution fizzles out very quickly.

In the second revolution of 1893 great excitement was caused in Rosario by a revolutionary gunboat being pursued by a Government boat and a naval battle (!) being fought on the river outside Rosario. These two boats blazed away at each other till the revolutionary gunboat was reduced to a wreck; the Government boat then threatened to turn its guns on Rosario unless the revolutionists capitulated. The town was given twenty-four hours to decide, and, after various disasters, including a terrible battle, had been threatened, as usual the revolution came to a sudden end, on this particular occasion owing to the revolutionist leader, D. Alem, committing suicide. That same year, 1893, distinguished itself by drawing to a close with three of the most terrible dust storms ever seen in a country that, after any lengthened period of dry weather, suffers from dust storms of a greater or lesser degree. The first of these occurred early in December, after many months of drought, on a brilliantly sunny afternoon. Standing at the front door of a house at Fisherton, a suburb about six miles from Rosario, we noticed right down in the S.W., on the horizon, great banks of grey-looking clouds, which, to our surprise, seemed to be rolling rapidly up the sky towards us. They had a most alarming appearance, for these masses of grey cloud approaching so rapidly seemed to portend a storm of terrible force. In less than twenty minutes from the time we first saw the clouds the afternoon had changed from brilliant sunshine to pitchy darkness. So rapidly had the darkness come on us that no one was prepared, and no matches or lights were forthcoming; so there we stood in a room in absolute darkness, no glimmer of light even revealing where the windows were situated in the room. Though all doors and windows were closely shut, we could feel the dust entering in clouds through the cracks, making it quite unpleasant breathing. When the storm caught us we had to stand and wait, I must own with some fear as to how it was going to end. Up to this time the storm had come up and fallen on us in total silence: now, after about ten minutes of pitch darkness, we could hear in the far distance the wind coming. It came up with cyclonic force, and then everything in the way of tins and buckets began to be blown in every direction, and the horses to gallop about neighing, evidently very much frightened. The wind was the forerunner of the rain, which gradually



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began to clear the air, though, of course, for some time it rained mud, much to the detriment of the houses, and to anyone unfortunate enough to be caught out of doors in the storm; indeed, one of our friends, who insisted on starting for the station just as the storm descended on us, was found crouching under his umbrella by one of the posts of the railway fence, with a face as black as a sweep's, and, by then, deeply repentant that he had started for the station against advice. Indeed, many caught out in camp by the storm lost their lives through falling into wells, and, in some cases, the river. But, fortunately, nowadays—principally, I fancy, owing to the larger area of country under cultivation—these dust storms do not recur.

LOCUSTS.

During the past century considerable study has been centred upon the life and habits of the locust, mainly from the desire to seek its subjugation and destruction, and, whilst much general biological information has been written upon the subject, there are things which we do not yet know about this insect or its habits. We do not know what precise influences cause their migration, nor do we know what is the exact length of life of the locust or its breeding power, or the precise locality in any country which may be defined as its permanent abode. Locusts are classified under the order of orthopterous insects of the family Acrydiidae, and are very closely related to grasshoppers.

There are a large number of species, the differentiating features being more or less the form and sculpture of prothorax, the size of the head, the length and size of the prosternal spine, the comparative length and size of the hind thighs and shanks, the amount and arrangement of the tegmina mottlings, the comparative length of wings, and the general build of the entire insect, which may be robust or fairly slender.

A general description of the distinctive physical features of migratory locusts might be given as a strong, wild-looking head, a strong collar inside which the neck moves, powerful and peculiarly-formed legs attached to a short, strong, square trunk or thorax, four wings, two antennae or feelers, six legs, and a long segmentary abdomen. The ground colour of the locust is generally brownish, straw, or red, but its colour varies somewhat according to the particular season of the year or some other peculiar circumstance, but nothing certain is known as to what influences the shade of colour. Mere ground colour is immaterial and does not signify a new species.

Besides having a pair of compound eyes which form so noticeable a feature in its head, there are three other simple little eyes, placed like shining dots at three angles of a triangle below the two feelers.



The mouth, which is a fearful apparatus, consists of nine distinct and well-marked organs; an interior or upper lip, consisting of a plate deeply cleft and capable of opening enormously; two true jaws or powerful mandibles; and two pairs of jointed organs called (maxillary) palpi, and two lower jaws. The mandibles and jaws move laterally from right to left.



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The thorax or trunk consists really of three rings. To the first is attached the two front legs; to the second, the two middle legs and the first pair of wings, and to the third, the two hind legs and the second pair of posterior wings. Along the posterior margin is a well marked serrated (spinous) arrangement by means of which the locust adheres and grips forcibly. The trunk appears to be full of a fatty sort of substance.

The abdomen consists of a number of horny segments which are joined together by an elastic membrane, a construction which enables the insect to extend its body several centimetres beyond its normal extent. It can also be increased in thickness.

The front and middle feet of this insect are short and weak, but the length, strength, and formation of the hind legs enable it to take extraordinary leaps. A full-grown locust can jump seven or eight feet in height, whilst it is said to be able to leap more than 200 times the length of its body.

The female is normally larger by $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length than the male, and has a rather thicker body.

The average length of the migratory locust is from 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches and about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in thickness in the abdomen. Locusts generally lay their eggs in the spring, and the manner in which the females, having selected a favourable site, make an excavation in the earth for depositing their eggs is intensely interesting and wonderful.

At the very extremity of the abdomen the female has two pairs of horny valves or hooks, each pair placed back to back with their points directed outwards, and arranged so that all four hooks can be brought with their points close together. By this means a sharp pointed lever is formed which can be turned around, evolved, and forked. With this apparatus she drills a small hole and by means of a series of muscular efforts and the continuing opening and closing of the valves provided with the formation of the abdomen, she actually bores to a depth of 6 to 7 centimetres, or about 3 inches. Here she deposits her eggs—normally about eighty—regularly arranged in a long cylindrical mass and envelopes them in a spumous or sort of glutinous secretion, so that the whole are quite tapped up and level with the surface of the ground. This substance when dried is more or less impassable and affords protection to the eggs from the elements and secures an easy outlet to the surface for the young locust when hatched. The eggs resemble in shape grains of small rice and are about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long.

The eggs hatch in from twenty-five to sixty days, usually about forty days, but the period may vary a little according to temperature, humidity, *etc.* The young locusts are known as “hoppers,” in which stage they pass some forty-five or fifty days before arriving at the fully developed stage known as “fliers.” To reach the “flying” or “migratory” stage they pass through six different states, changing the colour of their skin several times, gradually approaching to full growth, and finally growing wings.



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They have no quiescent stage, and whilst they are naturally yet incapable of flight, their locomotive powers are very considerable, and they are very destructive, for their voracity is great. Comparatively speaking, the flying locusts do less damage to the growing crops than the hoppers, who devour everything clean before them.

It is interesting to state that the "hoppers" in the first stage are in length about 7 to 9 mm., or not quite one-third of an inch, and that the feelers have thirteen divisions, extending to twenty-seven divisions at full growth.

During the cold weather they usually gather together in thousands, clinging closely to all kinds of vegetation and to each other. In this season the general rule seems to be that comparatively little food is taken of any kind. For the purpose of watching the development of their eggs, several hundred locusts have been opened during the winter months by entomologists, and invariably their cases have been found empty.

Perhaps the most feasible suggestion as to the cause of their migratory impulse is that locusts naturally breed in dry sandy districts in which food is scarce, and are thus impelled to wander in order to procure the necessaries of life.

The rate of travel varies according to circumstances. With an unfavourable wind, or little wind, they seldom travel more than five miles an hour. At other times, when the wind is favourable, they will cover fifteen to twenty miles per hour. When on the wing it is certain that a distance of 1,000 miles may, in particular cases, be taken as a moderate estimate of flight, and whilst, probably, it is often much less, it is sometimes much more. Their height of flight has been variously estimated at from forty to two hundred feet. "A dropping from the clouds" is a common expression used by observers when describing the apparition of a swarm.

It will not be denied that the presence of locusts in force constitutes a terrible plague. They make their appearance in swarms and eat up everything. It is wellnigh impossible to estimate the number in a cloud of locusts, but some idea may be formed from the fact that when they are driven, as sometimes is the case in a storm, into the sea and drowned, so many are washed ashore, that it is said by one observer that their dead bodies formed a bank of nearly 40 miles long and 300 yards wide, and many feet in depth, and the stench from the corruption of their bodies proceeded 150 miles inland.

When a swarm of locusts temporarily settles in a district, all vegetation rapidly disappears, and then hunger urges them on another stage. Such is their voracity that cannibalism amongst them has been asserted as an outcome of the failure of other kinds of food.

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Locusts have their natural enemies. Many birds greedily devour them, in fact a migratory swarm is usually followed by myriads of birds, especially sea gulls; they are often found 150 to 200 miles inland. Often a flock of gulls will clean up a "manga" of locusts; they devour them by thousands, and will then go to a neighbouring lagoon, take a little water, and throw up all they have eaten, and at a given signal go off again to fill up with more locusts, only to repeat the operation time after time. Predatory insects of other orders also attack them, especially when in the unwinged state. They have still more deadly foes in parasites, some of which attack the fully developed locust, but the greater number adopt the more insidious method of attacking the eggs.

Many inventions have been brought out with the object of exterminating the locusts, some of which, at least, have doubtless been partly successful, but determined and combined effort by the nation and land proprietors is imperative if the remedial and preventive measures proposed are to reap the success hoped for.

The Agricultural Defence Department reports having spent \$10,561,540 mn. from 1st January, 1909, to 31st May, 1910, in fighting the locusts. The total area invaded was 135,000,000 hectares (about 337,500,000 acres).

From 1892 to date, and with what is required for the present year, \$54,000,000 have been spent in combating locusts and like plagues to agriculture.

CONSCRIPT LIFE IN THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

The life of a conscript is more agreeable than most people in the Argentine Republic imagine it to be, although it has its disadvantages as well as its advantages.

Every year all over the Republic a drawing takes place, calling to arms, for a year in the Army or two in the Navy, Argentines who have attained the age of twenty-one. At an average 12,000 to 15,000 are called out every year and distributed in the different regiments, according to height; from 1.75 metres upwards to Cavalry, middle height to Infantry, and short men to Artillery.

For eight months the troops are drilled daily, and at the end of this period a big manoeuvre is held in which every regiment has to take part. This manoeuvre is divided into two parts: in the month of September all troops pertaining to the I., II., and IV. Regions are mobilised, and in November those of the III. and V.

The daily routine is as follows: At 4 a.m. at the call of a bugle all troops have to rise, and the roll is called over; at 4.30 a.m. coffee is served; at 5.0 every morning orders are given to saddle-up horses and arm, and they have to be ready to leave the barracks at 5.30 for morning drill on horseback or to go to the shooting range, according to the time-

table; the drilling continues till 10 o'clock, at which hour the troops are due back at the barracks, having to go through a course of drilling on foot up till 11 o'clock.

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At 11 o'clock the troops have to turn out and clean and brush down their horses until 11.30, at which hour lunch is served out; after which they are allowed to do as they like (except leave the barracks) till 1.30 p.m.; from 1.30 to 3 p.m. the troops are drilled on foot, and at 3 p.m. "Mate-cocido" is served out; at 3.30 they have to attend class until 4.30 p.m., either on "Campaign Service," "Military Duties or Laws," or on the "Carabine or Sword"; every other day class is given on the different parts of a horse, and on how to look after and clean same. From 4.30 to 5.30 p.m. there is revision and cleaning of arms. At 5.30 dinner is served out, after which those who have leave are allowed out until 10 p.m., or in some cases until 4 a.m. next morning.

Those drawn for the Navy have to go through a preliminary course of training on shore before being sent on board the training ship "Sarmiento," which every two years leaves Buenos Aires for a trip round the world, occupying, on an average, eighteen months.

There are certain allowances made for students, who at the age of nineteen are allowed to enlist in the 8th Cavalry, where they have to serve for three months. At the end of this period they are put through a very severe examination, and should they pass, are promoted to the grade of Sub-Lieutenant of the Reserve, having to serve for a month every year in a regiment allotted to them.

The advantages of conscription are many. It brings half-breeds from all parts of the Republic in touch with civilization, it teaches them obedience, respect for their superiors, and, above all, how to shoot. After their year's service they leave the barracks knowing a good deal more about things in general than when they entered them.

There is also the better class of lads to be considered. Conscription teaches them a few things also, *viz.*, to knuckle down (which is a great failing of the Anglo-Argentines), and be made to do things which they have not been accustomed to, clean out stable, *etc.*, and look after their equipment properly, as anything they may happen to lose is deducted from their wages, which are very small, \$5 per month.

The food in the Army is good and plentiful: there is coffee in the morning on rising, a mid-day meal and dinner, which are usually similar, consisting of soup and "puchero" (a national dish made of beef and vegetables boiled), and an occasional dish of "pulenta" (boiled maize).

The general treatment in the barracks is good. There are cases of miscarriage of justice and ill-treatment, but these are rare. A conscript may have to suffer punishment although in the right, and is not allowed to protest his innocence against an officer until after he has completed his punishment.

ACROSS THE BOLIVIAN ANDES IN 1901.

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Recollections of a journey from the Peruvian port of Mollendo to the Bolivian interior, which the writer made in the year stated, are here transcribed. No rhetorical merit is claimed, facts only are related, and the compiler of the manuscript only hopes that his efforts may, in part at least, justify a cursory perusal, without exhausting the patience of the readers, or overtaxing their indulgence. These notes are transcribed nearly ten years after the trip was made, and any readers who may have visited Bolivia at a more recent date are requested to make allowance for such modifications or change of conditions of which they can be the only judges.

I have crossed the Andes Chain in other places farther south, in Chile; but on this occasion I will confine my observations to the trip as headed.

Mollendo is one of the worst ports on the Pacific coast, but is of some importance on account of the fact that the railway through Peru to Lake Titicaca starts here. All vessels have to lie at least half a mile from the land on account of the constant heavy swell, and the landing is always attended by a certain amount of danger, so much so that not infrequently passengers have to be "slung" on to the landing stage in baskets made for the purpose. Like most of the South American coast from Valparaiso northwards there is little or no vegetation, and the scenery is not of the kind generally associated with tropical climes, of which one reads so much. Sand dunes and waste meet the eye on all sides, and the traveller for the interior is generally glad when the railway journey commences.

Of the country through which the railway takes one there is not much to be said, but the attention of the traveller is at once called to the marvellous ingenuity of the famous engineer Meiggs, who built the railway. Gradually rising as the coast recedes, the train reaches Arequipa, at an elevation of 7,500 feet, and distant from Mollendo about 200 miles. Arequipa has about 45,000 inhabitants, and, while rather prettily situated in a small valley surrounded by high volcanoes, it does not have anything of particular interest to attract one. Moreover, it suffers frequently from earthquakes, which does not surprise one when you look at the giant volcano "El Misti," towering up to 18,000 feet, at no great distance off. The houses are all built with "vaulted" foundations, the better to resist the "earth-tremblings," but on this occasion I did not experience any shocks.

Leaving Arequipa behind, the ascent continues until the highest point is reached at Crucero Alto, where a notice board indicates that we are now 14,666 feet above sea level. It is before reaching this altitude that the wonderful enterprise of the engineer shows up. The line goes on winding and climbing, twisting back again but always ascending, for hours, until a point is reached where passengers, looking down from the carriage windows, may see right below them, only



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a few feet down, the actual railway track over which they have passed an hour before. At one place there are actually *three tracks visible*, one right below the other, just like steps and stairs, and I believe there is nothing quite like it in Argentina. Leaving Crucero Alto the descent is very gradual until Puno is reached, on the shore of Lake Titicaca, but still at an altitude of 12,000 feet or more. I did not actually see the town, which is a short distance from the station, but went straight on board the "Coya," the steamer which was to ferry us across to Chililaya or Puerto Perez, on the Bolivian side of the immense lake.[F] The distance in this direction is about 110 miles, and the passage was made in ten hours, during the night, so that I had not on this occasion an opportunity of seeing the surrounding scenery.

On another occasion I saw too much of it, as the steamer missed the canalized strip which extends several miles out from Puno, and we remained hard aground for thirty hours. We had over a hundred Japanese passengers—immigrants going to the rubber country—and all armed with huge revolvers; but as the food lasted out until we were relieved by another small steamer belonging to the railway company they were kept in good humour, and they gave no trouble at all. Before floating again about 100 tons of cargo had to be transhipped to the other steamer, and when we again got into the deep channel it was again transferred to the s.s. "Coya." This latter boat was about 150 feet long; it was quite a comfortable boat, and the food and bedding were decent, when you consider the part of the world you were in. The bill of fare and wine list contained many quaint delicacies, and I shall never forget how the printer of same spelt the word indicating Scotch wine (commonly known as whisky). He was quite phonetic from the Spanish point of view, and the word read "Gueiscki," but it tasted all right.

Landing at the Bolivian side of Puerto Perez, the immense plateau which covers all the centre of Bolivia stretches out on all sides landwards, until it meets the inner and higher range of the Cordilleras.

La Paz, the then capital of Bolivia, on account of the fact that the President, General Pando, lived there, was our next objective point, and we found the old "Diligence Coach," drawn by eight horses, awaiting to convey us the forty-two miles across the plain. This part of the journey is most uninteresting, and the road was only fair. All along it is the same level, stony ground, entirely devoid of trees, and covered completely with large, round stones. These latter the Indians have to gather in heaps, and thus make some open patches for growing their potatoes and grain, which, with their "Chalona," or sheep dried in the sun, are their principal foodstuffs throughout the year. Besides, the surplus produce is conveyed to the larger towns on llamas, and there realised to the best advantage. It is a very interesting sight every Sunday morning



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to see the “market,” and the curio hunter would just be in his element, as not only do the Indians bring in vegetables and fruits, but all sorts of native silver in quaint shapes, and ornaments made by the Indians themselves can be picked up very cheaply. The dresses of the Indian squaws are also very picturesque, and, as far as I can remember, red, green, and bright yellow were the dominating colours. But I am getting away from the main subject.

Right ahead of us there is the gigantic Illimani, silent and majestic, with its perpetually white crown rising 22,000 feet above sea-level. One begins to wonder where La Paz can be, as the plain seems to extend right to the foot of the mountain. Keeping steadily on, however, the coach eventually arrives at the brink of a hitherto unnoticed hollow, and the scene that here awaits the traveller is magnificent in the extreme. To describe the view baffles my limited vocabulary. There you are looking down on the roofs of the houses in La Paz, which lies snugly 1,200 feet below you. It just seems that you could drop a stone on to them, so precipitate are the cliffs; but it is the enormous drop that deceives the eye, because, of the route over which the coach passes, six miles have yet to be traversed before getting into the town. I have seen La Paz from the top of the “Cuesta” both by day and night, and the latter effect, while losing much of its grandeur and magnificence, on account of the darkness, almost surpasses in beauty that of the daylight vision. The whole city is lit up by electricity, and it just seems as if one were gazing *down* on another firmament, if such a thing can be imagined. I repeat, that to fully appreciate this special scenery words fail me.

