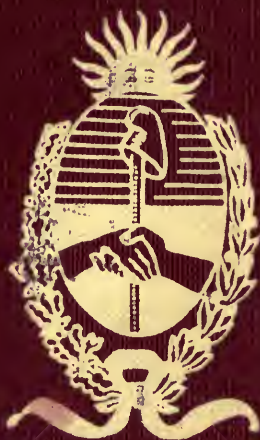
THE AMAZING ARGENTINE

JOHN FOSTER FRASER



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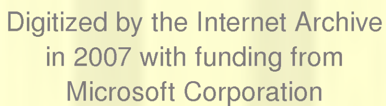
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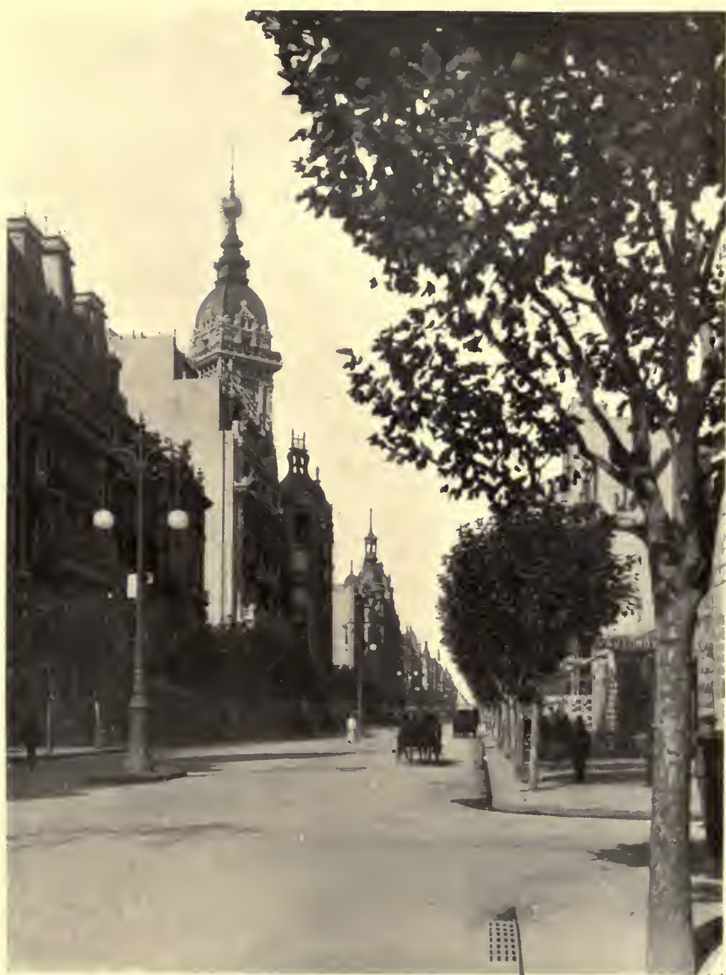

THE MAYO AVENUE, BUENOS AIRES.

THE AMAZING ARGENTINE

A NEW LAND OF ENTERPRISE

BY

JOHN FOSTER FRASER

WITH FORTY-EIGHT PLATES
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

NEW YORK
FUNK AND WAGNALLS COMPANY

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THE AMAZING ARGENTINE

CHAPTER I

THE INVADERS

It was on a boat which was laden with bananas and running from Colon, on the Isthmus of Panama, to New York.

The steward called me at dawn. He thought I was mad because I stood in pyjamas without apparent heed of the mirky drizzle. Beyond the sad waters there was little to see but a low-lying and dreary island with a melancholy lighthouse. No vegetation brightened the scene. There was no gorgeous sunrise. There was nothing but a lump of barrenness heaving out of the sea. But this was the island of San Salvador, the western land which Columbus first touched when he sailed to find the Indies.

There are now near one hundred and fifty millions of people of European descent in the Americas. And a little glow came into my imagination that rain-swept morning when I felt I was the only traveller on the boat who had crawled forth to gaze at San Salvador. I tried to picture what thoughts must have crowded the mind of Columbus

when he sighted this shore. He never knew what he had discovered for Spain. He could never have dreamt he was the first in the greatest invasion the world has ever witnessed.

A year later I was on an Atlantic liner. The fo'c'sle was thronged with poor Spaniards from Vigo and poor Portuguese from Lisbon. In the voyage across the Atlantic I had watched them in the steerage—tawny-visaged, easygoing men, and broad-set, figureless women, sprawling, gossiping, drowsing. To the accompaniment of an accordion they lifted their voices in song on the balmy, starlit evenings whilst the ship churned through the tropical seas.

Another misty morning and I climbed on deck. Saloon passengers were tucked in their bunks. But all the steerage had turned out and were crowding the foredecks, and were gazing at a dim strip of land and watching a blinking light. The land was the coast of Brazil, and the light was the harbour of Pernambuco, which means "the Door of Hell."

The immigrants raised a long-drawn shout of joy. They hailed Latin America. There was the country of which they had heard so much. They had broken with the Old World. Four hundred years ago their ancestors came across these seas with eyes greedy for gold. Now they came, not to snatch gold from temples or to terrorise the natives into showing where the metal could be found, but to work on sugar plantations, to nurture the coffee plant, to rear bananas, to do the humble work in the building of

towns and the construction of railways, to toil in the jungles, to sit in the saddle and round up cattle on the prairies. They had come to the New World to get gold by industry.

How much we talk and write about the enterprise and colonising power of the Teutonic races, and how prone we are to dismiss the Latin races as effete and played out! But our generalisations will not bear examination. The spirit of adventure cannot have left Italy and Spain and Portugal. Every year hundreds of thousands of people sail from those countries across the Atlantic.

We speak of North America as Teutonic—made prosperous by the stock of northern Europe—and South America as Spanish. Latin America, however, does not all lie south of the Panama Canal. We must begin to reckon it from the territory line which separates the United States from Mexico. Southwards from the banks of the Rio Grande the Latin tongue is spoken, chiefly Spanish, but with much Portuguese in Brazil, and Italian in places right down, through the Torrid Zone, the heavy tropics, reeking with luxuriant vegetation, to the bleak and rocky, inhospitable Tierra del Fuego.

There are millions of Latins. They have set up half a score of Republican governments. The wealthy world slowly and then impetuously realised the possibilities of this strangely diversified region. Untold gold has been poured forth to develop it and get quick return.

It is not stories of treasure which bring a glint

into the eye of modern men. It is enterprise and development which appeal. There are cattle to be reared on the ranches of Mexico; there is rubber in Peru; there are nitrates and fabulous mineral wealth in Chili and the neighbouring lands; there are cotton and sugar and coffee in the mighty sweep of Brazil; there are the illimitable wheat areas of Argentina, and cattle rearing and the giant possibilities in supplying Europe with frozen meat; there is the opening up of immense areas by networks of railroads.

"The stuff is there; it has only to be got," says the man who knows and talks with the fire of enthusiasm.

South America is not the land of the future. It is the land of to-day. Nowhere in the world is the speculator, the investor, more busy than in Latin America. The tales told by the first Spaniards are baby talk to the stories told to-day by those who have been and seen and are fascinated. Of course it is overdone. Of course there is exaggeration. Of course some of the jewels in El Dorado are useless stones. Of course some of the caves of Aladdin are found empty. But what the modern world ranks as precious is in abundance.

I like to conjure a contrast between the little barques of a few hundred tonnage bobbing on unknown seas with the big fifteen-thousand tonners which make their ports of call according to time-table. The early invaders went into the unknown, crept along unmapped coasts, battled with savages, and died like

flies before the scourge of fever. The whole story of the conquest and settlement of the Americas is one of slow victory through a mist of tragedy. The invaders of other days left their native lands with little hope to return. The invaders of to-day set forth waving an au revoir to their friends on the dock side.

The man with the flimsiest imagination can think of the tiny craft, ill-lit, ill-furnished, with scurvy-providing food, running before the trade winds, lolling with idle sails in the doldrums, and with uncertainty as constant companion. To-day the huge vessels scorn the tides. Aflame with electric light they press through the dusk, and the ship's orchestra plays ragtime music. You cross the Equator to the tune of a Gaiety light opera. Sultry afternoons are relieved with exhilarating deck sports. The warmth of the dinner hour is softened by the whirl of electric fans. In the evening a space on deck is enclosed and hung with the flags of all the nations, and dancers in fancy dress whirl blithely on the powdered floor. These are the circumstances of the modern invasion. The journey is a holiday with nothing of grim adventure about it.

What Latin America means to-day is told in the personalities of the passengers. There are the rich Argentines, after six months in Europe, returning to Buenos Aires, occupying the cabins de luxe. They offer you the information how much they are paying, contribute largely to the sports fund, and their ladies dress with frank display. Whether Spanish

or English they are proud of the name of Argentine, and never weary telling of the progress of their country. They have open contempt for their Portuguese neighbours in Brazil. The wealthy Brazilian men, swarthy and fat and bejewelled, do not join the deck games, but, with cigar between lips, saunter the decks, leering at every woman with a passable countenance. The Argentines thank God there is no nigger blood in their veins. The Brazilians retaliate they could buy the Argentines up. Care must be taken not to mix the two nationalities at the ship's tables. Each nation sports its own flag. Sometimes rivalry threatens tragedy.

There is the Englishman "with interests in Argentina" going out to look after his property, frequently an *estancia,* or ranch, purchased when land was cheap, and before the boom came. Now a railway cuts through his property, and it has increased seventy-fold in value. Sometimes he mentions drought; occasionally he shudders at the mention of locusts. But he recalls the state of things when he went out thirty or forty years ago "with not much more than a bob," and now he has a fortune made out of meat shipped to Europe, and his only regret seems to be the iniquitous amount of death duties which will have to be paid by his heirs.

"Argentina is not what it was," he tells you. That means the winning of a fortune is going to be increasingly harder to this and subsequent generations. But he is a fine type of Englishman, for he went forth before South America had grown beyond

its monthly revolution, when the continent chiefly bred restlessness amongst the Spanish settlers, and when life and prosperity was a gamble. He has come through the fire. Foresight, daring, and good luck have swung him, as they have swung thousands of others, into affluence. He has "retired." He lives at home in Belgravia, and gives fine dinner parties. But he keeps an eye on Argentine stock, and when you encounter him in the club he repeats that "Argentina is not what it was, but still——" and then he makes you wish you could place your hand on some of the plums that remain.

There is the rich Argentine who shows what he is made of by insisting upon everybody in the smoking-room drinking champagne at his expense—and he is uncomplimentary if anybody deliberately refuses his hospitality. There is the man who hires a band to play to him during the voyage. There is the delicate lady who has a special cow on board so that she may be sure of fresh milk. The boat carries a cow so that the children may have milk. The charge per pint for the milk is high. "Why," said one passenger when he heard what the price was, "I think I will give my children champagne; it will be cheaper."

British gold has flowed like water into South America to make the dormant region fruitful. British interests are colossal. The United States has not taken much of a hand in development, partly because the Latins do not love their northern neighbours,

and partly because the financiers of the States have been sufficiently occupied in their own country. Three hundred million British pounds sterling has been invested in Argentine railway and tramway companies, and there are on board men who manage the lines—tall, stalwart, clear-skinned Englishmen, with cool nerve and steady eye.

There are the big *estancia* men, proud and ambitious, who pay enormous prices for famous race-horses and get the best breeding stock from home in cattle and sheep, no matter what competition forces the price up to. There are shrewd men going out on behalf of syndicates to throw their eyes round the country and scent out possibilities for money-making on the grand scale. In the free talk of the smoking-room they speak with vagueness of what their special mission is. There are the men who have been charged to take control of city development schemes—for all ports, towns, and cities in South America are crazy for development, and are piling their backs with debt to achieve their desires. There are the men who represent English firms who are intent on extending their connections or in establishing branches. There are engineers, with jobs in the far interior, proceeding to fill five-year contracts. There are young bank clerks, flushed with increased salary, exchanging London for a pampa town and scarcely realising they will find living three times as expensive as at Bromley. There are the men who laughingly acknowledge they have no direct mission except that they intend to see what

they can pick up. But they are mostly a good brand of Briton, well set, and with courage in the veins. And when one remembers the growing Latin population, and listens to captivating explanations about potentialities and hears what has been accomplished—more wonderful in the making of cities than a tale out of the Thousand and One Nights—there is the fact in the background that all this continent must long have continued to lie undeveloped if it had not been for the constant and confident inflow of British money.

Beyond the rails are the second-class passengers, folk of humbler aim, but going to play their part in the land of adventure. But, above all, are the third class, the steerage—few British here—travelling to South America with little but hope and muscle to do the labourer's part. It is labour the country needs to-day more than capital. In the spring of the southern hemisphere the Atlantic is trailed with ships packed with Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese. The continent swallows them. They are men of courage, or they would never have gone forth. They take with them their fiery Latin temperament and fierce political, frequently anarchist views. The native Indians are mostly too cow-like to be of much use in industry. The millions of negroes in tropical Brazil are too lazy to be relied upon. Labour is the need, the ever-pressing need. Emissaries are busy in southern Europe booming South America and filling the boats which sail from Lisbon and Vigo and Genoa—chiefly from Genoa, for the Italian is the

ideal immigrant for a warm clime. He is industrious, sober, frugal.

All the towns along the South American coastline have futures. They talk about the future, always the future, and are preparing for it. Swung in a basket from the deck of the liner, I boarded a tug and went ashore at Pernambuco. The buildings which stood were decrepit, as though erected by the original Portuguese, like their ramshackle homes on the other side of the ocean, and they had done nothing to them since except an occasional smear of pink, blue or yellow colour-wash. Most of the place was in ruins; whole streets were literally choked with débris, suggesting there had been a frightful earthquake, or that a revolutionary episode had perpetrated dire havoc. In fact, Pernambuco was in the throes of improvement. The first necessity of all these South American towns is not a system of drainage but an Avenida—a wide main thoroughfare with bedizened buildings on either side, and cafés and bands and electric lights and motor-cars and a theatre. They have begun with a theatre. But the ways of Western civilisation have travelled so far because, instead of drama and opera being presented, the theatre is devoted to kinema entertainments.

As though cleared with a hundred cannon, there is a way right through the town; this is where the Avenida is to be. Open matchbox tramcars, drawn by weedy mules, rumble over uneven metals. The next time, however, I visit Pernambuco electric cars

will whiz along the roads. There are no cabs or carriages, even of ancient pattern, to be hired; but there are plenty of motor-cars. There is a breakwater built on a coral reef; yet huge harbour works are in progress, and before long liners instead of lying outside will be fastened to the dock side. There are big shops where you can buy most things, including the inevitable picture post cards, though you pay twopence each for post cards of a kind which you can buy for two a penny at home. I paid 1s. 8d. for a drink for which no hotel at home would have charged me more than 6d. The neighbourhood is rich in vegetation, but potatoes and fruits are imported from Portugal. The people are town proud. They are proud of Brazil. The Brazilian flag, with its yellow ground and star-spangled blue globe in the centre, waves everywhere.

The next day we were at Bahia, picturesquely reclining on a wooded hill. It used to be the great port in the slave trade, and most of the inhabitants are negroes. Indeed, it must not be forgotten that most of the population are negroes, or negro Indians, or negro Portuguese, or a mixture of all three. However, it is only the Portuguese, a mere handful in the total, who exercise political influence in the country. On the boat came many Bahians. All down the coast, whilst we were losing the European invaders, we were taking on board and losing Brazilians. Most of them were podgy, and an inky tinge on their skins indicated there was mixture in their blood.

The healthy sports which had entertained the

English travellers on the Equator were things of the past. There was a new sport, and it was played in the smoking-room all day long and far into the night, when most of us had gone to bed. The rattle of the dice-box never ceased. Gambling was in the veins, and the English sovereign was constantly shuffled from hand to hand on the green baize tables. There was baccarat, first for low stakes and then for high. There were two glib Yankee-negro-Spaniards who had such luck that spectators shrugged shoulders and exchanged glances. In a single game they netted £150, and one young Englishman was a loser by £80.

From gambling at the tables one turned to talking about gambling in the country. The enormous liabilities to foreign countries are all incurred in a great gamble that the hinterlands will yield produce which will pay for all and leave massive surpluses. The coffee trade of Brazil is immense. But all merchants do not make their incomes by watching and nursing the market. That is too slow. Transactions are decided quite as often by the throw of the dice as by negotiation and bargaining. Reckless, far removed from business principles, all this is; but it bespeaks a buoyancy of belief that, notwithstanding the lapse of luck, there is a bottomless well of prosperity to be dipped into in the natural productions of the country. It is scarcity which breeds timidity; it is the confidence of affluence which occasions waste.

Of course there was much talk about Rio de

Janeiro, the city with the most gorgeous setting in the southern hemisphere.

"Rio harbour is the most beautiful in the world," said the Brazilian.

"It cannot be a patch on Sydney harbour," said the Australian, who had never seen Rio.

"Tut!" said the Brazilian, who had never seen Sydney.

It was in the fall of an exquisite Sunday afternoon that our glasses caught sight of the hills around Rio. As we approached and ran past picturesque islands a wonderful panorama was unfolded. The scenery was unlike any other scenery in the world. The hills, radiant with equatorial vegetation, rose like strange humps out of the sea. In the background giant mountains reared their heads in the crimson-grey clouds of approaching evening. The picture was not like real scenery. It was like the realisation of a disordered imagination. I would say it was like an imitation of Turner, were the illustration not so trite. Then I thought there was something Chinese about the outreness of the landscape. Then the sun went down in a hurry, and the background was a weird purple. The ship dropped anchor, and the front part of Rio town, a tumble of fantastic red and yellow washed houses, was for all the world like a drop curtain to a stage. I felt we had slipped into another world—and I am not given to rhapsody.

A thousand lamps began to blink along the esplanade which curves to the bend of the bay. A thousand lights pricked the hill sides. There were

two big black Brazilian warships, and somebody had to tell the old story how two battleships were sent out to visit the Brazilian convict island in the Atlantic, and how one returned with the awful story that the island had disappeared, for they sailed straight for it and it had gone, whilst later on it was learnt that the other vessel had certainly found the island, for it got piled up on the rocks. Gaily illuminated launches scurried about whilst our liner was slowly being berthed alongside the quay.

"Ah!" cried the Brazilian to me, whilst his eyes glowed brightly, "say that Rio is the most lovely harbour in the world!"

"There's nothing to shout about," interrupted the Australian, "alongside Sydney harbour; and you've seen Sydney harbour," he added, turning to me.

As a sort of amateur Solomon, I was turned to for judgment. My first comment was to laugh. I had seen the two harbours which are each claimed by their champions to be the grandest thing Nature has ever accomplished. It was amusing to witness the fervour of the two men, as though they had a hand in the making of these famous harbours. They were both of the stuff which leads men to believe that for any other country to have pretensions to beauty is just dull-witted boastfulness.

"Well," I remarked, "I think Vigo harbour is charming."

"Oh, Vigo!" they both exclaimed in disgust.

"And there is something to be said for the Golden Gate leading to San Francisco," I added.

"But the Golden Gate and any other place is not in the same street with Sydney harbour," blurted the Australian rather angrily, though he had never seen the Golden Gate. "It cannot be," he said decisively.

"But what do you really think of Rio compared with Sydney?" asked the Brazilian, who saw I was attempting to be funny at the expense of them both.

"I'll tell you," I said, actually throwing half a cigar overboard, for I was called upon to give a verdict on one of the most debatable subjects in the world. "It is like passing judgment on two lovely women. For grand, impressive spectacular effect, being hit right between the eyes with stupendous gorgeousness, seeing Rio harbour at the hour of sunset is the most wonderful sight in the world."

The Brazilian smiled, and the Australian made a contemptuous noise with his lips.

"But hold," I added. "You see all the beauty of Rio harbour at one view. It is like suddenly coming face to face with an imperial lady of dazzling attractions. When you have seen her you have seen everything. Sydney harbour does not knock you over with bewilderment of beauty like Rio does. It is more calm, less turbulent; it impresses you. The more you know it the more it impresses you. And it has lovely arms, stretching up between soft woodlands, as peaceful as the best bits of the Thames. Rio has nothing like that. No, no; I'm not competent to pass judgment. You two gentlemen can go on fighting over the matter, as I dare say the

people of your two countries will continue to do, till the crack of doom. I admit the unrivalled grandeur of Rio, but personally I have more affection for the grace and the delights of Sydney."

The Brazilian bowed politely. The Australian wanted to argue I had ceded too much to Rio. Happily, just then a group of friends came on board to rush me off to a dinner party on shore.

Rio will always remind me of Imre Kiralfy, the White City, and Earl's Court. There are some narrow, old European-like streets that recall places on the other side of the Atlantic: the houses high and sombre and with a little mystery behind the shutters. But most of Rio is rampantly new and garish. The people have driven a magnificent Avenida right through the heart of the city, and hang the expense! The piles of buildings, hotels, public offices, great stores along this Avenida are generally eccentric in architecture—and there comes the feeling that here these transplanted Latins, with a strain of negro in their veins, are struggling to express themselves as a new people. The wonderful thing is that five years ago this Avenida was not.

Nothing that the Riviera has can outvie the esplanade, broad, well made, with miles of bright gardens and statues—and the motor-cars whiz along at the maddest, breakneck pace. There is one exquisite avenue lined with nothing but palm trees. Many of the houses, designed surely by someone who has built palaces for pantomimes, are half buried behind splashes of prodigal tropical vegetation.

Everything is ornate, showy. From the standpoint of British comfort the buildings are gaudy palaces, lacking real ease. But always one has to remember one is in the tropics.

I know no place so dazzling as Rio. Behind all the glitter, however, there is gold. There is commerce, abounding speculation, the devil-may-care assurance of the gambler. Broad ways, electric car services, hundreds of expensive motor-cars, extravagant restaurants, ladies laden with jewels, the men eager, all tell the opening chapter in the story of Brazil's future. In the cool Strangers' Club I met men of the Saxon breed, quiet Englishmen, quiet Americans, representatives of syndicates with millions of money at their backs, negotiating, wire-pulling, securing concessions for railroads, for developing stretches of that great back country of Brazil, as little explored as Central Africa, but the possibilities of which the world is realising and will scramble hungrily to turn into profit. What Brazil has accomplished so far is but the turning of the key in the door.

The morning comes with a gasp, and a flavour of old oil is in the air. The heavy stillness makes one recite the agony of the Ancient Mariner. We are leaving the ocean, and the steamer is churning a way up an ochreish river, banked on one side, but with a stretch of malarious jungle on the other. We are making for Santos, and an old German who rests his elbows on the rail tells how he has known this coast for thirty years, and how, in the

old days, it reeked with yellow fever; how whole ships' crews went down before the scourge, and how no passenger boats dared lie at Santos for the night, but always slipped down to the mouth of the river in the evening so that fresh air could be obtained.

Now drainage has done wonders, and Santos, a great export town for Brazilian coffee, is improving itself. I get into conversation with the man who has been engaged to settle in Santos and see that the place is improved. The river is deep, serviceable, and runs far inland. Casting my eye over the flat lands, matted with vegetation, and dotted with many a wretched nigger shanty, I have a vision of the time when docks will be delved and many of the riches of Brazil will find their outlet to the world by this gateway. Great wharves are on the river front at Santos.

The town, however, is in a hugger-mugger of change. The Brazilians seem to lounge round, but they are forging for the future. Men who have been with us for a fortnight hasten ashore. They have eagerness. They are off by the quaint hill-climbing railway to San Paulo, high perched, healthy, throbbing with trade. Others are bent for the interior, away from their kind, to seek their fortunes.

"And that's the end of my six months' leave," says a red-faced Englishman with a sorrowful smile. "I lived away back there for three years, and never saw or talked to another Englishman. I've been home for my holiday, and now it will be another three years before I come back from the plantations.

Good-bye. I'll hunt you up when I'm in London again." Off he goes—one of the brave men of the world.

A peep at Monte Video, the neat capital of the miniature Republic of Uruguay, and then the black-green of the ocean we have been travelling for three weeks is left behind, and we are forcing a way up the yellow waters of the River Plate. A river; but for hours there is no land in sight, so wide is the mouth of this great stream. And shallow, for at intervals the steamer shivers as she bumps on the bottom.

"That is all right," says the captain, "for we do not mind a couple of feet of mud."

The journey of the new adventurers is nearing its end. Shipboard friendships are sworn to be eternal. The ship's sports are long over, and the prizes have been distributed. The fancy dress ball on deck is a memory. There is the distribution of largesse amongst those who have made things pleasant. Cabin passengers are light-hearted. The throng of Spaniards and Italians in the steerage are silent and strangely impressed. They were sad when they left the old lands; they were happy during the voyage; now the mystery of the unknown is laying hold of them. We pass a crowded emigrant ship from Italy, and cheers are exchanged.