Allow me to transgress once more. On the first occasion that I reached the top of the entrance to La Paz it was under rather “sporting” circumstances, which, I think, I may be excused for interpolating here. I had come on horseback and *alone* from the mining town of Coro Coro, sixty-six miles off, and it is a very hard and tiring journey. The elevation above the sea varies from about 14,000 feet to 12,000 feet at the La Paz end, and therefore great speed is impossible on account of the rarity of the air. Apparently I had journeyed too fast for my horse, as the poor animal died when I was still eighteen miles from La Paz. Here was a nice “kettle of fish.” It was all right enough as long as daylight lasted, but when darkness overtook me I was fairly “in the soup.” Not knowing the road, and there being nothing to guide me and no one to consult, I simply walked along slowly, hoping to strike up against some Indian settlement, and pass the night somehow or other. I trudged along for goodness knows how long until I eventually did hear some sounds indicating that at any rate I was nearing some encampment or habitation. I could hear what was supposed to be music, and in the dark made my way, as near as I could judge, in the direction of



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the sound, and in about half an hour my efforts were rewarded, as I had overtaken a band of roving Indians, all in fancy dress, playing funny reed instruments and dancing continuously as they travelled. They could not speak Spanish, but at that time I knew sufficient of their language—"Aymara," as it is called—and soon explained to them my position. I was allowed to accompany them, as I found they also were bound for La Paz, and soon became a lifelong friend of theirs when I produced a small bottle of whisky which I had with me. The experience was of a unique nature for a white man, but I must confess I rather appreciated the novelty than otherwise, and when I reached La Paz about 1 a.m. I felt that I had had quite an adventure, which might easily have had a more sinister termination, had my Indian escort shown the other side of their nature. Well, to come back to our old coach, which I think I left at the top of the La Paz entrance, I resumed my seat and got into the city at mid-day. I put up at an excellent hotel, of which there were several, and at once bethought me of looking for work, as the balance in my bank (otherwise my pocket) did not warrant my looking upon my visit to La Paz as one of pleasure only. At the time I write of there was one solitary Britisher resident in La Paz, and he was a Scotchman like myself. This was before the railway from Oruro was built, and he was proprietor of the coaches that ran, once a week, from La Paz to the south; and I understood had quite a remunerative business. La Paz is a peculiarly situated city, as the reader may imagine from my description of its position. The streets are mostly hilly and steep, with the exception of one or two which run parallel to each other on both sides of the valley, at the foot of, and in the centre of which flows, the La Paz river. This it bridged in about half a dozen places for horse traffic, and while, for most of the year, there is scarcely any water in the river, when the snow melts it is converted into a veritable roaring torrent; and I happened to be present during one of the most serious accidents that had ever occurred from this cause.

It had rained very copiously for some days, and the river had risen enormously—in fact higher than ever before recorded—and many were the predictions as to how the bridges would stand the weight of water. The usual sightseers were about, and, unfortunately, a large number of them paid the penalty with their lives. They had been duly warned that a certain bridge was dangerous and threatened to give way, but this evidently excited their curiosity all the more; at any rate, a crowd tried to cross, with the result that the bridge tumbled into the raging stream, carrying with it over 200 people, and many of them were drowned—the exact number was never known.



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Quite an important city is La Paz, and a large number of wealthy mine-owners reside there, drawing their incomes from rich tin mines in the neighbourhood. There are also numerous stores from which the wants of the distant population that reside in the rubber country are supplied. The larger proportion of the inhabitants are Indians, and I cannot help remarking that the Bolivian Indians, men and women, are about the ugliest type of human creatures I have yet seen. Besides, they are very illiterate, and it is estimated that, of the total population of Bolivia, only about 30 per cent. can read or write. In the south, Aymara is chiefly spoken; but further north, Quechua is the commoner language. I saw several bull fights in the bullring of which the town boasts, but they were so very disgusting that I refrain from nauseating my readers with details.

The Cathedral was only half completed when I was there, and I understand is still in the same condition. I was forgetting to mention that there was no British Minister or Consul in La Paz, and the story goes that, at some previous period, a Bolivian President compelled the British official representative to ride round the plaza seated on a donkey, but with his face to the tail; the consequence being that the Prime Minister of Great Britain figuratively wiped Bolivia off the map. Anything which we required from the Diplomatic Service had to be obtained through the medium of the British Minister resident in Lima, in Peru. This may now be altered, but I am not aware of the fact. I remained several months in La Paz in the employment of a Bolivian magnate, but the remuneration not being commensurate with my ambitions, I eventually arranged to accompany the proprietor of a very large rubber forest on a trip to his properties on the higher reaches of the River Amazon, and hence my privilege of being able to offer you a perusal of my experiences across the inner ranges of the Cordillera mountains. His daughter also accompanied him, and, although the journey is a most uncomfortable one in more ways than one, she stood the fatigue of many days' riding on mule-back, over trails which did not deserve the name of roads, just about as well as any of the rest of us.

For a trip of this kind many provisions have to be made, as very little indeed can be procured on the journey in the way of good food or lodging. We accordingly had to carry our beds and bedding, and in fact everything we could think of in the form of clothes, food, firearms, and, of course, the necessary accompaniment in liquid form. Most of our baggage and what we might not require at a moment's notice we sent on ahead with a day's anticipation, and eventually on the 20th May, 1901, our caravan departed from the then capital of Bolivia, at 8 a.m. Our conveyance, to start with, consisted of a coach drawn by four mules, and it took much longer to climb the steep "Cuesta" than it had taken us to descend on previous occasions already mentioned. However, our animals were good and in about an hour and a-half we reached the top of the hill, and I took what proved to be my last view of La Paz City.

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The journey for the first forty miles is over the same ground as I have already referred to, in the direction of Lake Titicaca, and there is nothing more to be said about it, beyond that we changed animals at a place called Ocomisto, this being simply a few Indian huts where there is always a supply of grain and water for the animals, and the ordinary country fare for the passing traveller. There was a long journey ahead of us, so we only remained during the time that was occupied in outspanning the tired mules and inspanning the fresh lot. At 1 o'clock we reached Machacamarca, another "tambo" or resting-place, and were very disgusted to find that our pack animals, which we had dispatched the day before, had got no farther than this point. Our desired destination for the night was the Indian town of Achicachi, twelve leagues off, but as it was now quite out of the question to think of travelling our baggage animals so far before night should overtake us, we had to change our plans and therefore directed our coach towards Guarina, another Indian town on the shores of Lake Titicaca, but much nearer than Achicachi, and we eventually arrived there at 5 p.m., having covered, more or less, fifty miles since morning. The journey seemed longer, as the country is so much alike all along the route; but as the roads were fair, travelling was quite comfortable.

Guarina is purely an Indian fishing village, and the only white people are the Bolivian half-caste authorities. As I have already stated, there are no hotels or even lodging-houses in these Indian towns, and ordinary travellers have just to hunt about until they find a place suitable to put beds for the night. However, as my friend was a "personage" in Bolivia, in other words, a man of position and power in political circles, we of course fared considerably better than we should otherwise have done had he not been with us; and we were invited to put up in the house of one of these men in authority. He did his best for us in their frugal way of living, and gave us a meal consisting of "Chairo," which is soup as black as coal, and made from frozen potatoes which are called "chuno." These are about the size of walnuts, hard and black, and have to be well soaked before cooking, and then they are not a savoury bite. The next plate consisted of "Chalona," already described as lean sheep dried in the sun, and which, generally speaking, is very repugnant in appearance, smell, and taste. Never mind, we were hungry and partook of whatever was brought along, until the "inner man" cried content! The meal, I may add, was washed down with a cheap "wine" distilled from cheaper raisins, but it was something wet, and for the time sufficed.



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Our pack animals arrived at Guarina about 7 p.m., and we very soon had our things unpacked and occupied our beds, knowing that a pretty early start would be made in the morning. The night passed uneventfully, and at daybreak we got under way, bound for Achicachi, about five leagues off. There is still a road for vehicles to this town, and keeping along the shores of Lake Titicaca, we reached this larger Indian town about 9 a.m. The population was about 5,000 Indians, but it is a very uninteresting, bleak spot, and we only remained long enough to have a square meal, which we were again fortunate enough to have provided for us by the reigning magistrate. That over, we then dispatched our coach on its return journey to La Paz, and thought of our other means of transport for the forward journey. Good mules we had sent ahead, and were now awaiting us saddled and ready, and we at last got started on this the more arduous part of our journey inland. Our destination for the night was Gualata, a small holding belonging to my fellow-traveller, and we reached it at about 1 o'clock, having climbed probably 2,000 feet higher up the mountains. Cultivation of cereals and potatoes is carried on on a limited scale, owing to the altitude, and taking it all round, the house, although comfortable enough, was situated in about as bleak and bare a spot as it is pretty well possible to imagine.

Nevertheless, it was peopled by about sixty Indians, who turned out in true Indian style in their beautifully coloured robes and making horrible discordant noises which were intended for music—all, of course, to show their appreciation of their “patron.” Here, of course, we got all we required, and as there were any amount of fowls to be had, our bill-of-fare improved in accordance. There was nothing to do specially, and we did not feel inclined to move about much at this elevation above the sea, so we were quite pleased when bed-time came round, and without any ceremony each retired to their respective couches *on the floor*. Owing to excessive cold, however, sleep was out of the question, and it was a relief when day dawned on May 22nd. After refreshing ourselves with a cup of tea we set out for Sorata, distant about six leagues. Travelling was now much slower as the roads were very bad, and in some places very steep and covered with loose stones. This made the foothold bad for the mules, but we trusted to the useful animals entirely, letting them go along on a loose rein to choose their own footing, which they did very successfully. We passed the Indian village of Illabaya, perched on the side of a hill, and all plotted out in small squares for the cultivation of vegetables, *etc.*, of which we bought a supply for our own use. The highest point we passed was over 14,000 feet, and then began the gradual descent into the pretty little town of Sorata, 6,000 feet lower down. The path was not of the best, and the pace was very slow; but the scenery was quite refreshing compared with what we had already passed through.



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Sorata is indeed very pretty and quaint, and although comparatively out of the world, a traveller can spend a short time there pleasantly, and personally speaking, the few days we remained were very enjoyable, thanks once more to my friend's influence. For a change we did not sleep on the floor, and by way of recreation I scented out a billiard table, not a good one, it is true, and the balls were rather elliptical; but as I had once personated the "Mikado," *a la Gilbert & Sullivan*, the conditions were not so disconcerting as they would doubtless have been to a less famous personage! Sorata, being the nearest town to the Bolivian rubber districts which export their products to the Pacific coast, is naturally of more consequence on that account, as all materials and merchandise for the interior must pass through the hands of the Sorata merchants, while the rubber exported to the coast also finds its way through the medium of Sorata agents.

There is the usual plaza in the centre of the town, where the youth and beauty disport themselves in the way peculiar to these mountainous regions, which consists of walking round and round at a good pace to keep up the circulation, as the weather is nearly always cold in Sorata. Illampu, the competitor of Illimani and Aconcagua, and which claims to be the highest peak in South America, rises up magnificently right above and round the town, and visitors for the first time must really wonder how they are to find a road to cross these gigantic mountains, as the town appears to be so completely shut in.

However, on 27th May we started to ascend the track forming the way to the interior, and got a fine send-off by the inhabitants, the more important of whom turned out to bid us adieu and wish us luck over a case or two of beer. The climb before us was a constant one for 18 miles, and to-day we were to pass the highest point of our entire trip. This we reached about midday, at just under 16,000 feet. We were above the perpetual snow-line for a short time, and it was piercingly cold, besides we had to go slowly on account of the thin air, but we kept steadily on and reached an old mining establishment called "El Injenio" at 5 p.m., having done 24 miles in all since morning. There is a long, steep descent to the old mining camp by a narrow winding track cut out of the mountain side, and as the drop on one side to the little stream down below was about 40 to 50 feet, and there was no protecting fence of any kind, we decided to get off our mules, and accordingly completed the worst part of the way on foot, and of course this made travelling very much slower.

Apparently, gold-washing had not been carried on for a very long time, as although the main building still has a roof, the whole place has a very deserted look about it; but, nevertheless, it still affords a covering for weary travellers like ourselves, and we soon began to select the most comfortable looking corners for our beds. There was an old Indian there who earns a meagre existence by selling forage to passing travellers for their beasts of burden; and he was also utilised by us for getting a fire ready and boiling water for a welcome cup of warm tea.



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One thousand feet above our heads, as it seemed, we could see Llano, another of these quaint, Indian hamlets, but the appearance of the exceedingly precipitate track up to it did not excite us in any desire to make the ascent. After partaking of some food, we got under our blankets in the usual way at sunset to once more sleep the sleep of the contented traveller. By 6.15 next morning we were again in the saddle and under way—the road was now even narrower than before, about two feet wide only—winding round and round the mountain side, ascending all the time, and in some parts far too steep for comfortable riding. From now onwards the journey was over tracks, not roads, and many of the ascents and descents were so steep that it was quite out of the question to attempt to negotiate them on muleback. We, accordingly, with philosophic patience had just to accept the inevitable, and get off and lead our animals over these now really dangerous parts. Some of the precipices down to the river bed were now much deeper, and had we slid over, we might have experienced considerable inconvenience at the bottom, and a greater difficulty in getting up again. The roads became worse and worse, and really they could be given no other name than “goat-tracks,” but the mule is a wonderful beast, and let him have his head (on no account attempt to guide him), there is not much fear of any serious trouble. Our sleeping place for the night was to be at an old ruin of a house at a bare, but more level, opening in the mountains, called Tolapampa, and before reaching this we had to negotiate much the worst pass on the whole route. This is called the “tornillo” (screw), and it is a real corkscrew path, cut out of the mountain side at an angle of about 50 deg., and about 450 feet of a climb.

Riding was of course impossible, and we scrambled more than walked until we safely got over the top, very tired and puffed out. The mules with their cargo followed our example, and it was wonderful to see how they kept their feet; as one false step might have sent them to the bottom, carrying everything behind them too, and on more than one occasion this has happened, the animals falling, generally being killed outright in the fall. Pushing on as fast as possible, it was not till 4 o'clock p.m. that our residence for the night loomed in view, and it did not inspire one that it could supply much in the way of home comforts. Sure, the old hovel had walls and a roof, but beyond that there were no windows, and where the door ought to have been there was only a hole in the wall, but nothing to close it with to keep out the intense cold.



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We, of course, knew when we started that we would have to rough it, so there was no use grumbling now, and therefore set about at once to get something to make a fire with. With great good fortune we, after a great deal of searching and gathering, obtained some old rubbish that burned. I say with good luck, because this is a treeless region yet, at an elevation of 10,000 feet, and fuel is naturally always at a premium. For cooking it did not matter so much, as we had a spirit lamp, but it was to warm our bodies and keep up our spirits that made the fire so desirable. Darkness was on us before we finished our evening meal, and we looked forward to the night with no very pleasant forebodings—and it did turn out a tiresome night—it rained all the time and the cold was extreme—so much so, that we eventually sat up most of the time, hoping by daylight to move on to a more charitable atmosphere.

I think I should not miss this opportunity of relating an experience of mine when I journeyed over the same route on another occasion. Then I was only accompanied by two Indians—no white people—and was travelling towards Sorata. I remember very well we reached Tolapampa, already described, in the afternoon, it having rained constantly all day. I was suffering from malaria very acutely, and the high levels at which we had been travelling also affected me grievously. I arrived at Tolapampa soaked to the skin, shivering cold, and really more dead than alive. To aggravate matters we could not light a fire—everything was wet—and I can assure you it was anything but a bright outlook for us. Another gang of about ten Indians also turned up, and we did look a sorry lot. However, these natives, seeing that I was so weak (I had had malaria almost constantly during the previous six months), did all they could to get me to “buck up,” and kept moving me backwards and forwards to warm myself, which operation I well remember was a very tedious one. They also tried to get me to eat of their cold frugal fare; but that was beyond me; and after they decided it was time to rest for the night, I scrambled in *amongst them*—Indians all round me—so as to benefit from the heat of their bodies. It was neither a very pleasant nor a very clean position that I occupied, and I can hardly realise how I had the courage to do what I did; but the facts remain the same, and at any rate I got some rest.

It poured all night, and when at daybreak I suggested to my men that it was time to start, they positively refused to move until the rain ceased. I brought all my persuasive powers to bear, but it was of no avail, and as I had decided to go on alone, all I got out of them was a promise they would follow me at 10 o'clock. It was very disappointing, but I was determined to get forward at all cost. I therefore started on my lonely journey at eight o'clock, with the rain, and at times sleet, coming down in bucketfuls; I could hardly see in front



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of me at times, and it was destined to be a trip of which I shall always retain very vivid recollections. On this occasion, owing to the excessive rains, all the little mountain streams, which under normal circumstances are of no inconvenience to travellers, had been converted into veritable roaring torrents, causing me on more than one occasion to think twice before attempting a crossing. To condense matters as much as possible, let me remark that it rained all day; travelling was not only difficult but positively dangerous, and I, being so ill, could hardly keep my seat on my mule. All this made travelling so slow that I was still a long way from "El Injenio," my objective point for the night, when darkness overtook me. I had the narrow, dangerous paths to go along which I have already described, and I therefore did not trust to getting over them on muleback, but took the safer and, in my opinion, more sensible plan of leading my animal. This was tedious work, but it was to become worse very soon. I arrived at one of those swollen mountain streams, the appearance of which in the darkness fairly frightened me. My mule would not look at it, and for a while I did not know exactly what to do. I could judge that it was four or five feet deep, and rushing past at a great rate. Neither mule nor I could ever have hoped to keep our feet if we had attempted crossing, as it was about thirty feet wide. I left my mule and commenced to reconnoitre along the side, when I came to what had been a bridge, but which was partly washed away, leaving a gap of about four feet in the middle, as far as I could judge in the uncertain light, and over which it was impossible for a mule to go. Leaving my mule, I made a good jump, and, fortunately, got over all right, but, after all, I did not know in the least where I was, and, before attempting to return to my animal, I started to go forward in the hope of at least striking some sheltered spot where I might pass the night. Meantime, however, I heard a crash, and, as it turned out, away had gone the remainder of the bridge, leaving me on one side, and now completely isolated from my mule and saddlebags. There was no use fretting, so I continued moving on—it was now dark—feeling my way, and keeping very carefully away from the river. I had not proceeded very far before my progress was all too suddenly arrested. I did not until the next morning know what actually did take place, but the facts are as follows: In groping my way along I had actually been walking on the very edge of a sort of precipice, and apparently had simply stepped over the side. At any rate, I rolled to the bottom, which, luckily for me, was only about fifteen feet; but it was quite a bump, and I wondered where I had actually landed. As it was so black, and I did not know anything of my surroundings, I simply made up my mind to remain where I had fallen until morning. I ought to tell you that, although I had plenty of matches, they were all wet with the rain, so that they would not



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light, and I had to remain in darkness all night. My saddle-bags were with the mule, and I did not even know now where the animal might be. I was soaking wet, shivering with ague, nothing to eat, plenty of cigarettes and matches, but unable to smoke or even make a light, so my disagreeable plight can to some extent be imagined. Moreover, there were about six inches of water all round me, so that I could not attempt to sleep. The cold was intense, and I can safely say that I never spent such a long, disagreeable, and dreary night in all my previous experience, and I hope never to be compelled to do so again. There are bears in this district also, but I am thankful to say that I was not molested in any way.

Towards morning the rain slackened, and when daylight came I never felt more thankful in my life. I climbed out of my nest, and there, only about a hundred yards away, was my faithful mule standing exactly as I had left him. I waited until the water in the stream had gone down sufficiently, and crossing on foot, with the water about two feet deep, I mounted my mule, and then recrossed on muleback. I knew from the number of hours I had travelled on the previous day I could not be far from Injenio, and I was right, as in less than an hour I saw my destination right ahead of me. I was in a pitiful condition, and could hardly stand up. The old Indian recognised me and got me dry wraps after a fashion, and I got under his dry blankets. I could not eat, but I drank a large quantity of "Aguardiente," which at least put some life into me. In the meantime I did not know what had become of my pack animals and Indians, but I was not in a state to worry about them, and didn't. Instead, I kept my bed for about thirty hours, until I was revived somewhat. Then, luckily, my men turned up, and I was able to continue my journey to Sorata.

Well, we left Tolapampa about 6 a.m., and for the best part of the day the route was over country very similar to that passed on the previous day; but we were descending rapidly now, and the temperature became perceptibly much warmer, in fact, by the afternoon we had indications that soon we should arrive in the "montes," where we would have vegetation in abundance, and consequently we would at least have some shade during the heat of the day. The road, nevertheless, continued to be very rough and broken, and we had frequently to dismount and lead our animals for long distances at a time. The long pass of Margurani was unusually tiring, as it was down hill most of the time, and over loose rocks and stones, which were very hard on our poor feet. Pararani, a small stopping-place, was reached about 2 p.m., and as both we and the animals had just about had enough of it, we decided to remain for the night.



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We were now right in tropical surroundings, and the beautiful palms and ferns, not to mention the magnificent butterflies of all colours, were a grateful contrast to the scenery we had been accustomed to since we left Sorata. We were now only about two thousand feet above sea level, and the weather was very hot indeed, mosquitoes and other worrying insects were very plentiful; but, bad as they can be, they seemed trivial troubles compared with what we had come through. At this "puesto" we were better treated, as we obtained vegetables, bananas, and oranges, and with our tinned stuffs made quite a decent repast. The place was owned by a Spaniard, and he, along with his wife, cultivates a little piece of ground, and supplied passing travellers with general rations for both man and beast. The place was clean in comparison with what we had been accustomed to, and we seemed to sigh a mutual sigh of content at our good luck in reaching this "oasis." We rested all afternoon, and got to bed early, and, although there were rats about, I slept "like a log," I was so fearfully tired.

In the morning, however, I awoke refreshed, and with our usual punctuality got away at 6 o'clock, feeling that at last we were nearing our journey's end, as we now directed our animals' heads towards Copacabana, the nearest of the rubber forests belonging to my friend. This was only three or four leagues off, and the going was somewhat improved also, so our progress was a good deal faster than usual. During the greater part of the present journey, the weather, so far, had been fairly good, that is, taking into consideration the high regions through which we had come, but we were not fated to be so successful on this our last day. In fact, we had not gone far, when a really characteristic tropical shower baptized us properly, and continued during the whole of the rest of the day, the result being, as may be imagined, that we arrived at "Copacabana" like the proverbial "drookit mice." As the path was beneath the trees all the way, we got the full benefit of the rain dripping from the branches overhanging, which was just like a shower bath all the time. However, I got into dry clothes, and, I think, felt when I got into the Estancia house, that after all the "roughing," the trip was, in part, compensated for by the new experiences I had gone through, making my way over these very mountainous regions at such a very high elevation.

However, I remained for over a year in the rubber districts, and had an opportunity of seeing how the work is carried on and of judging of the enormous profit which must result to the lucky owners. Unfortunately, the climate is of the very worst, and the malaria being of a very malignant nature, is very hard on white people. I had my full share of this "terciana," as it is called, and sometimes wonder how I really managed to work my way to the outside world again.

In conclusion, let me express a modest hope that the perusal of my humble effort to put personal adventures on paper may at least convey to the reader some idea of what has to be experienced if one chooses to be a wanderer like myself in remote places, and that he or she may to a certain extent enjoy the result nominally, without going through the hard work involved in the actual performance.



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FOOTNOTES:

[F] Allow me to remind the reader that Lake Titicaca is the highest water in the world which is navigated by steam.

[Illustration: *Loading Wheat at the Port of Buenos Aires.*]

PROGRESS OF THE PORT OF BUENOS AIRES.

The first Custom House built for the port of Buenos Aires was in 1603. The only work carried out in the harbour up to the end of the eighteenth century was the construction of thirty-five metres of brick quay-wall at the site of the "Arsenal" on the Riachuelo. We find that although between the years 1852 and 1858 many plans were presented for building of piers, these were only carried into practice and built by the Government under the technical direction of Engineer E. Taylor; a new Custom House replacing the fortress, a timber pier for loading and unloading goods, and another pier for passenger traffic at the locality of the old mole. In the year 1878 the Riachuelo was first opened for traffic for sea-going ships, and in 1879, 197 vessels with 55,091 tonnage had entered the Riachuelo. As early as 1862 Ed. Madero turned his attention to the question of docks for the port of Buenos Aires, and in 1865 applied for permission to construct them at his own cost, but the application was rejected. Four years later he presented another application, which suffered the same fate. In 1869 the total exports from Buenos Aires were 397,722 tons, the bulk of which were loaded at the Riachuelo, and steamers over 100 metres long frequented the harbour about the time of 1870. It was not until 1882 that Ed. Madero succeeded in obtaining the concession of building the docks for the port of Buenos Aires. The docks were to be constructed on the river side of the city, between the gasworks on the north and the Riachuelo River on the south.

The trade of the City of Buenos Aires up to the time of the opening of the South Basin had nearly all been carried on between the shore and the steamers by lighters and small steam tenders. The usual anchorage for the ocean steamers was in the "bar anchorage," a distance of about fourteen miles from the city. The cargoes were transhipped into lighters, which brought them as near to the shore as possible, and from this point they were taken to the Custom House in specially-constructed carts with very large wheels. Passengers were transhipped in the bar anchorage into small tenders, and were brought to a point about 500 metres from the end of the passenger mole. From these tenders, when there was sufficient water, they were taken ashore in small boats, while, if the water was too low to go alongside the mole, they also had to be brought ashore in carts. In many cases, however, passengers were brought on in tenders and landed at the Riachuelo wharves, which were then under construction. The first steamers that arrived in the River Plate were those of the Royal Mail Company,

followed by the French Messageries Maritimes, and shortly afterwards by the Lamport & Holt Line.

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Up to the year 1870 these lines, and a few more that were started, progressed very slowly, although the rates of freight were then very high; but after that trade increased gradually, and not only a fair number of sailing-vessels arrived yearly, but the regular lines of steamers increased their number of sailings. The great drawback was the deficient state of the port, where steamers had to lie at a distance of fourteen to sixteen miles, and most of the sailing-vessels at ten to twelve miles from the shore. There was no channel dredged, and even the Riachuelo was so scantily supplied with water that lighters drawing seven to eight feet were sometimes for weeks prevented from getting out to deliver their cargo to the sea-going vessels in the outer roads. The discharge was exclusively effected into lighters, which, apart from the heavy expense incurred by the receiver of the goods, presented the great objection that a considerable portion of the cargo was often broached and pilfered before it reached the shore, claims for which had to be paid by the ship. Another point was that many of these lighters were old sailing-vessels or steamers, and, in the unseaworthy and leaky state they were in, often arrived with their cargo considerably damaged. On the completion of the South Basin on 28th January, 1889, passengers were able to embark or disembark with a little more comfort, and cargoes were landed on the quays. Docks 1 and 2 have each a water area of 23 acres, being 570 metres long by 160 metres wide, with a quay length of 1,420 metres. No. 3 Dock has a water area of 27 acres, is 690 metres long by 160 metres wide, with a quay length of 1,660 metres. No. 4 Dock has a water area of 25 acres, is 630 metres long by 160 metres wide, with a quay length of 1,535 metres.

All these four docks, when they were originally finished, had a depth of 23 feet 9 inches below low water, so that, however low the river may be, there should never be less than 23 feet 9 inches in the docks. Since then dredging has been going on and the docks have been deepened to receive larger vessels. The docks are united by passages 20 metres in width, each passage being crossed by a swing bridge. Dock No. 4 is entered at its northern end by the north lock. This lock opens into the North Basin, which has a water area of 41 acres and a quay length of 1,409 metres and a depth of 21 feet 3 inches. The total area of the basins and the four docks is 174 acres, and the total length of quays 8,482 lineal metres. The following are the dates the various basins and docks were opened to traffic:—

South Basin 28th January, 1889
South Lock, Dock No. 1 ... 31st January, 1890
Dock No. 2 26th September, 1890
Dock No. 3 31st March, 1892
Dock No. 4, North Lock, North
Basin, and Graving Docks ... 7th March, 1897
First half of North Channel... 15th June, 1897
Second half of North Channel,
buoys and beacons 31st March, 1898



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The timber sea-wall was built to a level of 16 feet above low water, and the stone sea-wall to 19 feet. Originally there were built three sheds in the South Basin, three sheds and two warehouses in Dock No. 1, two warehouses and two sheds in Dock No. 2, five warehouses in Dock No. 3, and four warehouses in Dock No. 4, the total capacity of these sheds and warehouses being 525,510 cubic metres, and the floor area 192,800 square metres. Since then, several warehouses have been built, and some burnt down. The total cost of the harbour works as contracted for by Ed. Madero was \$35,000,000 gold, or, say, about L7,000,000. This includes the South Basin, Dock No. 1, Dock No. 2, Dock No. 3, Dock No. 4, North Basin, North Channel, Graving Docks, machinery, *etc.*

The following statement shows the total tonnage that passed through the port of Buenos Aires in 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1909, and clearly shows the advance made in the last 30 years.

These figures include steamers and sailing-vessels, and local as well as foreign trade.

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1880 | 644,750 tons | 1890 | 4,507,096 tons | 1900 | 8,047,010 tons |
| 1909 | 16,993,973 tons | | | | |

In 1909 we find that 2,008 steamers and 137 sailing-vessels entered the port of Buenos Aires from foreign shores with a tonnage of 5,193,542, and 1,978 steamers and 129 sailing-vessels left the port for foreign shores with a tonnage of 5,174,114; out of these, British boats lead with 2,242 steamers and 37 sailing-vessels, or, say, 53-1/2 per cent, of the total.

JUST MY LUCK!

I really have had rather bad luck. As you know, I was wrecked on my way out from the Old Country. The good ship "Southern Cross" met her fate on a rock in Vigo Bay, and my luggage met its fate at the same time. This was something of a blow, but I expected to be treated a little more kindly by fate when once my destination was reached; I would be a stranger in a new country, and fate is proverbially kind to tyros of every sort.

R.M.S.P. "Danube," which carried the shipwrecked passengers of the "Southern Cross" from Vigo to Buenos Aires, arrived at the Argentine capital towards the end of January. At the conclusion of my journey, one of my fellow-passengers, to whom I was saying good-bye, gave me this sound piece of advice: "Take care of yourself, and the country will take care of you." I don't suppose I can have taken care of myself, for within two months I was down with typhoid fever. This is how fate treats strangers in a new country.



You know that I had the good fortune, shortly after my arrival, to find employment with the Santa Fe Land Company, and immediately on my falling ill, the Manager of the estancia sent me to bed, and reduced me to a milk diet. Two days later he himself took me down to the Buenos Aires British Hospital, and it is to this fact, and to the sensible treatment which I received in camp, that I in great measure owe my quick recovery. The journey to Buenos Aires was made as comfortable as possible. Even so, however, I must have been slightly delirious, for I remember thinking that everybody in the train was wearing a pink shirt without either coat or waistcoat. This must surely have been a delusion.



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I reached the hospital on a Sunday morning, and was promptly carried upstairs to a private ward. Though my temperature was now as much as 104 deg., and my faculties were naturally not at their quickest, I could not help noticing the cheery look of the ward. There were flowers on the tables, the patients were obviously well cared for, everything was scrupulously clean, and the British nurses looked both efficient and attractive. The scrupulous cleanliness, together with the latest and most approved methods of treatment, were indeed a feature of the hospital in all its aspects.

It was a short time afterwards that one of the doctors, after carefully diagnosing my case, ordered me to the medical ward, where there would be greater facilities for giving me a course of baths. In the medical ward my treatment was as kind and as careful as formerly, but my new surroundings had for the moment a rather depressing effect. I was just able to realise that the cases around me were more serious than in the private ward, and that both doctors and nurses were more grave and intent on their work. I was soon, however, to become delirious again, and for the next few days was more or less oblivious to my environment. After a short time I became more alive to what was happening around me. We typhoid patients had four cold baths daily, and those patients who in their normal existence were unaccustomed to one warm bath a week were somewhat inclined to rebel. This was amusing. My sense of humour was reviving. The company here was certainly more mixed than in the private ward—consisting as it did of every class and of every nationality, from Montenegrin to Turk, but it was not on that account any the less entertaining. Two or three berths away a brawny Scot of monster dimensions, who was convalescent after an acute attack of rheumatism, would every night before getting into bed say, with a certain naivete, and without any sense of proportion, that he was going to his “little nest.” And yet people accuse Scotsmen of a lack of imagination. On either side of me lay a typhoid patient—each delirious. The one on my right hand imagined he was at home drinking beer in Plymouth, and the one on my left, an Italian workman, would persistently call for his boots. It seemed he wished to return to his work and did not think any other article of dress necessary. The weather at the time was certainly hot, and this may have suggested such a daring flaunting of the conventions. It is curious that among typhoid patients this illusion of doing some action without sufficient clothing is rather prevalent. I myself at one time imagined that I had been discharged from the hospital with only the top of my pyjamas and a travelling rug. As I would carry the travelling rug on my arm, it scarcely compensated for the lack of other apparel. Through all these vagaries on the part of the patients the nurses remained kind and careful as ever. This was especially conspicuous



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in one case, where a patient insisted that his nurse was a Chinese pirate, and behaved accordingly, but she gave her charge the same excellent attention as before. At this time I began to be troubled with the pangs of a great hunger. After subsisting for five weeks on milk alone, my food diet began with small doses of cornflour and with large doses of castor oil, but at last there came a chicken. I shall never forget that first chicken, nor the nurse who brought it to me. How I tore those bones—of the chicken, not the nurse—apart, and how I attacked them in my fingers so that I should not leave any of the good meat. Eventually my bed in the medical ward was required for a more serious case than myself, and I was sufficiently well to be returned to the private ward for a few days of convalescence. The patients here were certainly more companionable than in the medical ward, and they suffered from less grave complaints. They were for the most part victims of accidents, and were all nearly well enough to leave the hospital. In the evenings we generally had some sort of amusement among ourselves. The *piece de resistance* was more often than not a wrestling match between the man with the amputated foot and the man who had undergone an operation for sciatica. As both performers were in ordinary circumstances compelled to use crutches, their efforts were distinctly humorous.

It was after two months of medical treatment that I was able to leave the British Hospital, and it was only when on the point of leaving that I realised what we Britishers owe to this institution.

The building itself is constructed on the most approved designs, it is fitted with every modern appliance, both medical and surgical; the treatment is excellent, the percentage of cures remarkable—not a single case has been lost in the medical ward during the current year; the doctors are not only experienced, but efficient; and finally, the nurses—but perhaps I have already dwelt with sufficient emphasis on their virtues.

All the same, thank Heaven I return to camp in a week, and may fate deal more kindly with me in the future.

“THE TACURU.”

“THE TACURU.”

PATRON SAINT: GEORGE WASHINGTON.

No. 1.

Saturday, March 26th, 1910.

When we consider the already overstocked journalistic world, and remember the innumerable papers and magazines which greet one at every street corner and nestle in

every armchair, we feel that an apology is due to our readers (if any) for our temerity in swelling the overflow of periodicals, but let us assure you our reasons for putting another paper on the market are purely altruistic. It is no idea of mere gain, or even a desire for notoriety that urges us to issue "The Tacuru"; we have undertaken this responsibility because we know that the world would be the loser did we refuse to give to the public the highly scientific impressions formed by an extraordinarily



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intelligent party of pilgrims during a unique journey into the wild uncultivated northern lands of the Argentine, especially as some of the most intellectual (the superlative adverb is well chosen) members of the band have promised to give their scientific views on the lands through which we shall pass daily. Though this expedition is only advertised to last a fortnight, yet we have no intention of closing our paper at the end of that time, for we are certain that once the public have been educated to appreciate the high-class literature and useful information which it will be the aim of "The Tacuru" to supply, we shall have created a demand and interest which not even Halley's comet can rival, and we shall endeavour to satisfy that demand daily. Our only fear was that lest the world should be kept waiting for the publication of our paper, for though everything was in readiness yesterday for an early start to-day, the elements seemed inclined to delay us, and when rain had fallen steadily nearly all day, The Instigator of the trip was seen to clench his jaw yesterday afternoon, as he remarked "We cannot start till Monday." This fiat caused dire consternation; the idea of waiting for two days when all those carts were packed ready for our immediate outset, filled the party with annoyance, and had it not been for the fact that The Instigator is a man not to be trifled with, it is possible remonstrances might have been raised. But, fortunately, each member of the party only possessed the angelic variety of temper, so no expostulations were made, and peace was maintained. This unequalled patience under trials was rewarded, and great was the joy of the party when at 8 p.m. it was found that the rain had ceased, and the moon shone forth in such a way as to influence The Instigator to rescind his decision and declare an early start for to-day.

Rumour has it that The Jehu and his aide-de-camp and Our Hostess sat up till 12.30 a.m., finally arranging "places in the carriages, food supplies, blankets required," and all the innumerable details which made for the party's comfort.

Before we publish the impressions, contributed by one member of the band, on to-day's trip, we think our readers might appreciate a slight character sketch of each of our "Staff." There are nine Pilgrims.

FIRST: *The Instigator*. Well, he's right when you know him, but you do want to know him first. What possessed him to suggest that we should trek away north, goodness only knows, unless he was fired by a desire to imitate the Cook-Peary journeys, or it may have been the celebrated "Cristobal Cocktails" which inspired him to do great deeds.



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We hear that coming out from England he earned a reputation on board ship as an auctioneer, and once even sold a live lord for a few shillings to the highest lady bidder. As a camp man he is a marvel, never seen on horseback, but generally discovered on his hands and knees fudging about with a thing he calls a pocket microscope, and occasionally going off into hysterics over some clod of earth, a leaf, or some weird microbes which he says are feeding on the alfalfa roots. Talking of feeding, The Instigator can eat anything, his motto is "*tout jour*"; he has the digestion of an ostrich, and says "it is just as well to make a good meal while you are about it, for you never know when and where you will get the next." His best friends cannot say he is musical (save when others are trying to sleep); but he has a favourite song, and it is that old music-hall classic entitled "Do, do, be always on the do." However, he is a very good fellow, and notwithstanding that square jaw of his, which seems to hint at the possibility of "a man of wrath" existing in that silent thoughtful being, he is kindness itself to all, and never fails to do his share of work as it comes along.

SECOND: *Our Guest*. The Wild Man discovered this *rara avis* in a railway carriage, babbling for "Kwilmez Beer," so he was brought along, and he had not been long at the Estancia before he was running first favourite in the Popularity Stakes. He was always ready for anything, and it must have been his desire to acquire knowledge which induced him to come with the party. The Saint has undertaken to explain to him how colonists thrive on the 8 per cent. system, and to teach him how many grains of maize make "ocho." We doubt whether she will succeed in the latter attempt, for we fancy Our Guest will never leave eight grains of maize uneaten; he is a wonder for that delicacy, and feeds on it constantly, and we hear rumours that he intends to take some maize cobs home with him to his native country, and proposes to feed his "team" on it.

THIRD: *The Delineator*. This is a misnomer, he really should be called "The Photographer," but that sounds so common, and his views are so uncommon that we called him The Delineator instead; besides, he always travels about with maps and charts (his own, or someone else's) and when appealed to as to what course we should take, replies in a cold, hard voice, "North by North, just as she goes." Like the rest of the party, he has never travelled quite the road we are going now, but the prospect of collecting a few new varieties of butterflies, moths, insects, and plants caused his eyes to light up with a wild gleam when he heard of the trip, and the yarns he spins of things unseen by the ordinary sober mortal are ever a joy to the listener, and make them whisper, *se non e vero e ben trovato*.



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FOURTH: *The Jehu*. There is but one name for a man who handles his four-in-hand over tree-trunks, tacurus, and tussocks, as our cocher does. He drives as not even his namesake drove; in rain, in sunshine, in light, in darkness, over smooth ground or rough, he guides his steeds with consummate skill and care, which is wonderful to see. After a more than usually big bump he turns to his passengers with a cheery "All aboard?"; then gives his attention once more to the animals of which he is so fond, and in which he takes such pride. His knowledge of the horses he drives is marvellous. The Jehu is a man of great perception and information, and has a pleasant knack of being able to convey his knowledge to others. He and The Instigator have great arguments together which interest all listeners by day, but the discussions are not followed with quite so much delight by those who are privileged to hear them at night, when they often degenerate into a snoring competition.

FIFTH: *The Wild Man*—had been driven south by stress of weather and strikes. We should like to say something nice about him, for he always carries revolvers, knives, and cameras, but we fear that our kindest remarks may be misunderstood by one so unused to a quiet civilisation with no revolutions, so we refrain from all personal comments. This product of a land of luxuriant vegetation has a quaint penchant for collecting matchboxes (filled), old boots, deer horns, and any odd things lying about the camp belonging to himself or other people; still he is always cheerful and content, never grumbles, and can give valuable information respecting the ways of the natives who look upon him as a man and a brother.