Out of the haze of the hot day rises the low land, Argentina. We see the buildings of La Plata, once intended to be the capital of the country. The ship makes strange zigzags, for it is following a channel

known only to the pilot. There rises a bank of smoke. As we get nearer we run into shipping. From the background emerge tall buildings, white mostly, and recalling the skyscrapers of the United States. So slowly, laboriously, the good ship *Avon*, which has behaved so well, is brought to rest in front of Buenos Aires. It is night, but the wharves are all commotion. There is the shrieking of tugs. There is the shout of excited Argentines, but their garb is south European. Beyond the Custom House can be seen hastening motor-cars and whizzing electric tramcars. And here is a newspaper man, wanting an interview. We are entering " the amazing Argentine."

Photograph by H. G. Olds, Buenos Aires.

PLAZA DEL CONGRESO, BUENOS AIRES.

CHAPTER II

SOME ASPECTS OF BUENOS AIRES

THE Argentines call their city of Buenos Aires the Paris of the southern hemisphere. It has a population nearing a million and a half, which is greater than that of any other town below the line of the Equator. The people promise that in time it will overtake London.

You insult an Argentine if you mix him up with Chilians, Brazilians, and other South Americans. He does not thank you for being reminded his father sailed from Italy, or his grandfather from Spain. He has no affection for any old land from which his sires came. The beginning of the world for Argentina was in May, 1810, when the Republic was set up.

He has no pride of historic race. When he makes money and visits Europe it is not to find the ancestral home in Spain or Italy. It is to have a good time in Paris. When he takes his family to Paris it is not to spend three, five, or six months. It is to spend three, five, or six hundred thousand pesos—and the value of a peso is one shilling and eightpence. When the pesos have flown he returns to Argentina and makes more.

The Argentines are a dignified people. They accept the English because in round figures five

hundred millions of British capital in gold have aided in developing the country. They dislike the citizen of the United States because the big brother Republic of the north patronises them, and they need nobody's help. They have a contempt for all other Latins beneath the Isthmus of Panama, particularly the Brazilians. They are conscious of their own qualities.

And the visitor blinks, and rubs his eyes, and admits the wonders of Argentina. If his acquaintance with geography is casual he has shrugged his shoulders at South American Republics, where they have revolutions every six weeks, and where tawny Spaniards in quaint costumes drive mules and die from difference of opinion with other Spaniards.

Then he goes to " B.A."—the familiar description of Buenos Aires—and he finds he has landed in a rampantly modern American-cum-European city. There is none of the sloth of the Southern, no checking of business between noon and three to pass in siestas.

It is a busy city. The port is thronged with shipping, mostly British. High-shouldered elevators stick out long tongues, and streams of wheat, grown on the plains of the interior, pour food for Europe into the holds. Trucks of cattle grunt through the noisy railway yards. There are huge killing establishments, and animals go to their death by the many thousand every day with a celerity which would awaken a Chicagoan. There are mighty avenues

Photograph by H. G. Olds, Buenos Aires.

THE PLAZA HOTEL, BUENOS AIRES.

of chilled and frozen meat. Labour-saving machinery carries it on board the steamers which hasten across the Atlantic, carrying cheap beef to the London and Liverpool markets. Commerce is conducted on the latest scientific lines. The North Americans have nobbled the meat trade, and the Jews have control of the wheat market.

Buenos Aires is the mart where the produce of the rich back-lands is bartered. It levies a heavy toll. The most imposing business buildings are the banks—national banks, British, German, French, Spanish, and Italian banks. In and about Reconquista are these banks, ever busy. Near by are the rival shipping offices, a glut of them. The offices of the great railway companies are enormous. Wide-spreading premises exhibit the latest and best agricultural machinery that Lincolnshire and Illinois can produce. There is the hustle of commerce. The streets are as narrow and as crowded and as vital as within the City of London. There is earnestness about the men.

The Argentine is sombre in manner. He dresses in conventional black. A light waistcoat, a gay tie or fancy socks, is bad form. You cannot tell the difference between a millionaire and one of his clerks, except that the former has an expensive motor-car and the latter hires a taxi or a victoria, or travels by electric tramcar. At every corner you see evidence of prosperity, of successful money-making. And money speaks in "B.A." as loudly as it does in New York.

Folk of the Saxon breed tend to scoff at the decadence of the Latin race. But there is something revivifying in the transplanting of a people. We have evidence in our own colonies. The man of Spanish descent in the Argentine is not always the spry fellow he thinks himself; but he has dropped the cloak of sluggishness which enwraps Spain. He is often rich; he lives in a gorgeous residence; his extravagances are beyond those of a Russian archduke. He is polite and hospitable.

But the wealthy Spanish Argentine is not the creator of his own wealth. I heard of only one case of a Spanish Argentine owing his great fortune to commercial enterprise. The fortunes of most of these Argentines come from land. Their grandfathers got immense areas by the easiest means. Properties were so enormous that extent was not reckoned in acres, or even square miles, but by leagues. But a hundred leagues, however good for cattle or sheep, or wheat growing—what was its value a couple of hundred miles from a port? Then came British railways. They pierced the prairies. The land bounded in value, tenfold, a thousandfold. Other people came in; first shrewd Scotsmen; then industrious Italians; then Englishmen bent on becoming *estancieros*. Their children are Argentines. But the mighty fortunes are mostly in the possession of the early Argentines —those who were settled fifty and more years ago. They have sat still and seen their land blossom in value. They pay no income tax; there is no tax on unearned increment. Mr. Lloyd George was once

in the Argentine, associated with a land development company. That, however, is another story.

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants pour into the Republic every year. They come from every land on earth. Mostly do they come from Spain and Italy. Italy provides the greatest number, and splendid colonists they are. Though the language will always be Spanish, the race is rapidly becoming Italianised. There is a commingling of the sterner stuff from Europe. So in this rich land—rivalling Canada and Australia in productiveness—there is being blended a new people, keen, alert, successful, ostentatious, pagan—a people that has a destiny and knows it.

The Argentines are town proud. You are not in Buenos Aires a couple of days before you are bombarded with the inquiry, "Don't you think this is a beautiful city?" It is not that; but it is an interesting city.

In the oldest quarters the streets are narrow, after the Spanish style. So narrow are they that, with electric cars jingling along them, vehicles are allowed to journey only one way. To reach a shop by carriage it is sometimes necessary to drive along three and a half sides of a block of buildings. Funny little policemen, brown faced, blue clad, and with white gaiters and white wands, direct the traffic. In the Florida—the Bond Street of "B.A."—all wheeled traffic is prohibited between the hours of four and seven in the afternoon, so that shoppers may have an easier way.

Most of the streets are called after Argentine provinces, or neighbouring republics, or national heroes, or some politician or rich man who can influence the authorities. When a popular man has lost his popularity the remnant of his fame is obliterated by the street called after him being named after someone else. It is as though the Government at home decided to change Victoria Street, Westminster, into the Avenida Asquith, with the prospect of its being altered later on to the Calle Bonar Law.

Wide plazas decorate the city. Vegetation is luxuriant, and statues are numerous. The Plaza Mayo is not called after an Irish peer, but after the month of May, 1810. The shops are as big as those in London. Argentina manufactures practically nothing, and all the lovely things have to be imported from Europe. The hotels are imitations of those in Paris. The restaurants are on a par with the best we have in London. A Viennese band plays whilst you have Russian caviare and the waiter is asking your choice in champagne. But everything is expensive. A man needs three times the salary in Buenos Aires to live the same way he would live in London. If you calculate exchange rates you go mad. It is best to count the peso (1s. 8d.) as a shilling, and then remember that you are spending your shilling in South America, where things are dear. You can get a modest luncheon for 10s.; but you will pay 2s. for a bottle of beer, and 3s. 6d. for a cigar worth smoking.

Yet nobody minds. Immense sums are being

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

THE TIGRE, BUENOS AIRES ROWING CLUB.

spent on improving the city. It is built on the American T-square plan. But it is to be subjected to the plan of Haussmann, with great tree-girt avenues radiating diagonally from the Plaza Mayo. An underground railway, honeycombing beneath the town, is in rapid construction. The railways have a great suburban traffic, and are being electrified. There are British colonies at Belgrano and Hurlingham, and you have a choice of three golf courses. In the summer months—December, January, and February—there is river life on the Tigre, the Thames of the Argentine. A charming spot is Palermo, a combination of Hyde Park and the Bois de Boulogne —open sweeps and charming trees, a double boulevard with statues and commemorative marbles in the middle, well-cared-for gardens, radiant flowers and the band playing.

A drive through Palermo at the fashionable hour causes one to gasp at the thought that one is six thousand miles from Europe. Nowhere in the world have I seen such a display of expensive motor-cars, thousands of them. Ostentation is one of the stars of life in the Argentine. Appearances count for everything. You must have a motor-car, even though you have not the money to pay for it, and you owe the landlord of your flat a year's rent. The ladies are exquisitely gowned, but they have not the vivacity of the French women nor their daring in dress. There is a demureness, a restraint which reminds one that the atmosphere of far-away Castile is still upon them.

On Sundays and Thursdays there are races at Palermo. The price Argentines pay for horseflesh has become a proverb. It is a good race-course. We have nothing in England, neither at Epsom, Ascot, nor Goodwood, so magnificent as the grand stand. It is a glorified royal box. The restaurant is like the Ritz dining-room. Everybody dresses as they would at Ascot. There are no bookmakers. The totalisator is used. Betting is officially conducted by the Jockey Club, and there is constant announcement of the amount of money put on the horses. Those who have backed the winners share the spoil, less ten per cent. As this ten per cent. is deducted from the total amount put on each race, the income of the Jockey Club runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. So the Club maintains a good race-course, offers capital prizes, has a house in "B.A."—undoubtedly the most palatial club-house in the southern world—and distributes the remainder amongst the hospitals. The income of the Jockey Club is so large it is really embarrassing. The members are proceeding to build an Aladdin's palace of super-gorgeousness.

But at the races at Palermo I noticed that no ladies attended, except in the members' enclosure. Even there they did not mingle with the men-folk. There was no mirth, such as we are used to in Europe. They kept themselves to little groups. Moving from wonder to wonder, I was present at a gala performance at the Colon Theatre. I have seen all the great theatres in the world, and this is the loveliest—a

harmony of rose and gold. The audience was as fashionably dressed as at the opera in London, though I missed the dazzling display of diamonds which had been promised. Most of the audience were ladies; there were boxes of them, and most of the men were in the stalls. There was one gallery reserved for women.

I began to discern a strange Orientalism in the relations between the sexes. The Argentine women are amongst the best mothers in the world. But there is practically none of the good fellowship between young fellows and young girls which is so happy a feature of our English life. For a man and a woman to take a walk together would shock the proprieties. There are brilliant receptions, but dinner parties, as we know them, are rare. An Argentine seldom introduces a friend to his wife. Except amongst the poorest a woman scarcely ever goes into the streets alone. If she does she runs risk of being insulted. There are Argentines, who would be offended if refused the name of gentlemen, who think it excellent sport to walk in the Florida in the evening and mutter obscenities to every unprotected woman who passes. Buenos Aires is the most immoral city in the world. So the Argentine guards his women-folk from contact with other men. His attitude is a relic of the days when the Moors had possession of Spain.

I have called Buenos Aires a pagan city. So it is. The men are frankly irreligious. In conversation I have been told of the tolerance to all religions.

What is really meant is indifference to any religion.

Money-making and flamboyant display—these are the gods which are worshipped. The houses in the wealthier districts are exotic in architecture. I remember driving along the Avenida Alvear, a street of palaces, reminiscent of the Grand Canal at Venice if it were a roadway. But the fine stone blocks are nothing but stucco. The ornamentation, the floral decorations, are not carved stone; they are stucco. Imitation, pretence, showiness, the flaunting of wealth, are everywhere.

Yet this city, which has grown in a generation on the muddy flats by the side of the muddy Parana River, has something that is weird in its fascination.

CHAPTER III

ROUND AND ABOUT THE CAPITAL

THE way not to see a city is to be trotted round and shown all the "sights." I have an idea I may have missed some of the "sights" of Buenos Aires. I did not "do" the churches. Acquaintances who knew I went to South America to pursue my trade of writer sometimes asked me what I was going to write about, and the reply was, "I do not know." But I was not believed.

Anyway, I may say that I drifted about "B.A." I presented my letters of introduction, made friends, lunched out and dined out, had motor trips, went here and there as suggestion provided the inclination; maybe to a theatre, or to smoke a cigar in one of the clubs with men who are of account in Argentina or no account at all, or to spend a Sunday with an Argentine family; maybe to idle an hour in one of the cafés; maybe to have a serious talk with a Minister; maybe do nothing but idle round. That is no scientific way to study a city. But it just happens to be my way.

The conclusions I draw may be wrong, for I may have met the wrong people and seen the wrong things, especially as I had no system. Yet out of the confused jumble of impressions and experiences some-

thing coherent evolves, and that is the substance of my remarks when I am asked, "Well, what do you think about Buenos Aires?"

It is not my wish to accentuate the point, but open-handed extravagance is one of the traits of the people. It is a fault of democratic countries that, having no aristocracy of birth, they proceed to create one of wealth. Argentina has fine old Spanish families; but, though esteemed, they are in the background. In the wrangle-jangle of frenzied progress they are not to be counted amongst the moderns. So garish is the display of money that the idea left is that you have had your attention called to it by the constant blaring of a bugle.

But I would shrink from saying the display is vulgar. Keeping in mind that the people are Latins, and are fonder of colour than we of the cold and moral north, I would write there is a sort of ostentatious restraint. Argentines glory in spending money, but amongst the older settled people other things besides money have their place. They are fond of music, and pride themselves that they discovered Tetrazzini and Kubelik long before London. Here, as in Paris, London, and New York, there is the mob which goes to the opera because it is "the thing" to have an expensive box, and to wear lovely gowns and loads of diamonds. The prices paid make the charges for a gala night at Covent Garden seem like those of a twopenny show. It may be said that a well-known artiste is sure of a kindly reception. Yet Buenos Aires has its moods; it has its vagaries,

LOLA MORA FOUNTAIN, BUENOS AIRES.

and is petulant. For some undefinable reason it will take a dislike to some performer who arrives with a European reputation. Perhaps half a dozen ladies who lead the fashionable world will say the artiste is overrated. "She may be all right for Paris, but she does not come up to Buenos Aires standard"—that is the attitude. For anybody to praise the poor singer after that is to advertise their inartistic taste. There is a boycott. So a European singer or instrumentalist who goes to the Argentine aglow with the prospect of a dazzling success sometimes returns with the saddest of experiences—neglect.

With such a people, Latin in race and living in the sunshine, life is something of a holiday. One hears stories of the looseness of life amongst the men—on the boats running between France and Argentina can be seen the girls going out to meet the requirements of the hundreds of houses of ill-fame—but the Argentine women themselves are beyond reproach. Indeed, their regard for correctness is often amusingly prudish. Public opinion is so strong that no lady, if she wants the esteem of her neighbours, dare show the slightest originality in costume or conduct. Plays with the faintest hint of suggestiveness about them are barred. Performances which would pass muster in a London West-end theatre are shunned; plays to which the most innocent of girls cannot go are taboo. The consequence of this is that there are other places of amusement especially catering for men, which no

respectable woman can enter. Just outside the boundaries there are cinematograph shows "for men only," which for indecency cannot be outdone in Port Said or Havana.

I have mentioned how the visitor to Argentina soon begins to be aware of the low position of women in the minds of men, the way in which there is no real friendship between the sexes outside the family circle, and how no Argentine will trust another Argentine in regard to his ladies. With all their finery and jewellery and expensive motor-cars and boxes at the Colon Theatre, you are prone to remark, "How un-European!" when you see the segregation of the women.

Yet with all their frivolity, dress, bridge, amusements, you make a mistake if you fancy the Argentine lady a guarded, slothful doll—though the description applies in thousands of cases. I had the opportunity of seeing the other side of the picture. On two days, under the guidance of ladies themselves, I visited the establishments of Las Damas da Beneficencia and several Government hospitals. A noble work is being done. I saw how the poor are cared for. There was the nurturing of the old. There was tending the sick in buildings worthy of any city in the world. There were the homes where the wives of poor folk could come to bring their babies into the world. There is much illegitimacy, and formerly there was much infanticide. So there was a kind of casement where, at dusk, mothers could bring their unwanted offspring and deliver them. No

questions were asked, but the infant, because it was a helpless little child, was cared for. The same work is done to-day, but without the mystery of the casement. Foster-mothers are engaged to nurse the children. As one went through the rooms, and saw the tiny morsels of humanity, many of them feeble, with a shape of head which roused wonder as to the future, it was hard to keep the tears away.

Poverty, as we understand it in Europe, does not exist in Argentina. But there are men who are stricken down in early manhood, unable to earn anything, and who need help. There are widows and the fatherless to be cared for. There are poor folk, but their trouble is due to misfortune and not to economic causes. Charity, however, is great, and funds are numerous and the Government provides handsomely, and there is no distress such as we know it. But all this good work, hospitals, looking after the aged, providing for the fatherless, is carried on by the women of Argentina. Except to serve as doctors, no men have any voice in the control or management. Ladies, with their presidents and boards of management and committees, have the work placed entirely in their hands. It is set apart for them, and no man interferes. Yet the suffrage question has not extended to Argentina.

Life is taken lightly and showily by this new nation. But when anybody dies all the relatives go into mourning, to the fourteenth cousin. And in death the display is just as rampant as in life. The Recoleta is a strange cemetery, bizarre, ghoulish,

tawdry. To own a tomb in Recoleta is one of the necessities if a family wants to be in the swim. These tombs are like chalets, occasionally of Italian marble, generally of the Buenos Aires stucco—the capital surpasses all other cities in the world in the amount of stucco—and they are ornate. There are streets upon streets of them, and you take a walk through a town of the dead. The doors are open, and you can step in and see half a dozen coffins ranged round the shelves. Occasionally there are photographs of the dear departed. On All Saints' Day it is usual for the living family to gather in the tomb, have tea, and munch cakes. After a number of years the coffins have to be removed, or a heavy sum paid, and the tomb is "to let." The whole thing is repulsive to the Englishman, but the Argentine loves it.

The capital of Buenos Aires province is La Plata, about fifty miles away. I went down one day by the luncheon train, which runs out of the Plaza Constitution just after midday and does the journey in an hour. It was a fine train, and the luncheon car was bigger, and the food better than we have on English lines. The car was crowded with a sallow-skinned, black-moustached, black-garbed lot of gentlemen, and I gathered they were all Government officials. Nobody in Government employ thinks of doing any work in the morning. The men go to the office late and leave early. It was almost like home.

La Plata is a town that has missed its way. Full of grandiose ideas, and taking the United States as

LA RECOLETA.

a model, it was decided to build La Plata as the federal capital on the Washington plan. Gorgeous buildings were erected; magnificent avenues were constructed; the loveliest of public gardens were laid out; a fine museum was founded; a great municipal theatre was piled up. In the public square bandstands were provided and statues to national heroes hoisted. It was to be the flower of Argentine towns. And every Argentine town, when it sets out to beautify itself, must have an avenida and a plaza and an equestrian statue of San Martin; the matters of water supply and drainage come later.

But the federal capital absolutely refused to settle at La Plata. It was too near Buenos Aires, where society lived, and where there was a whirl of excitement. So, perforce, the capital had to be at Buenos Aires, and a Government House for the residence of the President of the Republic was built, and is known as the "Palace o Gold," because of the money consumed in its construction.

Argentina is ever willing to vote vast sums for town adornment; but the money has a habit of evaporating before half the work is done, and then more is needed.

However, La Plata is the capital of the province of Buenos Aires; but the majority of officials refuse to live there. They prefer to come down from Buenos Aires at a quarter past one, and catch the quarter to five train back. The Governor has made

appeals; he has even threatened what he will do if the officials do not live in La Plata. They take no notice. The consequence is that this beautiful city —and without doubt it is majestic in its spaciousness —is deserted, and a saunter through it is like a walk through an old cathedral town on a drowsy afternoon.

As a companion and a host no one could be more charming than the Argentine. He loves his country, but is willing to hear praise about other countries without thinking you wish to depreciate Argentina. He will go to infinite trouble to secure some particular information you are anxious to possess. Men on whom I had no personal claim whatever laid aside their work and devoted a couple of days in my behalf. As the men are courteous so the women are graceful, until lack of exercise and over-eating makes them stout. The girls are modest, but, I am afraid, centre their thoughts on dress. It rather shocked one to see that it is a habit for quite young girls of thirteen or fourteen years to daub their faces with powder. As for the young gentleman, he begins when twelve years of age to smoke and to tell lewd stories. He is impudent to the servants and to his parents, and I have known fathers smile when told their sons of fifteen have taken to visiting houses of ill-fame. Some Argentines are taking to healthy sport; but it would be better if all of them took to outdoor exercises, cricket, football, baseball, tennis, and golf. The Argentine young gentleman is bright but superficial, and is too fond of the clothes of the

THE GOVERNMENT BUILDING, LA PLATA.

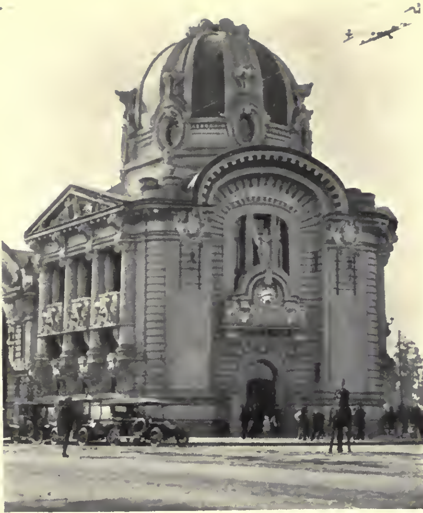
dandy and jewellery and perfumes to excite any admiration amongst men who dislike effeminacy in their own sex.

It was my good fortune to receive nothing but kindness from every class of Argentine that I met. But I am not going to hide I met Englishmen, who knew more about the Argentines and who had few generous things to say. "There is no morality, unless the young women are guarded; the Argentine is egotistic beyond words; domestic habits are dirty, and taking a bath is rare; the men chatter, and, whilst voluble with friendship, are suspicious; they are bombastic about patriotism, but are not above receiving bribes; all the advantages the Argentine has he owes to foreigners; he produces nothing himself; he is shallow and shiftless; the only business instinct he has is cunning, and the old Spanish *mañana* spirit—always putting off till to-morrow the performance of a business duty—is deep seated." All of which shows how impossible it is to draw a composite picture of an individual to represent a nation. Just as there are nice Englishmen and vulgar fellows, cultured Americans and bounders, delightful Germans and hoggish sots, so in Argentina it takes all sorts to make a people. The growing practice of well-to-do Argentines of sending their children to be educated in Europe has its advantages, though there is another side of the picture. They certainly acquire better manners than they pick up at home; they learn that Argentina is not the centre of the world. When they return to Argentina

and display the consequences of foreign travel they are not popular.

As far as I could discern the Argentine, though still infused with Latin traits, still showy and talkative, more inclined to gamble than to do hard work, is breaking through and away from the old Spanish habits. European business men told me they were keen witted, but incompetent in practical affairs. But there is too much business now going on in Argentina, too much development of industries in which foreigners have little hand, too thorough a grasp of some of the problems which face all new lands, for the Argentines to be dismissed with a phrase.

I could see they were inexact, that they were fond of showing off, that knowledge of the world was thin; but I did understand their genuine ambition to lift Argentina into the first rank among nations; that where they lacked technical and mechanical knowledge themselves they were willing to let others come in; that they were quite alive to what progress means in the modern sense. The conservatism of the old Spaniard has completely disappeared. The Argentine wants the latest and the best. If one goes forth to gather faults it is easy enough to get a basketful. What drew me, however, was not so much listening to a catalogue of things he is not, but to mark down what he is, what he has done and is doing, and what he intends to do. As a small instance, in Buenos Aires the habit of the Spanish siesta is abandoned. There is no pulling down of



THE SOUTHERN STATION AT LA PLATA.

IN THE GREAT SQUARE AT LA PLATA.

business shutters between noon and three o'clock. The climate is enervating, but be the day never so steamy, with hot gusts panting from the north, the city is early alive with commerce, the suburban trains are packed, the Stock Exchange is a babble of excitement—and there never seems to be any drawing of rein till five or six in the afternoon. There is hustle.

The way the population jumps up is phenomenal. It signifies much that an eighth of a million is added to the population of a capital in a single year. Sky-scrapers now tower over the buildings which were thought enormous a dozen years ago. Notwithstanding the services of the policemen directing the traffic, there is often a tangle of motor-cars, electric tramcars, private carriages and carts. New broadways are being driven through the city, and up go palatial stores. Most English newspapers are modest in *locale*. But the Argentine newspapers keep in the sun. *La Prensa* is one of the best-informed journals in the world. It has a noble exterior to its offices. Inside are luxurious suites of rooms, lecture halls, libraries, and the public are invited to enter. Every public building, all the clubs, even the churches, seem to be tied up with long ropes of different coloured electric lamps, so that on nights of festival the switch is jerked and the whole place is radiantly illuminated.