SIXTH: *The Chaperon*—has his uses. It will be his business to see that we are housed, clothed, and fed. The horses and peons will also be under his care, and if anyone wants to grumble about anything The Chaperon is the person to abuse. Tent-erecting is what he considers himself to be very good at; but rumour has it that his best accomplishment is hairdressing (ladies or gentlemen, English or foreign styles). His resources know no bounds; he has been seen to fasten up a pair of leggings with bits of stick. His powers of annexation, both mentally and materially, are indeed marvellous. He prefers to make his bed on the bricks or the cold, hard ground, and then enlarges on the comfort thereof; he generally takes his food standing up, and is always on the spot ready for any emergency when required.

SEVENTH: *The Saint*—is a lady who will give away anything in her possession, save chicken or eggs. Just now she is making donations of pipes, tobacco, handkerchiefs (her own or The Instigator's), and good advice on matrimony. She is a person of importance, and is very keen on collecting knowledge which she is always ready to impart to others; unfortunately, some of her efforts to improve humanity have not been absolutely successful, but she is never discouraged, and takes up the next case on the list with equal enthusiasm. Most of us have to thank her for some good thing or other. She will do her best to keep every member of the party up to the mark, physically and mentally. Her accomplishments are numerous.



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EIGHTH: *My Lady*—is a general favourite; she will look after the lot of us in her own gracious fashion. Everyone goes to her for advice, sympathy, or help, which she is always ready to give. Even without her tea-basket she would be an absolute necessity for the social success of the trip, for, as the advertisements say of patent sweepers and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, “no party is complete without” her, so every one was glad to hear that she had agreed to accompany the northern pioneers. Those favoured ones who have seen her “on the boards,” whisper that her histrionic genius is marvellous; we, who are not among the fortunate number, can only say that if her acting equals her talent for giving (when required) a really concise, lucid description of anything, it must indeed be wonderful. Her quotations, too, are so ready and apt, though occasionally they remind us, by their vagueness, of her namesake and favourite book.

NINTH: *The Kid*. Why she is brought along, nobody will ever know. It may have been as a “contrapeso” (“an addition of meat or fish of inferior quality, thrown in to complete the weight,” *vide* Arturo Cuyas’ Dictionary), but we think she came with the sheep. Anyhow, it was not until the first part of the journey had been accomplished that she was discovered bleating in the corner of one of the coaches. We had a meeting to decide whether she should come on with us or not, and arranged to put her on the job of tidying up for the trip; but her hopeless incompetence and ready impertinence to her superior officers, necessitated instant dismissal without a character. However, as she is really not worth the trouble of sending back, we locked up the tea tin, and let her continue the journey on the condition that she will not talk too much, awake or asleep. With any luck, we may yet lose her somewhere in the wilds.

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The one disappointment expressed by all the party was that Our Hostess decided not to accompany us on the trip, but to await our return at Cristobal.

We started out from the estancia house as soon as the ladies’ luggage could be brought downstairs, and we should like to remark, in passing, that it was a very affecting sight to see Our Guest, The Delineator, and The Wild Man lifting and carrying heavy boxes and baggage (with no thought of gain) out to the peons, who, under the able direction of The Chaperon, loaded them scientifically on to one of the four carts, which, when ready, were sent on ahead with the nine peons who had been told off for the trip. Cameras appeared from every available corner as we prepared to move, and many invaluable photos of the start of the caravan must have been secured by those who gave us such a hearty send-off. When at last Our Hostess had put in the final cushion and rug, and provided us with biscuits and bull’s-eyes, and was satisfied that even she could do nothing more for our comfort, we parted from her with great regret, promising that she should receive numerous marconigrams concerning our welfare, and our travels en route. First went off the four-in-hand driven by The Jehu, who had four members of the party in his care; he was followed by The Chaperon, who drove a pair, and looked after the rest of the explorers.

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There is an old saying, "Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him." The truth of this saying has never been better exemplified than in the case of the Chaco, which long held the reputation of being good for nothing. Rumour had it that the northern land was useless; life was impossible there for the white man; indeed, it was supposed that cattle even could not live there on account of the mosquitoes and garrapata; and Indians were said to be as thick as flies, and equally disturbing.

The Santa Fe Land Company has been one of the pioneers who steadily fought down these reports, and by showing what good cattle could be bred there, and what crops grown, has gradually opened up the possibilities of the northern lands to colonists and investors. Slowly but surely workers came north, first in fear and dread, but later with confidence, and now the cry is "They come, and still they come." Before we had gone far on our journey we had an opportunity of conversing with one lately arrived colonist. A wonderful crop of maize attracted our notice, and we stopped to speak to the great, jolly, strong-framed Italian who had grown it. He has moved up from the south with his wife and family, and his fellow-workmen. They started ploughing, and though it was late in the season, he was persuaded to try a catch-crop of maize, with the result that he has to-day banked \$5,000, when he never expected to secure a chance harvest. And so sure is he that the land will repay all labour and time expended upon it that he is anxious to take up a league and colonize it with his fellow-countrymen.

It is the same story all through the northern lands; anyone with pluck, adaptability and grit can do what this man has done: indeed hard work and perseverance will as amply reward the labourer in the northern lands as they have done in the south. The sight of this great crop of valuable maize, on land which a few months before was a mere waste, brings the words of the Psalmist forcibly to one's thoughts, for surely of no country could it more truly be said than of the Argentine, "Dwell in the land, and be doing good, and, verily, thou shalt be fed"; and perhaps there are few countries in which there are less openings for the man whose mind is not set towards "doing good": the Argentine has little room for the shirker.

[Illustration: *Horses awaiting Inspection.*]

The rain of yesterday relieved us from the trials of dust on our journey, but it also made the going very heavy, and instead of travelling for the usual two hours before relieving horses, we were obliged to make an early stop for a change. This is always an interesting sight, for the animals are so well trained. Our total number is 87, and when a halt is called, these animals are all lined up in a row, generally against a wire fence. At the word of command they range themselves, backed close against the fence in a long line with their heads outwards.

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Packed tightly together they await the inspection of their master, who chooses the animals he requires, and as they are standing thus they allow themselves to be haltered up and led quietly away from the line to be harnessed. Their training is wonderful, but it is really amusing to watch the expression of the horses as they stand in a row while the selection takes place, they seem to be saying "Please, sir, not I this time." Where no wire fence is available, the peons stretch a rope or lasso out, and the horses will line up against that in the same manner. During our first change of horses, unexpected excitement occurred. The Saint perceived a plaid horse—at least this is what she called it, and we believed it to be German for piebald horse—from which a peon had dismounted. This horse must have reminded her of the circus-riders of her childhood (or possibly her action was owing to temporary aberration); anyhow, without a word of warning, she leapt astride the native saddle and gave a short display of how it should be done. However, fortunately from her point of view, though disappointingly from that of the spectators, the piebald animal had not been trained to circus tricks, and only quietly ambled along for a few yards, during which time the cameras came into full play. After The Saint had been persuaded to dismount, and the horses were harnessed up, an onward move was made, and it was not long before we met our host for the day. He had ridden to the furthest outposts of his section to join us, and under his guidance we were conducted to two or three spots, where The Instigator inspected rodeos of animals in his charge.

We arrived at the Section house of Polvareda about midday, and found that our host had prepared an alarmingly sumptuous repast for his influx of visitors: as course followed course, roast ducks dodged the turkey, and were pursued by plum pudding, *etc.*, we began to wonder if our host thought that meal would have to last us for the fortnight of our trip. But we discovered that he came from the West of England, and had not forgotten the ideas of hospitality current in that part of the world. Rumour had it that he himself had been seen carrying about pails of scalded milk at 4 a.m. This proceeding explains the delicious Devonshire cream and butter we are enjoying.

The afternoon was spent in driving or riding round the section to inspect various windmills, more groups of cattle, wells, fencing, and new alfalfa, *etc.* Our host, as we were driving round, took the opportunity for giving us a short, successful exhibition of buck-jumping with his steed, whether willingly or not, neither he nor history mentions. At eventide, another excellent repast was provided, and The Saint was so impressed by the catering and culinary skill of our host, that she decided to inaugurate a prize to be won by the bachelor estanciero who shall provide the best meals for the hungry nomads during the trip; certainly our host for to-day has put the standard very high for the other competitors. A short telephonic communication was held during dinner with Our Hostess at Cristobal, and "All's well" was reported on both sides.



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[Illustration: *Stacking Alfalfa.*]

[Illustration: *Alfalfa Elevator at Work.*]

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“THE TACURU.”

No. 2.

Sunday, March 27th, 1910.

The party did not sit up late last night; they had a short talk on the verandah for the sake of digestion, and then all retired to bed, but alas! not to rest. Foolishly they had imagined that mosquitoes were things of the past, and no nets were put up, with the result that one and all soon learnt that for fresh blood and newcomers there was a plethora of these little demons waiting with their irritating song, sting, and bite: from some of the party we learn complaints of other songs, more human, and more nasal, and it is believed that it was Our Guest who was heard at midnight to be murmuring the chorus of a favourite song, viz., “Hush, boys! No noise! Silence ebyting! Listen, and you’ll hear de little angels sing.” At least it says “angels” in the song, but the word Our Guest used sounded like “demons,” but probably he was dreaming of the “ping” of bullets and the roar of battle as the snores resounded through the room, or, one might almost say, through the house. Very early this morning there were cries for The Chaperon: he was wanted to tell the time; he was wanted to bring water for ablutions; he was wanted to tell us when breakfast would be ready; he was wanted to give advice or remedies for mosquito bites, and, in general, for a short space of time, he justified his existence. When at last the members of the party had collected themselves from all sorts of odd corners, coffee (with the addition of bacon and eggs, and several other things) was served, and the interval, before the order “All aboard” was issued, was chiefly occupied in observing and discussing the effects of our first night’s experience of bichos. Our Guest, after due deliberation, laid down some useful rules for future guidance, the chief being, “Never be without a Mosquitero”: his face and head were literally enlarged on this point, and he assured us that a mosquito’s proboscis is an impressive point. Apparently The Kid, too, would have liked to give her views on mosquitoes and their ways, but her uninteresting remarks were cut short by The Wild Man’s order of “kennel up,” and, given a bottle of cana, she seemed quite happy. Our Guest seemed to have an impression, also, that someone had blundered. He knew someone had slumbered (some had not), and plaintively he begged that he might be allowed in future to sleep at one estancia further ahead of the rest of the party.

Most of the nomads had had some slapping acquaintance with mosquitoes during the night, and the showing of bites, swellings, lumps, *etc.*, only ended when The Jehu ordered the bugle to be sounded for an onward move. We were well under way before half the lamentations had been entered in the station complaint book.



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Bidding adieu to Polvareda, where the green fields of alfalfa show the march of progress, we pushed forward, but as we left we were unable to decide whether it was a desire to escape observation (and, perhaps, the too-effusive thanks of the lady members of the party), or a violent toothache, which caused our host to conceal himself in a huge blanket wrapped around his head as we left, but we fear it was toothache that necessitated the extra wrappings.

[Illustration: *The Green Fields of Alfalfa.*]

We had not gone far on our journey before we crossed the bridge over Las Conchas. The manager of the next section met us soon afterwards, and we inspected the cattle on his domains. On our way from Polvareda to Michelot we passed the emporium of the Universal Provider of the North, in other words, "the stores," where most of the necessities and many of the luxuries of life can be obtained. The Saint can never resist the desire of a bargain, and others of the party were anxious to see all that the stores contained, so we made a halt and inundated the building, where everything was extraordinarily neat and clean, shelves piled high with bales of bright-coloured cottons, cloths, and handkerchiefs; hats hanging in long lines, brilliant saddle-cloths, pipes, knives, tobacco, axes, leather goods and harness, every variety of tinned foods, barrels of flour, sugar, *etc.*, all arranged with precision, and showing cleanliness and method at every turn. Some men were sitting on the benches, smoking and drinking and chatting together, for apparently "the stores" constitutes the local rendezvous and news agency for miles around.

The Saint at once made purchases, for no place is stamped on her memory unless she has spent money there. She wanted to make the whole party presents of hats, handkerchiefs, or pipes, but she was restrained, and ultimately satisfied her generosity by choosing the best saddle-cloth the establishment could supply, and one or two hats. We went into the living-rooms of the storekeeper, and found the same attractive neatness there. A gramophone occupied a side table, and skins and pictures were hanging on the walls. The storekeeper's wife and her sister were attractive Englishwomen; there were two or three children running about, but none of them could speak anything but their father's native language. After this inspection we drove on, and we are glad to be able to register the fact that Our Guest for once acted up to the first part of the old adage, "Earn sixpence a day and live up to it." The Jehu's coach had stayed behind for a while, to allow The Instigator to observe and note a great many things which were no business of his at all, and the peons had likewise remained, but The Saint, having fulfilled her mission of purchasing whenever possible, was content, and anxious to get on to the Section house for a rest before her afternoon ride, so The Chaperon drove on with his coach, and we are assured, on what we consider good



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authority, that when Our Guest perceived a closed gate in the way, and no peon at hand, he leapt from the carriage (perhaps “flew” would be a better word) and opened that gate. Possibly he had been fired with ambition to earn money while inspecting those crimson and blue handkerchiefs at the stores, for we know he appreciates “colours”; but, whatever his motive, he *did* open that gate, and let it be recorded to the honour of his fellow-passengers that his action was not allowed to pass unappreciated or unrewarded. When all the party were collected at Michelot estancia house, lunch was served on the verandah by a dour-looking Oriental, who apparently combined the duties of cook and parlourmaid in his own somewhat yellow person, and very well he performed his task, but as he went silently about his business of serving this large party, which he did with a slow precision and apparent utter disregard of his master’s orders, he reminded us irresistibly of the soi-disant American definition of “Life,” and we began to wonder whether it were not a Chinaman who summed up existence in the words, “After all, Life is only one d——d thing after another.”

[Illustration: *Herd of Cattle.*]

A short siesta followed lunch, and after an early tea everyone mounted horses or carriages and went forth to see the sights of the Section—everyone, that is to say, save The Chaperon, who had other work to do; he it was who discovered and averted what might have been a disaster. Some members of the party were quite content as long as they were given three cups of tea, others fancied cocktails, and some babbled for cocoa. It was suddenly found that the supply of this last useful article was running short. The Kid not being a cocoa-drinker, casually suggested filling up the tin with tannin extract or dust; she said “it looked the same and nobody need smell it,” but The Chaperon declined to resort to subterfuges and rode off to the stores to supply a deficiency caused by his own lack of attention.

At Michelot, as at Polvareda, great progress has been made of late years, alfalfa laid down, fences and wells made, and the cattle are improving yearly. Our last sight, before the inspection for the day was finished, was a wonderful rodeo of 3,000 cattle, which we viewed from the vantage point of the banks of a newly made reservoir. It was a striking picture, which will not easily be erased from the memory of those who saw it. The cattle, with their long continuous lowing, were rounded up below us, and away on the horizon the sun was setting with the glory one never sees better elsewhere than over a plain, leaving, as it rapidly sank from sight, marvellous shades of gold and crimson on the fantastically shaped clouds. Save for the animals and their drivers just around us, the whole vast space seemed so still and empty, yet on every hand were traces of man’s labour and skill, conquering a tract of land which was almost valueless a few short years back.



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On our return to the house we found dinner for us on the verandah. This was a delightfully cool method of taking food, but rather apt to attract beasties, and although the philosophers and friends of the party arranged the lights to keep away insects as much as possible, and succeeded in their efforts, some members of the party preferred to take no risks and dined with veils wrapped around their heads, only leaving their mouths available. The Wild Man caused some excitement before we sat down to dinner by introducing us to a beast he called a "railway insect." It certainly strongly resembled a railway train, with its green light on its head, red at the tail, and luminous yellow lights all over its caterpillar-like body; it was a most interesting discovery, and the Wild Man went up in everyone's estimation for a few minutes. The Oriental again served us with silent steadiness. It was suggested that one of our "boys" should assist him in the task of waiting on the party of twelve, but notwithstanding the fact that he had been told he might kick round any boy he chose to make an assistant, he waived aside all outside help with the words "no good," and continued on his way imperturbably.

The Instigator, with The Delineator and The Jehu, had a long discussion after dinner on various Argentine subjects too deep for the ordinary mortal, though The Wild Man and The Chaperon seemed to be trying to take an intelligent interest in the conversation. Our Guest sat silent, looked sad, and on being offered a penny for his thoughts, he murmured that he was wondering whether he would be allowed any sleep to-night. Doubtless he felt wearied, because, as it is Sunday, The Chaperon had been allowed to take a half-day off for his own amusements, and Our Guest, perhaps stimulated by his financial success of the morning, offered to fulfil the duties of chaperon during his absence; but we regret to say that we cannot candidly advise Our Guest to take up chaperoning as a means of livelihood, for though willing and tactful, he lacks the long training and apprenticeship necessary for continual service in this arduous work.

The ladies seemed happier, for they had noted the mosquito nets over each bed in their room, and they looked forward to a peaceful night. We had our usual communication with Our Hostess over the telephone before retiring, and received and gave satisfactory reports from both sides.

A correspondent wishes to know if any of our readers can name the author of these lines:—

"Heaven gives sleep to the bad, in order that the good may be undisturbed." He would also like to know if this generally accepted quotation is quite correct, or whether the "un" is a misprint. Replies to "O.G.," c/o THE TACURU.

Owing to the innumerable applications which we have received for advertising space in our widely circulated periodical, we have decided to open our columns to advertisements at the rate of 50 cents per line, applications to be sent to "The Advertisement Editor," THE TACURU Offices, c/o The Jehu, First Coach. All orders must be prepaid.



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ADVERTISEMENTS.

WANTED.—Bricklayers who can build straight.—Apply Manager, Michelot.

RIDING TAUGHT by a lady, side-saddle or astride; fees go to Charity.—Apply “T.S.,” c/o TACURU Offices.

BOOT CLEANING undertaken in best style. Gents', per pair, \$1; Ladies', per pair, for the asking.—Orders received by “T.C.,” Offices of this Paper.

* * * * *

“THE TACURU.”

No. 3.

Monday, March 28th, 1910.

Owing to the care with which the mosquito nets had been put up, there were few complaints of bites when the party assembled for breakfast, but the conversation chiefly degenerated into an argument on phonetics. The different rooms held various views on the harmonizing of sounds. Had it been a glee competition we should undoubtedly have given the award to the verandah party. Sleeping on the bricks seems to bring out the sweetness of a treble voice as nothing else can do. The Saint and My Lady both remarked that they were very fond of music, but they could not appreciate being awakened from their beauty sleeps, by the announcement in a raucous voice of “No, thank you.” They do not wish for a moment to imply that The Kid was not perfectly justified in refusing whatever she did refuse, but they would like her in future to confine her conversations to the daytime if possible, and to leave their nights in peace. It was a happy thought on the part of The Jehu to suggest a picnic at the Waters Meet to-day, before our forward move on to Los Moyes, and after breakfast we started out. First we went to inspect the site where the new house is to be built, then on to the pretty little monte near by, where some picturesque photographs were taken of the cavalcade of riders. We paused in this tiny monte, for it is an intensely interesting spot from a botanical point of view, and with care and attention should be so for some years to come. In an extraordinary small compass this wood contains more varied specimens of trees than one would ordinarily see in a day's journey. So on to Waters Meet. Here one is afforded an opportunity for studying the watershed of this portion of Argentina. Three rivers meet here, the Concha, the Calchaqui, and the Northern Salado. The latter is the only perennial river in that region; it rises in the snowy peaks of the Andes, in the province of Salta, miles away, and it is not to be wondered at, that, though it is a slow-moving river and meanders through the Gran Chaco, in the times of floods its swollen

waters overflow their banks and flood immense tracts of land. Thomas Page, an American Admiral, in the year 1855, navigated this river from its junction with the Parana to the spot where we were to-day, but when he went up it there was so little water in the river that he had to give up the idea of continuing his pioneer task of exploration. It had been his intention



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to open up the river for trade, and there is no reason why this should not be done at some future date. The Calchaqui goes under different names at various places. It rises on the great swamps on the North-East of the Santa Fe Land Company's territory, and flows through a chain of lakes and canadas until it runs into the huge laguna "Del Palmar," and thence along what used to be the Eastern boundary of the Santa Fe Land Company's lands, until it joins the Salado.

The Calchaqui must drain at least 150,000 acres of land, and the Rio Concha has a watershed of about 60 or 70 thousand acres. It is not known what the area of the watershed of the Salado is, but it must be immense; therefore it can be understood that the meeting-place of the waters of these three rivers is an interesting spot geographically, and we were all glad to have seen it. On our arrival at the Water Meet we had our first introduction to the native "asado," and we all hoped it would not be the last. The peons collected (apparently from nowhere), in less time than it takes to write about, sticks and odds and ends for a fire, over the ashes of which they broiled the meat, holding it over the heat on long skewers of wood. The meat was brought to us cooked, still on these skewers, and each one cut off, or had cut off for them by The Jehu, the portion he or she preferred, and a very hearty and merry meal was made by all. The resulting silence of repletion was only broken by a murmur from The Saint of "My heart is full," which sentiment, anatomically amended, was echoed by all.

[Illustration: *Expanse of Alfalfa.*]

When active exertion was once more possible everyone repaired to the banks of the Waters Meet, and a spot being found where there were no dead fish lying about, the ladies (under the tutorship of Our Guest and The Jehu) indulged in a little rifle-shooting at bottles. We fear that we cannot record any marvellous marksmanship on their part, for the bottles were still bobbing about on the water when the ladies' party retraced their steps to the "camp." A cup of tea was suggested before the returning drive, and it was thought possible (though not probable) that The Kid might be useful on this occasion. However any hopes in this direction were speedily dispelled when (after a great deal of noise and talk) she appeared with a thick black liquid, which proved absolutely undrinkable. True it was poured from a tea-pot, but anything less like "tea" as one usually meets it at 5 o'clock, could scarcely be imagined, and the air seemed full of the unspoken query, "Has everyone a use in this world?" The drive back to the estancia house was as pleasant as that of the morning, and there we found the Chinaman (who, owing to the strenuous exertions of The Chaperon, now appeared with considerably less hair, and obviously a more swollen head), had gauged correctly the incompetency of The Kid, in the brewing of his native beverage, and consequently had prepared a beverage which might

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pass for tea, and was enjoyed by all. After this refreshment a move was made, the luggage had gone on, and the party followed in their two coaches. We now began to approach a more pleasing country, and drove through little montes of scrub and trees, with a few bright-coloured verbena and cacti growing near the ground, making a brave show, and that larger optunia, the prickly pear, with its silver grey appearance and the bright crimson of its fruit showed up occasionally against the low trees. Altogether, the land had a more homelike and less expansive appearance, as it was broken up by these little groups of trees. It was a glorious drive. We were favoured with another exquisite sunset which shed weird and beautiful light over this strangely quiet and empty country. As the four-horse char-a-banc had started some minutes ahead of the more modest two-horse vehicle, it was to be supposed that it would reach the destination, Los Moyes, first, and we hear that there was some consternation expressed by the party of the smaller coach when, on their arrival they found that nothing had been heard, or seen, of the more ambitious vehicle. However, The Chaperon on being appealed to, impassively murmured "They're all right," and started to give orders for unloading, and putting up beds and generally arranging matters as if the section house belonged to him, and this callousness on his part, we are told, calmed the others sufficiently to allow of their enjoying the remnants of the sunset, undisturbed by any thoughts of the horrible fates which might (but were not likely to) have overtaken their companions.

Certainly Los Moyes section house is most prettily situated, with an expanse of alfalfa beyond the little front garden, and trees in the distance opening to show a glimpse of the smallest lake. There are three of these lakes not far from the house, and fishing is carried on, by means of spearing, in their waters. Long after the last trace of sunset had faded from the sky, The Jehu appeared with his coach, and a rush was made by the hosts of Los Moyes, and their earlier arrivals, to ascertain the cause of this delay. All anxiety was quickly allayed by one glance at the face of The Instigator. He was exuberant with joy. The rest of the occupants of the coach seemed rather less excited, and more weary, as they explained that The Instigator had sighted in the far offing a steam plough, and despite murmurs of "the dinner waits and we are tired" from The Delineator and The Wild Man, he insisted on investigating that plough, in fact on trying it himself, and it was with difficulty he was persuaded to return to the coach, and continue the drive home. We believe the credit for this latter achievement is due to The Delineator, who, with tact worthy of a diplomat, suggested that if an early return to the ploughing were made next morning, photos could be obtained of the machine and its work. This bait was successful, and The Instigator was gently enticed away with promises of "to-morrow."



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[Illustration: *Disc-Plough at Work.*]

[Illustration: *Roadmaker and Railroad Builder.*]

After everyone was assured that everyone else was safe, The Instigator came back from his Elysium, dreamily to finish the quotation of The Delineator and The Wild Man with "Said Gilpin, So am I," and we all sat down to dinner, during which meal much merriment was caused by a difference of opinion between The Saint and her host on "dogs and species of dogs." Our enemies, the mosquitoes, were not so virulent as usual to-night, perhaps owing to the eucalyptus trees which are growing near the house; anyhow the party could venture to sit out after dinner on the verandah, which was already covered with beds for the accommodation of some of the party. Thus, with an audience seated on chairs and beds, The Instigator talked of the plough and of its marvellous work in opening up hitherto unused tracts of land. Want of labour has retarded development considerably, and until quite recently the northern camps were very much handicapped by the lack of labourers, and of men with brains to guide the labour. Not only was there a deficiency of men, but often so many of the working bullocks were drafted off to the forests for timber haulage, that it left a sparseness of them for agricultural purposes. The remedy, however, presented itself by the utilisation of the traction engine. The breaking-up of fresh lands has always been the trouble facing the colonist.

In dry weather it is almost impossible to get the plough, drawn by horse or bullock, into the ground, and the drought so punishes the working animals that often when rain comes they are too weak for their work, and the colonist is unable to take the best advantage of the season, but mechanical ploughing obviates all this, and gives him the virgin land in such a condition that with the means at hand he is able to cultivate an area sufficiently large to ensure him success.

As we sat thus on the verandah in the moonlight, plans were made for the following day. It was decided that a visit to the plough should occupy the morning, and a row on the lake, or ride round it, the afternoon, before proceeding to Lucero. Fishing was spoken of, but we could not manage everything in the short time we had at our disposal at Los Moyes, so we found that probably the fishing would have to be given up. Thus, in the security of the possession of clear consciences and mosquito nets, the party retired to rest.

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Prepaid advertisements received at the office of this paper before 6 p.m. will be inserted in the next day's issue.

"M.L." writes in answer to "O.G." that the quotation he gives is from the writing of the Persian poet Sadi. The quotation is quite correct, for though Sadi travelled for a great

number of years in Europe, Asia, and Africa, he never travelled with the present Company in the Argentine, therefore he did not realise that the sleep of the bad could disturb the good. Modern thought is inclined to differ from his views.



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ADVERTISEMENTS.

LOST.—Two rubber sponges and two blankets. When finished with, please return to the Manager, Michelot.

L10 REWARD.—Lost, one pearl-drop ear-ring; may be under the carpet. Finder will be rewarded as above, on returning same to "T.S.," Offices of this Paper.

* * * * *

"THE TACURU."

No. 4.

Tuesday, March 29th, 1910.

This morning, alas! did not fulfil the promise of last night's sunset, for a drizzling rain was falling when the party collected for breakfast, and we were afraid that not only would the fishing expedition be impossible, but also that the ploughing inspection might have to be postponed, and all were anxious, after the enthusiasm of The Instigator, to see that engine at work. Our host had sent some men out in the early morning to secure fish for our delectation, but they were unable to spear more than one, and this large aquatic animal was now hanging up under the verandah, causing a great deal of interest to the various curious members of the band; needless to say, The Instigator was busy divesting the fish of scales, examining them under his ubiquitous microscope, and insisting on everyone observing the marvels of Nature shown in this manner. We think that this was the psychological moment when the rest of the party began to appreciate the powers of that microscope, and insinuations were made to the owner that it would be a pity to take such a beautiful pocket instrument back to Europe, in case any accident should happen to the boat during the voyage, and the microscope be lost.

The Delineator and The Wild Man appeared to be the chief favourites for the prize, and knowing the acquisitive propensities of The Chaperon, all were surprised to note his passiveness during the competition; however, he explained his inertia by saying that his sleep had been disturbed by visions for which no microscope was needed. He offered to sketch what he had seen, but could give no more definite description in words than "figures on the blind" and "streaming hair," so he was left alone to recover his nerve. The Jehu then pointed out that his prophecy had proved correct, and the misty rain had blown off, leaving a clear sky and fine weather, so a start was made *en masse* for the scene of the ploughing operations. A slight lameness on the part of one of the steeds made it necessary for the smaller coach to return for change of animals after a few hundred yards. The Wild Man occupied the few minutes of this delay to the best

possible advantage. The owner of the house and chattels was away, and The Wild Man, stimulated by The Chaperon made a very productive tour of the rooms and verandah, resulting in great satisfaction to himself.



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When the coach was ready with fresh horses, and The Wild Man had satisfied himself that nothing of value had escaped his observation, another move forward was made, and on arriving at the ground the smaller party found that the occupants of the first coach were already on the plough, having ousted the colonists for the time being. This plough was working on rough virgin ground, turning over more land in one hour than two men and four horses can do in England in a whole day. Each member of the party took their turn on the plough, and enjoyed the pleasure derived from turning over the untouched soil, and of feeling that they were helping to start the development of Nature's truest source of wealth. The engine was drawing twenty disc-ploughs, and could plough twenty-eight to thirty acres of land a day, week in and week out.

Until recent years land in the Argentine Republic has been ploughed in small areas by animal labour, the farmer or colonist often employing the members of his family to assist him, and thus saving expense. Owing, however, to the immense harvests and the vast tracts of country awaiting development, it has become necessary to work on a much bigger scale, and to bring in the aid of machinery. In some places the ordinary form of steam plough has presented many practical disadvantages. They are heavy and unwieldy, and apt to sink in soft ground, from which they are extricated with difficulty. This is likely to cause damage, or more serious accidents, through explosion. Further, they require a constant train of water-carts and fuel wagons, and a staff of at least six persons to work them. At the spot where this engine was working the latter objections were obviated, as both wood and water were plentiful. In general, these difficulties are largely overcome by the adoption of the naphtha motor engine, which has been brought to a state of considerable perfection in Great Britain and the United States. It can be employed not only for ploughing and threshing, but also for traction, excavation, and embankment work, *etc.* An engine and plough will break up one hectarea of camp per hour, and some of these machines with two relays of workmen will break 108 hectareas per week. In a month of only twenty-three working days they will break up a league of camp.

[Illustration: *Ploughing Virgin Camp.*]

The price of naphtha is gradually decreasing in the Argentine Republic, and the oil wells of the country will probably make the cost of fuel even less by-and-by than it is to-day.

Areas of fertile camp, which have hitherto lain fallow, owing to their being intersected by canadas, and difficult to get at, can now be treated by the motor plough, with the result that their value will rapidly rise. In an actual case near the Central Cordoba Railway, people are to-day offering \$118 per hectarea for land which was bought two years ago for \$25 per hectarea, but during the two years it has been thoroughly ploughed and drained by mechanical means.



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In nearly all the northern lands small trees grow irregularly all over the camp, and in order to plough the land these trees must be dug up. Machines are manufactured in the United States to deal with land containing tree roots. They perform the double operation of cutting roots under ground and ploughing up the surface, but they have not yet been introduced into the Argentine in large numbers. Other machines dig holes for fence posts at the rate of fifty holes per hour, and they can be so accurately gauged that the posts may be firmly fixed without expending much labour in ramming.

The naphtha engine is likewise used with great advantage for traction purposes. A striking instance of this is to be found at Rio Gallegos, where many naphtha engines are engaged in the work of carrying wool over a track of more than 300 kilometres, a feat which would be quite impossible with animal labour, owing to the rocky and broken condition of the roads.

As the Santa Fe Land Company owns a great diversity of land, they have used both the steam traction and the naphtha engines, and time will show which machine is to be recommended.

It is a pity that the agricultural implement importers of Buenos Aires should have recently formed themselves into a ring to lift prices, because their doing so will certainly tend to lessen the progress which agriculture is making in the Argentine. These combinations, however, will not deter the Company from continuing its "march of progress," but it comes hard on the colonist, who, after all, is the chief factor in building up the fortunes of the great importing houses of Buenos Aires.

One of the greatest competitors of the British-built traction engine is the Hart-Parr oil engine, a splendid agricultural tool, which is invaluable where ordinary fuel is not easily procurable.

It was with great difficulty The Instigator could be persuaded to leave the plough, and at one time his enthusiasm (and the engine) carried him out of sight, and those remaining at the starting-point grew speculative as to whether he would return before dark. However, a recommencement of drizzling rain apparently cooled his ardour, and restored him to the party. The nomads gladly turned their thoughts and coaches towards the section house, realising as they went the sweet truth of the words, "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way." Lunch awaited them, and the fish of the morning appeared in a more pleasant guise, to be enjoyed by all. After lunch, the rain showing no signs of clearing off, the party had to give up all idea of the lake proper, but watched one form in front of the house instead, and wondered how it would be negotiated when the time came for an onward move. So they sat on chairs, baggage and benches under the verandah, and tried to keep awake, while observing the steady downpour. One member of the party at last gave up the struggle against the inevitable, and sank gracefully into the arms of Morpheus, represented by the bags of biscuits and other impedimenta. A photo was secured of him as he lay half concealed amongst the

portmanteaux, packages and “pan.” We refrain from publishing it, because the chief feature of the picture is in the boots of the sleeper. (We trust no weak humour is intended in the preceding paragraph?—EDITOR.)



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[Illustration: *Hart-Parr Engine, drawing Roadmaker.*]

A slight diversion was caused by a repacking of some goods after lunch. It seems that the bottles, with contents (a most important item), had been forgotten, and The Wild Man was approached with a request that the bottles might be transported to Lucero in his bag; of course, he cheerily acquiesced, but as the whole of the contents of his bag had to be turned out to pack the bottles scientifically, and as that bag happened to be the same receptacle in which The Wild Man had secreted the various articles collected during his tour of appreciation this morning, developments were interesting to all, save to the man who had laboured under the delusion that several horns and other articles which appeared from the bag, were still in his own possession. However, probably remembering The Wild Man's character (*vide* page 205), he said nothing, but calmly looked on as his goods were repacked and removed from his sight for ever. All honour to such unselfishness.

After a cup of tea and farewells, the ladies were transferred to the coaches in a highly skilled manner, and a damp drive to Lucero followed. One sheet of drizzling rain surrounded us all through the journey, and none were sorry when, after a side slip or two, the coaches drew up (not before it was quite dark) outside the estancia house. A change into dry garments was very welcome, and there was to be noticed for the first time since the start of the Tacuruers, a dull air of respectability over the party, as they collected for their evening meal.

Shirt fronts and pretty frocks appeared once more, for here we had a lady presiding over the table. Still the old proverb proved true "Fine feathers do not make fine birds," and some members of the party did not live up to their costumes. It may have been the good dinner, or the genial glow of a fire that upset their behaviour, but the fact remains that there were two or three unusual occurrences during the course of a merry meal. The Kid was observed to be burying her face in a spoonful of jelly, and others seemed to be performing a sort of a general post during the repast. However, all ended well, and after coffee various home pets were introduced by our hostess, who is a devoted lover of animals. A nutria appeared and some friendly dogs, and we heard of tame foxes and diminutive ponies to be seen next day. It was a great regret to everyone that The Delineator did not put in an appearance for dinner; he pleaded headache and retired to bed early, perhaps in the hope of getting some sleep before The Instigator came to share the room.

* * * * *

ADVERTISEMENTS.

HARD CASE NO. 1.—"T.K." writes to inquire the proper procedure under the following circumstances:—"A lady receives a plate of jelly at dinner, the gentleman on her right at once takes up her spoon and commences to feed her with the jelly." What should she



do? And if she allows herself to be fed, is it etiquette, this year, for the gentleman on her left to give her a slight push, which results in her nose meeting the jelly in the spoon? We offer the problems to our readers, and a prize will be awarded for the best solution sent in.



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LOST.—One pair deer's horns, nicely coloured. If this advertisement meets the eye of T.W.M. the owner would be very glad to have the horns returned to Michelot, but does not wish to make a point of it.

FOUND.—The reward of L10 for lost ear-ring is withdrawn; owner found lost property herself, and has paid for her advertisement.

* * * * *

“THE TACURU.”

No. 5.

Wednesday, March 30th, 1910.

Much to everyone's relief The Delineator appeared at breakfast looking himself again; he replied to the enquiries showered upon him that his indisposition could be explained in the words used by Herbert Spencer, when he defined life as “The continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.” The Delineator said that that formula, when one considered the various cookings, including the Oriental style we had lately sampled, exactly described the cause of his passing illness, from which he was now happily recovered.

The morning was bright, and nothing but the drying mud remained to remind us of the rains of yesterday. At breakfast some strange tales were told of a frightened nutria which generally slept peacefully under a wardrobe in the dressing-room; but last night the room had another occupant, whose sleep was not so peaceful as that of the nutria, and at the first sound of a snore the poor animal was so scared that it leapt from its usual bed and rushed round the room till it found a way of escape, through the window, to a more restful soot.

Cattle-dipping was to be the sight of the morning, and as soon as the out-door menagerie was explored, under the guidance of our hostess, who has a wonderful knack with all animals, the coach and cavalcade of riders set forth to the scene of operations. Here we found a large number of animals ready to be dipped. This process is necessary to clean the animals from the garrapata. This is a tick which has been, and still is, the terror of the north. It is the means of transmitting to cattle the disease known as “Texas Fever.” The rough native cattle do not suffer badly from this fever, but any newly imported fine stock from the south generally succumb to it.

Time after time wealthy men who realized the menace this pest was to the north have attempted to fight it, but their efforts have not been successful. Often their loss has been immense, sometimes as many as 95% of the total animals brought into the neighbourhood from the Province of Buenos Aires have died.



Undoubtedly these constant failures helped to give the northern district a bad name, but the experiments with the animals should have been carried on by means of acclimatisation. Animals for the north should be carefully handled, and with constant vigilance, adapted to their surroundings. These are the principles on which the Santa Fe Land Company have been working, and they confidently predict that before long they will be selling pedigree bulls with tick on them. When this is an accomplished fact, another great barrier to the progress of the north will have been broken down.



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The cattle tick has two phases in its life.

[Illustration: *Cattle leaving Dip.*]

After establishing itself on the animal, the tick becomes a blood sucker, and at certain seasons animals running wild over unbroken camps, become literally covered with these bichos; consequently the cattle fall back in condition, and the mortality amongst them mounts up to an appallingly large percentage. To obviate this the dip is used, and has come into general use. The animals are collected from afar, and brought into the corral (a strong enclosure), from which there is a wooden passage, having many contrivances useful for marking, branding, and dehorning cattle, all of which are used in their due season; but for dipping purposes this passage terminates in a precipitous slope, and the animals are gently forced along it from the corral to plunge suddenly into a prepared bath of a strong solution, which kills every tick; so it follows, that if the animal has been totally submerged, it is absolutely free from the parasite. The object of dipping is to kill all kinds of insects and parasites which trouble the bovine race; especially so the common Louse (the *Dermatodectis Bovis*) which is the scab producer. The worst pest is, however, the cattle tick or Garrapata, and known under the scientific name of *Boophilus Annulatus*.

This latter is the harbinger of the microbe of Texas Fever or Tristeza, as it is known in the Argentine.

The remedies that are principally employed are of a tarry basis and prepared so as to be easily mixed with water, usually in the proportion of 1 to 100.

The amount of mixture used is 2.60 litres, and the cost works out at 10 cents. per head.