It is all very wonderful. The confusion, the barbarism, the love of beauty and the display of dollars, the inflow of invested gold, the coming of

the immigrant, the whirl of business, the big deals, the gambling, the making of fortunes and the losing of fortunes, dazzle the mind. But you feel the fascination of Buenos Aires. It has grown so astonishingly in so short a time that you gasp when you contemplate how much more it is likely to grow.

STATUE PRESENTED TO ARGENTINA BY THE FRENCH COMMUNITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF INDEPENDENCE.

CHAPTER IV

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC

THE place Argentina holds in the world is due to the meat and wheat it sends to other lands. But having recognised its fecundity as a good food-producing area, it is well to start at the beginning. Argentina may have had fine grazing tracks capable of rearing untold millions of cattle and arable land that had only to be scratched to yield excellent crops of cereals; but without transport values are at a minimum. Accordingly, the development and prosperity of the Argentine is mainly due to railways. The sum of £300,000,000 British capital is invested in Argentine railways and electric tramways.

I travelled a good deal in the Republic, from Buenos Aires to Inca in the Andes, and from Tucuman in the north to Bahia Blanca in the south. I journeyed over hundreds of miles of flat, featureless, dreary country that grew nothing but wild grasses until a few years ago. And there are plenty of sandy, bush-studded, alkali-stricken acres—just as you find barren patches in the United States, Canada, Siberia, and Australia—but there are thousands of leagues awakened into life, *estancias* with great herds of cattle munching at the alfalfa, stretches of wheat and maize, on and on, as though without end, the

only break on the horizon being the colonist's mud hut, a clump of trees—and it always seems the same clump of trees—which indicates a ranch, and the ever-whirring American water-wheel. As you travel through England it is the spires of churches that pierce the sky. The only thing that ever pierces the sky on the Argentine pampas is the zinc American water-wheel. The Argentine *estanciero* thinks a water-wheel is of more use to him than a church.

All over this land, zigzagging, curving, intersecting, sometimes running in an absolutely straight line for a hundred and fifty miles, is the greatest length of railway lines in the world for a population of seven millions. The towns are far apart; villages are few. You journey half a day, and, except at the little wayside stations, do not see more than half a dozen folk on the land. Yet it is a smiling land, and greets the sunshine with abundance. The railways in the Argentine are to garner this wealth. Freight trains, with cars of the colossal American pattern, trundle their long length across the plains.

I recall one night when, at a forgotten siding, the engine drew out to get water, taking a saunter along the train side. It was brilliantly lit with electricity, and the restaurant car, with the usual little red-shaded lamps on the tables, was busy; crowds of passengers were dining, and the usual waiters were scurrying, and there was the usual Continental fare, and champagne and Moselle wines, and the usual mineral waters you get on the Nord

express. That gleaming train in central South America was the symbol of what railway enterprise has done in Argentina.

There are 20,000 miles of railroads in the Republic. The British showed the way in the initial building, and their lines pass through some of the fattest territory. The French have been tardy followers, but have constructed useful minor lines. The Argentine Government has built State lines through country that was suitable for colonisation, but which did not appeal to the outside investor. These State railways are financially a failure. One reason is that the territory through which they run is not of the best. The principal reason is that they are the prey of the politicians. Constituencies have to be considered, and innumerable jobs found for the hangers-on of political parties. Business conditions are the last to be thought of, and, though the Government has done well in throwing these lines into distant regions needing development, they are not likely to succeed until placed under different control.

Not only have the Argentines themselves not started railway companies, but they have no money invested in the foreign companies. One cause is that, though the Government insists on a local board of directors, the real board of directors is abroad, chiefly in London. Another cause is that dividends are limited by law to 7 per cent., and that is not a sufficient return for the Argentine. He does not care to touch investments that do not

yield 12 per cent., and when he gets 30 per cent. he thinks that about fair—and the country is so prosperous it can afford it.

Although within the last fifteen years millions of British money have poured into Argentina for railway construction, the investor in the old days cast a hesitating eye on South America as a place to sink his capital. In the 'fifties a railway a few miles long was all that Argentina could boast, and ten years later, when 7 per cent. was guaranteed, money was not forthcoming. As an inducement to construct a line between Rosario and Cordoba the absolute ownership of three miles on either side of the line was offered. Even with such an attraction the British investor was shy.

Gradually, however, money was forthcoming, and lines were laid. In the 'eighties there came a spurt. It was not till the years following 1900 that money could be had for the asking. Lines cobwebbed the profitable country; distant points were linked up; land which previously had little beyond prairie value bounced up in price.

Though to-day there is a thought in the public mind that a little too much money has been thrown into Argentina, that land prices are too inflated—which they are—I have traversed districts which three years ago were wilderness; but a spur of railway has been driven into them, and instantly farming has been started. I saw hundreds of freshly-built homesteads—crude, and the life harsh, but it was the beginning of great things—and alfalfa had been

CENTRAL ARGENTINE RAILWAY COMPANY'S GRAIN ELEVATORS AT BUENOS AIRES.

laid down, and cattle were feeding, and wide spaces which previously were sandy and apparently inhospitable were carpeted with the bright green of new wheat. Just as in Canada there is a belief that the breaking up of the land had decreased the severity of the frost, so there is a belief in Argentina that rains follow the plough. Places which formerly had little rainfall, and which had a doubtful agricultural future, are proving successful. Yet without the advance of railways the country would have been as forlorn as when the Indians roved the pampas.

Railway companies in England have had to fight landowners to make headway. In Argentina landowners welcome the coming of a railway, for obvious reasons. Most of the wealthy Argentines owe their fortunes to their land being benefited by the railways. As a rule, out in the far districts, a railway company can get the necessary land for nothing. Owners are willing to make financial contributions. The general managers of the big British railways in Argentina get large salaries—£7,000 a year. This is partly to remove them from the range of temptation of being bribed by owners, syndicates, or land companies to authorise the making of railways where they would not be economically advisable. Of course, extensions near the big towns cost the railways as much as they would in England. I know a man who thirty years ago bought a piece of land for £1,600. He sold it to a railway company for over £200,000.

Though foreign capital is having so extensive a run in networking the country with railways, the

Argentine Government has a much closer grip on the working of the lines than the Board of Trade has on English companies. It is therefore no misrepresentation to say that, whilst private owners are glad to have their property enhanced in value by the juxtaposition of a railway, the Government puts obstacles in the way for what are ostensibly public reasons. Accordingly, expensive "diplomacy" has sometimes to be used. The Government is sufficiently aware of the return the foreign investor gets —and when fresh extensions are sought it invariably withholds its consent until some concession has been wrung out of the company, such as an undertaking to construct a line through a district that cannot, for some time at any rate, be a success. There is never any guarantee that another company will not be formed to work the same district. The Government smiles at the fight between the two lines for traffic—to the public benefit. When companies propose to amalgamate the Government either makes such demands in regard to uneconomic lines that the thing falls through or a veto is put upon the amalgamation altogether.

Perhaps it is due to the excellence of the railways that the Argentine high roads are so bad. And frankly, though I know most of the new lands of the world, I know of no region where the country roads are so villainous as in this Republic. Rarely are they anything beyond mother earth. In wet weather they are quagmires, and I have seen vehicles stranded, unable to be hauled by a team of five horses. In

summer, when rain is absent, they are foot-deep furrows of dust. I shall never forget a motor excursion through the sugar plantations round about Tucuman. The way was like a magnified ploughed field, and all the ridges were of dust. We drove through it as an engine drives through snow.

All railway material comes in duty free, but one of the conditions is that 3 per cent. of the profits shall be used for the making of roads leading to railway stations. The companies do not object, because the call is not large, and it is to their interest that agriculturists should be able to get their produce to the railway station to be transported over the lines.

The Direccion-General de Ferrocarriles is the authority over the railways in Argentina. It decides the number of trains which shall be run, and it insists on the number of coaches. There must be a certain number of dormitory cars on all-night trains, and restaurant cars are obligatory over certain distances. Every train carries a letter-box, and recently the companies have been squeezed into carrying the mails for nothing. A medicine chest, a stretcher, a bicycle—so that quick communication can be made with the nearest station in case of accident—and all sorts of necessities in case of a breakdown are compulsory. Every carriage is thoroughly disinfected every month, and there is always a card to be initialled by an inspector. All bedding and mattresses are subject to scientific disinfection such as I have seen nowhere in Europe.

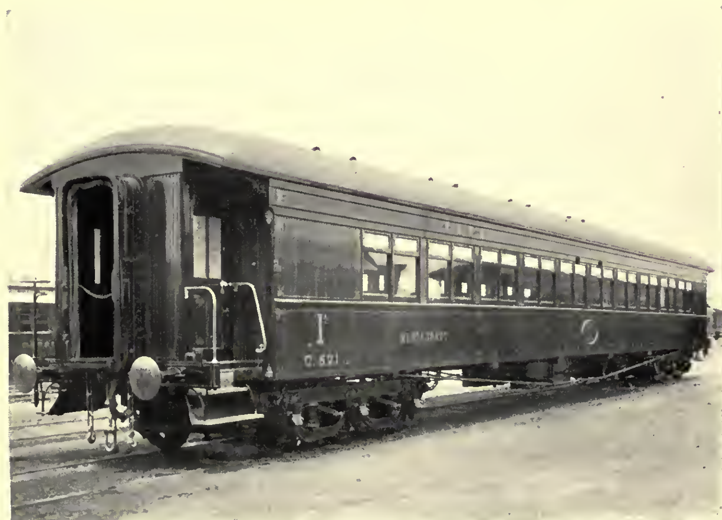
No time-tables can be altered without the sanc-

tion of the National Railway Board at least two months before coming into operation. If trains stop at stations for which they are not scheduled a heavy fine is imposed; and all late trains, and the reason, have to be reported to the Government authority. No alteration, however small, to a station building or to the design of rolling stock is permissible without the sanction of the Government representatives. A complaint book is at every station, open to anyone to complain on any subject. Guards also keep a book. Many of the complaints are amusing. I heard of one man who insisted on writing in the complaint book that "everything was in perfect order and the staff faultless." Occasionally passengers will have a dispute, and whilst one will find fault in the complaint book with the manners of the train attendants, another will write beneath that the attendants are all right, and it is the complainant's manners which are at fault.

There are the usual buffers in front of an engine; but they are all hinged, and have to be hoisted backwards when a train is travelling, because if an animal were run into, the cow-catcher might not be able to throw the beast aside, for it could be caught between the catcher and the protruding buffer. Though, on the face of it, the Government subjects the companies to innumerable restrictions, and frequently imposes vexatious regulations, it must be recognised that public safety is the thought behind them all.

The Republic lives by its exports of meat and

LATEST TYPE OF PASSENGER LOCOMOTIVE.



LATEST TYPE OF DINING CAR.

agricultural produce. Ninety-five per cent. of this trade is carried to the ports by the railways. From the railroad cars one beholds productiveness; yet fifteen or twenty miles away lies land just as productive but as yet untouched by the plough, because there is neither sufficient population to cultivate nor railways to carry. Within the next dozen years there must inevitably be a further spurt in the making of feeding or auxiliary lines. Something like £20,000,000 a year is crossing the ocean for fresh railway enterprises in Argentina. Nearly 40,000,000 tons of goods are carried over the lines each year, and the receipts are something like £25,000,000 annually. And yet but a fragment of the harvest of this new land is being garnered. Its untrodden millions of acres await new railways to open up the country.

CHAPTER V

SETTLEMENT ON THE LAND

Prolific though Argentina is, and though its agricultural wealth has only been scratched, it cannot be described as an ideal country for the poor immigrant. The eyes of the land have been well picked, and there are rich personal estates covering one hundred and fifty square miles.

There is little disposition to voluntary splitting up of estates, but rather to hold whilst annually the value increases with the coming of people and the advancement of railways. The Government is doing something to assist the small man with limited capital to settle on distant Government lands. But the poor immigrant, with nothing but his muscle and his industry, has a long and rough road to travel before he reaches independence as a landed proprietor. It is a hard land in which to start making a fortune ; but the man of money who can step into the Republic, say, with £25,000 to play with, and who invests judiciously, can double his capital in three years.

Whilst the old Argentines, those of Spanish descent, have waxed wealthy simply by sitting still and letting the foreigner develop their property, there are British Argentine families whose estates,

if realised, would produce double-figured millions, and whose proprietors landed as labourers less than fifty years ago. Money has come to lots of these people, shrewd and lucky, as though they held the key to a cave of jewels. Some have remained modest in spite of possessions; others look upon gold as the only god, and their blatant display at Mar del Plata, and on the steamers of the Royal Mail Company, is something which would make the conduct of the new rich of Chicago Quakerish by comparison.

The cry of Argentina, like that of all new lands, is for population. Over 300,000 fresh arrivals land annually from all corners of the earth, Russia, Syria, France, Germany, and England, but mainly from Spain and Italy. Whilst the Spaniard comes to stay, there is a considerable ebb and flow amongst the Italians, thousands coming out for the harvest when wages are high, and making sufficient to return for the rest of the year; then they return for the next harvest. Allowing for the ebb, Argentina gets a solid increase in population by immigration of over 250,000 persons a year, and there are no assisted passages and no offers of free land.

At each of the ports are Government hotels for immigrants. That at Buenos Aires accommodates a thousand people. The new arrival, instead of being distraught at landing in a strange country, or possibly falling a prey to its sharks, is housed and fed for five days as the guest of his new country. Careful inquiry is made as to capabilities, and, as

there is a never-satisfied demand from the interior for labourers, work is certain, and officials see him and his baggage on the train, and an official meets him at his destination and sees him firmly settled in his fresh life. As work is assured, Argentina is a land where there are no unemployed—except amongst the dissolute, who are to be found in all countries. I saw these immigrants on the *Avon* gathered at Vigo, and I saw them in distant provinces, and I was struck with their sturdiness and health. I place on record that I never saw a drunken man during all my wanderings in the Republic. Blessed with a fine climate, and the winter so temperate that fires are not necessary, life is easy, and there is no crushing into towns for work, as is usual in Canada during the frozen months.

Owing to such immense tracts being held by individual owners—many of whom prefer the pleasures of Paris and Buenos Aires to living on the land where the cereals are grown—most of the cultivation is done by "colonists." The system varies in different parts of the country, but the general procedure is much on these lines. In a little centre of population, maybe a village, but important because those who live many miles round are dependent upon it for supplies, is to be found a store where most things can be bought, from a plough to a tin kettle. The storekeeper enters into a contract with the owner of vast lands to cultivate it, either on rent or on shares of the value of the produce. This storekeeper is a middleman, often a sweater. Though I

VIEW OF GRAZING LANDS.

A DRINKING PLACE ON AN ESTANCIA.

have no doubt there are honourable exceptions, he is often a thief into the bargain. He gets a "colonist" to take over a certain area and to cultivate it on shares. The "colonist" has to build a mud house, and sink a well, and he has to buy his plough and hire his horses, and obtain all necessaries from the middleman, who can fix his own price. When the wheat or the maize is gathered the only man to whom the "colonist" can sell is the middleman, who has it very much in his own hands to say what the price shall be, and he frequently furnishes the ignorant "colonist" with false returns as to quantity. But even then he keeps back what is owing on agricultural implements and loaned horses, with the consequence that the poor fellow has very little —if any—margin. It is not too much to say that the "colonists" are in the grip of the middlemen, and it is with difficulty they are ever able to break free.

Of course, the middleman runs risk of little return if there is drought and a bad harvest, and, on the other hand, when he proceeds to sell the wheat he finds himself encompassed by a ring of four Jewish firms, who control the wheat market of the Argentine. The whole practice is vicious, and I cannot but think that before long the Government will have to take the matter in hand.

Admitting the exquisite climate, and the fertility of the soil, and Nature's quick response to light work, the lives of these "colonists" in the distant camp is sad. Men of the Basque country, the north

of Spain, the north of Italy, they come from the homeland, where means of livelihood were sparse, to this new land, where, although the chances are rather against them to secure independence, their material well-being is certainly better than in the Old Country. But they are ignorant people; they know nothing of, and so care nothing for, the refinements of life; their houses are not much better than kraals. They are removed by long distances from neighbours; they live on a featureless plain, and have no communication with the outer world; they cannot read, and books and newspapers are foreign to them. Their world is fringed by the horizon. A visit to the wayside station, where, maybe, one train a day passes, is their excitement. There are no schools and no religious instruction. Their moral standard is low.

Many of these "colonists" take to farming with a minimum of practical knowledge. Yet, though I have just drawn a rueful picture, I would not have it thought there are no illuminating spots. A valuable work is being carried on in agricultural instruction. On several occasions I came across specially-built railway cars in which lecturers travel all over the Republic and freely give advice to the peons how to get most out of the soil. During the last seven years (since 1907) the Government has zealously appreciated the need for organising the agricultural and live-stock instruction. The work is not to be compared with the splendid agricultural colleges to be found all over the United States. The significant thing, how-

ever, is that the people of the Argentine—perfectly conscious of all the advantages of science, and with most of its best sons educated in Europe—have taken hold of this problem of how to train its population to get the best out of the soil. So schools are being formed over the country where information can be obtained about the special productivity of particular districts, about the growing of grasses, the feeding and care of beasts, milk production, sugar-growing, cheese-making, market-gardening, fruit-rearing, and in far western Mendoza I came across a college that is making instructive experiments in viticulture.

Besides agricultural courses at the Universities, there is much done by way of University extension lectures; but instead of lectures about sea-power in the sixteenth century, or the relationship of Henry VIII. to Rome, the lectures are on the breeding of cattle, the raising of maize, the sowing of alfalfa.

It was my fortune to meet many cultured and travelled Argentines, but, summing the people in a lump, and excluding the viciousness which trails behind the wealth of Buenos Aires, and also making allowance for the lack of that virility and perseverance of those strong men who are fighting the big battle in Canada, the thing which constantly confronted me was the fact that here in South America was a nation, born yesterday, thoroughly alive to the worth of its possessions, brusquely modern, content with nothing but the latest appliances and machinery

and thoroughly determined that, in the contest amongst the widespread agricultural lands to supply food to the millions in crowded Europe, Argentina will not be satisfied with an inferior position.

In a subsequent chapter I will deal with what has already been accomplished in this field. Here, however, I limit myself to pointing out that Argentina is increasing her capabilities with a purely practical education. Men who can neither read nor write, but have come under the influence of these itinerant schools, can talk with scientific knowledge about their trade of food producing, be it meat or cereals.

Now another step is being made, and I trust with happy results in view of the unfortunate position of the "colonists." So successful has been the agricultural instruction during the past half dozen years, that the next thing is to develop the commercial spirit so that the farmer may have some chance of getting a fair return for his labour. Free lectures are given on the business side of agriculture. Then, attached to the schools are special buildings for experiments; and boarded pupils, the sons of men who understand the money value of knowledge, are given a thorough training. So that all may benefit there are free scholarships, and I found that preference is given to competitors who come from districts, suitable for a special industry, where schools have not yet been established.

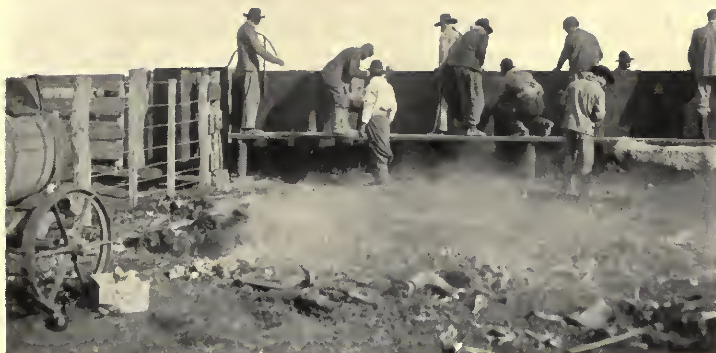
Anyone who visits the school for viticulture in Mendoza, for agriculture and live stock in Cordoba,

and for arboriculture and sugar-making in Tucuman—and I saw all three—comes away nothing less than amazed at the way these transplanted Latins, away south of the Equator and across six thousand miles of ocean, are making headway—and the start only begun a few years ago. There is the real spirit of enthusiasm combined with an optimism which to a man from a staid old country seems exaggerated until, seeing what has been done, imagination is allowed to jump freely into the future. At Mendoza, nestling at the foot of the Andes and reminiscent of a town in Tuscany, where the whole countryside is covered with vineyards and wine is being made to supply millions of wine drinkers in the country—for the Argentine peasant takes wine with his breakfast—experiments are made with the best known vines from Europe on a farm of sixty-seven acres, so that grapes suitable to the soil may be matured. At Cordoba the school has 445 acres, and investigation is made to secure earlier and higher yields, and with special attention to obtaining varieties which have powers of resisting drought. The same sort of thing goes on at Tucuman. The sugar industry is increasing at astonishing speed. Many men with scant practical knowledge are attracted to it. The school gives them instruction and will send members of the technical staff to the sugar factories and distilleries to give assistance. Facts like these argue that Argentina is a country really to be reckoned with, and is not to be dismissed—as I have heard it dismissed in England,

even amongst those who consider themselves educated—as a rubbishy South American Republic, whose only crop is revolutions.

All over the Republic "regional schools" are being set up to provide instruction, not in general agricultural subjects, but in regard to the special requirements of the locality—for Argentina varies in climate from tropical in the north to stern cold in the south; dairying, with a model dairy, at Belle Ville; fruit culture at San Juan; forestry in the Benitz colony. A scheme has been devised to equip Argentina with agricultural knowledge by means of courses for children and adults, travelling lecturers, information bureaus, co-operative experiments, regional shows, encouragement of agricultural societies, organisation of regional agricultural experts and military farms. Further, the National Government have done an enormous service in providing irrigation works in regions where the rainfall is uncertain.

It has to be admitted that some areas are subject to drought, and this and other evils have to be taken into consideration when reviewing the agricultural growth of a country like Argentina, which lives by its produce, and which in 1912 exported £36,000,000 worth of live-stock products and £53,000,000 worth of agricultural products. Given good years, the *estanciero* in average country makes 30 per cent. on the year. He can afford to have one bad year in three and yet be prosperous. But although districts suffer, the area of the country is



The irons are heated by fire made of bones of dead cattle.

Putting cattle through the chute.

BRANDING CALVES ON AN ESTANCIA.

so vast that losses are swamped in general prosperity.

As the older countries of the world concern themselves with national defence, Argentina has established a Department of Agricultural Defence, chiefly to fight the plague of locusts, which can eat out a whole district in a single night. I recall in Cordoba Province seeing in the distance what looked like a cloud of smoke. It was a storm of locusts, so dense as it passed that midday was reduced to twilight. The locust blights the land—it is the enemy. The locust is the thing which makes the farmer shudder. When it comes it not only devours every blade of grass within miles, but it lays its eggs in untold millions. The pest has to be destroyed. The Government readily assists localities to destroy the ova. The route of the swarms from the tropical north is known. The telegraph tells of the progress. When they land, the countryside turns out and catches them by the cartload. Sometimes the district in which they have settled is fired. The whole zone where eggs have been planted is ploughed. Animals are driven forth to trample the pest. The Government has in its possession over 20,000,000 yards of metallic barriers to make a line of defence, and when a swarm is penned it is suffocated, burnt, or trampled. The Government not only has its inspectors out, is ever ready to meet and repel the locust invasion from Brazil and Bolivia with suitable appliances, but gives financial assistance to those who help in the extermination. The Argentines are determined to stop

this pest. The way they are setting about the work is evidence of their earnestness.

The point I specially desire to make, however, is that farming in Argentina is not all casual, but is becoming a developed national industry. There are many things to criticise about the Government; there is maladministration and there is peculation. But that so much has been accomplished, notwithstanding these drawbacks, accentuates the wonders of progress.

CHAPTER VI

ARGENTINA'S PART IN FEEDING THE WORLD

It is well to mark that of the British food supply from overseas Argentina provides one quarter. Each person in the Republic, after providing enough food to supply himself, sends at least £8 worth of food to other countries.

Argentina covers 776 million acres. Eighty million acres are suitable for wheat, but only one-fourth of this area is cultivated. The population is growing rapidly; it is now over seven millions, and is being increased by about a quarter of a million immigrants every year; but still the cry is for more inhabitants.

At present there are six persons to the square mile; but when you remember that the province of Buenos Aires has a population of two and a half millions, you find the population for the outside areas is just under two per square mile.

Three-quarters of the population are Argentines; everyone born in the country, no matter from what land the parents come, is reckoned an Argentine. Of the new-comers half a million are Italian, a quarter million Spanish, a tenth of a million French; then come the British, numbering 25,000; Germans 18,000; Swiss 15,000; Austrians 13,000, and so

on, decreasingly. North Americans are few, though within recent years much United States capital has quietly taken hold of certain industries. Argentina is capable of carrying a population of fifty millions, and it will secure them within the next half-century. In race, language, customs, religion, it is especially favourable to folk from the thronged Latin countries of Europe.

Every settler becomes a violent Argentine. The emphatic patriotism of the American is tepid alongside the hot-blooded nationality of Argentina. It is daily inculcated in the schools. The blue and white striped flag is honoured on every occasion. You are poetically reminded it is of the blue of the sky. When the Argentines were in revolution against Spain in 1810, and needed a banner to flaunt against the red and orange of the enemy, they got pieces of blue and white cloth (intended for garments) from an English warship lying at Montevideo, and made a flag of it. So the Argentine flag, like much of Argentine prosperity, is due to Britain.