The greatest number of animals that the Santa Fe Land Company have been able to put through the dip in a day is 6,700, working from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Animals certainly are frightened the first time they take this bath, but very soon they find the comfort of its effect, and come to like and enjoy it. The cattle we saw dipped to-day had mostly been through the process several times before, and walked calmly down the passage, seeming to enjoy their scramble through the dip. On emerging from the dip, the animals stand in a small corral on the other side, and are kept there for a while to allow the liquor to drain off their hides, and find its way back to the tank.

Some of the younger animals seemed scared at the first plunge, and though a very great point is made of the fact that they must all be collected and driven into the corral and down the passage, with the utmost gentleness, some of them grew so disturbed at the unusual proceeding, that they leapt on to the animal in front instead of sliding down the dip as the older animals do. However, there are always plenty of men under the superintendence of the mayor-domo to see that no harm comes to any animal, and



though in the early days of dips, broken legs were not unusual occurrences, nowadays there are very seldom any accidents, though thousands of animals may be dipped in a few hours. One man holds a curious sort of wide blunt prong, with which he presses the heads of any animals, who have not been totally immersed, under the liquid as they pass him, thus ensuring the destruction of all parasites.



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After this inspection The Instigator and company were taken on to see land which was being broken by bullocks, and thence to the Rio Salado, (which we are hoping to negotiate much further north to-morrow), and returned in time for lunch. After a short pause for rest and a cup of tea, the party, this time with their host and hostess, set off for various windmills, earth tanks, *etc.*, which were of recent erection, and were to be reviewed by The Instigator. Everything he saw seemed to give satisfaction, and a weary but happy band returned to the house for dinner, in the course of which some native dishes were introduced to us.

Another lovely sunset favoured us this evening as we drove homewards, and we hear that My Lady and The Wild Man almost came to a serious quarrel over the shapes of various beautifully tinted clouds. One said a certain cloud resembled a bear, the other said it was exactly like a pork pie "shot" with a diamond tiara, and the matter was still under bitter discussion long after the cloud in question had faded away into a nebulous mist. The evening was calm and still, and we all sat outside after coffee, discussing the unknown journey of to-morrow, and the perils that might befall us on our way across the camps. The Instigator talked emphatically, and quite unnecessarily, of "an early start is imperative," till we all grew tired of his insistence and retired to bed, where some of the party wondered under what circumstances they would be sleeping to-morrow.

* * * * *

CORRESPONDENCE.

LUCERO, *March 30th, 1910.* DEAR SIR,

May I use the valuable medium of your paper for the purpose of announcing that anyone who wishes to accompany the explorers on the excursion, under the guidance of The Jehu and myself to the wild north, must be ready, decently clothed and fed, with a supply of patience and drinkables in their personal luggage, not later than 6 a.m., to-morrow, March 31st, 1910.

I am, Yours, *etc.*, THE INSTIGATOR.

P.S.—While taking suitable precautions for the safety and happiness of those who entrust themselves to our care, we wish it to be understood that we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any loss of wearing apparel or other goods, temper, meals, or rest, caused by rain, mosquitoes, frogs, snakes, overeating, or the incompatibility of other passengers, or from any cause whatsoever.—T.I.

To the Editor of "The Tacuru."

March 30th, 1910.

SIR,

We should be glad to know if anything can be done to stop the public nuisance in the shape of the amalgamation of two members of the party, who are obviously descended from some long ago Christy Minstrels. We believe that, taken separately, one at a time, at long intervals, the aforesaid members can be tolerated for a few minutes (personally, we find them nauseating to a degree, under



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the most favourable circumstances), but together, when they attempt to be bright and amusing, and fancy they have a sense of humour and intelligent wit, they are absolutely impossible. They might have been useful (say in 1500) as the final torture decreed by the Inquisition, but in this year of grace of 1910, they are unwarrantable, and we shall be grateful if immediate steps can be taken for their separation, if not for their entire suppression. We are, Dear Sir, still suffering from violent headaches, caused by being shut up in the same coach for three hours with these imbeciles.

Yours truly,

T.D. and M.L.

* * * * *

HARD CASE No. 1.

The prize of five cents has been awarded to a correspondent O.G. (who is requested to forward his real name and address as soon as possible) for the best solution to the Hard Case we published yesterday. He says that in those circumstances the lady should undoubtedly allow herself to be fed, and should do all in her power by opening her mouth widely, and turning her head slightly in the direction of the gentleman on her right, to assist him in his self-imposed task, and thus to avoid giving him the impression that he had committed an unusual social solecism in commencing to feed her.

Numerous correspondents have sent in solutions, but we consider the above the best. Several answers have also been sent to the second part of the question, and all agree that the gentleman on the left had no shadow of excuse for causing the lady's nose to rest in the jelly. Such a proceeding is totally without precedent in the highest circles.

* * * * *

"THE TACURU."

No. 6.

Thursday, March 31st, 1910.

THE LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY DAILY PAPER PUBLISHED ON THIS TRIP.

Everyone was astir early this morning, remembering The Instigator's final warning last night of the necessity for an early start, but, on assembling for breakfast at 7 a.m., The Instigator himself was missed. His hawk-like eye (we apologise to Our Guest) had noticed some Galpon, or drinking trough, or something, which he must, of course, investigate before leaving Lucero, and dragging off The Delineator and The Jehu, he



quite forgot breakfast and the “early start,” as he fussed over his new-found interest, and it was not until he was captured forcibly by a search party that his companions were allowed to come in to breakfast—after the rest of the party had finished. Much to everyone’s delight the morning was bright and fine, and all promised favourably for the excursion into the unknown.

While waiting for the start, considerable interest was caused by the home-building operations of some birds, who were constructing a nest under the eaves of the outbuilding, and manipulating the mud for its construction in a most clever manner. One bird flew off to get some mud while the other energetically fashioned the last piece into shape in the nest, then, when the first returned, the second bird flew off to get her contribution of clay; so the moulding of that nest grew apace while we watched its progress.



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Before we set out a pleading message came (and it was not the first, either) from those left at headquarters, begging us to give up our exploration scheme, and, in view of weather reports, to return in peace to the civilisation of San Cristobal; but needless to say, nothing daunted, The Instigator still kept to his determination to see all there was to be seen, and the more people try to dissuade him from a thing, once he has decided to do it, the more fixed becomes his intention to do that thing. So, expostulations were useless, the final preparations and farewells were made, a last communication held with Our Hostess at Cristobal, before our passing into the wilds, and the Tacuru coaches with their freight of precious humans, and still more precious food and drink, started off from their pleasant rest at Lucero. Someone was heard to murmur as the coaches drove off—

“Then hey! for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
The Instigator *must* have his tour, lad,
And *never* will give way!”

But this puerile parody met with the indifference it deserved, and, accompanied by the Section Manager, we commenced our journey, travelling for some hours over the land which is in his charge. “Monte,” too, seemed to consider that his presence as a guide and friend would be necessary to the party, and came along with us; he is a “wild” dog of the deerhound type, who was taken as a tiny puppy from a litter found in a wood near Los Moyes, and has ever since been devoted to his captors. There is a calm air of disinterested abstraction about “Monte” which is very satisfying, and he is undoubtedly a philosopher. One of the two Indian guides we picked up during the day’s journey also had a dog, but it was of a very different appearance and character to “Monte.” “Monte” looked on mankind in general as needing his care and supervision, while the little black smooth-haired terrier felt “the great passion” for one alone. His master was evidently his god, and if he lost sight of “master” for two minutes it was really touching to hear his cries, almost like those of a child, as he tried to trace his master through the shallow water which we sometimes crossed.

His yelps as he splashed along, nose to the ground, almost voiced the sentiment:—

“Rank and wealth I pass unheeding,
Never giving them their due;
For my heart and soul are needing,
Nothing in the world but “YOU!”

And he and his “YOU” were never very far apart.

In a country where kindness to animals is not considered necessary, and is very rarely found, this example of devotion between dog and man was all the more noticeable and appreciated. Needless to say, as soon as The Saint observed it she wanted to “give the

man a present,” and was only restrained from doing so because she had nothing suitable for presentation in her luggage, or in that of The Instigator.

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About one o'clock we came to the banks of the Salado, concerning the crossing of which river we had heard so much. We had been told it was impossible and impassable; that the rains had swollen the river too much for a safe passage; that at the best of times the banks were too steep and slippery for carts to negotiate, and that all idea of crossing had better be given up. The Instigator and The Jehu merely smiled when they heard of these difficulties, but some members of the party had wondered how the traversing of that river was to be accomplished, and they were agreeably surprised, on reaching the spot chosen for crossing, to find that a tenant had built a narrow "tajamar," or earth bank, across the river, which at this place was not very wide. Everyone dismounted, the horses were taken out, and all hands were in request to pull the vehicles across. First went the coaches, then the luggage carts were dragged over. To illustrate the difficulties of the proceedings we publish one of the many photos taken, during the crossing of the tajamar. Our Guest was one of the first to help in the conveyance of these carts. Apparently, since the gate-opening episode, he has "learnt the wisdom early to discern true beauty in utility," for he is always to the fore when work is to be done, and in this case his athletic training proved the truth of the Yankee expression that "It's muscle that tells." The Delineator and The Wild Man, as usual, when real hard work presents itself, "thought the party would like photographs of it," and, armed with their cameras, retired to safe distances, where the work could not possibly interfere with them or they with it, and took photos of the progress of the carts. We cannot complain, however, of their action (or inaction, rather), for the resulting pictures make a good memorial of the crossing of the Salado by the "Tacuruers." The ladies rushed to assist when they saw that photos were being taken, but, as the carts were well over the danger line by the time the ladies were at the ropes, we have no pictured record of their deeds, which, we may note, were really quite valueless at this point.

[Illustration: *Crossing the Salado.*]

[Illustration: *The Effect of a Long Drought.*]

Once the horses, carts, and luggage were safely across the tajamar the more serious business of cocktails and lunch was thought of, and, in an incredibly short time, the usual asado of meat, brought from Lucero, was under discussion.

The unfortunate sheep who were still spared were let out for a short run.

The Kid, too, was set free in the hopes that she might possibly prove useful now, but, judging from her attitude during the preparations for lunch, we should say those hopes would not be fulfilled.



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As we rest after our arduous crossing of the Salado, our thoughts are inclined to wander to the awful tragedy enacted here in the year 1904. It was a disastrous year for many of the northern camp men. There was an appalling drought of long continuation, for which all the northern camps were totally unprepared; the river over which we have just passed became the concentration spot for all that is most terrible at such times. It is not exaggerating the case when we say that 15,000 animals (some of them having travelled south for 100 miles or more), forced by instinct, and guided by wire fences, came to drink from the foul, polluted chain of water-holes which then represented this river. One can imagine the horror and distress of it all—not a blade of grass for miles, where to-day the vegetation is luxuriant, and not a drop of water in this river on whose banks we are resting, only a few mud-holes in which hundreds of decaying carcasses were embedded. This is what the cattle found after their long journey south, through which they were daily growing weaker. It is not surprising to hear that, at one place alone on the river-bed, over 3,000 hides were taken off dead animals, and, probably, it is well within the mark to say that at least another 1,000 were lost. Well may we wonder, “Why this terrible suffering and loss?” And the answer comes back, “Human negligence.” It was the want of wells which caused all this misery; cattle will bear drought for a long time, but the actual want of water maddens them and causes the death of thousands. If the northern camps are to be colonised and are to become prosperous, the first necessity is the obtaining of a supply of good water; second in importance only to the water supply is the fencing of the camps, by which means a control over the cattle is established; refined camps, better grasses, and alfalfa, will all follow in due course; and anyone who has studied these northern lands would have no hesitation in predicting that these camps will, in time, prove just as profitable as any in the vast Republic of Argentina, and this is saying a good deal, as those who have travelled over the rich southern camps will realise. But, for his own sake, and for the sake of the cattle in his care, let it be the first business of the estanciero to provide good and sufficient wells, so that the terrible history of 1904 may never be repeated.

[Illustration: *Refined Camps.*]

However, the scene is different to-day, with a pleasant sunshine, the crisp air sweeping over the uncultivated camp of natural grasses, and plenty of water in the river; but we cannot linger, so, after the pipe of peace for some, and a short siesta for others, “the all-aboard” bugle was sounded, horses were put in, carts packed once more, and, after a farewell to our host—who was returning to the section house—we went on ahead into the wilder regions, and had a pleasant, though rather short, drive for two or three hours before The Jehu called



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a halt. He explained that we should require at least an hour for the unloading and erection of the tents, tables, *etc.*, before dusk; therefore, as the sun was only a hand's breadth from the horizon (roughly speaking, an hour before setting), we must dismount. He had chosen a pleasant spot for the camp of the night, not far from a small ranch, and here the coaches halted. Of course the luggage carts could not come up until some time later, as their loads were so much heavier, and My Lady became even more popular than usual when she suggested that the wait should be beguiled with a cup of tea, and produced her tea-basket from the coach; true, we found that there was no tea, but My Lady had plenty of cocoa. Water was obtained from the house near by, and a very welcome cup of cocoa handed round, accompanied by an unexpected slice of cake which apparently appeared from nowhere, and which disappeared equally effectively, for it was decidedly useful fodder and appreciated as such by all.

We discovered here that our friend "Monte" had declined to go back after lunch with his present master to Lucero, but had chosen to accompany his past master on this expedition. His presence was an agreeable surprise. He was found surveying the party with his calm scrutiny, and apparently he approved of our spot for camping, also of the cake.

As The Chaperon could find no work to do before the carts arrived, he, for once, relaxed from his terrible strain of usefulness, and tided over the tedious hour by trying to "throw the knife" in the most approved cowboy manner. As each member of the party had had their "tea" (he was practising with the knife which was used for the carving of the cake—and anything else, when needed), no one objected to this harmless amusement on his part, provided he did not pitch the knife on to their toes; and, after long exercise, with the help of The Wild Man, who is an adept at these tricks, The Chaperon at last succeeded in "throwing the knife" to his satisfaction, and others' terror. A sigh of relief escaped the lips of those who were dodging the knife when they saw the luggage-carts looming in the distance. They at once drew the attention of The Chaperon to the approach of the carts, and were rejoiced to see him return the weapon to its sheath (in his leggings), and stiffen into the attitude of action once more.

No sooner were the carts on the spot than every member of the party was at work, or pretending to be so. Poles were taken off the carts, luggage uncovered, canvas was everywhere, yells for "the mallet" alternated with the resounding blows struck, with the same, by the strong men of the band, tent-pegs bristled all over the ground, everyone wanted the hammer at the same time, and apparent chaos reigned for half an hour; then, behold! as by magic, the din ceased, two tents had been securely erected, floored with canvas, the luggage was placed under another covering of canvas, a table, with plates, knives, forks, *etc.*,



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was ready in an open space, camp-stools stood around it, beds, blankets, sheets and pillows galore were in each tent, and the smell of roasting meat in the distance rose pleasantly upon the air. The place looked as if the party had been accustomed to camp there regularly once a week, so well was everything arranged. Nothing had been forgotten which could add comfort, for all hands had been working hard, and each peon, too, had done his share; in fact, the sight would have rejoiced the soul of the most ardent, red-tied Socialist, for surely never did a community carry out more thoroughly the principle of "each one working for the happiness of others." True, there was no trade union to limit their exertions, but that was an omission for which we may be thankful.

As the dusk quickly deepened, the peons gathered round their fire, over which the meat was cooking, a little distance from the camp site; the lamps were lit and hung from poles, and the party looked with satisfaction on their handiwork. It would have made an interesting, and not unpicturesque illustration, if one could have obtained a photo of the "Primera Vista" camp that evening.

But it was at this time, just when all seemed smiling and happy, that the travellers were to go through their first real trial, for here the discovery was made of a serious loss. It was spoken of in whispers at first, but gradually the whispers increased to a murmur as the loss became generally known; yet neither man nor woman quailed, and none could have told from their outward bearing the bitter struggle they were inwardly facing. A cynical traveller once said, after noting the innumerable number of statues in the land, "South America has evidently produced a phenomenal number of heroes," but we are inclined to think their tale has not been told if those who bore their trouble so bravely that night are to be "unhonoured and unsung." Think what it meant, you who may read this, in years to come, in civilised places, comfortably seated in your armchairs, conveniently near the cellaret, and,—honour our brave! They had at least two days to face (with no prospect of obtaining supplies anywhere) and they discovered, here, that *the case of whisky was lost*, left behind, vanished—they knew not what, only that it had disappeared!

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs not to moan or sigh,
E'en though their throats were dry,

Noble "Tacuruers"!

True, the comforting thought that they still had a bottle and a-half of the precious drink with them may have helped them to keep their spirits up with the hope of pouring spirits down, but a bottle and a-half is not much amongst so many thirsty souls for three days,

and, we repeat, that great courage and bravery was shown by the equanimity with which the party bore the news of their loss.

A minor loss was that the dinner napkins were not forthcoming, but that surprised no one, for they were in the charge of The Kid, and, of course, she had forgotten them at Lucero. We believe she said something about their being “left to be washed” there, but no one listened to her, and we used glass cloths instead.



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At our first camp evening meal everyone did justice to the goods that The Chaperon provided. Coffee was not forgotten, and, after their dinner, the more musical members of the band tried to sing—it kept the mosquitoes off—and when “a catch” was attempted even the bicho colorado was cowed into silence. We had looked forward to hearing the guitar played by one of the peons here. He had brought his instrument with him, but, unfortunately, had dropped a large packing case upon it, which did not improve its tone, and this accident prevented our hearing the national dances played on a guitar in the open camp as we had hoped to do.

Weary with the exertions of the day the party turned their thoughts and steps early towards those tents where rows of little bedsteads, each with its mosquito net above, looked so attractively inviting, and before long lights were out and peace reigned as far as possible.

“Thus done the Vales to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.”

Guards were set and they, with Monte, were left to protect the horses and camp through the night.

CORRESPONDENCE.

March 31st, 1910.

SIR,

I feel that, as I am in a measure responsible for the presence of the two people to whom your correspondents of yesterday object, I should like to apologise, through the medium of your paper, for the inconvenience these two people have caused, and to assure your correspondents that steps shall be taken to prevent a repetition of the annoyance. The fact is, that both of them are so rarely out of Bedlam at the same time that I had not realised the necessity for keeping them apart, nor the danger of their amalgamation, but they shall be kept in separate coaches in future, and I can only express my sincere regret for the mischief and trouble they have caused.

I am,

Yours, *etc.*,

THE INSTIGATOR.

* * * * *

A correspondent writes to know if any of our readers can solve the following problem for her:—“A’ starts on a seven days’ journey with eighty-seven horses, he loses two, one of



which he finds next day, and at the end of the week has 110 horses." The enquirer has searched through her "Hamblin Smith" but can find no honest method of solution.

* * * * *

ADVERTISEMENTS.

EXPERT GUIDE.—Anyone requiring a really good guide, thoroughly conversant with the Chaco, ways of wild Indians and animals, please apply "T.W.M.," Offices of this paper. Good shot, can cook and sew, able to point out all the beauties of nature, animal and vegetable. Terms moderate. Inspires confidence in the most timid ladies by his winning smile.

LOST.—One tin of gingerbread biscuits (Huntley & Palmer). No reward is offered, as they will probably be eaten by the time this advertisement is in print. If anyone would return the tin, as a recuerdo, to Lucero, advertiser would be obliged.



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LOST.—Lucero. Several good horses.

* * * * *

Several correspondents have written to know whether it is not a menace to the rest of the community for one member of the band to sleep promiscuously on the bricks, or anywhere else handy, at night. Two or three say they have tripped over him in the dark and consider it would be a safeguard if anyone preferring to spend the night in this way were compelled by law to burn an anchor or other light. They are quite willing to believe that the offender had had at least one “starboard light” at some period of that night, but that light had lost its power of illumination at the time our correspondents tripped over the prostrate figure, and they wish to suggest that in future, people sleeping out should use some means to safeguard unwary passers-by. (We give the complaint the publicity it deserves and trust steps will be taken to right the matter.—ED.)