In proportion to the population there are as many millionaires in Argentina as in the United States. There are sturdy old fellows, who can hardly write their names, who scarcely know the extent of their wealth. Fifty years ago an Irish labourer landed in the country. He died the other day worth over £4,000,000.

It is none of my business to boom land values in Argentina. Though the tendency of late has been a little too buoyant, I know of no land where there

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

A GROUP OF GAUCHOS.

have been such enormous heaves in values, not fictitiously hoisted, but legitimate on development of commerce, as in this Republic. In 1885 you could buy land in the centre of Buenos Aires at 2s. 6d. a square yard. Now you must pay £200 a yard. A suburban plot of 60 by 20 yards, which you could have got twelve years ago for £5, will cost £150. Fine camp land—the "camp" is the Argentine name for farming districts—which could be got for a song a quarter of a century ago will now fetch £100,000 the square league (three miles). I know a plot of land at Rosario which has jumped in value from £2,000 to £40,000 in twenty years.

It is easy to understand how Argentine millionaires are made. In the wars with neighbouring Republics Argentine officers were given tracts of country in lieu of pay: of small value then, but their descendants are fabulously wealthy. The careful Briton who came out when railways were beginning to speed through the country, and acted shrewdly, got land for next to nothing which will bring a better price per acre than land in the home counties. I am writing this in mid-Atlantic on my way home, and each morning on deck I exchange a bow with an old lady who owns 180 square miles of the finest agricultural land in the province of Buenos Aires.

In a previous chapter my pen was somewhat free about the ostentation of the Argentine. But the display of wealth is frequently put to a good purpose. When a fabulous price is paid for a Derby winner it is an Argentine who has found the money.

Argentina has a fine breed of horses. As the cattle industry is so important, the best stock is purchased at home. I went to the agricultural show in September, 1913. All the judges had been brought out from England, partly because good judging was needed, but chiefly, I fear, because the Argentines cannot trust each other to give unbiassed decisions. The show was finer housed than any royal show in England, and the quality of the exhibits was quite on a level with anything we can produce. The prize bull, Argentine bred, was sold by auction for over £7,000. Admitted this was a fancy price due to the rivalry of breeders to have the best and to boast about it. A thousand pounds has been paid by a meat company for a Hereford bull to kill; but this may be ascribed to advertisement.

The *estancias*—ranches or stations—are frequently enormous in extent, as wide as an English county, and are managed as well as any great estates in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand. There are the usual show places, maintained by Anglo-Argentines, where the immediate grounds are laid out like an English park, the farm buildings all on the model plan, and the animals of the best stock, whilst a successful endeavour is made toward converting the house into something palatial. Though some *estancias* are far inland, and distant from a railway line, life is far more enjoyable than might be thought. The rich *estanciero,* however, spends little of his time on his land. He is too often an absentee landlord. He has tasted the joys of Europe; besides,

his wife and daughters are inclined to prefer Buenos Aires to life in the camp, however healthy. The place is usually run by a manager. Then there are sub-managers, often young Englishmen who have heard of the fortunes to be made; next there are the peons, Spaniards and Italians, who do the meaner work. Life in the camp is arduous. Men are out at dawn, rounding up cattle, giving an eye to the "colonists," attending to fencing, driving beasts to the railway station to be transferred to the "freezers," and it is sundown when the work is over and men go to their quarters. It is a strenuous life, and the employees have little of the pleasures of civilisation.

Within the last ten years the export value of live stock products has increased from £23,000,000 to £36,000,000, and agricultural products from £21,000,000 to £53,000,000. Since 1896 the area under cultivation has grown from 13 million acres to nearly 50 million acres. Of Argentine cereals the United Kingdom imported 1,654,000 tons. There are 30 million cattle in the Republic and 80 million sheep. The breeding of sheep is not what it was, because the Argentine finds he can get a better return from cattle and cereals. So, whilst the value of exported mutton remains very much what it was ten years ago (about £1,250,000), the value of the exported chilled and frozen beef has risen from £1,500,000 to over £6,000,000 a year.

At the ports are big slaughtering establishments, some belonging to Argentine companies, and others

to American companies. A bitter feud is being waged to capture the chilled and frozen meat trade, especially in the English market. As England is only three weeks' distance, meat that is only chilled has an enormous advantage over meat from more distant countries which must be frozen. The fact is denied, but it may be taken as certain that there is a big combination of Chicago houses endeavouring to squeeze their competitors out of business—and they seem in a fair way to succeed. The Argentine public are showing fright, and there have been frantic appeals to Congress that steps be taken to check the creation of a trust. Also it is hoped that England may take action. But the authorities in both countries decline to do anything. The Chicago firms have a long purse and are damaging their rivals at both ends, first by paying Argentine cattle breeders unprecedented prices for beasts, and then by selling the meat below cost price in the Smithfield market. Of course, in reply to what is happening, one hears the statement, "Why grumble, when the Argentine cattle dealer gets a high price for his beasts, the London consumer gets cheap meat, and the Chicago firms pay the difference?" That is true. But it does not need much business foresight to understand that when the Anglo-Argentine companies are bankrupt the Chicago trust, having the game in their own hands, will pay their own price for cattle and lift the price of meat in London. Meanwhile, the Argentine *estanciero* is quite happy, and is willing to let the future take care of itself. One thing,

however, may safely be prophesied. The Argentine Government has a drastic way of doing things. If the expected happens, and the Chicago houses secure the meat industry and begin to force down prices for cattle, there will not be the slightest hesitation in passing a law which will make things uncomfortable for the trust.

With the care taken in breeding, always striving after improving the strain of the stock, Argentina, with its millions of acres of pasturage, is determined not to slacken the stride of its improving meat trade. The best lands are given to wheat, maize, oats; but the use of alfalfa has meant an amazing expansion of productivity, for this nutritious plant, a kind of sanfoil, will grow abundantly on land that is little good for other purposes. Areas at which the agriculturist was inclined to shrug his shoulders as barren prosper under alfalfa, the best of feeding stuffs, and several crops can be got in a year. Two acres will carry a beast. Alfalfa grown for fodder gives a hundred per cent. profit. Alfalfa, whilst drawing nitrogen from the ground, attracts nitrogen from the air. One ton of alfalfa contains 50 lb. of nitrogen. Three tons of alfalfa has as much nitrogen as two tons of wheat. It is easy to grow, and cattle fatten on it abundantly. The alfalfa of Argentina means more to the prosperity of the country than rich gold mines. As there is no winter, as we understand it, the cattle are left out all the year, and there is no stalling or hand feeding.

Cattle disease is more prevalent than with us.

This is partly due to carelessness, but chiefly to the herds being so large that the scourge becomes virulent before it is noticed. Then, as I have indicated, there is the danger of drought and the dread of locusts. Further, so much of the cereal growing being in the hands of "colonists," too often anything but expert farmers, the yield is by no means what it would be if the farming were in more skilled hands. So, whilst the average yield of wheat in Great Britain is thirty-one bushels to the acre; in Argentina it is only eleven bushels. But manuring is unknown in the Republic.

Yet, keeping one's eyes open to all the disadvantages, one cannot go through the country and see its fecundity, go into the killing houses at La Plata and Buenos Aires, watch the ocean liners, with the Union Jack dangling over their stern, being loaded with many sides of beef, visit the grain elevators at the ports of Bahia Blanca and Rosario pouring streams of wheat destined for European consumption into the holds of liners, without the imagination being stimulated when standing on the threshold of this new land's possibilities.

Already Argentina holds first place in the quantity of exported frozen meat. It was in 1877 that the Republic led the way in exporting such meat to Europe. It was not till 1885, however, that the business of freezing was definitely established. To-day £11,000,000 is invested in "freezing works." And millions of cattle and sheep are slaughtered for foreign consumption. There seems to be something

of a race at present between live stock products and agricultural products which shall hold first place in value of exports. The ports of Argentina, with a capacity for 45 million tons, are ever busy. Yet they are only in infancy.

Like all new lands, where enterprise and optimism frequently leap beyond rigid economics, Argentina has its heaves and falls. We know of the hundreds of millions of foreign capital invested. People do not go to Argentina for the beauty of the scenery. They go for money-making. Often when I came across some evidence of Latin sluggishness, saw what had not been done, what might have been done, and then remembered what, nevertheless, had been done, I found myself exclaiming: " Oh, that this land were a British colony! "

CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT

NEW countries, in planning their system of government, have advantages over old lands steeped in tradition and hampered by precedent. They can profit by the mistakes of the older countries, and can, more or less, start with a clean slate. As men past middle age are disposed to think the young fellows of the present day headstrong, lacking in ballast, it is all in the nature of things that the older countries should look with a somewhat critical eye upon the experiments in government made by youngsters amongst the nations. So it is instructive to look at the system of law and administration in the Republic.

The head of authority, in which the executive power of the nation is vested, is the President. He must be an Argentine, a Roman Catholic, and being elected for six years can never be elected again. This is a provision to prevent a Dictatorship. The President for the time being is head of the Army and Navy; he nominates the judges, selects bishops, appoints diplomatic representatives to other nations, and all the secretaries of State are chosen by him. There are two Houses, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; but a Minister can be neither a senator

nor a deputy. He can attend debates, speak and defend himself from criticism, but he is beyond the power of either House. If he likes, he need appear only once a year in Congress to make an annual report about the working of his Department. So he is removed from the constant cross-examination which is the fate of Ministers in the British Houses of Parliament.

The Senate consists of thirty members, two from the capital and two from each province. Those sent from Buenos Aires are elected by certain high franchised electors, and those from outside are nominated by the provincial legislatures. A senator must be thirty years of age, must have been a citizen of the Republic for at least six years, and have a personal income of £160 a year. A senator is elected for nine years, and can offer himself for re-election. But every three years ten senators of the thirty, decided by ballot, must retire, though they can be re-chosen. No "carpet-bagging" is allowed. A senator must either be a native of his province or have lived in it for at least two years before his election. The provinces vary considerably in population, but they have equal voice in the Senate. Thus it is a body which may be said to represent localities rather than individuals.

The Chamber of Deputies, however, is chosen direct by the people. There is one deputy for every thirty-three thousand inhabitants. No man can become a candidate unless he is twenty-five years of age, has been a citizen at least four years, born

in the province, or lived in it for two years. Thus there is never anything in the nature of a general election, but there is a constant movement going on to secure the proper representation of the people.

Both senators and deputies receive a salary of £1,500 a year, so they are the best-paid legislators in the world. Both Chambers meet on May 1st and adjourn on September 30th. Only the Chamber of Deputies can have a voice in taxation. As I have shown in the preceding chapter, the Argentine Government—which, like all Governments, is open to criticism—has done a great deal in advancing legislation for the solid benefit of the country. There cannot be said to be government on party principles, but the Government is maintained by the followers of particular men. Politicians in Argentina, as elsewhere, have their enemies, and when a man has been elected to Congress he sometimes dare not attend, for that would mean leaving the constituency, and there would always be some rival busy sapping his influence. I was in Buenos Aires toward the close of the session. Day after day the House met, but nothing could be done, for no quorum could be obtained. Public business was at a standstill. It was proposed the President should employ the police to search Buenos Aires, arrest legislators, haul them along, and thus "make a House" with locked doors, so that business could be proceeded with. Everybody was crying out against the scandal of Congressmen drawing such large salaries and doing nothing to earn them. But nothing was done.

Photograph by H. G. Olds, Buenos Aires.

THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES.

Besides the excellent remuneration for not attending to business, the Argentine politician has the advantage of getting jobs for all his relatives. The majority of Government employees are the relatives of politicians. There are true and honourable men in political life, but, so far as I could gather, most men take to politics in Argentina because they can do their families a good turn. The only group that is cohesive is that of the Socialists. Socialist deputies are on the increase. Nearly all the freshly arrived immigrants, Spanish and Italian, when they get their naturalisation papers after a residence of two years, vote Socialist.

Now, whilst everything which affects the Republic as a whole is decided upon by the central Government, each province has its local government, with governor, two Houses, and considerable power, quite independent of the central executive. This is following the United States plan. The principle of devolution is a good one, that districts should administer their own affairs without interference by those who cannot know local circumstances. But Argentina has frequently the same trouble that the United States has, and similarly would like to get rid of. There are differences in the provincial laws, so that what is allowed in one province is prohibited in another, with the consequence that, though the process of trade is not hampered, it is often irritated.

Then the provincial Governments, sovereign in their own realm, sometimes enact laws which the federal Government declares affect general condi-

tions in the Republic. They infringe the prerogative of the central executive. Accordingly, the relationship between the central Government and the local Governments is frequently strained. It is the smaller provinces which cause the most trouble. Some of them have a population that, all told, would not stock a fair-sized town. That, however, does not diminish their sense of importance. They are cock-a-hoop. They know what is for their good; they will pass what laws they like; they are not going to be dictated to by those overpaid fellows who go to Buenos Aires. The federal Government cannot use force, and the provincial Governments snap their fingers. For instance, Mendoza insists on printing her own paper money. It is quite clear, if serious trouble is to be avoided, that the federal and provincial Governments must meet in conference and draw up hard-and-fast rules dealing with their respective powers and limitations.

So far as the individual is concerned, the theory is liberty and equality. The stranger has the same rights before the law as the citizen. The State, however, interferes in the matter of property. A man is not allowed, as in England, to leave his possessions to whom he likes. A father must leave his wife and children four-fifths of his property; a husband, if there are no children, must let half his belongings go to his wife; an unmarried son is obliged to leave his parents two-thirds of his property. Only the man without parents, wife, or children can dispose of his property by testament.

There is no obligation upon a foreigner resident in the country to become a citizen before he can start a trade or own estate. Two years' residence is the qualifying period to become a citizen of the Republic. If you enter the public service you can become a citizen earlier. If you marry an Argentine woman you can become a citizen right away. Every child born in Argentina, even though its parents be British and on a fortnight's visit, and have no desire to change their nationality, is counted an Argentine. Thus there are lots of residents with a dual nationality, Argentine in the Republic, but British in any other part of the world.

Though the Roman Catholic faith is that of the State, and other faiths are not restricted, the average Argentine pays little attention to religion. He likes his wife to go to church because it does her good. Education comprises three divisions: primary, secondary, and higher. The former is free, secular, and compulsory for children between six and fourteen years. If religious instruction is to be given it is only for those children who voluntarily remain after school hours on certain days. Public schools are scattered all over the Republic—though there are extensive districts where the population is thin where there is no instruction, and thousands of children grow up illiterate—and are subsidised by both the national and provincial Governments. Also there are primary schools for grown-ups, men whose education has been neglected, and who want to learn reading, writing, arithmetic,

and elementary history and geography. This teaching is given during the day or evening, and is free.

Secondary education for pupils over fourteen years is neither compulsory nor free, though the fees only amount to 8s. 9d. a year. This secondary instruction, quite as wide in range as elsewhere, is given in national schools, of which there are five in Buenos Aires and one in each of the capitals of the provinces, and normal schools, which are twenty-eight in number, three in Buenos Aires and the remainder in the provinces. Five years is about the length of tuition at these schools. Then the students can enter one or other of the faculties which form the university. There are three universities in Argentina; the oldest is in Cordoba, and the others are in Buenos Aires and La Plata. To qualify in either of these universities for the practice of medicine, law, or engineering, a seven-years' course is required for the former and a six-years' course for the two latter. Minor terms of special study are required for qualification as a chemist, accoucheur, dental surgeon, surveyor, or architect. In order to obtain the degree of doctor in physical sciences further studies are required outside those of the faculties. The university council cannot grant a qualification for a notary public, which must be acquired before the Supreme Court of the particular province in which the applicant seeks permission to practise.

Primary education in the capital and national territories is under the National Ministry of Education. In the provinces it is under the control of

THE KINDERGARTEN AT MENDOZA.

the Provincial Council of Education, who receive subventions from the national exchequer as occasion may require. The intuitive method is employed exclusively, and the whole system is modelled on that of the United States. As a rule, Spanish children learn Italian from their classmates, and vice versa. In the elementary higher standards, boys learn manual labour and French, and girls learn French and domestic duties. The schools are well built, well ventilated, the rooms are airy, each child has a separate desk, there is a medical visit every day, and where schools are within reach they are fairly well attended. But only 42 per cent. of the children in the Republic who ought to go to school do so. The low attendance may be put down to the great distances which separate the children's homes from the schools in the country districts. Very general complaints are heard in the villages of the manner in which the schools are conducted, and the small amount of knowledge acquired in spite of the flattering picture presented by the education authorities.

Considerable attention is paid to technical education, which is largely encouraged throughout the country by means of schools and training colleges maintained at the expense of the nation. Prominent among these institutions stands the National School of Commerce, which trains and prepares mercantile experts, public accountants, and sworn translators. There are also commercial schools in Cordoba and Bahia Blanca. These schools are attended by about a thousand pupils, who receive instruction in com-

mercial arithmetic, account and book-keeping, French, German, etc. The schools are open to both sexes, and in them the pupils can qualify for employment as book-keepers, accountants, clerks, etc. The Industrial School has its own workshops for the teaching of trades. The entrance conditions are similar to those for the national schools. Thorough practical instruction is given to about four hundred pupils in a number of subjects, including chemistry, mechanics, physics, optics, electricity, architecture, practical carpentry, mechanical and electrical engineering. The complete course lasts about six years, and the school is said to have given very good results. There is a School of Mines at San Juan, to which was added, by a decree dated April 20th, 1906, a section of chemical industry. There is an important agricultural college known as the Agrarian and Veterinary School at Santa Catalina in the immediate neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, and at Mendoza there is a viticultural training school where the practical cultivation of the vine is taught. Various other agricultural and horticultural schools are being established by the Government, which also supports the National School of Pilots, several conservatories of music, and a drawing school.

There is a naval and military college, from which officers are chosen for the navy and army, but they do not come under the Ministry of Education. By order of the Ministry of War physical drill and rifle shooting are taught in the two highest classes of all secondary schools, these exercises being subject to

the supervision of a military officer. The Argentine Government has founded numerous scholarships, and sends students to England, the United States, Italy, France, and Germany. It will be seen that the plan of education is very complete; but it would not appear to give such good results as might be anticipated, for it is a very general complaint that there are no good schools in the country districts.

The attention of the public is frequently called in the newspapers to the unsatisfactory condition of education, in spite of the large sums of money spent upon it annually. It is shown how small is the attendance at the primary schools compared with what it should be if the law was properly obeyed, as would be the case were the results more satisfactory. It is also asserted that the education in the secondary schools is especially defective, and that certificates are issued to university candidates without previous examination, and after merely nominal questioning by inspectors. There are numerous foreign private schools in the country, which all have to submit by law to Government supervision.*

There is compulsory military service. The period of continuous training does not exceed one year, and this only in the case of a proportion of the annual contingent. The others are released after three months' drill. With varying periods of training every Argentine from the age of twenty to forty-

* This information respecting education in Argentina is extracted from a British Foreign Office memorandum.

five is liable to be called upon to defend his country. Though years may pass without any call to attend military drill, every man in the country must learn to shoot.

Heavy duties are imposed on most manufactured articles imported, except in the case of material directly beneficial to the development of the country, such as machinery. Anything which helps in the progress of the Republic has easy entry. So, though it means two years' residence to become a naturalised citizen, anyone who establishes a new industry, or introduces a useful invention, who has contracted to build railways or establish a colony, or who is going to be a teacher in any branch of education or industry, is admitted at once. All these regulations go to show that, despite the perfectly legitimate criticisms which can be made, there is sound commonsense and foresight in the minds of the governing classes.

Everyone in any business or profession must pay an annual licence, and these vary from five to sixty thousand dollars. The latter sum is paid by banks. Money-lenders have to pay from five to seven thousand dollars, whilst in some provinces the *patente* varies from three to six hundred dollars a year. The postal and telegraph services are under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. Most of the taxation is indirect. Though the tariffs imposed on manufactured articles coming into the country are high—except in the case of specified articles, which are counted as beneficial for the development of the

country—and consequently one is disposed to gasp at the price of things compared with Europe, it is not to be forgotten that the direct taxation is not so high as in Europe. I heard it asserted that the reason there are high tariffs is to stimulate manufacture in Argentina. If so, the result has not been markedly apparent. The effect might have been so if the mass of the immigrants into Argentina came from manufacturing countries, like Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, or the United States. That is not so, and one of the hindering checks has been the language. The crowd has come from Italy and Spain, mostly unskilled labourers or men whose knowledge is limited to the land.

Argentina has no coal—and that will always handicap her if she enters the field as a manufacturing nation. The climate being what it is, there is no need of coal for heating purposes. A fire-place is a rare sight. But the importation of coal is a heavy charge on the working of railways and on shipping. Syndicates are now endeavouring to introduce oil as fuel. Oil has been found in the country, but as yet not in sufficient quantity to make it an important addition to the products of the Republic. So I see small prospect of Argentina's ever becoming a manufacturing country in the modern meaning of the phrase. Blest as she is in innumerable respects, she could not be worse placed if she had any such desire. She cannot produce cheaper, because most of her raw material, including coal, must be imported, and heavy freights would handicap economic pro-

duction. Take the case of two raw materials which she has in abundance, leather and wool. There are shoe factories, but the quality can in no way compete with that of the importations. Only the rougher kind of boots are made. There is some woollen manufacturing, but the material produced is crude, except in a few cases. Besides, the rush of immigrants is to the land, and not into workshops. The men who are skilled artizans are few. Therefore, although here and there you get local manufacturers who can hold their own in the markets, it may be said that in general the articles imported are better and cheaper, notwithstanding the tariff. However, as I will show in a later chapter, there is room for industrial development within a defined range.

Then there are the constant labour disputes in the towns. Running along with the prosperity of the country is the trouble of repeated strikes amongst the workers. It is not my province to go into the merits of the respective disputes. But they have been so recurrent, and have so much hampered trade, that the Government has taken the most drastic measures by laying hands on the chiefs of trade unions when grievances are fomented and strikes threatened.

Although the number of the strings of commerce which are in the hands of Englishmen is gratifying, it would have been strange if I had not heard the usual complaint that the Germans are edging in, and that, if care is not taken, the British will be

ousted from their pre-eminence. It was the old story that British merchants are too conservative, and do not pay sufficient heed to the personal likings of Argentine customers. It is true I saw lots of German goods. They were cheaper and not of the same quality as those of British make. Further, German houses give much longer credit than do their British rivals. Another cause of complaint is that in business disputes the long-drawn-out law's delay, and the obstacles in the path of the foreigner seeking redress, mean that justice is not always secured.

It is not to be denied that, although the returns are excellent, Britain does not retain the same proportion of the import trade which she had a few years ago. There is no disputing the superiority of the British article; but German and French merchants having a market to secure are more accommodating to their customers, whilst in regard to agricultural implements the United States makers are pushing their hardest. Their machines are more showy than the English. It seems a small point, and yet I have thought it would be well if our British manufacturers would not only turn out a serviceable tool, but bear in mind the temperament of the people who are to be the buyers. Put two threshing machines in a Buenos Aires warehouse, that from Britain painted grey, and that from the United States painted red; the Latin Argentine is naturally attracted to the red, even though its merits be inferior. Hundreds of millions sterling are to be expended in public works during the ensuing few years,

and British contractors should be awake to the possibilities. Belgian contractors have already been in the field, but their work has not always been "up to sample," so that the present opportunity is considerable.

Old residents directed my attention to a great change which is taking place in the import houses of Buenos Aires. Until a few years back it could be said that the British were first and the rest nowhere. British capital has flowed abundantly into the country, but toward developing its natural resources rather than in trade. Now German houses have a strong footing in "B.A.," and, naturally enough, they are encouraging the products of their own land. Go into a German house, and it is German wares that are for sale. Go into a British house, and you find United States and German wares as well as English being offered. I was seriously convinced, whilst studying the trend of trade in Argentina, that it is absolutely necessary that the managing heads of English firms who have dealings with South America, and find they are not getting that share of the increased trade which the growth of the country warrants, should make periodic visits to Argentina to learn for themselves what is the matter.

If there is one complaint to be made against the Englishman trading with a foreign land, it is his lack of adaptability. So long as he had the manufacturing of the world in his own hands, he could do as he liked. The thing he made was good, and it was the only thing. Now he has keen com-

petitors, and the customer has a varied choice. The Englishman has to consider whether it is worth his while to give the exaggerated credit which manufacturers elsewhere are prepared to give if they can secure the orders. The Argentine likes long credit. Then, is he prepared to make an inferior, showy article at a cheap price? These are two considerations which count enormously with the Argentine. You can purchase the best Sheffield cutlery in the best shops, for it is what the better-to-do people insist on having. But there are millions of people in the Republic who have never heard of Sheffield, and, therefore, know nothing about its reputation. What they want is cheap knives. Sheffield firms do not make these, and the consequence is the majority of the people have rubbish from elsewhere. I am not advocating that the British manufacturer should drop making the things which have won for him and his country a worthy reputation. I am pointing out some of the things which must be well thought about if Britain is going to keep its pre-eminence in the financial value of the goods imported into Argentine.