“THE TACURU.”

No. 7.

Friday, April 1st, 1910.

ADVERTISE IN “THE TACURU”—THIS ENSURES YOUR WANTS BEING KNOWN IN EVERY COACH.

We fancy that most of the party were awake to see the dawn this morning: it may have been that they only saw the first streaks of light between the openings of their tent as they lay in bed trying to soothe the itching of the mosquito bites, but we think that few were asleep as the sun rose gloriously from the mists on the horizon. It was a strange sight, the sudden flooding with bright sunlight of that rough camp land, which scarcely owned a tree or shrub. It may be the primitive barbarian lying dormant in all of us though hidden under generations of civilization, which makes us feel a close communion with Nature when we see her in these great uncultivated wastes; but, whatever the causes of the sympathy, these pictures, of wild untouched Nature, leave an impression and a longing more deep than any experience gained in years of civil life; none will ever regret having seen that sunrise on the plain, though all regretted the cause of their wakefulness this morning.

Of course The Chaperon was up and clothed (he always seemed to be) and ready to get basins of water, looking-glasses, shaving materials and all luxuries for the others. The ladies were heard to enquire why he did not bring them early tea and hot water, but, on the whole, he combined the duties of valet and maid fairly efficiently.



Rumour has it that The Chaperon had given instructions that he was to be called by the guard an hour before dawn, so, in the dark, he was awakened by hoarse whispers of his name and gentle shakings. After he arose it occurred to him that it felt more like the middle of the night than the morning, and he enquired of the peon what time it was, the answer coming in soft Spanish, "Can't say, the cocks have not crowed yet!!!" On investigation The Chaperon found it was scarcely 4 a.m., so spent the remaining



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two hours sitting round the camp fire with the peons, alternately dozing and sucking mate. We believe he heard some expert opinions on the subject of the “roncadors” of the camp during his vigil. At any rate he had full opportunity for proving the reality of Ruskin’s words, “There is no solemnity so deep to a right-thinking creature as that of dawn.” At the same time he was heard to murmur something to the effect that he would prefer a little less of the “deep solemnity” and a little more of “deep slumber” another morning.

Scarcely were the toilets, and the packing of personal luggage, accomplished, before a request was made that the mosquito nets and beds might be removed for loading, and, as we emerged from the various tents, the breakfast-table greeted us ready laden with tea (from the kettle), sardines, jam, peons’ biscuits, etc. True, the only milk procurable was some condensed milk, which had “gone solid,” there were not enough knives to go round, and a few other irregularities, but no little items of that sort ever disturbed the temper of The Tacuruers; they simply remarked with the other “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table,” “Difficulties are Nature’s challenges to you,” and used one spoon for all their cups, tore off lumps of bread with their fingers (when they could get hold of a loaf), and used the same plate and knife for jam and sardines alike, and enjoyed their early meal.

[Illustration: “*Rich black alluvial Soil.*”]

There was one subject that did cause sore feeling, and that was mosquitoes. We had thought we knew all about them, we were proud with the conceit of nets, ammonia, and veils, but our pride had a fall. Comparatively speaking, we had only known mosquitoes theoretically before (though that knowledge was bad enough); last night we learnt of them practically, none of us had thought of *tucking in* our nets, and mosquitoes seemed to swarm up under each net before we had been in bed for half an hour. Little peace did anyone get through those long night hours, and, though a voice came from one of the tents about 2 a.m., remarking clearly above the intermittent snores, “Oh! how lovely,” few echoed the sentiment, and the speaker assured us this morning that she was only dreaming, and that her words did not refer to insects of any kind, neither were they made in connection with the upheaval caused by “Monte” at one period of the night. He had taken up his quarters at one end of the ladies’ tent, but was disturbed from his beauty sleep by the sudden barking of a dog outside the other end of the tent. This, of course, must be seen to; it was his duty, so, leaping up, he rushed through the tent, lifting up each one of the low beds, and their occupants, as he passed under them on his way to quell the outside noise. The ladies forbore to scream, though they thought of earthquakes, but settled down again to their occupation of trying to kill mosquitoes, quietly, in the dark, and to snatch moments of slumber occasionally.



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After breakfast, Our Guest was rather unkindly “put on” by The Instigator to dig holes, to ascertain how deep the rich, black, alluvial soil reached; the ladies energetically washed up the breakfast things, which occupation resulted in The Kid once more, and this time finally, being given notice to leave, without a character, owing to general incompetence, impertinence, and lack of ability to wash out tea-cloths.

By 7 a.m. the coaches and carts were ready, horses rounded up, the “Primera Vista” camp was struck, and the march onward recommenced. But not before The Chaperon had pointed out a terror that “might have been.” After breakfast he approached us with a stick held at arm’s length, on which hung a dead, slimy-looking, grey snake, about 4 feet long. He explained that this reptile had crawled over the neck of one of the peons as he lay on the grass last night. This had happened before we went to bed, and we felt grateful to The Chaperon for having saved us from another horror last night by keeping the fact, and snake, to himself until we were leaving that camp.

The first part of our drive to-day was a new experience; we had passed over a few ant-hills before on our journey, but now we came to a land where it was difficult, if not impossible, to dodge them; they literally covered the ground, and the South American ant-hill is a power to be reckoned with. It is not the yielding mass composed of soft earth and other heterogeneous materials as found in England, which can be demolished with a kick, should anyone have sufficient temerity to lay himself open to the attacks of the inmates by thus disturbing them; but the homes of the black ant, and the Amazon ant, in Argentina are quite a different affair. They are, usually, solid, hard masses of earth from three to four feet high, very wide at the base, and covered entirely with coarse grass. They present an unyielding obstacle to any vehicle, and the wheels of even a heavily laden cart make no impression on them, but they are not unlikely to cause the overturning of that cart, and even traction engines suffer from the sudden drop caused by these gigantic sugar-loaves. Therefore it will be easily realized that the innumerable ant-hills through, and over which, we drove, were no inconsiderable menace to the safety of the party, and it was only due to the great care and skill of our drivers in threading their way amongst these obstacles that the inmates of the coaches were not upset time after time. As it was, no accident of the slightest description occurred—only a few bumps and jolts as we ascended or descended one of the ant-hills, which are so difficult to discern in open camp, where the whole land is covered alike with long grass. The worst part of our travelling did not last more than three or four hours; then we came to smoother country, fewer ant-hills, and occasional small lagunas, the land growing slightly undulating, though still bare of trees, and, after another three hours’ driving, during which we had many changes of horses and several “helps” from the guides over extra bad pieces of travelling, we could see in the distance the position of the Lake Palmar and the tops of the palms which grow on the farther shore.



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It was during this part of our day's journey that the peons made two captures of live animals in an armadillo and a nutria. These men have extraordinary good and far sight, and observe any movement in the grass, yards ahead of them. They at once killed both animals, for they are exceedingly fond of armadillo flesh, and cook the animal in its skin.

It was decided that horses and drivers alike would require a rest when we reached the shores of the lake, and, after our cocheros had made futile attempts to cut figures of 8 with their respective four and two-in-hands on the invitingly firm, yellow sands which surround Lake Palmar, all dismounted, horses were taken out, and, while lunch was being prepared, the party wandered on the shores of the lake trying to find remnants of extinct monsters, fossilised palms, and other improbable things. The Instigator rushed up and down picking leaves to bits, collecting sand and examining it under the microscope (which is, as yet, his), tasting the water of the lake, and generally trying to find a way of teaching Nature how to improve on her own handiwork. It really seems a pity She does not engage him as her expert consulting engineer. My Lady and The Saint did discover a boar-hound's tooth on the sands, and two teeth of a nutria, very pretty in their long, gentle curve, white at the root and gradually deepening to a reddish-brown at the end; but both these finds were absolutely valueless, and, though there was talk of having the teeth set as brooches, *etc.*, connoisseurs, such as The Wild Man, knew well that the "finds" would be dissolved to dust long before they could reach the civilisation of a jeweller's shop.

The tiny banks which slope down from the camp to meet the wide stretching sands of the lake are covered with scrub and low trees of the acacia type, and, on one of these low trees, eked out with camp stools, the party, wearied with their search for curios, settled down to await their mid-day meal. It was gently broken to us that the sheep had at last been sacrificed, and would shortly appear before us in a different guise. The slaughter must have been most humane, for no one of us had heard the slightest cry or sound of distress, and now the flesh was being cooked. The peons would always prefer to cook all meat in the hide, if they were allowed to do so, and it is only with constant watching that they are prevented from thus wasting the valuable skins of animals. They are enormous meat eaters, which is scarcely to be wondered at, considering how scarce green food is. They live on meat, mate, and hard biscuits.

The bright idea occurred to someone that a *hors-d'oeuvre* would be acceptable, considering how long ago we had had our meagre early morning meal, so the only available article, a tinned Dutch cheese, was attacked; and none but those who have tried, under similar circumstances, one of the soft Dutch cheeses which one obtains in the Argentine, would be able to understand how very good it can be. As it was handed round (to everyone on the same knife), hunger, open-air, and the exercise of the ant-hills caused it to be appreciated more than usual, even beyond its deserts, if possible.



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As the party were thus collected (mostly with their legs tucked away to prevent the climbing operations of the black ants with which the ground was swarming), The Instigator took this opportunity to try to rid himself of some of the responsibility of the trip by calling a meeting (the whole nine were already there), and putting it to the vote as to whether The Kid, now that she had lost her companions the sheep, should be turned adrift to find her way back again as best she could, drowned in the lake, or allowed to accompany the party for the rest of the journey. A wild gleam of joy lit the eyes of everyone who knew anything of her at this prospect of getting rid of the trial. Both the ladies, and everyone who had known her for longer than the week, voted, hands and feet, for her extinction, but four of the men were foolishly too polite to express their real wishes. So she herself was left with the casting vote, and chose to go on! Thus The Instigator's well-thought plan to remove an incubus was frustrated. He was so disgusted with his failure in a laudable object that, directly after "lunch" (which meant each one cutting off from the half-sheep, that was handed round, the piece he or she preferred), he went off with his microscope trying to find other interests, and in a few minutes was growing unduly excited over a shrub on which he discovered some most unusual excrescences. These shapeless masses of earth, apparently growing on the shrub, he was examining from all points with the naked eye before submitting them to microscopic investigation, and it was only when Our Guest came up and removed some of the earth from one of the excrescences that The Instigator, who was watching intently, noted that the mass resolved itself into the shape of one of The Saint's shoes, which had been hung up on the shrub to dry after her lake-searching expedition. Foiled again, The Instigator collected The Delineator and My Lady, and started to walk to the northern end of the lake, where The Jehu could pick them up, when the washing, packing and harnessing allowed of an onward move. We are told that for once The Kid, perhaps stimulated by her recent narrow escape from total extinction, really did do some work here. It is true we only have her word, an indistinct murmur from The Chaperon, and some clean plates to vouch for the statement, as all the other members of the party remaining were lying in more or less graceful slumberous attitudes in carts, under trees, or anywhere else, enjoying forty winks. Some excellent photos were obtained of the sleeping beauties as they lay there resting, but their modesty caused them to beg for forbearance in the publication of any of the pictures thus obtained.

Before the actual start was made, The Jehu, Our Guest, The Chaperon, and The Wild Man tried their hands at some revolver-shooting. Naturally, the drivers, after their long hours with the reins, could not do themselves justice with the more dangerous weapons, but, combined with Our Guest and The Wild Man, they left a fair show of broken bottles in the lake, rather to the surprise of the lookers-on.

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Neither of our cocheros could resist the further opportunity of figures of eight as we drove off on the hard sand, but we believe they were not encouraged in these exhibitions by their passengers, and, skirting the North part of the lake they came to a little ranch where they had arranged to meet the three walkers, who had discovered divers interesting specimens of animal, vegetable and mineral kinds during their very pleasant stroll round the lake. Here they were sitting at the ranch awaiting the arrival of the coaches, and they introduced the newcomers to a marvellous collection of tame birds with whom they had made acquaintance. The owners of the ranch had six or seven birds of different kinds, which flew about and pitched on anyone's shoulder or hand, or on the carriages, and were most friendly; in fact, one big bird was so willing to become attached to us that we could scarcely persuade it to leave the coach when we were ready to drive on.

We allowed those who had driven to the spot a few moments in which to dismount and greet the neat little mistress of the ranch, with whom we had already made friends, and her pretty children. The roofing of this little ranch and its out-houses was most interesting. It was carried out entirely with trunks of palm trees. These, split in half and cleared of all sap, made very effective roofing, placed alternately in concave and convex form, so that the ridges of the two lengths of trunk placed bark upward rest in the hollow of the intervening trunk. Naturally, all rain water drains off the convex half into the concave trunk and flows down these gullies into the water course formed of another hollowed palm trunk running along the lower edge of the roof. A more suitable and rainproof roof could scarcely be designed. The mistress of the house was most anxious to entertain us to tea, but, having picked up our guide from Vera, who it was arranged should meet us here with letters, we could not spare time for further delay, and once more started off with the guide ahead of us.

After leaving the ranch we turned to the eastward, and before long passed over the Calchaqui river (which is more generally known as the Golondrino here). This was not a difficult matter.

After crossing the Calchaqui we enter quite a new country, the land is perceptibly higher, the grasses are finer and trees begin to appear. First we came to the tall palm trees on the edge of the forest, and very imposing they were, then small montes gave place to the regular woods which stretch North on this side of the river, and trees abound. The scenery was altogether more tropical. Occasional flocks of bright pink flamingoes made a welcome touch of colour as they stood on the edge of some little laguna, or, disturbed by the unusual approach of coaches, flew off in the distance. Hares were to be seen now and then, and sometimes even one of the small wild deer of the forest was noticed before it rushed off to the shelter of the trees.



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Unfortunately, about this time, the sun, which had been so friendly all day, became overcast with clouds, and the sky assumed a threatening appearance; but, notwithstanding the wise head-shakings of those who know the country (The Delineator and The Jehu in particular), the party refused to be downhearted, and asserted that rain was the most unlikely event, and, in any case, they intended to enjoy their present drive through scenery which was not unlike that which would be found in an English park; the great expanses were gone, and in their place we had slightly undulating stretches of grass bordered with trees of all kinds. The whole aspect of the land had changed and the country here was extremely pretty, though no distant views could be obtained owing to the thick growth of the trees and the impossibility of finding any but the slightest rising ground.

We arrived, before long, at a little ranch, in the neighbourhood of which we were to encamp for the night. The spot was very different to our camp of last night, for here we were surrounded with trees, and near by a flock of sheep, belonging to the ranch, were feeding. Before the heavier carts could arrive, and the work of tent-erecting commence, there was plenty of time for a cup of tea, with the aid of My Lady's useful basket; but all the water that could be obtained from the so-called "well" at the ranch was half mud, and, though this was used with great success, we could only secure two mouthfuls of tea from each cup, as the rest of the contents was composed of mud. We believe The Kid was rather annoyed about this, and felt distinctly aggrieved, but she did not dare to give vent to her feelings, and the matter did not worry those who were looking forward to "cocktails" before dinner, and well they deserved those "cocktails," for by the time the carts arrived the atmosphere had become intensely close; a slight drizzle seemed only to add to the damp heat, and the work of unloading and erecting tents, and beds, and unpacking in that warm, steaming air, which was intensified under the coverings, was no light one; but here, again, everyone performed their quota, whether large or small, for the general good. Before long the tents were up. Three were erected to-night, as, owing to the rain, we should be obliged to have food under canvas. The Instigator caused great admiration by cunningly using trees as supports in the erection of the tents under his supervision, and thus hurrying matters on. Everything was finished, beds made, luggage under cover, the table laid ready in the tent, and lamps lit and suspended before the short twilight had given place to complete darkness, and The Saint once more earned the blessings and gratitude of all by thoughtfully insisting on a general "washing of faces." As she marshalled the party in front of her, and attacked each one with sponge and towel, we were irresistibly reminded of a board school; but that sponge of toilet vinegar, after the damp heat and all the work, was



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one of the most refreshing things imaginable, and everyone felt cleaner and more cheerful after this ablution, and ready to attack the poor little armadillo, which had been cooked; this meat tastes very much like sucking pig. The rain, which was coming down heavily by this time, was powerless to damp the spirits of the party as they sat down to dinner. They were only troubled because they feared this would be their last evening meal in camp, and that Civilisation might again claim them for her own to-morrow, for a great deal of the enjoyment of this trip has been due, undoubtedly, to its incomparable freedom. So they spent the time in eating, and holding a mutual admiration society meeting. Each decided (between the mouthfuls of mutton and armadillo) that every other member of the party was just the nicest person that he or she had ever met, and, as there was no one there to contradict the obviously erroneous statements, all were satisfied and content, and drank each other's healths with enthusiasm, and—whatever else was left. Someone even tried to murmur something kindly about The Kid. Above all, the Instigator was eulogised, and rightly, too, for his genial influence helped everything to go well; no one could have grumbled at the little inconveniences which they had had to put up with at times, while The Instigator was so cheerful and anxious for others' comfort and careless of his own through all. His interest in, and enthusiasm for, his Company know no bounds. Get him to hold forth, and he will tell you how, in the early days of the Company, matters were quite different from what they are to-day. The shares stood then at five shillings each, and the bankers refused to allow an overdraft of £2,000, and when it became absolutely necessary to have money he actually made advances out of his own pocket to supply the requisite funds.

Shortly afterwards matters began to improve, and when he visited the property in 1900 he was able to send this reassuring message to the General Meeting:—"I honestly believe the worst is past, and that in future we shall progress."

He always appraises the work of others whether the result of their operations is successful or not, and he will appreciate the mental and manual exertions expended on the undertaking by the employees of the Company at their true worth. All he asks of his colleagues and subordinates is that each one shall "play the game" in every sense of the word to the best of his ability. He never paints the prospects of a beginner in rosy hues; in fact, he has been known to speak of the hardships and privations which a young man must be prepared to go through on first joining the Company as being comparable to "the life of a dog." To-day the men who have been through those first years of necessary self-denial and hard work are grateful for the training they have received and anxious to work their best for the Company.



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For a long while the party sat talking of their experiences on this trip, and of the Company and its prospects. The travelling over this comparatively unknown land had been a revelation to most; the dormant wealth lying in the camp must be enormous, but men, money, and brains are needed to exploit it. Unfortunately, it is still difficult to get colonists for these more northern districts, but when the railway which is contemplated becomes an accomplished fact, as it assuredly must, people will be attracted further north, colonisation will be easier, the land will yield its hundredfold, and some one will, in time, have performed the great deed of "making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before." It may seem to those accustomed to the narrower life of towns, a lonely, empty life to spend one's years and energies improving these wild lands; but assuredly the man who labours here with the best that is in him, not only earns a great reward for himself in the gradual development and growth of that land, but has deserved well of mankind in general, and will, some day, receive his "Well done," than which there is no higher praise, as surely as those whose lives have been spent in the more public fields of civilisation or in military prowess.

For some, obscure reason it is generally supposed that the man who spends his life in agricultural pursuits is bound to have his mental abilities dulled by the continuous round of duties connected with the land and the care of animals. The origin of this idea is difficult to imagine, unless it be that agriculture is the oldest and most necessary pursuit of mankind; but surely the man who has to keep a perpetual watch on wind, weather and workers, animal and vegetable kingdom and natural phenomena, and be ready to anticipate any change, besides being thoroughly in touch with all the latest improvements, mechanical and material, in reference to his calling, and conversant with the ruling prices in the best markets, cannot be held to be a man whose perceptions are becoming blunted by his business. It is certainly true that there are many who do "let things go," but that class is not confined to agriculturists alone, and in agriculture, as in all other callings, those who "let things slide" very shortly find that most things have slid away from them irrevocably. Certainly the Argentine is no place for the man disinclined for exertion. She holds rewards, and great rewards; but only for the resolute who are prepared to lead a strenuous and self-denying life of labour, exposure and fatigue, and who come to her determined to win the best from her rich lands, and to take every opportunity as it comes in their way for improving their knowledge.



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Plans were made for to-morrow's journey; there was talk, if the day was fine and the way possible, of going first south-east to the tannin factory at La Gallareta, then due north to Las Gamas, but it was feared that the recent heavy rains in this district would have made the undertaking of the two journeys on one day inadvisable, and the Indian guide persuaded the "leaders" that it would be wiser to go straight to Las Gamas to-morrow and leave the visit to the factory for Monday. This would give Tuesday for Santa Lucia and Wednesday for Vera. Sarnosa and Olmos could be visited from one or the other of these two estancias, and, leaving Vera on Friday afternoon, San Cristobal would be reached on Saturday evening.

As we dispersed in the rain to our various tents, a slight thunder and lightning storm commenced, but, notwithstanding this, we were happy in the assurance that our troubles from mosquitoes were likely to be less virulent to-night, owing to our proximity to the sheepfold of the ranch. Therefore, as good disciples of the immortal Pepys, we quote—and with appropriate action—"So to bed."

* * * * *

ADVERTISEMENT.

OUT OF WORK.—Advertiser wants situation as general help; might be useful in tea-taster's office; hard work not so much an object as high wages and comfortable living. Advertiser could take immediate situation. No references.—T.K., *Second Coach*.

* * * * *

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T.C. writes in answer to the arithmetical problem of yesterday's date, "Yes, if A starts with 87 horses, loses 2, and finds 1, he does end the journey with 110, for he collects 24 more at the last estancia. Only experts can do this; hence your correspondent's failure to find a solution."

LOST.—One watch and chain (said to be gold), trinkets attached containing several locks of hair and portraits of ten or twelve gentlemen. If finder would return portraits and hair, owner would be obliged.—T.K.

"THE TACURU."

No. 8.

Saturday, April 2nd, 1910.



THE CIRCULATION OF "THE TACURU" WENT UP LITERALLY BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS YESTERDAY MORNING, FAR BEYOND THE EXPECTATIONS EVEN OF THE EDITOR.

The morning dawned damp and dreary; rain had fallen steadily all night long, and still continues. Neither The Chaperon nor anyone else had an opportunity for seeing "the golden exhalations of dawn" this morning. To-day's "exhalations" were chiefly those of moisture, and the only gold we saw was supplied by the light of the paraffin lamps which The Chaperon, always on the look out to anticipate our wishes, provided for us to see our way to wash. The water for ablutions was obtained from the mud-hole which did duty for a well at the ranch, and its appearance was somewhat disconcerting. However, with skill,



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one could scoop up a little of the surface of the water for a splash without disturbing the thick stratum of mud at the bottom of the basin; things might have been worse, and everyone felt that on such a damp day washing at all was merely an aesthetic waste of energy. By the time dressing was accomplished it was sufficiently light for the lamps to be dispensed with, and we assembled for breakfast in a dull-grey atmosphere. Hot tea, even though half mud, was very good. We believe that the leaf of a certain cactus has the power of clearing water absolutely; if it is dropped in a vessel of water, it and the mud settle at the bottom, leaving the water quite clear; but though several varieties of cacti were tried this morning, none were successful; apparently the special kind did not grow around our camp.

[Illustration: *Water Knee-deep.*]

No one seemed much disheartened by the rain; even the peons, though already wet through in their scanty garments, were cheerfully smiling as usual, with no thought of grumbling. Monte, too, was calmly ready to accompany us, despite the bad weather.

Owing either to the skilful manner of tucking in the nets adopted last night, or to the neighbourhood of the sheepfold, mosquitoes had not troubled us nearly so much as on the previous night; only the continual flashes of lightning and the soft rumblings of thunder during the steady downpour had been able to disturb our deep slumbers.

As soon as possible the tents were taken down, packing accomplished, and a start made. Fortunately the ant-hills were considerably fewer in number to-day, but the ground was ankle deep in water everywhere, and fallen tree trunks hidden under the, in some places, really deep water, formed a considerable danger in our path. However, again owing to the skill of our drivers, no accident occurred all through that long drive in unceasing rain, which shrouded all but the most immediate view. Of course, constant changes of horses were necessary, as, for eight hours we drove through water, above and below, to our destination. The accomplishment of that drive of his four-in-hand from the absolutely unsheltered position on the box was no small feat on the part of The Jehu; we all felt an even deeper admiration for his pluck and endurance than before, as he steadily pursued his way on that terrible day, when his whole body and especially his hands must have been numbed through and through with the cold and wet. The Chaperon, too, had an arduous day, though his work was not so strenuous as that of The Jehu. At one spot, when under trees we made a change of horses, The Chaperon was seen to be wading through water, knee deep, as he handed round the only refreshments available—ginger-bread, biscuits, beer and gin—to guests and peons alike, all drinking gratefully from the same small measure. That drive is something to be remembered; it was executed under the most trying circumstances with not a single

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complaint or grumble from anyone, but an increased thankfulness on the part of the passengers that they were in such good hands during the trip. The land through which we drove to-day is covered with trees of various kinds; large forests exist on the eastern side of the Calchaqui, bordering the river for its entire length; the trees of these forests are chiefly Algarrobo the wood of which is not unlike our walnut in appearance, but extremely hard; in days to come this timber will be used in great quantities for making parquet flooring. It seems almost incredible that the city of Buenos Aires should import millions of square metres of ready-made parquet flooring when the Argentine produces magnificent timber of far more suitable and better wearing quality for the purpose than any used in imported parquet. As we have journeyed eastward, trees have become much more numerous, and splendid timber is to be seen on every side. Most numerous amongst the trees is the Quebracho Colorado, which supplies one of the hardest timbers the world produces. The trees have a peculiar appearance, for their leaves are quite small and the trunks have a rough bark from which often hangs moss-like lichen, of which, by the way, cattle are very fond. The photo on the opposite page gives a general idea of a tree's appearance.

The wood, which is light in colour when first cut, becomes dark red upon being exposed to light and weather, and it is intensely hard.

[Illustration: *Quebracho Colorado Tree.*]

The word "quebracho" (pronounced KAYBRATSHO) signifies axe-breaking, and even modern tools do not retain their edge long when working on this wood.

The wonderful durability of the wood renders it a perfect material for railway sleepers, and this has been appreciated by the Government of Argentina to such an extent that they have decreed that the laying of new railways is to be upon sleepers made of the hard woods of the Country.

[Illustration: *Sleepers awaiting Transport at Vera.*]

The forests of the Santa Fe Land Company have produced in the last twelve years over a million Quebracho Colorado sleepers.

One drawback to the wood is that it has the peculiarity of splitting around the heart of the tree. This is caused by the accumulation of resin at certain periods, and is probably connected in some way with the excessive moisture or dryness of a particular year's growth.

The tree is often attacked by a boring grub, which enters by making a very small pin prick opening, and during its existence in the tree grows and bores an ever enlarging



hole until often it becomes half an inch in diameter. It would seem almost incredible that a grub could live either on the resins in the tree or be able to bore through what is one of the hardest woods in the world.

Of recent years this timber has also been put to another use—that of producing tan. When used for this purpose, the tree was cut down, its outer sapwood removed, and then taken to the river to be finally shipped to the United States of America or to Germany.



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It was soon found that the railway and shipping freight charges absorbed a considerable amount of the profits to be obtained in making this tannin extract abroad, and, therefore, extract factories were erected in Argentina. The process of obtaining the extract is very simple; the logs are first put through a machine which reduces them to chips, the chips are then boiled in water till all soluble matter is extracted from them, and the solution obtained is concentrated down to the consistency of pitch; in this form, after being dried, it is exported, and is used by tanners the world over. The great necessity and essence of success, in the present way of working the business, is good water and plenty of it.

We do not know who first noticed the tannin material oozing out of these trees, but no doubt attention was called to the fact by pools in the neighbourhood of the trees being often red in colour. Undoubtedly the Germans first took this business up on a large scale, and to-day they hold an enormous quantity of forest lands.

Hitherto the extract has been brought on to the market in a solid state very much after the style of Burma catch. The Santa Fe Land Company have recently produced the material in a fine powdered state, absolutely pure, and containing a great deal less moisture than any other form of extract on the market, and they are about to erect a factory to work this process in connection with their saw mills at Vera. This new process requires very little water as compared with the old method, and can be adopted, in huge areas hitherto unsuitable for the industry.

About mid-day we approached a plaza, or wood deposit, of the La Gallareta Factory, situated on the Company's Lands. Rain had been falling in torrents for days past, and the tracks (called by courtesy "roads") had one and all become deep crevasses of soft mud, loads of timber had been left here and there in the wood, just wherever the cart conveying it had stuck, and in many places the water was so deep that not a vestige of these obstacles could be seen. Our coaches had to be driven under (or perhaps we should say "over") such circumstances as these for about three miles, and this part of our journey was absolutely dangerous; the greatest credit is due to the drivers and those in charge of the party that no serious accident occurred, for, about mid-day, the way was truly terrible, and one never knew when a tree trunk, small or large, lying hidden under the water, would cause a terrific jolt to the cart, despite the utmost efforts on the part of our cocheros. However, we passed from the extreme danger zone into the comparatively smooth waters of the flooded lands. So we drove on, our drivers and guides becoming more and more chilled with the rain and cold, but always cheerful, till at last wire fencing and other signs of civilisation marked our approach to the precincts of Las Gamas. This was indeed a welcome sight to the party, for all were beginning to feel the need of food and shelter, and though the "passengers" in the coaches were comparatively dry, despite the continual downpour, the drivers were wet through long ago and the peons had not been dry since dawn.



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[Illustration: *Tannin Extract Factory.*]

No one was sorry when "The Jehu," to shorten the drive, ordered some of the wire fencing to be dropped so that we might proceed in a straight line to the house instead of making the considerable detour to the gate. It was past three o'clock when, after a side-slip or two, and consequent meeting with gate-posts, we drew up in front of the estancia house and noticed on the outbuildings a damp flag trying to flap a weary "welcome" to the party of Tacuruers. The first thing was to get The Jehu from his driving seat and into a warm bath, and the same treatment was meted out to The Chaperon, and hot whisky and water for all! Our host and hostess gave us such a genial welcome and the big room looked so dry and inviting, with a wood fire crackling in the grate, that our troubles, which had, during the long hours of to-day's tedious drive, assumed really serious proportions, were soon forgotten as we sat down, in an incredibly short time, to a hearty meal of roast turkey and mince pies! We almost fell to wishing each other a Happy Christmas, and instinctively wondered if roast chestnuts would form part of the afternoon's programme. Unfortunately, chestnuts of an allegorical kind *did* enter into the proceedings. Meanwhile, the rain continued its unceasing downpour. It was some time before the baggage waggons arrived on the scene, and, needless to say, they and their contents were very damp. But the peons soon had the goods unpacked, and ere long were happy and dry in the big galpon round a roaring fire, which they must have badly needed. Their behaviour all through this terrible day, sometimes under most trying circumstances, had been splendid, and it says a good deal for master as well as for man that not once was a sound of discontent heard. In fact, the men often suggested themselves little things in which they thought they might help the caretakers of the party. It was a relief to us all to know that the work of those peons had ended for the day with the caring for the horses and unpacking of the goods.

Monte still accompanied us, but here he had to be kept under strict surveillance, for dogs were numerous on the premises, and several of them were not of the kind who brook any encroachment, however harmless, on their preserves; so poor Monte was perforce shut up, away from the house, where Bear and his companions could not take exception to the presence of an interloper. The late afternoon and evening were chiefly spent in having warm baths, which were most grateful after the, of necessity, somewhat sketchy ablutions of the past three days. Now that the safe arrival of the luggage was an accomplished fact, and the travellers clothed and fed, there seemed little reason for late hours, and it was not long after dinner when the general dispersal took place. We only waited to hear a few selections of songs on the beautiful gramophone which our host had received a few months ago as a Christmas



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greeting from England. It must be difficult for those at home to realise what an immense amount of pleasure a good gramophone can give to the dwellers in the far camp lands. This instrument was in constant request, and both the machine and records were extraordinarily good. Still, even this great attraction did not tempt the party to sit up late; everyone was tired and exhausted, and our cocheros, more especially the Jehu, must have been worn out with their exertions of the day. We can only hope they will suffer no after ill effects from their arduous task and severe drenchings.

[Illustration: *Some of the Horses.*]

Our horses have been simply wonderful during this trip. We have driven, ridden, and brought along nearly 100 animals for 150 miles, and have not lost one upon the journey. This speaks volumes for the care and training bestowed upon the animals at the head estancia, and we are inclined to think that few other places could supply as many animals to do such trying work. The fitness of our animals is owing entirely to the continual attention and care they receive daily at the estancia.

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We are sorry to be obliged to hold over all correspondence, advertisements, etc., to-day, as, doubtless owing to the floods, no communications had reached us up to the time of going to press. We hope all correspondents will accept our sincere apologies for the unavoidable delay in dealing with letters and orders; all despatches shall receive our earnest attention as soon as they come to hand.

“THE TACURU.”

No. 9

Sunday, April 3rd, 1910.

Dawn showed us no respite of the drenching rain; the paths, the garden, and the camps were all flooded with the continuous rain of yesterday and last night, and still it poured. After disposing of a more substantial breakfast than had fallen to the lot of the travellers for some days, there seemed little to do save listen to the dulcet strains of the gramophone, which proved a welcome diversion. A considerable disturbance was caused by a dog fight under the table round which we were sitting; whether intentional or not on the part of the animals, the rout of the ladies was complete, and the dogs were only separated by the calm procedure of some of the men who held them under the water taps until their ardour was cooled. Monte was out of all this trouble, for he had been consigned to the security of the galpon to avoid trouble concerning rights of way which would assuredly have arisen between himself and Bear (the big bulldog of the



estancia) had they met. Bear amused the company by presenting a truly comical sight, some minutes later, when he decided to have a drink after his fight; he walked with majestic mien up to the water spout, which jutted out from the house a few feet from the ground, and, poking out his heavy under-jaw, collected the flow of water in his mouth in a most satisfying way,



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for a few seconds. Of course, The Instigator started off pacing and measuring the room's verandah, *etc.*, in order to devise a scheme for the best improvements for the estancia, and before long he and The Delineator had made out a plan which would drive any member of the R.I.B.A. to desperation, but caused its authors enormous joy. The Jehu and The Chaperon were occupied for some time in seeing to the comfort of their men and animals, and trying to dry the tents, clothes, *etc.*, by the huge fire in the galpon in which the peons were housed for the day. We are told that one Tacuruer tried to employ the morning remuneratively by opening a temporary barber's shop on the verandah, and advertising "hair-cutting and shaving"; possibly he might have built up a successful business in time, but unfortunately for him his first customer's beard was too unyielding for the ordinary scissors and the customer objected to the way in which the horse clippers were used on the hirsute growth of his chin, and talked of his treatment afterwards in a way that did not inspire confidence in the other might-have-been customers, who were observed to slink away one by one from the barber's chair as if it were infected. We regret that a well-meant enterprise on the part of one of The Tacuru party met with such a poor reception.

A gleam of ceasing rain—it was not sunshine—gave courage to some of the more energetic members of the party to go forth to inspect the heaps of wood about to be made into charcoal in the neighbourhood of the estancia, if any could be reached on dry land. For to-morrow the visit to the La Gallareta factory will occupy the day, and the Charcoal piles are too interesting a sight to be left unvisited now that we are in the wood department of the Santa Fe Land Company.

In the northern districts where trees are numerous it is necessary to "distrincar" the land before the soil can be brought into condition suitable for the plough. In other words all the trees and roots must be removed before ploughing operations commence. But the timber so obtained is not wasted; the branches and all pieces not big enough to be used for sleepers, *etc.*, are cut up into various suitable lengths and piled together in such a manner that when finished the heap presents the appearance of a huge beehive; the centre of this dome running from the apex to the ground is a hollow cylinder; this tube or pipe is filled up with the small sticks and twigs from the trees, and when all is in readiness the contents of the cylinder are fired from the top, the fire slowly burns downwards and sets light to the surrounding logs which in their turn smoulder till they become charcoal. But the match is not applied until the whole mass of wood has been covered up and plastered over with mud, to prevent the entrance of any air. The kiln thus forms an enclosed retort, and the wood is carbonised and makes excellent charcoal, which eventually finds its way to Buenos Aires and other cities, where immense

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quantities are used for cooking and heating purposes. If all goes well, the kiln being well built, and no air admitted, some thirty to forty tons of charcoal are produced from one of these heaps; not infrequently, however, the crown breaks in; this allows the air to enter, the wood is completely burnt, and the labour expended on this "horno" is represented by a few cartloads of useless ash. The thought of these possible failures was too much for The Instigator; he held forth, at length, upon the advisability of bringing a little science to bear upon the problem of preventing any waste of the material itself or of the by-products. His theory is that to make the best use of nature's lavish gifts in the way of wood products, an iron or brick still should be erected, on the inside of which the heavy tarry products would naturally accumulate, and so find their way to the base of the kiln where they could be collected and run out into casks for utilisation, whilst the lighter vapours are condensed in the hood of the still to be chemically treated later for their highly valuable properties, and the charcoal itself would be a more certain production from these brick or iron kilns than it is from the present heaps. At this point of his lecture the weather became impossible, and when The Instigator discovered that he was expatiating to the camp and rain alone, he, too, turned to seek the shelter of the estancia house, whither his audience had long ago fled. For some time we watched the storm as it worked up with intense fury. The lightning as it illuminated the whole camp was a wonderful sight, it seemed to flash (and this was before the dinner hour) yellow light from the north, red from the south, and a bright white light from the east, and was of long continuance. The culminating point seemed to come when an appalling crash was heard and something appeared to have been struck by lightning. This drove the party indoors, though from the time of the crash (we found later that it was the telephone which had suffered), the storm abated and only steady rain continued. However, nothing more could be done out of doors, and everyone was glad of warmth and shelter, while they hoped for a better day to-morrow.

Songs occupied the evening, and most of the party retired early to bed.

The Editor regrets that up to the time of going to press to-day, the advertisements, correspondence, *etc.*, due for yesterday's issue had not reached the office; he fears they may have been lost, and requests that all orders may be repeated.

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The following advertisements of to-day's dating have been sent in:—

HAIR CUTTING AND SHAVING while you wait.—Lowest prices. Large supply of tools, or customers may bring their own instruments if preferred. Good style guaranteed. Customers' comfort not so much considered as thorough work. Satisfaction certain.—T.C., THE VERANDAH.



WANTED.—Reliable Barber—for clipping advertiser's beard weekly, at own residence. May be required to travel. Gentleness much appreciated; advertiser would give valuable information on any subject in return for Barber's services.—T.I., LAS GAMAS.

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WANTED—By several people; good book on “How not to lose at Bridge.” Anyone possessing a copy of this valuable work for sale, please quote lowest price to The Editor, *Tacuru* Office.

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Monday, April 4th, 1910.

The Editor and Staff of “The Tacuru” announce with great regret the unavoidable demise of the journal known and respected by all as “The Tacuru.” This valuable and instructive periodical has become a necessity to every happy home. The Editor hoped long to continue his beneficent task of bringing a daily joy into the lives of all English-speaking and reading people; but, alas, just as he bore “his blushing honours thick upon him,” there came a flood, an awful flood, and carried away his hopes and printing press (we believe some people were drowned, too). Therefore we must, perforce, bid our readers “farewell, a long farewell.” Though not, we hope, for ever. Printing presses are not unique, and some day, in the land of civilisation, we hope to be able to make our loss good and bring happiness and information once more to countless millions. In case any of our readers would like to erect a monument of gratitude to “The Tacuru,” in memory of the enjoyment, or otherwise, this paper has brought into their lives, we would mention that the printing-press and a few lives were lost on the way to Olmos. We are able to publish a photo of extreme interest, depicting the counting of the loss after the deluge. With this, and our deepest regrets, we must pause, trusting that some day our great work may be renewed under similarly happy circumstances, by the same staff, to whom, and to all contributors, willing or unwilling, a thousand thanks.

[Illustration: “*Awful Flood.*”]

[Illustration: *On the Way to Olmos.*]