Further, an Argentine when he orders anything wants it at once. Quick delivery is an essential. Finally, all catalogues should be in Spanish, and all prices in Argentine currency. No man who goes out to "chase up business" in securing orders should be without a knowledge of Spanish. Talking through an interpreter is no good. The personal touch is lost. Spanish is a language much neglected

in England. I can think of no more profitable investment for a young fellow of parts, wanting to enter commercial life, and without means to go into business as a prineipal, than thoroughly to master Spanish.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COUNTRY

It is well to get a bold, broad idea of the country. It covers 2,000,000 square miles. England is just about one-tenth that size. It is double the size of Mexico.

In the far north you are in the torrid tropics. In the far south you need a heavy coat, even in high summer-time. Its conditions may, therefore, be described as variable. No other country can give you such change.

The 20,000 miles of railway run through most of the flat fertile areas, and the ordinary traveller comes away with the idea it is one of the most level, featureless countries he has ever been in. The old settlers had the same idea, for their description *pampa* applied to a boundless stretch. You can journey for hundreds of miles and never see a tree. But up in the north, under the shadow of Brazil, are great forests which will be made useful to the world one of these days. Then you get the backbone of the continent in the west, the Andes with Aconcagua rising to 23,000 feet above sea level. In the middle land is the fruitful Argentine Mesapotamia. In the far south is the last word of desolation, the Patagonian wilderness.

Argentina has several navigable rivers, and two, the Plate and the Parana, up which it is possible, for light draft steamers, at any rate, to go hundreds of miles. If one pretends there is no Amazon in existence the Plate discharges more water into the ocean than any river from Hudson's Bay to the Magellan Straits. A learned book informs me that the volume of water rolled into the ocean is 2,150,000 cubic feet per second, which seems "prodigious." At Monte Video the width of the river is sixty-two miles; so it is no trifling creek. The Plate is the muddiest stream I have ever come across. This is not to be wondered at, considering that it and its tributaries scour many thousands of miles. As a matter of fact, the estuary is being filled up. Within knowledge, the depth opposite Monte Video has lessened by fifteen feet, and though dredgers are constantly at work, big liners moving up to Buenos Aires have sometimes to force a way through two feet of mud. It is quite likely that in the fullness of time Buenos Aires will not be a port, but an inland town.

Sometimes Argentina has floods which ruin the crops, drown thousands of cattle, break the railway banks, and reduce strong men, who thought they were rich, to tears at the prospect of poverty. Or there are droughts which shrivel everything up. Away back in the 'thirties, Buenos Aires Province had a drought which lasted for five years. Scientists, who know all about these things, say that the rainless zones are extending, and that in the far future the whole Republic will be a rainless zone, and

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires

OX-CARTS IN THE ARGENTINE.

The long pole in the man's hand is an ox-goad.

umbrella sellers will go into the bankruptcy court. The prospect is not immediate, and if we are wise we shall not worry over a trouble which may have to be faced five hundred years hence.

Considering you can get a sweep of level country for 2,000 miles, with scarcely a hill that would make a decent bunker, when a gale gets on the rampage it runs away with itself. There is the *zonda,* which so disturbs the elements that the thermometer jumps fifty degrees in about as many minutes. Then, although there are those millions of cubic feet of water emptying itself out of the Plate, there comes the *suestadas,* which blows so hard that the water cannot get into the ocean, and, as a result, the upper streams rise and tumble over their banks. Next there are the *pamperos* on the plains, which either grill you with their heat or give you a chill from their rawness. I did not suffer myself; but these hateful *pamperos* are so charged with electricity that they give you a shock which produces a sort of paralysis, "perhaps twisting up a corner of the mouth, or half closing one eye, or causing a sudden swelling of the neck," as one authority records.

Parts of the Republic are yet to be explored. Persistent man is having a rough time in the Chaco region. When our ancestors invented hell they had no knowledge of the Chaco. It is all swamp and forest, and mammoth mosquitoes and fever, and pestiferous Indians who do not like the white man, and put a spear into his back whenever they get the chance. The Chaco Indians are amongst the

few of their race who have not been subjugated. There are rivers which come trailing from goodness knows where; but when they reach the Chaco they are evidently so disgusted that they burrow underground. When it rains, fish several inches long drop from the clouds. Under a torrent a dip in the ground will become a pool, and in it will be found fish a foot long. They do not drop from the clouds. There are no little streams by which they can have arrived. Where do they come from? The easiest explanation offered is that they were formerly much smaller, did arrive on a storm cloud, and have been lying in the mud since the last storm.

I heard yarns, vouched for, but which seem like travellers' tales. There is a little bird which sits on a branch and twitters. Others come round, and are apparently mesmerised. Then the little bird attacks one, maybe much bigger than itself, and kills it without any resistance being offered. There is another bird which lives on friendly terms with the Indians, hops in and out of their mud huts, and is known as the "watch bird," because it always raises a peculiar cry when a stranger approaches.

In its physical aspects the Chaco is strange, with swamps, arid plains, and mighty clumps of forest. Here grows the quebracho, which means the break-axe; so it is a very hard wood. It is to get this wood that companies have men working in the Chaco, hundreds of miles from even a vestige of civilisation. Bullocks are employed to drag the trunks, and the poor beasts have a bad time of it. Then there are

light railways to carry the trunks to the mills. Originally the quebracho was sought because it made serviceable and long lasting "sleepers" for railroads. Now it is chiefly wanted for the tannin in it; it is said to contain 50 per cent. of tannin.

Mention has been made of singular birds in the Chaco. But there are others to be found elsewhere in Argentina. W. H. Hudson, in his instructive book "The Naturalist in La Plata," describes the ypecaha, which holds public meetings and has dancing performances. "A number of ypecahas," he says, "have their assembling places on a small area of smooth, level ground, just above the water and hemmed in by dense rush beds. First one bird among the rushes emits a powerful cry, thrice repeated, and this is a note of invitation quickly responded to by other birds from all sides as they hurriedly repair to the usual place. In a few moments they appear to the number of a dozen or twenty, bursting from the rushes and rushing into the open space and instantly beginning the performance. There is a screaming concert. The screams they utter have a certain resemblance to the human voice, exerted to its utmost pitch and expressive of extreme terror, frenzy and despair. A long, piercing shriek is succeeded by a lower note as if in the first the creature had wellnigh exhausted itself. Whilst screaming, the birds rush from side to side, as if possessed by madness, the wings spread and vibrating, the long beak wide open and raised vertically. This exhibition lasts three or four minutes,

after which the assembly peaceably breaks up." Quite like a political meeting at home.

European domestic animals have thrived since their introduction, though there is a tendency, checked by the constant introduction of breeding stock, to develop local characteristics. This has been particularly remarked in sheep which have strayed and have been left to themselves for several generations. They grow bigger and bonier, and with their leanness comes the power of rapid movement, so that their flesh is scant and their wool has an inclination toward growing straight and stiff like the hair of a goat. In the outlands of Argentina ostriches, jaguars, and deer may be seen; but you can live for years on the prairies—and that is where most of the colonisation is going on—and never catch a glimpse of one of these.

The thing which lays hold of the seeing man, after he has remembered the ages during which the country, suitable for maintaining innumerable millions of men and beasts, lay dormant, is the way the land has been completely transformed in its inhabitants, human and animal, and how alien vegetation has found a thriving home. The early Spanish adventurers, as has already been told, had to start their settlement by bringing animals from Spain, and it was chance, the extraordinary reproductiveness of herds which strayed or were abandoned, which taught them they had come into possession of something more valuable than gold mines. Books of history chiefly deal with the lust and the cruelty

of the early Spaniards. I have nothing to do here with the story of the way in which Spain conquered the land. We have not to lose sight of the fact, however, they began settling in these parts nearly four hundred years ago, when a voyage to the Americas was like a journey to another planet, when the ships were small and incommodious and dangers were great, and the world had no experience in the science of colonisation. The authorities freely gave tracts of land, but in their wisdom they always stipulated that European domestic animals should be introduced. A settler got land for wheat and maize and an orchard, and then more land, just in proportion to how many horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and goats he would introduce. The land could be obtained for nothing, but always on condition that it was put to its full use in the maintenance of stock. That was a rough and ready, and yet very statesmanlike procedure. The best incentive was given to the agriculturist and breeder. The more cattle he introduced the more land he put to the plough, the bigger was the grant given to him by the authorities. Thus possession and prosperity advanced hand in hand. Here is a lesson which might be learnt to-day and copied by such countries as Australia, where there are millions of acres of undeveloped territory.

Time came when the wild herds waxed so numerous that the local councils proclaimed that all such cattle were the public property of their own people. To prevent those who lived under another local

council taking possession, the system of branding these cattle, when they could be caught, was introduced. When the cattle thief came on the scene, and he was got hold of, he was first branded on the shoulder and for subsequent offences branded in the hand, flogged and hanged. The straying cattle in a district belonging to the public, the public soon began to appreciate that here were cheap meat and cheap hides. They were hunted as the buffalo were subsequently hunted in North America, and it really seemed as though they were going to be exterminated. Regulations had to be made limiting the number of animals to be killed every year. Though there was still great slaughter, the herds continued to multiply amazingly, and, of course, wandered hundreds of miles away from any settlements. So the tide rolled on until two hundred years ago the number of cattle had increased to many millions. Carlos Gervasini, a Jesuit missionary, writing from Buenos Aires in 1729, says, "So numerous are the cattle in the neighbouring *campo* here that any landlord may take from ten to twelve thousand to breed from, merely for the trouble of lassoing them and driving them home. In order to take more than this number a special licence is required from the governor. The ships returning to Spain are filled with the hides, and none but good specimens of these are troubled about. As to the flesh, each man takes what he requires and leaves the rest to the jaguars and dogs." Some years later a visitor to Argentina said there were so many cattle that

the plains were covered; and had it not been for the number of dogs which devoured the young the country would have been devastated by them. There were so many cattle that when the Spaniards were at war, and invading boats appeared, their custom was to drive vast herds pell-mell down the river bank and so prevent a landing.

See the extraordinary whirligig. First no cattle. Then land granted to settlers who would introduce cattle. Then so many cattle they could be had by anyone for the asking, and this followed by wholesale slaughter, the extermination so thorough that a halt had to be called. Then further amazing multiplication, till the increasing wild dogs played havoc with the young animals. Then the dogs got so numerous, and their ravages so extensive, that soldiers were sent out to wage war on the canine pests. They killed untold thousands, but the people, instead of being grateful, chaffed the soldiers and dubbed them the "dog killers." The dogs started to increase again, faster than the cattle, but men refused to go out and kill the dogs when the only reward was to be nicknamed "dog killer." So the dogs were left alone, and they kept down the number of cattle. It was not till fifty years ago that a systematic massacre of the wild dogs took place, because just then the Argentines were beginning to settle down to scientific breeding.

It is astonishing how few dogs there are in Argentina. The dog may be the friend of man in other parts of the world, but not in Argentina. The

Argentine hates the dog. In Buenos Aires the police have order to arrest every dog, whether it is with anyone or not. During the time I was in "B.A." I saw only one dog, and that was the property of Sir Reginald Tower at the British Legation.

That is not all the story. Not only did the wild dogs develop a taste for young calves, but the native Indians began to show a fondness for horseflesh. For centuries, although he could have had any number of cattle and nobody would have objected, the Indian maintained a preference for horseflesh. Then, suddenly, his fancy extended to cattle. When he started rounding up the cattle of the Spaniards there was trouble. Sheep were prolific, but mutton was contemptible food. None was so poor as to be obliged to eat mutton. The Spaniards regarded mutton much as Englishmen now regard horseflesh. The only use of a sheep was for its wool and fat. But the prejudice against mutton, after lasting for nearly three hundred years, finally disappeared.

Whilst there was an increasing carrying trade from Buenos Aires to Spain of skins, wool, and tallow—very profitable merchandise—Spain officially was not enthusiastic over this mean trading. What she wanted was gold and silver. As these came from Peru and Chili those countries were favoured whilst Argentina was the Cinderella of the family. What good was a country that had no mines but only grass to feed horses and cattle and sheep?

We think differently in these days, but in those far-off times Spain scarcely condescended to recognise Argentina. It was darling Peru that was always favoured. All regulations in regard to trade were made favourable to Peru. Spain accepted what she fancied from Argentina, and hampered her in seeking other markets.

Nothing, however, could stop the advance of Argentina. It was with reluctance that Argentina was raised to the first rank as a province, and was given liberty to export where she liked. Her trade jumped ahead. Then Argentina not only killed to get hides and wool and fat, but she had to begin breeding in order to supply the European demand. She began to dream dreams. There was little immigration; the people were the descendants of the old settlers. They knew nothing of Spain. They had no recollection of ancestors who did know anything of Spain. Spain meant nothing to them but a distant country which once lorded them and presumed to dictate to them. It was resentment at the relationship, combined with a desire to fulfil an independent destiny, that brought about the revolution and the declaration of a republic in 1810.

Since then Argentina has had many internal political troubles. She has had her set-backs. But the ebb has always been succeeded by a tumbling flow of fortune. The breed of cattle has been marvellously improved. The number of animals now runs into hundreds of millions. Vast areas now wave

with wheat and maize. As you journey through Argentina, and see the land smiling with success, you know that beyond your gaze are thousands of square miles of soil as virgin as in the days when the Indians roamed free.

A TYPICAL ARGENTINE PUBLIC PARK.

CHAPTER IX

"CABBAGES AND KINGS"

One of the failings of new countries, like that of youth generally, is conceit. Yet, on second thought, it is a useful offence, for it carries a people light-heartedly over rough ground which older nations dare not face and so turn aside.

In the new lands the settlers have the constant panorama of achievement before their eyes. They remember things as they were ten years ago, see them now, and are convinced that nowhere in the world has such progress been made as they are making. Anybody who hints a doubt is scowled upon. And the buoyancy of spirit, a sort of rampant optimism about themselves, is fostered by a bent of mind to read about what goes on in "rotten old Europe." A gracious Providence helps them to take notice only of the good things in their own country, and to have a quick eye for the bad things in other countries. Further, as all new lands need settlers, the official flag-waving and trumpet-blowing to attract immigrants is garish. You can, as a rule, reduce the value of the advertisements by half, and still be quite sure that more than justice remains.

I have been induced to write the preceding para-

graph because, as I am not a hired agent to proclaim the wonders of Argentina, but merely a man who has studied some of its capabilities on the spot, I have no desire, in my endeavour to give a true portrait, to ignore the warts and occasional blemishes. Of course, the Argentine thinks his land the most remarkable in the world. In many respects I am disposed to agree with him. But it is not without spot. For instance, the first thing he is enthusiastic about is the climate. The freedom from severe winters, with the possibility for cattle to remain in the open all the year round, is an advantage. But in the Argentine winter (our summer) there are cold, wretched, rainy days which are depressing. In their summer (our winter) the heat is sometimes intense, especially in the northern region. I know of the fine, clear, bracing climate of the plains, filling one's veins with energy and the joy of living. I have enjoyed the charm of Mendoza, the healthiest of all the towns in the Republic. Where I am inclined to part company with the Argentine is when he wants to argue that the climate of the whole country is adorable.

Take Buenos Aires. The new arrival is not only entranced with the development and the encircling beauty of the city, but, with continuous blue skies and glorious sunshine, he is prone to underline the usual nice things about the climate. Then, one day, he feels uncomfortable, limp, saggy in body and mind. The slight breeze is from the north, and it seems to bring heavy inertia from the Brazilian

forests. The old inhabitants have probably got used to the "norther"—they show no diminution in vigour—but the muscle-slackening and wearying effect on the new-comer is undoubted. Most of Buenos Aires is built on low-lying ground, much of it reclaimed from the shallow Plate, and the air is relaxing. Though the sun is delightful, it is anything but invigorating. So you reach the conclusion that, whilst Buenos Aires has usually most delightful weather, it has an indifferent climate.

There are striking changes in temperature in Argentina. Within half an hour of being broiled you may feel as though you had passed into a refrigerator. Hurricanes sometimes sweep vast areas, and everything—trees, buildings, crops—are mown down by the blasts. In the sandy stretches the sand is swept up like a thick cloud, and, though *estancieros* shut every door and fasten every window, it is not long before every room has an inch depth of sand. I have travelled all night in a sleeping car with double windows to resist the sand, but it filtered through nevertheless, and in the morning I found the only white spot in the compartment was where my cheek had rested on the pillow.

Life on a ranch has the glamour of romance about it. The town-bred Englishman, dissatisfied with his lot, lets his fancy roam to the prairies of North America or the pampas of South America, and his imagination glows with the conjured picture of cowboy life—quaintly dressed, always well-mounted, and with nothing to do but ride over the plains rounding

up wandering cattle. As I have explained in an earlier chapter, many of the large *estancias* are not occupied by their owners; a manager with a salary is put in charge, and he usually has several young Englishmen as assistants. There are a number of peons. The manager, usually married, has a decent house. The assistants have a plain, bachelor establishment, and live in common. The peons rarely have anything better than ramshackle quarters. Distances are enormous. Frequently, outside the little clump of trees which is the distinguishing feature of all *estancias*, there is nothing to be seen as far as the eye can range but featureless prairie. The railways may be many miles away. The country has comparatively few towns—really a good point about an agricultural land—and though they are all attractive, only Spanish is spoken. Months may elapse between the visits of an Englishman to a town. He has to rise early; he has to work hard; the glamour of cowboy life soon goes; he and his mates have told each other all their stories; visitors are rare; there is practically no women's society. At first the tendency is to be homesick. But in time the man gets used to the life; possibly he may be happy. He, however, is far removed from refining influences. He may have a fondness for reading, but life in the saddle is so hard that at night, after supper and receiving instructions from the "boss" for the next day, and having a chat over work, there is little disposition to do anything except have a game of cards, and then turn in.

It is no unusual thing for an *estancia* to be fifty miles square. If so, it is divided into three or four sections, with a manager over each. Even then the property to be looked after is extensive. Though for food there is plenty of beef and mutton, there is little variety. The men are out by four in the morning, and breakfast is often no more than biscuits, washed down with maté (native tea). There is a solid meal about eleven o'clock, generally boiled meat, by no means always attractively served. After dark, between seven and eight o'clock, there is supper: meat, coffee, and biscuits. The surroundings are coarse and dirty, and sometimes disgusting. Of course, conditions are occasionally much better than these; but I think I am fairly describing the average quarters of the young Englishman who goes out to Argentina to be assistant on an *estancia*. What gave me frequent surprise was not that the life roughened them, but that so many retained the kindly courtesies of their homes in England.

The great thing is that the life is healthy. As years pass it gets a grip of a man, so that even if he has the chance to return to civilisation he generally prefers the camp. There is the driving of cattle to the railway and loading them—often difficult work—into the trucks to take them to the freezing factories. There is the cutting of alfalfa and the shearing of sheep. There is breaking-in of colts and looking after the stock.

A neighbouring *estancia* may be twenty miles

away. But Sunday is a holiday, except for absolately necessary work, and men will start off at two o'clock in the morning to have a jollification with friends, generally to witness some horse-racing, about which all the *estancias* for fifty miles round are excited, and with a bottle of beer as first prize. Maybe once or twice a year a wandering parson drops into an *estancia.* Whatever be the religious views of the hands—supposing they have any—the visitor is well received, and, be he Roman Catholic or Prostestant, he proceeds to "fill them up." He brings them something they do not often think about. At the least he is a diversion. Undoubtedly his praying and preaching have an effect, because for several days after he has gone the men are serious, and language is not quite so ruddy as formerly. Then arises the question of the rival merits of horses over a level two miles, and the trend of thought changes.

The rural roads, as I have said, are shocking, especially after wet weather, for they are no more than tracks across mother earth. But man is an adaptable creature, and the Englishman gets used to the bad roads. The very discomforts facilitate companionship. No man out on the road and needing a meal has the slightest hesitation about dropping into an *estancia* and making himself at home. Young fellows will spend their money; and, as they cannot get rid of it after the way of the towns, it goes in buying horses to race or ponies for polo; because if there are a dozen youngsters within

hail they invariably form a polo club. Folk think nothing of travelling across country many miles to witness a polo match on the Sunday. Usually the matches take place at different *estancias* on successive Sundays, and if there should be a homely English girl about—well, she receives as much attention as a real beauty would get in Mayfair.

Where two or three men are gathered together in England the odds are that conversation will turn to golf. Wherever men living in Argentina meet, be they Spanish, Italian, or English, they talk about horse-racing. I cannot recall that I ever met a man in the Republic who was not interested in horse-racing. I have already described what goes on at Palermo. But besides the swagger races at Palermo, and the races amongst the natives, the English like to have their camp races every few months. Not only is there the excitement of the contests, but there is real warmth in the hearts of men meeting old friends. Everybody knows what every horse has done; everybody is acquainted with the riders. There is betting, but nothing like to the same extent as amongst the born Argentines, who are gamblers, every mother's son, and will bet on anything and everything.

Sometimes one reads in English newspapers and telegrams how, on the arrival of emigrant ships in Australia and New Zealand, there is hustling amongst the ladies of those countries to get hold of the girls who are arriving as domestic servants. Every new country has its domestic servant problem, and

Argentina is no exception. Unless wealthy, most people in the towns live in small flats, which is partly due to the excessive house rent, but also because servants are scarce and dear. The foreigner who has to make shift with an Argentine servant is either driven mad or deserves a medal for an angelic temper. I confess that at Cordoba I did meet with an English family who had nothing but praise for their native servants. But mostly I had to listen to tragic stories of dirtiness, theft, and unblushing lying. The trouble with so many of these Latins is that, even when willing, they seem quite incapable of learning. Of course, this applies to the lowest classes. When you get amongst the business folk you find they are quite as cute as North Americans—as the Argentines always speak of the people of the United States. After having a dozen incompetent servants in twelve unhappy months, many an English housewife ceases her search for a decent servant and does the work herself.

There may be a Merchandise Marks Act in Argentina. What I am quite sure about is, that it is the very paradise of the faked imitation article. There are certain things in Europe, be they mineral waters, or field-glasses, or razors, which are well known. It is possible to get the real thing in Buenos Aires, but it is six to one you get a faked article. The Argentines fake French wines of well known *châteaux*. You pay a big price expecting to get a good cigar, and more likely than not you get a brand with a well-imitated band. All the well-known Scotch

whiskies are imitated, and there are half a hundred "famous" whiskies that are never heard of outside the Republic. I searched the whole of Buenos Aires to get some briarwood pipes made by well-known manufacturers. I was offered pipes bearing their names, but they were all fakes. "Sheffield" cutlery is often the shoddiest product of Germany. England has still a reputation for turning out a first-class article, but my experience was corroborated by men I consulted in Buenos Aires; it was impossible, or exceedingly difficult, to get the genuine thing. I am not going to write that Argentina is responsible for the shiploads of imitation muck which is dumped upon her shores. But there are certainly some manufacturers in some parts of the world who make cheap and nasty things, affix well-known English names, and do an enormous business in exporting them to the Republic.

The "fool" Englishman is to be encountered on the boats sailing to the Argentine. He does not read the newspapers, except the sporting columns, and "books are so dull"; but somebody has told him Argentina is a wonderful place with no end of "stuff" to be picked up. So with a first-class ticket to "B.A.," and enough cash in his pocket to keep him at the Plaza Hotel for a fortnight, he hopes to make his fortune.

"No end of Johnnies make lots of money," he explains as a preliminary to proceeding to do the same himself.

"What do you intend to do?" is quietly asked.

"Oh, anything. I think I'd like to go on one of those *estancia* things; awfully jolly riding about all day rounding up beastly bullocks."

"Got any letters of introduction?"

"Yes; I've got two from a fellow at my club, awfully decent sort, who met a couple of ripping Argentines in the Riviera summer before last, but smelling with gold. They ought to put a chap in for something worth having; what?"

That is not a fancy picture. I have met two of that type in one voyage, and the above is a fairly good example of their hopes and credentials. Without any qualification they land in Buenos Aires and have the haziest knowledge what they propose to do next. Possibly they have some vague ideas that wealthy Argentines will be down at the wharf eager to help good-looking young Englishmen. The young Englishman proceeds to use his letters of introduction, and finds that one of the men is in Europe and nobody ever heard of the other. What next? The Englishman does not know. He cannot speak a word of Spanish. He hangs round the hotel lounge, and spends a lot of time in the American bar downstairs. At the end of four days he confides to you he is "fed up with the stinking hole," and has wired to the "old man" to send him enough "stuff" to take him home. Then at the end of a week he returns to England in the same boat as that by which he arrived, quite convinced Argentina is a place which he was jolly lucky to get out of.

There was another young fellow, somewhat more

A REGATTA NEAR BUENOS AIRES.

spry than the example I have given. I met him in the street one morning, and he was furious. He had been in the running for the secretaryship of an English company that had some big contracts in Argentina, and he had been ruled out at last because he did not speak Spanish. That was his grievance. He knew he could mess along somehow, and could always get somebody to explain if he had to talk business with an Argentine who did not speak English; so what was the good of having to swat to learn the lingo?

One of the biggest financiers in Argentina told me one day that whilst plenty of young Englishmen made their way—indeed, if competent, they were preferred to other foreigners—he was astonished at the way others missed their opportunities. My friend, an Englishman himself, but who has lived all his life in the country, and speaks Spanish more fluently than he does English, has his finger in many concerns. Young men who have come out to posts, and are not making the progress they hoped, go to him to see if he can give them a helping hand.

"Delighted," he says; "I want to help my own countrymen as much as possible. How long have you been in 'B.A.'?"

"Eight years."

"Then you speak Spanish like an Argentine, eh?"

"Well—er—no; but I've picked up enough to scrape along on."

"Could you take charge of a hundred Argentines and talk business to them as well as an Argentine?"

"No; I wouldn't like to say that."

"Could you write a technical business letter in Spanish?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Good day, my young friend. I should have been glad to have helped you, but I want a man who would not be sure to make mistakes."

There is a number of that pattern of Englishman in Buenos Aires. There are excuses for them. They go out under a three- or a five-years' contract to some post. A lad is a stranger in a strange land, and has yet to pick up Spanish. He naturally consorts with his own countrymen. They dine together; they meet in the same café; they belong to the same club; they seek their pleasures together. It is very hard for a fellow under such circumstances to become quick with the language, or extend his knowledge to any great extent as to the Argentine way of doing things. He can get all his requirements with a sort of pidgin-Spanish. So at last he does not bother. That is the kind of man who sticks in the same position all his life, and occasionally rails at his luck in not getting a big post.

That is one side of the picture. There is the other. I have in my mind a man who holds a high position in Argentina. When he went out twenty years ago he saw that the first essential was to know the language. At the risk of being thought unsociable, he lived with Spanish Argentines for two

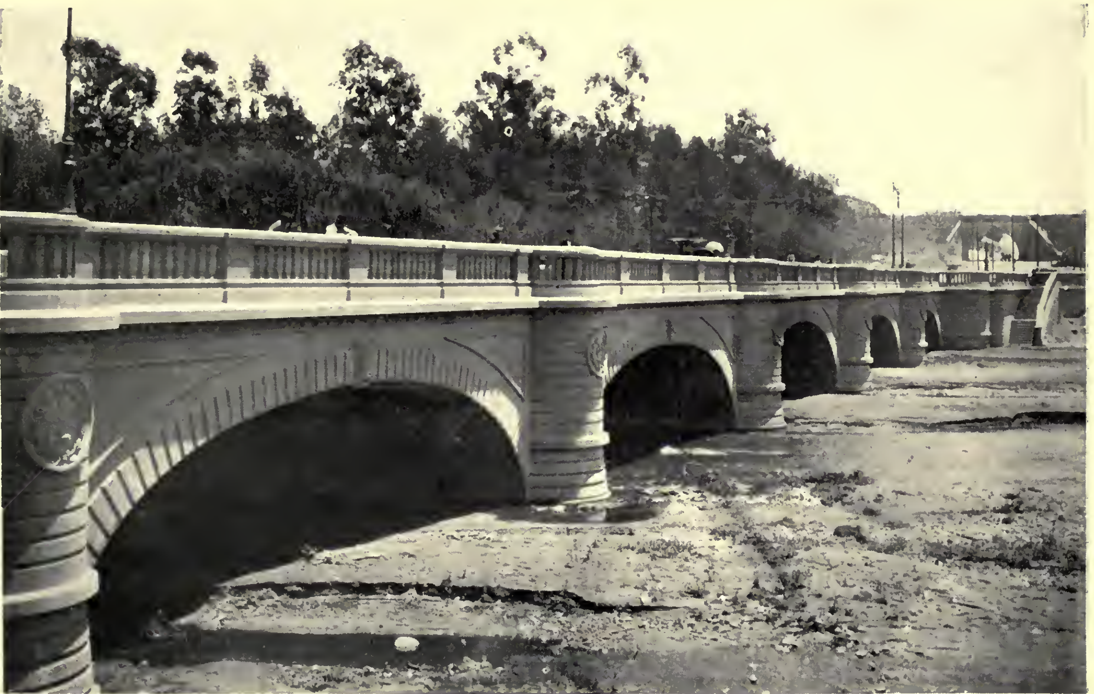
years, and made friends with young Argentines rather than with Englishmen. He made it a habit to read the Buenos Aires Spanish morning papers. He has gone ahead and done exceedingly well, although I would not describe him as a brilliant business man. Then there was a youth with whom I made acquaintance on the boat. I noticed he was spending a good deal of his time with a Spanish grammar. He told me he was going out under a five-years' contract to be a clerk in one of the banks. "But I am not going to stop a bank clerk," he confided to me, "though that will be all right for five years. By then I hope to have got a good grip of the language and picked up something about Argentina, and if then I'm not able to go to some boss and get one of the good jobs, well, it will be my own fault." With that spirit he would be a success. All over the country I was meeting Englishmen of that standard, and, because they can be relied upon, they are esteemed and trusted.

But I am not going to sing the praises of Argentina from a British immigrant's point of view. First of all, take the case of the unskilled labourer, the artisan, and the agriculturist. There is no man so conservative in this world as the British working man. He has an inherent contempt for all foreigners when he gets close to them, chiefly because their ways are not his ways. So the working man who went out to Argentina would be handicapped by not knowing the language; he would be confused with the money; he would dislike the food; the

way in which the working class lives out there would disgust him. At the other end of the string is the great capitalist. Capital knows no language, and owes allegiance to no country. The capitalist with shrewdness, intelligent anticipation, can make money quickly; in no country can a man get so quick a turnover of his capital as in this Republic.

Between these two classes is an army of men who go into the railway service, into the offices of great English firms, into banks. They get better paid in Argentina, but living is three times as heavy as at home. Take the case of a young friend of mine. He had a situation in England at £200, and, with his amusements, he had but little left over. He got a situation in Argentina at £700 a year. Living, more or less in similar style to the way he did at home, cost him £400 a year. But he had £300 a year over, and that was not £300 a year in Argentine value, but £300 a year in English value, because he was investing it for the time when he would return to his native land.

Of course there are promotions and superior posts to be obtained. Occasionally a man will break away and get hold of something which will lead to fortune. These cases, however, are the exceptions. The great fortunes do not grow out of business, as they do in the United States, for up to the present Argentina is not to be reckoned with as a manufacturing country. They come to men who have colossal finance to manipulate. To the great financier Argentina can give untold wealth. There are,



A FINE ARGENTINE BRIDGE.

of course, cases of men who started with nothing, and can now give their wives a £20,000 necklace. But to the man who lands in Argentina with nothing but his muscle, or a salaried job, although his position will be improved, and he can save more than ever he made in the Old Country, the chances are against his ever joining the ranks of the nabobs.

CHAPTER X

LIVE STOCK IN THE REPUBLIC

The constant wonder to me, as I traversed the fruitful prairies, was why Nature had not supplied the country with indigenous live stock.

One would have thought that the forces of evolution would have provided animals to benefit and multiply. Man, of course, has done much to improve the land. By the laying down of alfalfa he has turned sandy regions into rich pasturage. By irrigation he has converted wastes into prosperous stretches. Still, there were thousands of square miles, capable of maintaining great herds, for ages before the coming of the Europeans. But Nature was niggardly in raising animals which the adventures of man subsequently proved suitable to the soil.

The principal original animals were the alpaca, which provided meat and wool, and the llama, used as a beast of burden by the natives, though the loads it could carry were slight. Spain, when she took possession of the country, saw its disadvantages. Though the Spanish Court was prodigal in giving tracts of the new land to grandees and others, it is significant that in practically all the concessions was the provision that the grant failed unless horses,

cattle, sheep, and goats were introduced. They were for purely domestic uses.

A couple of centuries ago a bull and ten cows were abandoned. What became of them troubled no one. Long afterwards their descendants were found grazing, and they had increased to many thousand; now they have increased to many millions. They were sturdy cattle, but too numerous for the then exceedingly sparse population. Their hides, however, were profitable for sending to Europe; and many thousands of beasts were slain, and their carcases left to rot, in order that their skins might be sent across the seas. In 1794 merino sheep were imported from Spain. In 1824 Southdowns were imported from England. They made an excellent cross, and that was the start Argentina got in the growing of wool.

There was no discovery that this part of South America was peculiarly suitable for European stock. There was just a slow but increasing consciousness of the fact that European animals were easily acclimatised, and had a greater breeding capacity than at home. The first European cattle did not come direct, but dribbled in by way of Brazil from Peru —a roundabout route. Indeed, for several centuries Spain, which was mistress of that part of the world, rigorously excluded all other countries from assisting in its development or having any share in its trade. Further, Peru, which was the most important of the Spanish settlements, had sufficient power at the Court of Spain to secure an insistence that all

goods entering South America should do so by the door of Peru. You have only to glance at a map to see how absurd it was that articles intended for Buenos Aires or the east coast had to be shipped to the Isthmus of Panama, taken across to the Pacific side by mule caravan, shipped again down the coast to Peru, and then sent thousands of miles over mountains, through jungle and across uninhabited plains, to their destination. This intolerable condition of things, which Spain refused to change, had much to do with Argentina's casting off the yoke, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and declaring itself as a republic.

Though one hears much about the way Argentina has gone ahead as a cattle-raising country during the last decade, one must not lose sight of the fact that the Spaniards have been rearing cattle there for over three hundred years. Even when the possibilities began to be realised there were no means of land transport except by driving the beasts, and, except for the hides and tallow and subsequently the wool, there was little that could be sent to Europe.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, however, Argentina was beginning to find herself. The Argentines were not content with the quality of the animals which were bred haphazard. They took to importing better strains from Europe, grasped what pedigree meant, began to demand the best the world could produce, and were willing to pay for it, until the call of Argentina for pedigree stock has almost

become a mania, and other countries have little chance when Argentina enters the market with her bags of gold.

Not only was there a wonderful increase in cattle and sheep, but horses multiplied. The Spanish contempt for females extends to mares, and no self-respecting Argentine, who was not seeking the sneers of his countrymen, would think of riding a mare. A hundred years ago European nations had not thought of purchasing South American mares; and it has been computed that in the first quarter of the last century over 500,000 mares were mercilessly slaughtered in Argentina. It has been said that an enormous number of wild horses were at large, and their continued incursions amongst the general stock caused great loss to the breeders.

But that Argentina is one of the most productive lands in the world for horses is undoubted. They seem to have something approaching the fertility of the Australian rabbit. Historians disagree as to whether the first importation of horses to Argentina in the sixteenth century were seventy-two horses and mares, or forty-four horses and mares, or seven horses and five mares. Anyway, whilst Ruy Diaz de Guzman, who vouched for the latter figures, wrote they had "attained such a multiplication in less than sixty years that they cannot be counted, because the horses and mares are so many that they appear like great woods and occupy (the country) from Cape Blanco to the fort of Gabato, rather more than eighty leagues, and reach inland to the

Cordillera," the monk Fray Juan de Rivadancira, who declared for forty-four horses and mares, states that " the coast is inhabited by a great many people, and there is an immense number of horses that remained there from the time of Don Pedro de Mendoza, that is forty-five years ago, forty-four horses and mares that have multiplied themselves, but, strange to say, in all this time they have not been seen by the Spaniards, who only know of them from the reports of the Indians, who say that they cover the plains to an astonishing extent." Allowing for these tales being exaggerated, the very fact they should be recorded some fifty years or so after the first importation of horses shows there must have been an astonishing increase.

Argentine breeders of cattle, knowing of the care taken in Europe to improve quality, realised that quantity was not sufficient. There would be little merit in having millions of animals on the rich grassed plains if commercially they were unable to compete with other countries with their produce. So between fifty and sixty years ago they began methodically and scientifically to improve their herds. The result was so satisfactory that owners of herds conceived it to be their patriotic duty—and Argentina is noisily patriotic—to raise the standard of quality. The Argentine Agricultural Society was established. It has increased in size and importance. Its offices at Buenos Aires have the marks of energetic distinction, whilst its permanent show grounds in the suburbs of the city are the finest buildings for such

Photograph by Moody, Buenos Aires.

BREAKING-IN HORSES IN THE ARGENTINE.

a purpose in the world. I will not say, as is often said, that the display is the finest in the world. Now and then it tops any other show in a particular class. But it is a great show, provided by a country with only seven million inhabitants; and, speaking generally, it is not a bad second to any other, no matter where it is held.

There is tremendous rivalry amongst breeders, and the ambition to secure the blue ribbons is so great that the Argentines, as I have mentioned in a previous chapter, will not trust people of their own race to act as judges. The judges all come from Britain, and are men of recognised competence and integrity. They are the guests of the Society. They are provided with first class return tickets, are entertained at the best hotel for three weeks, have many courtesies piled on them, and each receives £30 as out-of-pocket expenses. So keen are some Argentine breeders to gain the coveted ribbon that I have heard of their sending special representatives to travel on the boat from Southampton to Buenos Aires so that an amiable judge may be "nobbled." Fortunately, British judges are not made that way; and although stories of attempts are common, there is no recorded instance of success.

I was present at the official opening of the show in 1913 by the Minister of Agriculture. It was not an enthusiastic occasion. The weather was bad and cold, and there was the reading of two interminable speeches from manuscript—read to about a score of top-hatted and frock-coated gentlemen standing

round, looking insufferably bored and never raising the equivalent of a single "hear, hear," whilst the crowds in the stands heard not a word but waited patiently for the parade of prize winners to begin.

But it was a show of cattle of which Argentina had a right to be proud. It was another post along the road of evolution. The time is yet far off when Argentina can rightly claim first position amongst the live-stock nations; but it is a goal which the Argentines steadily keep in sight. Stud farms are to be found all over the country. Prices which formerly would have been thought reckless are now willingly paid for stallions, bulls, and rams. Yet, though the Argentine is pleased with himself, he does not so much boast of what he has accomplished as rhapsodise about the future. To-day (1914) there are 8,000,000 horses in the country, 30,000,000 cattle, and over 80,000,000 sheep. Yet only a portion of the country suitable for stock is utilised. Everything indicates that within the next ten years 200,000,000 animals of all classes will be grazing on the pastures of Argentina.

The love of horse-racing is bred in the bone of every man in the country. All the big towns have their race-courses. Out on the prairies, if there is no race-course, the men at the *estancias* mark out a track and race against each other's horses on Sunday afternoons. An eye is kept on the famous European race-horses, and as much as £40,000 has been paid for a great winner, so that he may be

used for stud purposes. The breeding of thoroughbreds has become part of the national life of the Republic. The Jockey Club at Buenos Aires, possessed of an enormous income, has by the offering of handsome prizes encouraged the breeding of race-horses. The Argentine stud farms are, in excellence of stabling and general surroundings, lavish in luxury. So successful has been the breeding from expensive European sires that European breeders are now looking to Argentina to purchase some of the sons.

But always, one must remember, the prosperity of Argentina rests with her commercial cattle. As England prohibits the landing of live cattle for fear of foot-and-mouth disease, increasing attention has been given to the business of exporting chilled and frozen meat. The closing of British ports and consequent slump in Argentine cattle gave a colossal impetus to the frozen meat industry, so that at the present time the Republic is the greatest exporter of frozen meat in the world. That, perhaps, is the reward for Argentina's being the first country to export chilled and frozen meat to Europe. This was as far back as 1877, though it was not until 1885 that the first freezing works were established. To-day something like £11,000,000, mostly English and United States capital, is sunk in Argentine freezing houses. England is the largest consumer. But though the quantity imported is enormous, it is a mistake to suppose that frozen meat is yet ahead of English home-killed meat. As a nation

we are increasing meat eaters. We are now consuming something approaching two million quarters a year. Only about a third of this is chilled and frozen meat, and the consumption of home meat is increasing, not decreasing.

That there is foot-and-mouth disease in Argentina is undoubted. Though the Argentines protest we continue the cry as an excuse for keeping out their stock from our meadows and from competing with our own fresh meat, I was quite convinced that the disease does seriously exist in Argentina, and that, whilst not so prevalent as occasionally alleged, it is sufficiently bad to justify the British Board of Agriculture in maintaining the prohibition. With care, however, I am sure the Argentines could stamp out the evil. Its persistence is due to carelessness. The natural conditions of the cattle, being out on the pastures all the year round, count for healthiness. I have visited the great canned meat establishments in Chicago, and when in Buenos Aires and La Plata I inspected some of the biggest of the Argentine freezing places. Though the latter lacked the magnitude of the Chicago houses, I admit my complete satisfaction with the sanitary conditions surrounding what, to me, is always a sickening business.

When a mob of cattle has been purchased the seller gives a guarantee of the soundness of the animals. When they reach the stock-yard the veterinary surgeon of the company makes inspection of each beast before it goes to the slaughter-house.

The operation is the usual one: the animal is pole-axed, then the carcase is conveyed on a truck to a shed, where it is hung up, bled, disembowelled, and skinned. The veterinary surgeon makes an examination to see if he can detect disease. But this is not enough; a piece of the meat, a few ounces, is cut off, labelled, and sent to a laboratory, where further experiments are made. There is much greater care taken in these slaughter-houses of Argentina in the case of chilled and frozen meat than is usually taken at home in providing the "roast beef of old England." The carcases are placed in a chilling chamber, 34° Fahr., for twenty-four hours. Then they are cut in two, each side wrapped in a cloth, and taken into the refrigerator compartments on board a steamer. Should the investigation in the laboratory reveal disease the carcase is burnt.

To the layman inclined to be confused between the terms "chilled" and "frozen," it is well to explain the difference. Frozen meat is that which has been kept well below freezing point, and can be kept for an indefinite time. Chilled meat is not frozen, but it can be kept wholesome for some weeks when in a low temperature. Chilled meat is of better quality than frozen meat, and, as the Argentine ports are within three weeks of Smithfield, her produce has a distinct advantage over that of countries farther away, where the journey takes six weeks, and the meat cannot be kept chilled, but must be frozen.

I am aware of the prejudice against chilled meat. Yet I suspect that occasionally some of us, when paying for the home article, are really receiving the foreign meat, but we do not know the difference. The chilled meat trade—a later development than the frozen trade—has sprung into existence in Argentina mainly during the last dozen years. That which we get in London, whether from La Plata, Buenos Aires, or Chicago, is of better quality than the meat the Argentine or the American gets. The explanation is that the best meat is exported because it has to come into competition with British beef, which admittedly is the best in the world. The question, however, arises, What real detriment is there to meat as the result of freezing? Professor Rideal, of London University, who has made various experiments, has gone so far as to declare that the nutritive and digestive qualities of Argentine frozen meat are superior to those of the best freshly killed English meats, and that Argentine chilled meats possess the same qualities as English meat.

It was in 1880 that we began to receive frozen meat in any quantity from the Argentine, and year by year the quantity has increased. Other European countries are in need of cheap meat, and yet it is a singular fact that nine-tenths of the cold storage meat of the world comes to England. Just upon two hundred and fifty steamers are now engaged in bringing chilled or frozen meat to England from Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand. London

alone has thirty cold stores with a capacity for storing 3,000,000 carcases of mutton. South America, Australia, and New Zealand have seventy freezing establishments, chiefly for the purpose of supplying the British market. Satisfactory though that market is, Argentina is not content. She is beginning to import her chilled meat into the United States. She is making a bid for the French market. Professor Armand Gautier, of the Academy of Science, of Paris, has stated that the French people ought to eat a third more meat than they do. As the French production is insufficient, he has urged the importation of meat preserved by cold, because it can be kept almost indefinitely, and because in times of epidemic disease in live stock, or lack of forage, and above all in time of war, it would lend most important service.

For a long time, however, Continental countries have been shy about foreign meat, chiefly, I believe, because they were thinking of the interests of the breeders at home. Frozen meat has, however, been received in limited quantities in Italy, Switzerland, and Portugal. The Austrian Government at first restricted the importation to 10,000 tons, but as the meat was popular the restriction was removed. So, gradually, frozen meat of good quality, and cheaper than native meat, is finding a way into other European markets besides our own. The German-Argentine Society, recently formed, has been petitioning the German Parliament for the admission of Argentine frozen meat. The consider-

able consumption of frozen meat in England is encouraging Argentina in her ambition to contribute to the feeding of the immense artisan populations in the industrial centres of the continent.

Now anyone who has been much at sea knows about jerked beef. The preparation of salt beef in the old sailing days was a great business, and Argentina's first endeavour in the meat business was the preparation of jerked beef, as it is called. It is not going too far to say that it was this business which opened the eyes of South Americans to the potentialities of their country. But gradually the trade got shifted to the neighbouring little Republic of Uruguay, with Monte Video as the chief place of export. A great many of the cattle killed in Uruguay are bred in Argentina. The trade has extended to Brazil. Brazil, however, still calls for Argentine cattle. So although this dry-salting was first practised in Argentina in South America, and the trade has to a great extent been removed, Argentina is getting benefit because she sells hundreds of thousands of steers to the neighbouring republics. During the last year or two there has been a distinct movement in Argentina to recapture the trade. There is a huge demand for jerked meat in Cuba—and Argentina is after the business. Argentina has both eyes on the whole of the West Indies, where there are great negro populations who, it is supposed, would welcome this cheap kind of meat. It can be used in tropical regions where expensive cold storage would be an impossibility. Besides, an inferior

standard of animal, scarcely suitable for freezing, can be jerked.

The gigantic business in meat extracts carried on by such firms as Bovril and Liebig has given a cue to the wide-awake Argentine for another outlet to his enterprise. Indeed, the preparation of meat extract in Argentina to-day needs the killing of 200,000 head of cattle a year, whilst those killed for jerked beef are about three-quarters of that number. Anyway, Argentines, whilst glad enough to have foreign capital brought to develop their resources, are now constantly asking themselves, "Why do not we do all this?"

The fact is not to be overlooked that Argentina has a population of 7,000,000 to feed as well as to contribute to the feeding of the outer world. The population of the city of Buenos Aires is a million and a half. So, whilst it needs the killing of 4,000 head of cattle every day to keep the Republic supplied with meat, 1,800 of these are needed in the capital.

England clings to old and sometimes unsatisfactory ways. When I visited the abattoirs at Liniers I thought it would be no bad thing if a number of British municipalities sent a shipload of representatives to Argentina to study up-to-date slaughter-houses. One of the most important features of Liniers is the veterinary pavilion, with rooms for bacteriological and microscopical observations. There are twenty veterinary surgeons who make it their business to examine every carcase and stamp it

before it is permitted to be sold as food. The annual entry at the abattoir is, in round numbers, 750,000 sheep, 100,000 pigs, and 1,250,000 cattle. Yet the animals slaughtered for local consumption represent only three-fifths of the beasts sold in Buenos Aires, the rest going to the slaughter-yards attached to the freezing houses. These animals are not reared only in the province of Buenos Aires. Other provinces supply cattle, Cordoba, Santa Fé, Entre Rios, Corrientes, and further afield.

One of the most instructive places is the sheep market, covering 500 acres. Not only are there pens innumerable, but there are two galleries set apart for sales so that buyers may obtain a quick bird's-eye view of the stock offered. A police representative is constantly on duty, keeping a look-out that the marks are all right and preventing sheep stealing. Ten sanitary inspectors make inspection of sheep as they go along the gangway or race. Any sheep showing signs of disease is sent to the necropolis—supervised by the cattle division of the Ministry of Agriculture—is killed and examined. Over 4,000,000 sheep are inspected every year. Of these nearly 3,000,000 go to the freezing establishments and the others are either for local consumption or are bought to be fattened. On an average 4,000 railway wagons a month come in to Buenos Aires filled with sheep.

More than once I was made conscious of the deep disappointment amongst Argentine breeders that there is an embargo in Britain against the

importation of live stock. They insisted that if there were disease it would show itself during the three weeks' sea journey, so that British herd owners should have no fear of their own cattle being contaminated. The Argentines cannot get it out of their minds that it is not fear of disease, but protection for the British farmer which really actuates the British Board of Agriculture. Notwithstanding the increase in the sale of chilled and frozen meat, the Argentines, of course, recognise that the Englishman would prefer fresh killed meat if he could get it at a sufficiently cheap price. The steady increase in the price of home-grown meat in English shops is noted, and all the strings possible are being tugged in order to induce the British Government to relax. Besides, there is a considerable body of opinion in Great Britain itself, occasionally voiced in Parliament by the representatives of industrial constituencies, favourable to the importation of foreign animals, of course under proper inspection. Were admission granted, there would undoubtedly be a fall in the price of meat. But, even eliminating the natural antagonism of the British farmer, there is the consumer to be considered. Without joining in the combat whether Argentine meat is as good as British meat, there can be no doubt that the home buyer prefers the home article, and in innumerable cases he is prepared to pay more for it. There is the possibility, the danger if you like, if live stock from Argentina were admitted, for certain graziers to buy them, give them a week or two on

English meadows, and for the retail butchers, either in ignorance or with the intention to mislead the purchaser, to ticket the sides as "English fed."

Though Argentines grumble at the British ports being closed to them, causing a slump in their export of live stock, they acknowledge that the effect has been counterbalanced by the increase in the export of frozen meat. "Therefore why should they make such a fuss?" may be asked. Simply because the Argentines are eager to find an outlet for the productive capacity of their country. They do not rest on their oars. They are looking to the future. There is no question in their minds what Argentina can do. They do not want to be baulked by restrictions. It may be argued that, whilst they are zealous to secure freedom for their goods in oversea markets, they do not show any inclination to give an equally wide freedom to the goods of other countries in their own markets. That, however, just shows that considerations which often influence individual traders do not disappear when the nation acts collectively.

The point to be marked—and it is the significance of much in this chapter—is, that although other new nations provide increasing amounts of meat, Argentina is as alive as any of them to the growing necessity for the industrial communities of Europe—constantly increasing whilst agriculture stands still or slides back—to look across the oceans for their meat supply. The meat will be wanted. Competition to supply it will be keen. In some European countries the live stock is diminishing. Countries

which formerly did much business in supplying neighbours have now enough to do to supply themselves. Even Switzerland, unable to provide for her own needs, and no longer able to get what she requires from France and Italy, has turned to Argentina. The doors are closed by some European Powers, including Spain. But Argentina is keeping a watch on the artisan classes in commercial Europe. She expects the day will soon come when they will clamour for cheaper meat, and break down the doors. When that time does come, Argentina is determined to be ready with a full basket.

CHAPTER XI

THE STORY OF THE RAILWAYS

I THINK I have made it clear that, accepting Argentina as an amazingly fertile country, it is the railways that have chiefly been instrumental in making it one of the most prosperous lands, with a big part to play in providing food for the world. To-day 95 per cent. of its stock and produce is carried over some part of the 20,000 miles of line representing nearly £200,000,000 of British capital.

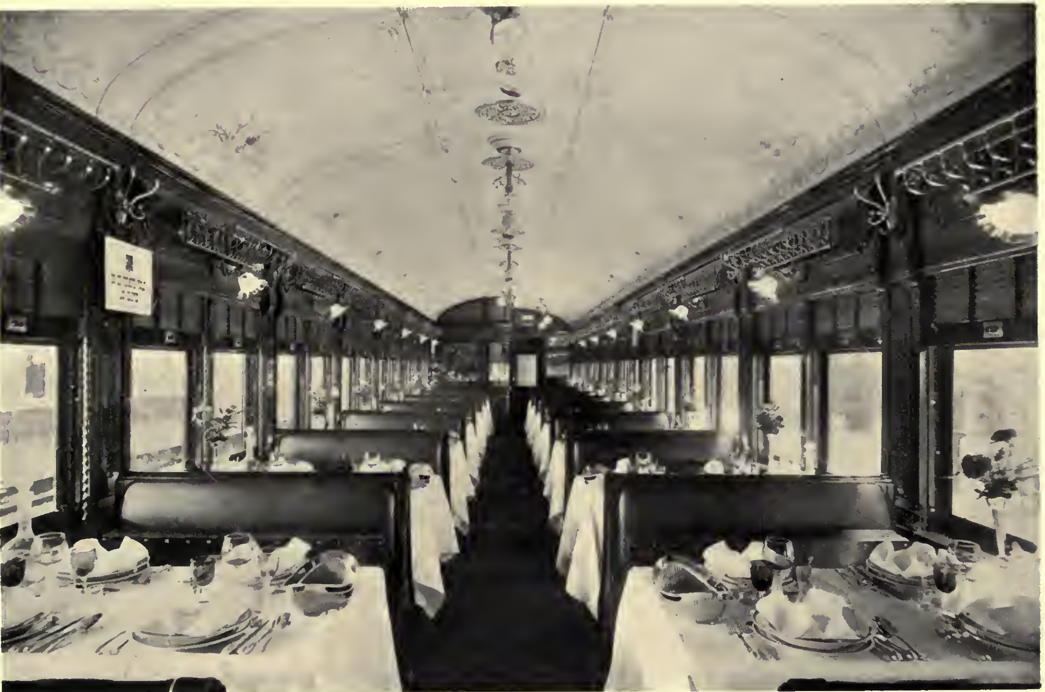
I remember riding in a coach attached to a freight train across some hundreds of miles of sand and sage bush, an impossible region from an agriculturist's point of view.

"This is an unprofitable stretch," I remarked to the railway official who was my companion.

"Not at all," was the reply; "you see, we have a full load, and we get paid mileage, whether we run through good or bad land."

That is one of the causes of railway profits in Argentina: the enormous distances freight often has to be carried.

It was not my lot to travel over all the railway systems in the Argentine, but I travelled over the most important of them, and from first to last I was enthusiastic. The rolling stock is excellent; the



INTERIOR OF DINING CAR, CENTRAL ARGENTINE RAILWAY.

permanent way is better than over similar country elsewhere, and as for the comfort of the passengers it is certainly unsurpassed. Frankly, I often felt like rubbing my eyes in order to make sure I was "roughing it" in Southern America.

Nowhere, out of Russia, have I seen the coaches so admirably adapted for small or large parties. You can have a section of a coach self-contained, dining-room, bedrooms and bathroom, suitable for families; and meals can be supplied from the buffet. If you travel over a certain distance you cannot miss having a buffet car; the law insists. Also the law insists on dormitory coaches on the all-night journeys. They are more commodious, because on most of the lines the gauge is wider than in England. There is none of the uncomfortable sleeping behind curtains, with, maybe, a stranger in the bunk overhead, and then having to wash in the smoking-room, which the long-suffering men of the United States put up with under the notion they possess the most luxurious travelling in the world. When you come to "special cars," a thing we know nothing about in England except for royalty, the United States comes first, but I would say Argentina is a close second.

Nothing could be jollier—when a sand storm is not on the wing—than travelling with pleasant friends in a reserved coach. It is like a flat. There is a sitting-room, and on a chill evening the fire burns brightly in an open grate. On a hot afternoon you have your easy chairs out on the platform at the rear and, with legs cocked up on the rail,

you can smoke your cigar. You press a button, and when the attendant has brought you an iced cocktail you agree that " roughing it " in Argentina is a delightful experience. If your car is properly equipped with a good kitchen and a good cook, and there is a decent " cellar "—hospitality is one of the legitimate boasts of the people—you fare as well as you would do in a first-class hotel. Were it not that I might be thought a sybarite, I could write like a chef about the menus I experienced and enjoyed in my long excursions throughout the land.

" This is a nice chicken," I said to my host one night. " Yes, we have a chicken run under the car," he answered. I laughed, for I imagined the innocent stranger was having his leg pulled ; but the next morning personal inspection assured me there was a " run," in the shape of a long galvanised screened box beneath the car.

It was pleasant to have a bedroom four times the size of a crib on an English " sleeper," to have a writing-table with electric light, and a bathroom adjoining. But the chief joy of a special car was that there was no changing to catch trains. Instructions were given that we would stop at a certain place at nine o'clock in the morning. The car was detached and shunted into a siding. We lived on the car and slept on it. Orders were given that we were to be picked up by the 3.15 local train in the morning, taken down a branch line forty miles, attached to the express which would be coming along at seven o'clock, and were to be released

somewhere else at 10.15 and put into a siding. I lived this sort of life for nearly a month. It was the best possible way of seeing the country.

Sometimes we travelled from point to point during the night; sometimes we camped, as it were, at a little wayside station, with the silence of the plains around us except when a great goods train went roaring by. We kept up the joke about "roughing it." After a dinner party, when the coffee and liqueurs were on the table, and the sitting-room was pouring billows of cigar smoke from the wide-open windows, we leaned back in our big chairs and hoped that other poor devils who were "roughing it" in the wilds were having no worse a time than we were.

Of course, the passenger traffic—except around Buenos Aires—is a secondary consideration compared with agricultural produce. It is estimated that the area of land suitable for agriculture but not yet cultivated is 290,000,000 acres, really all beyond the zone of railway influence. At a greater distance than fifteen miles from a railway station the cartage of the produce becomes so expensive and difficult that the profit disappears. Information supplied me by the Argentine Agricultural Society shows that the average cost of cartage is 0.70d. per mile per cwt. Therefore, whoever has his farm farther than fifteen miles from a station has to pay 10d. per cwt. for cartage. Lands lying within the agricultural zone, but distant more than fifteen miles from a railway station, lose enormously in value, as they cannot be utilised except for live stock. To find a means

of facilitating and cheapening the transport of cereals would be to double the production and value of the lands. The Agricultural Society thinks the solution may lie in the construction of cheap auxiliary lines of the simplest kind, which, laid down parallel to the principal lines at a distance of nineteen to twenty-two miles, or at right angles to them, would hand over to cultivation considerable zones of valuable fertile lands, and concentrate the produce in the loading stations at a fair cost to the farmers.

The question is well asked, if the 20,000 miles of rails are only sufficient to permit the cultivation of 70,000,000 acres, how many will be necessary when nearly 300,000,000 more acres are being worked? At present about 1,000 miles of fresh railroad are being laid down each year. £20,000,000 a year is being put into new railroad construction. Yet thirty years ago (1884) the total amount invested in Argentine railways—now running into hundreds of millions—was only £18,600,000. In 1885 all the railways in the Republic transported cargo amounting to a little over 3,000,000 tons. In 1905 it was over 12,500,000 tons. In 1913 it was moving toward 40,000,000 tons.

One harks back to the time of William Wheelwright, who may be called the father of railways in Argentina. It is three-quarters of a century since he was shipwrecked at the mouth of the River Plate. It was as a starveling that he got his first knowledge of Argentina. He had come from the United States, knew what railways were beginning

to do for the North, and dreamed what they ought to do for the South. When he got back to the United States he tried to interest his countrymen. But the North Americans turned a deaf ear. There they missed one of the greatest chances in their commercial history. Had they seized their opportunities, and come to South America with their adaptive enterprise, the story of the relationship between the United States and the Latin republics below them would have been very different from what it is to-day. Finding he could raise no capital in his own country for railway enterprise in Argentina, William Wheelwright came to England and interested Thomas Brassey, one of our railway pioneers. Brassey, Wheelwright, and others got capital, and a little line out of "B.A." was built. Other little lines were built. Bigger lines were built. There were set-backs; occasionally the investing public was shy. But, all told, for forty years a mile a day of railroad was laid down in Argentina, and during the last few years the rate has been three miles a day. And it is all done by British capital.

Before I went out to this country I was conscious of a certain apprehension in England that we had rather too much money in Argentina, and that it was about time we called a halt. The general average of dividend during recent years has been a fraction over 5 per cent., not much return for adventure in a new country; but the fact is not to be lost sight of that enormous extensions have been provided out of revenue, as well as out of fresh

capital. That there is jealousy amongst considerable sections of the young Argentines at the financial interests which a foreign country like England has in the Republic is undoubted. But it may be said that the mass of the people recognise what they owe to foreign capital, and although the Government is inclined to increase the tightness of its grip on railway administration, making bargains for lines through uneconomic country in return for a concession through fertile land—so that occasionally a company will throw up a scheme rather than pay the price by building in a region the Government wants to be developed—I do not think it can fairly be said that the Government is antagonistic to foreign capital. The danger of foreign capital getting a hold on Argentina in the way of extensive concessions is sometimes preached; but the pouring of foreign gold into the country brings too precious a return to the Argentines themselves for any check to be put upon it.

Besides, in strict fact, very little money is taken out of the country in the way of dividend; the profits are mostly thrown back to provide new works. I have lying before me the returns of the four principal railways for the year ending June 13th, 1913 (the Central Argentine, the Great Southern, the Buenos Aires and Pacific, and the Western of Buenos Aires). During the year the four companies expended in additional capital £8,870,639, and the earnings were £9,017,944, so that the investing public extracted only £147,305, which is not a large draft

in return for the hundreds of millions invested. The manner in which the earnings are thrown back into the country for further development shows that, despite the vague apprehensions in certain quarters, the public confidence is still firm.

The Central Argentine Railway may first be described, because not only does it date its origin from the earliest times of railway enterprise in the Republic, but it is one of the most up-to-date lines in the world. At the head of it as general manager is Mr. C. H. Pearson, young, shrewd, and, like most strong men, a quiet man. When in England I hear of lack of capability in railway management I think of such a man as Mr. Pearson, who has won his spurs at home, and by clear vision and steady, determined action is successfully directing a company which has 3,000 miles of railroad, most of it through rich country. The line to-day is the offspring of amalgamations. In the early 'seventies the Central Argentine opened a line from the river port of Rosario to Cordoba, two hundred and forty-six miles. Later on Buenos Aires and Rosario were joined by another railway company. Subsequently the two lines were linked. Always, without halt, the line has pushed its head into fresh country, until now its arms stretch like a fan with Buenos Aires as the base.

I have heard Buenos Aires and Rosario described as the London and Liverpool of Argentina—and the illustration is apt. Rosario, to be pictured in a later chapter, is a business and shipping centre, and between the two towns there is a constant rush by

commercial men. It is inspiriting to see the rush at the Retiro station in the early morning, when men are busy getting their newspapers at the stalls and hastening to the breakfast car and the roomy coaches. To the eye of the newly arrived stranger there are innumerable little differences from things he is accustomed to at home. But they are matters of detail to which you speedily get used, so that after a week or two, or even a few days, you have a little start in the realisation that you are not travelling in a London and North-Western express, but amongst a similar crowd of business men, in a far part of the world, who are intent on their own affairs.

Twelve passenger trains journey daily between Buenos Aires and Rosario. Until Mr. Pearson came along with fresh ideas most of the passenger traffic was by night. Trains left both places at ten o'clock; the passengers went to bed, and early next morning the destination was reached. Now there are two day express trains completing the journey in just under five hours. Only first-class passengers travel by these trains, as excellent as the expresses between New York and Philadelphia. There is nothing in the way of scenery to move one to rapture; but there is good agricultural progress on either side. The line is being double tracked and stone ballasted, and the running is comfortable. And sitting in this train, thronged with business men, whilst the great engine tears along to keep to scheduled time, you understand something of the spirit of modern Argentina.

Amongst the cities of the world Buenos Aires takes thirteenth place in size. With its population of a million and a half, long-distance electric tram-cars and the institution of an "underground" system are not enough. High rents are driving many thousands to the suburbs, and when, in the morning, the rush of trains begins to deliver throngs of men and women into the heart of "B.A.," the scene is animated. All the big companies running out of "B.A." are nursing their valuable suburban traffic. The Central Argentine is electrifying over forty-four miles of double track in the neighbourhood of the city. This company, in the suburban section of its system, now carries 15,000,000 passengers a year. All the trains of the company run 889,000 miles a month. A handsome new station is being erected on the site of the old Retiro. I was able to inspect the latest pneumatic system of signalling. When at Rosario I went over the extensive work-shops, and although it would be idle even to suggest they compared with Crewe, Swindon, or Doncaster, considering most of the parts are imported, they are comprehensive works, and the machinery of the best.

Since Mr. Pearson has been in charge the Central Argentine has taken to running excursions, and encouraging the holiday makers in the flat lands to go and seek bracing air in the Cordoba mountains. Alta Gracia—of which more anon—an old Spanish town which has been drowsing in the sun for several centuries, is now one of the most popular of holiday haunts.

But, though naturally enough the average passenger considers a railway line from the way it ministers to his needs, it is the goods traffic which is of first importance to railways in a country like Argentina. I went on the Central Argentine line as far north as Tucuman, and as far west as Cordoba and Rio Cuarto, and beheld the richness of the plains. There were endless miles of wheat and maize and linseed; there were the great herds of cattle and sheep. I witnessed the sugar cane harvest in the north in full swing.

All the goods are not brought into "B.A." The line runs to three up-river ports, Rosario, Villa Constitucion and Campana, where there are wide wharves and grain elevators. A goods tonnage of nearly 7,000,000 a year and receipts of nearly £3,500,000 a year spell big business. Yet one found this was only the beginning of things. Already there are gigantic schemes in project for irrigation works in those stretches which are incapable of use because of the insufficient rainfall. The Argentine Government is giving serious attention to this matter. But the railway companies in the Republic are not content to twiddle their thumbs and keep asking, "Why does not the Government do something?" All of them are attending to irrigation themselves, or are doing the work for the Government. The Central Argentine, on behalf of the Government, have an irrigation scheme on hand which will cost close upon £600,000. New lines and extensions up to a further 1,600 miles are projected to cost

£8,000,000. Over 35,000 employees are on this line. The length of rolling stock is 143 miles, including 600 passenger coaches and 2,200 beds. Twenty million passengers are carried a year, and the total receipts work out at £40 a week per mile.

The second big railway which attracted my admiration was the Buenos Aires and Pacific, which strikes westward across the continent. The company was formed as recently as 1882, but it has a present capital of over £50,500,000. It owns 1,406 miles, it leases 2,011 miles, and so operates 3,417 miles. Some 150 miles are under construction. It has over 16,000,000 passengers annually, and over 6,000,000 tons of freight; and its gross earnings in the last financial year (July 1912 to June 1913) were £5,590,613. During the last ten years it has absorbed a number of lesser lines—the Villa Maria Rufino, the Bahia Blanca and North-Western, the Great Western, and, lastly, the Argentine Transandine. It has also bought a length of over 200 miles of Government line out in the west. The "B.A. and Pacific" has several subsidiary undertakings. In conjunction with the Great Southern Railway it has a well-equipped light and power company. In my chapter on Bahia Blanca I shall deal with the port accommodation provided by the Pacific Company to dispatch the grain produced within its area to Europe. Perhaps the most important improvement made by the company has been the high level independent access to the city of Buenos Aires. This line, which is five miles in length, consists of

two viaducts of brickwork, containing 116 arches of 42.3 feet span each, and 19 steel bridges, the largest being 178.8 feet. From the River Plate an area of 366 acres is being reclaimed to be used for goods sidings and access to the docks. For the conveyance of coal, and materials for use on the line, the company owns its own fleet of steamers. It would be easy enough to give a bunch of figures to show how the passenger traffic has grown; anyway, its suburban service bears comparison with that of any other line entering the capital.

The Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway is becoming increasingly popular, for people desiring to see the world now travel from "B.A." across the pampas, over the Andes, and so down to Valparaiso in Chili, where steamers can be obtained to take them up to Peru, Panama, and San Francisco. Leaving "B.A.," the train runs for some twelve hours across an extensive plain which is far from indicating to the traveller the great mountain ranges which will surprise him later on. Across this plain the lines of the railway extend in an absolutely straight line from Vedia to Makenna, a distance of 175 miles, which is the world's record. Near the first-mentioned station the railway curves in the form of an S; without this, the stretch on the straight would have been 206 miles long.

Although the pampas are occasionally marked by undulations and small green-covered slopes, the first notable elevations are not encountered until Mercedes is reached. These are the San Luis hills,

the outposts of the Cordillera. Passing on the western side of this chain the picturesque city of San Luis is reached. As the traveller approaches the Cordillera of the Andes he finds himself in a district topographically distinct but always fertile, and watered by canals fed by the Tunuyan and Mendoza rivers. The view of the Cordillera in the early morning is a spectacle worthy of admiration. At a distance of one hundred miles before arrival at Mendoza the interminable chain of the Andes, with its snow-capped peaks mingling with the clouds, is distinguishable. As the train approaches their imposing grandeur becomes more and more evident. Another of the views which delights the tourist, and makes the business man think, is that of the smiling vineyards extending on both sides of the line in a delightful prospect until lost on the horizon.*

From Mendoza the line runs across the Andes by the Uspallata Valley route, the only transcontinental line in South America. What the Suez Canal and the Trans-Siberian Railway have done for the Far Eastern trade, the Transandine Railway is achieving for transcontinental traffic in South America by giving rapid communication between the two South American Republics—reducing the journey between Buenos Aires and Valparaiso from thirteen and a half days to thirty-eight hours—and thereby cementing closer commercial relations and developing trade with the Far East.

* Subsequent chapters describe Mendoza and the author's personal experience during a trip into the Andes.

This has only been made possible by the summit tunnel of the Transandine Railway, which was opened for public traffic in May, 1910, so that the distance between Buenos Aires and Valparaiso has been reduced to 888 miles. It is probably of interest to state that this tunnel is one of the longest of its kind in the world, being 10,384 feet long, including two artificial ends 442 feet in length altogether, and it lies at an elevation of 10,778 feet above the sea-level. It is nearly 1,500 feet higher than the highest carriage road in Europe, that over the Stelvio Pass, and more than 3,500 feet higher than the Mont Cenis, St. Gothard, and Simplon tunnels. So well were the levels and lines kept that the difference at the junction was only ¾ inch, and of the line 2¾ inches, while the chainage was only 2.14 inches less than calculated. At one period 1,700 men were engaged on the works.

Unfortunately, the beautiful and impressive bronze statue of the Christ is not visible to passengers in the train, but it can easily be reached by coach or mule from Inca. It stands some 3,000 feet higher than Las Cuevas, and is situated on the dividing line between Argentina and Chili. It was the gift of a pious Buenos Aires lady, Señora César de Costa, and was erected as a monument to the signing of the peace treaty between the two countries.

The Pacific Railway has expended over £80,000 in snow protection for their line during the past two years, with the result that through traffic can

THE STATUE OF CHRIST ON THE ARGENTINA-CHILI FRONTIER.

be maintained throughout the severest winter with perfect safety.

The line brings Chili at least a fortnight nearer London, a great consideration in these days of commercial enterprise. British manufacturers are taking advantage of the fact, and that there is a growing demand in Chili for British goods is shown by the increasing number of representatives who favour this route. Previous to the opening of the railway passengers and goods had to travel by boat through the treacherous Straits of Magellan, a long and tedious journey. Now a well-appointed and comfortable train is entered at Buenos Aires, and thirty-eight hours later the traveller finds himself in Valparaiso or Santiago.

But the fortune of the Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway really lies in the V-shaped territory from Mendoza to Bahia Blanca and Buenos Aires. There is a great country still to be awakened in the foothills of the Andes. There are millions of acres on the pampas awaiting the plough and the coming of the cattle breeder. The Pacific Company cannot but go on and prosper. It is a matter of regret, however, that it has lost as general manager Mr. Guy Calthrop. In the handling of a complex railway system he has no superior. A strong man, physically and mentally, he has had rough hours during labour trouble. But he kept a steady nerve. He went out to Argentina with high reputation of his work on the Caledonian line; he has shown the capacity of a general in the development of

traffic during the few years he has been in Argentina. But England called him to take the most responsible post in the railway world, the general managership of the London and North Western Company.

Now I come to the Great Southern Company, one of the oldest and one of the most famous lines on the South American continent. From "B.A." it extends southwards for 500 miles to Bahia Blanca. From there it shoots westwards for 348 miles to Neuquén, and an extension to the Chilian frontier is on its way. On behalf of the Government the company is carrying forward extensive irrigation works in the Neuquén territory which, when completed, will convert the valleys of the upper Rio Negro and Rio Neuquén, hitherto one of the least productive, into one of the most fertile regions of the country. The growth of the company, since it started in 1865 with a length of 71 miles, is worth noting. After 1865 the mileage grew progressively as follows: 1873, 145 miles; 1883, 472 miles; 1893, 1,406 miles; 1903, 2,404 miles; 1913, 3,641 miles. The lines actually in course of construction, or about to be commenced, represent some 670 miles. Thus it can be safely calculated that the mileage of the Great Southern Railway will, before long, exceed 4,300 miles. You get an appreciation of the zone served by the Southern by the comparative figures of the increase in its passenger traffic during the last five years: 1909, 16,865,200; 1910, 18,906,505; 1911, 22,231,112; 1912, 24,069,974; 1913, 27,454,719.

PLAZA CONSTITUCION STATION AT BUENOS AIRES.

Of these last figures, for 1913, it is significant that the suburban traffic is represented by 19,841,156, which shows the population that lives within reach of Buenos Aires.

Passenger traffic is, in fact, a main feature of the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway. On the Monday following the Easter holidays in 1913 trains with no fewer than 102 sleeping coaches arrived at the company's termini in Buenos Aires. Of these, fifty were from the fashionable bathing resort at Mar del Plata. The special feature of this Mar del Plata service is, that during the season as many as three heavy trains, composed of sleeping cars, are run nightly, in addition to afternoon expresses, formed of luxurious parlour cars, which run three days a week. In 1913 35,964 return tickets were sold to this watering place 250 miles from Buenos Aires. In the same year parcels and excess baggage represented 291,608 tons, though it should be stated more than half this amount was for milk, butter, and cream. The number of tons of goods carried in 1909 was 4,852,379; in 1913 the tonnage was 7,977,663. Live stock carried in 1909 were 5,576,983, whilst in 1913 the number was 6,562,951. Fully 50 per cent. of the live stock received at the slaughter-houses for consumption in Buenos Aires, and by the freezing establishments for export to England in the form of frozen or chilled meat, is dispatched from southern stations. The bull that obtained the championship in 1913 at Palermo, and fetched the world-record price of £7,000, was born on Señor

Pereyra Iraola's estate at Pereyra station on the Great Southern Railway.

Practically the whole of the zone served by the Great Southern Railway in the Province of Buenos Aires is adaptable to the growing of cereals generally, with the exception of maize, which is limited to the districts nearest Buenos Aires. The authorised capital of the Southern is £53,525,530, and that issued amounts to £48,981,530. The net receipts for 1913 (June 30th) amounted to £2,870,349, and the dividend for the year was 7 per cent., which has been maintained for the last fifteen years, being, indeed, as high as the law will permit. The company's rolling stock, comprising some 15,000 vehicles, was recently valued at £7,437,654. The general manager of the company is Mr. Percy Clarke, the doyen amongst English railway officials in Argentina, and a man of charming personality.

It is unnecessary for me to go through a catalogue of all that is being done by the various railroads in the Republic. But I must refer to the work being done by what is known as the "Farquhar group," an amalgamation of railways under the spirited enterprise of Mr. Percival Farquhar, a go-ahead North American who is chiefly responsible for the creation of the Argentine Railway Company, which is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maine, U.S.A. This company was formed a couple of years ago (July 12th, 1912) to group together various railways in order to obtain benefits of unified management, and provide increased railroad facilities

in the northern districts of the Republic. Two of the principal railways which this company now control are the Central Cordoba and the Entre Rios lines. Also it has a controlling interest in a number of smaller companies. The biggest amalgamation effected by this company has been the purchase by the Cordoba Central Railway of the undertakings of the Cordoba and Rosario and Cordoba Central Buenos Aires Extension Lines; and the proposal at the time of writing is to create £23,000,000 worth of new stock, whilst £18,000,000 worth is to be issued to the holders of existing stock in the three companies. A good deal of reorganisation is in progress.

Although competition between the big lines is as severe as anywhere in the world, except within the United States, this movement in Argentina for amalgamation and agreement in regard to spheres of interest shows a disposition to put an end to fierce rivalry. Indeed, it is more than likely that within the next few years there will be more amalgamation and working agreements between the big companies.

CHAPTER XII

ROSARIO

It was not my fortune to see Rosario, one of the leading commercial cities in the Republic, under the most favourable circumstances. During the few days I was there the weather was all it ought not to have been—dull and rainy and cold—and the streets, except in a few central thoroughfares, morasses of mire.

It is a purely commercial town. It puts forward no claim to be artistic or cultured, and it has no pretensions to be a leader of fashion. All the men in Rosario are engaged in money-making. There are big offices, and the business men are at their desks early in the morning and remain late in the afternoon. Great railway lines converge upon Rosario, and along the front of the River Parana there are miles of goods sheds and wharves, with ships lying alongside into which the elevators pour their streams of wheat. There is the constant shunting of trains, the shrieking of cranes, and the swinging of derricks.

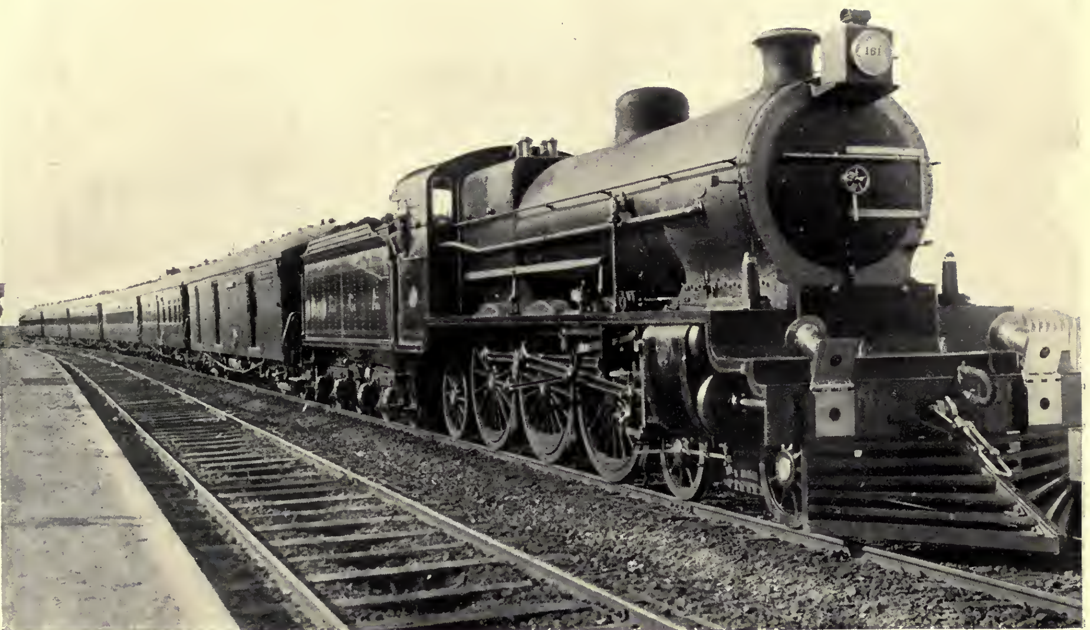
The workers are the best type of Latins, Italians from North Italy, or North Catalonian Spaniards or Basques. Other Latins do not get much of a chance in Rosario. There are a number of Englishmen, but they are swamped in the total. I made in-

quiries about the relative merits of English and Italian working men, and was told that the Englishmen are superior, two of them doing the work which it generally takes three Italians to accomplish. But it did not strike me, considering the high cost of living, that the workers in Rosario are highly paid from an English point of view. Commerce is frequently held up by strikes. Indeed, there is probably no place where strikes are so recurrent as in Rosario.

This is a town which came into existence a century ago as a sort of military outpost to fight the Indians. Half a century back it was little more than a village, and in 1870 it had a population of 21,000. To-day the inhabitants number 200,000. It is a great port for sending abroad wheat, maize, and linseed; indeed, its exports annually are about 5,000,000 tons. As the country north of Rosario is rapidly being colonised, and as the town is the up-river port capable of receiving ocean-going steamers, its continued growth is assured. Though, of course, I do not forget the gradual silting of the River Plate into which the Parana flows, and the restraint this is sure to put upon shipping in the future, Rosario is certain to go ahead. The day is not far distant when there will be extended railway communication between Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia; and, as all the lines will pass through Rosario, it will get the benefit. It is reported that Brazil has coal mines yet to be exploited, and if this takes place Argentina, which is much in need of coal, will be one of the principal markets.

I spent an interesting morning in the workshops of the Central Argentine Railway, which are situated here. They are extensive works, though most of the engines on the line are brought from England. The majority of the workmen, naturally enough, are Italians, though the men at the heads of departments are Englishmen. The goods yard of the Central Argentine Company is as large as that at Crewe, and is ever busy with the great freight cars coming in from the west and north. When I was there the railway station was being transferred to another part of the city so that passenger and goods traffic could be more expeditiously handled.

Though Rosario prides itself that it keeps its nose to the grindstone in the matter of money-making, it is not quite neglectful of other sides of life. There is a fine system of electric tramways. There are huge blocks of municipal buildings, and imposing banks and theatres; but the law courts, whilst having a fine exterior, suggested a certain shabbiness to me because of the weeds that were growing in the courtyards. There is the usual race-course, and close by there is the Parque Independecia. And, of course, there is a Plaza San Martin, whilst in other parts of the town is the Plaza San Lopez, and the Plaza Jewell, presented by an Englishman who made his fortune in the city. Some distance outside Rosario is the English suburb of Fisherton, and I noticed that the Englishmen had fallen into the Argentine practice of calling their houses after their wives—the Villa Elsie, the Villa Florence, the Villa



THE ROSARIO EXPRESS, CENTRAL ARGENTINE RAILWAY.

Ethel, and so on. As might be expected, there is a golf course. In the city itself there is a Strangers' Club, of which most of the members are Englishmen.

An evidence of the prosperity of Rosario is the way in which land has increased in value. Plots which in 1885 could have been bought for 2s. 6d. a yard now fetch £200 a yard. On the outskirts of the town, where a few years back a bit of land on which to build a residence—say twenty yards by sixty yards—could have been obtained for £5, it cannot be obtained to-day for less than £150. I saw one stretch on the river front which was bought twenty years ago for £2,000 and sold last year for £40,000. Twenty miles from Rosario camp land which a dozen years ago could have been obtained for £10,000 the square league is not allowed to change hands to-day for less than £100,000 the square league.

With nightfall the Rosario people give themselves up to pleasure. Attached to the big hotel there is a huge saloon, and whilst men play dominoes and cards, music is provided by a band composed of Austrian girls. There is a great *café chantant,* and every night hundreds of people, men and their wives, sit at the little tables having meals, or partaking of beverages, whilst a band plays and comic singers perform, or a kinematograph entertainment is provided. I saw nothing at all in Rosario to suggest it was a place of culture. But it is a town throbbing with commercial activity, and when business is over the people seek nothing more than the lightest of entertainment.

CHAPTER XIII

CORDOBA AND ITS ATTRACTIONS

An old-time languorous atmosphere seems to hang round Cordoba. It is a city with eighty churches, and as it has a population of 80,000, I pride myself on my arithmetic that works it out to one church for every thousand inhabitants. It is named after Cordova, in Spain, was founded in 1504, and is the Oxford of the Argentine. Its university dates from 1666, and has a high reputation for learning in law and medicine.

Those old Spaniards who came pioneering down this way from Peru in their early days of conquest had a neat eye for the picturesque. Speaking generally, I would not place Argentina high as a land of beauty. But in the middle land there is a fine rib of mountains, the Sierra de Cordoba; and on a rise, so that it may be seen from afar, when the heat dances hazily there is something immaterial about Cordoba as though it were the city of a waking dream. See it, however, in the early morning, when the air is fresh and the gleam of the sun catches it sideways and the buildings are silhouetted against shadows, and you witness a picture which would enthral an artist.

By northern European standard it is not an

ancient city. But as living beneath the sun brings early old age to men and women, so cities which have had a few centuries of constant sun glare get a drowsy mediævalism which sister cities in more temperate climes must have long ages to acquire. The aroma of the Church and of scholasticism permeates Cordoba. In many respects it is quite modern, with its big new hotel, where the band plays in the restaurant whilst you are dining, and its streets lit with electricity and electric tramcars jangling their way through the squares and plenty of taxi-cabs on the ranks.

But the tendency is to forget these, and in recollection of the place you think chiefly of the quiet in the quadrangle of the university, the calm of the great library, the weatherworn walls of the old churches and the dim lights of their interiors doing much to soften the tawdriness of the decorations. There is a good deal in the assertion occasionally made that the towns of recently developed countries lack individuality, distinction; that, with all their progress, they are more or less duplicates of each other. It is easy enough in Argentina to find evidence of this modern spirit in town planning. Yet I know of none of the newer countries where the towns have such a separate character as in Argentina.

Of course, there are raw townships of yesterday which have nothing to show but two wretched rows of badly built houses on each side of the railway track, just as you will find in the western parts of the United States and Canada. As Argentine towns

grow they do not grow uniformly, as though they were designed by the same architect or were imitating one another. They show individuality. If you like, it may be just a desire to show off. Many municipalities are loaded with debt. But they will have their cities beautiful. When they have made a broad grass-plotted, tree-girt avenue right through the town to the railway station, and the station buildings are low and ugly and out of keeping with the rest of the town, and the railway authorities at Buenos Aires turn a deaf ear to the deputations which may wait upon them, you can safely bet that one of these nights the railway buildings will be consumed by fire, so that the company is compelled to erect a new station.

Because it is the oldest city in Argentina and has inhabitants with pedigrees, and because of the society attracted to it, Cordoba regards itself as the aristocratic centre of the Republic. In the neighbouring hills are sanatoria, like Jesu Maria, much favoured by the people of the plains who need a change.

Cordoba, like other places, is quite certain it has the best-dressed ladies. In a sedate sort of way there is a good deal of gaiety. On hot summer evenings a band plays in the square, where there is a statue of San Martin. There may be a town in Argentina which has not an equestrian statue of the Liberator from Spain. If so, I must have missed it. The statues are all facsimiles of the original, and there must be dozens of them. It is the one point on which

all the towns agree; they must have a statue of San Martin on a prancing steed, and eternally pointing in the direction of the Andes. Once I unfortunately made an Argentine angry, for, being anxious to show me the beauties of his town, he sought my wishes as to what I desired to see, and I replied, "Anything you like, so long as you do not take me to see the statue of San Martin—I've seen him so often during the last month." The feathers were up at once. I smoothed them down by assuring him that we have very few statues of Wellington in England.

The Cordobians are fond of music and racing and gambling, and sitting in the cafés throwing the dice-box. There is a delightful theatre, the Rivera Indarte, built by the provincial Government. Opera companies which go to Buenos Aires are invited to come to Cordoba, and the authorities give a guarantee against loss. The proper thing is to buy a box, holding six persons, for the little season of ten performances. The cost of such a box is £150. The charge is a dollar for the *entrada* (entrance), which provides nothing except permission to enter the building. This *entrada* charge is like the charge for "attendance" in old-fashioned hotels in England, which is an excuse for sticking another eighteenpence a day on your bill so that you may be deceived into thinking you are paying six shillings for your room when you are really paying seven and sixpence. So at the opera in Cordoba, usually Italian, the lowest ticket is two dollars to be permitted to stand up,

but you have already parted with one dollar to go in. Cordoba province, like the other provinces, thinks no small beer of itself. It rather resents receiving orders from the Federal Government sitting in Buenos Aires. Perhaps that is the reason the Argentine National Anthem is so seldom heard.

Students are attracted to Cordoba University from all over the country. Most of the professors have had experience of European universities, generally French. The library is extensive and varied. I handled some fine old Bibles, bound in sheepskin, relics of the early Spaniards. Also there is a remarkable collection of old maps, showing that the priests as they travelled this way were first-class geographers. Whatever literary sentiment there is in Argentina finds expression in Cordoba. Indeed, it is the natural meeting-place for men inclined to culture for its own sake. But it is by no means a sleepy hollow. It has several really good newspapers. There is a great export of lime. Being the centre of a big wheat area, much milling is done by modern electric appliance. Light and power are provided by an enterprising English company. There is a shoe factory, which turns out 2,500 pairs of footwear a day.

Yet, as I have said, though there is plenty to prove that Cordoba is awake, the impression left on the memory is that it is an old-fashioned Spanish university town that has strayed to the central part of South America. This may be because I spent most of my time in the university buildings, or

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

ON THE WAY TO MARKET IN CORDOBA.

roaming through the churches. In the cathedral a shrivelled but kindly old priest showed me a gallery of bishops of Cordoba; but I suspect they are much like the Scottish kings which adorn the walls of Holyrood Palace, many painted by one hand, and from imagination of what the bishops looked like rather than from any knowledge of their actual appearance.

I went to the Jesuit church, where a tonsured, jolly monk showed me the relics. People who had had rheumatism, and who had been cured by prayer, gave acknowledgment by sending golden arms or silver legs. There was a little golden motor car, and this came from a lady who in a terrible smash prayed her life might be saved; and it was saved, and here was her gift. Here was the statue of the Virgin, which performs miracles. Those who are inclined to doubt are shown a stack of crutches of those who hobbled into the church to seek the aid of the Virgin and walked out quite cured. The little figure of the Virgin is as fresh as though it had been carved and painted only last year. Yet the story goes it has never been touched for nigh four hundred years. In those far-off days it was sent from Spain. But the ship was wrecked in mid-Atlantic. Those who had expected the statue were in distress, and prayers were offered on the coast that the good Mother would send another statue. And whilst they prayed the case in which was the statue was floated on the shore, and the statue was quite unharmed. At once miracles were performed, and

miracles have been performed over since. I saw the crutches and I saw the golden motor-car.

From the rafters hung many flags of foreign countries captured by Argentina in war. There is a Union Jack, with colours dimmed with years, which was seized from the British nearly a hundred years ago, when a British force landed and it was a toss-up whether Argentina would not become a British Colony. Many British visitors cast a regretful eye upon that drooping flag in the Jesuit church at Cordoba. They are not told—but it is a fact all the same—it is not the real flag. I was shown the real flag folded in a glass case in a room behind the altar. Some years ago a number of young Englishmen travelling in the country recovered the real flag, which then hung in the chancel. There was such a how-d'ye-do that it had to be returned. To avoid a similar mishap it was put under lock and key in a glass case, and kept in a chamber not accessible to the public. But the public would still want to see the British flag. So not to disappoint them an exact copy was made, and it is the imitation flag upon which most visiting Englishmen cast a patriotic but regretful eye.

There is an agricultural college, a wonderful drive up a hill to a park which provides long distance views, an English school and a German school. I could easily give a dozen places where these developments can be found, and better. The point is that you find these things at all in the very heart of South America. Being the heart of the southern

continent, Cordoba has been selected by the Government as its chief observatory. It is the Argentine Greenwich. The Republic keeps the same time from east to west, and it keeps Cordoba time. The observatory is under the control of a staff from the United States.

The Cordobians are great lovers of pleasure. Sometimes on the grim hoardings of London you see how a railway company will take you, first class, to a popular seaside resort, house and feed you in a well-known hotel, and bring you back at a fixed inclusive sum for the week-end. The Central Argentine Railway does the same thing in regard to Alta Gracia, a pleasant village in the hills, and where there is the best mountain hotel in the world. Alta Gracia is about an hour's run from Cordoba, and on Sundays there is a rush of holiday-makers, reminiscent of the Pullman express out of London down to Brighton on a Sunday morning. The "fixed charge" is popular. Everybody knows exactly how much the outing is going to cost. At ten o'clock a train thronged with holiday-makers sets out for Alta Gracia. By eleven o'clock the place is reached. At noon there is *déjeuner*. The afternoon can be spent lounging about, listening to the band, playing golf, playing tennis, gambling in the casino, taking walks in the wooded hills. At seven o'clock is dinner. The train returns at nine o'clock, and by ten Cordoba and home is reached.

One of the pleasantest week-ends in my life I spent at Alta Gracia. There is a little group of

Englishmen, associated with the Central Argentine Railway, living at Cordoba, and, as officials have special cars, we had a couple of cars attached to the train on Saturday night. At Alta Gracia these were detached and side tracked. Then we "roughed it" for twenty-four hours. After the cocktails, and whilst dinner was being prepared, we sat out on the plain. On one side rose the village, revealed by points of light in the blackness, and on the summit of the hill was a glow of light just like a great and well-illumined liner appears as she ploughs the sea. That was the mountain hotel. On the other side was the prairie, just a streak of dark below the deep blue of the sky. The stars seemed bigger and nearer and more numerous than they do in northern climes. There was the usual searching for the Southern Cross, and when found we all agreed it was the most overrated constellation in the heavens. A caressing warmth was in the air. It was good to sit there, smoking our pipes and "listening to the silence."

Away on the plains of central South America—that sounds like "roughing it." But you have got to go much farther afield to rough it. The car which my friend and I had would have attracted much notice in England. There was a pleasant sitting-room, with big easy chairs and a real English open fireplace. There were three bedrooms, not the "cribb'd, cabin'd, confin'd" cabins we have in our "sleepers" at home, and there was the luxury of a bathroom. There was a kitchen, a chef, and

THE NINTH GREEN AT ALTA GRACIA.

IN THE COURTYARD OF THE MONASTERY AT ALTA GRACIA.

a sprightly waiter. The whole car was lit by electricity. So we sat down to dinner—half a dozen courses as excellent as can be served at a London restaurant which looks after its reputation. We filled the coach with our tobacco smoke; we told our best stories; we exchanged yarns about things which had befallen us in distant parts of the world —in Siberia and Australia, Peru and Havana, the Soudan and California—for here the corners of the earth were met in a side-tracked private car in the lee of a pretty holiday village in the middle of Argentina. The Spaniards have done much to this land; but bands of young Englishmen have played and are playing their part.

In the delicious freshness of the dawn we sauntered about in our pyjamas, drank tea and smoked cigarettes. The day came with a rush of glory. It was Sunday morning, and the bell in the monastic church on the hill was clanging for the faithful to go and pray. The mystery which hung over Alta Gracia had gone, and in the truthful light of the morning it was just a straggling Spanish village, with many trees about, and the red hills in the distance making a jagged background. It was a torrid Sunday morning, and when we had had our tubs, and had shaven and put on our flannels, we set out to "make a day of it."

The bell of the old church was clang-clanging. Peasants in their Sunday clothes—the women squat and short-skirted and with highly coloured kerchiefs over their heads, the men in baggy velvet trousers

and slouch hats, their faces polished with soap and their hair reeking with scented oil—were slowly climbing to worship. The walls of the church, and the buildings where the monks formerly lived, suggested a fortress prepared to resist attack rather than a haven of peace. There were long slits in the stonework through which the nose of a musket could be stuck. For in the old days the monks had to fight as well as pray. Alta Gracia was very lonely centuries ago, and always liable to attack. But now all that is far in the background. The church was crowded. The priest at the candled altar was chanting. The air was pungent with incense. There was not room for all the worshippers to sit so many stood, and when they knelt they spread their handkerchiefs on the floor. There was nothing which could be described as distinctively Argentine. Better-to-do folk were dressed just like better-to-do folk are dressed in Europe. It was just the usual Sunday morning scene you can witness in Spain and Italy—countries six thousand miles away.

One blinked on coming from the shadows of the church into the sunshine. The holiday-makers from Cordoba had arrived, and were scattering to find suitable haunts for picnicking. We tramped up the heavy, dusty road, panting and perspiring, but encouraged by the sight of the spreading, low-roofed hotel. Ah! at last we were on the broad balcony, twice as wide as the promenade deck of our greatest liner. A touch of the bell, and we were having our

favourite beverages, much iced. Through the shimmering heat the eye could wander over the endless brown plains. Solemn Argentines, inclined to portliness, sat in big basket-chairs, surrounded by their sedate families, doing nothing at all. There were invalids who had come here for the high, dry air. There were noisy English youths, in gorgeous blazers, arranging a tennis match. A party of heavy-shoed golfers were setting out.

Alta Gracia is renowned throughout Argentina as a health resort. In the hot months—and it can be very hot around January—many families come here, for there is always a refreshing breeze. There are hundreds of rooms in the hotel. Bathrooms are innumerable. There are suites and single chambers. The furniture is tasteful but not luxurious. The dining-room is in white. There is a ball-room. There is a resident orchestra. I know most of the big hotels in the mountains of Switzerland, but no one is comparable in conveniences to this.

Across the gardens, a hundred yards away, is the casino, quite apart from the hotel, but provided for those who want to gamble—and where is the Argentine who does not like to gamble ? There are large public rooms ; there are small rooms, decorated in a variety of styles, for private gaming parties ; there is a refreshment and reading-room, German in appearance ; there is a beautiful little theatre. No, I am receiving no fee to advertise Alta Gracia. With the exception of my companion, I am quite sure there was not a soul in the place who knew what my name

was, or bothered their heads what was the business of a tourist-looking fellow like myself.

We lunched, we had our coffee, and then we hired one of the hotel motor-cars and went for a forty or fifty mile spin. Roads—there were no roads. There were passable tracks and a considerable amount of bouncing which tested the springs of the car. Like all Latin chauffeurs the driver had a mania for speed. The way serpentined amongst the rocks and through scraggy woods, so we had often to make a sudden duck to avoid getting whipped in the face by a branch. We banged and swerved, but even the awful threat of not giving the driver a tip did not hold him in for more than a hundred yards at a stretch from letting that car tear along at its maddest. He took us to see a gurgling little river, the Bolsa, tripping through a sylvan glade which caused me to exclaim, "Why, it is just like a bit of Dovedale!"

Off again at a furious pace, heaving, diving, skirting hills. "If there is a smash you will be the first killed." But the chauffeur only laughed over his shoulder. We struck up a defile, and the hills rose high on either side. Mountain ponies scampered about; goats hailed us from rocky heights. Gauchos, swarthy and handsome, with their women perched behind, were overtaken on stallions which were restive and inclined to bolt at the approach of the automobile. A bend in the narrow way, and we nearly ran into a funeral procession; the coffin on a cart and covered with a dingy pall,

THE HOTEL AT ALTA GRACIA.

and the friends of the dead man in many and varied vehicles following, in no garb of mourning, but nonchalantly smoking cigarettes. There was backing of the car till it could be run on a piece of grass. The horses hauling the dead man laid their ears well forward and then well back, but were led past the thing they were afraid of without accident. We exchanged the greetings of the day with the friends of the dead man. He was going to be buried twelve miles away, and it would be well into the night before they got back. The motor-car snorted and jumped on its way. It was a beautiful afternoon.

The chauffeur brought us to a chalet which we reached by crossing a brook and passing through a garden. It was a house of refreshment. And what kind of refreshment in an out-of-the-way part of the world? A sad-faced girl gave us a curtsy and waited our orders whilst we stretched our legs beneath an orange tree. Now what had she to offer in the way of refreshment? The señors could have what they wished. I inquired about champagne. Certainly! But who on earth could want champagne on the edge of the world out there? We did not have champagne. We had a bottle of native white wine and aerated water. The chauffeur! Oh, his fancy ran to a bottle of beer; indeed, he had two bottles of beer. And who was the dead man we had passed? we asked the maid. Her brother. Last night he took ill and ere morning he was dead, and now they had taken him away. An old man came to the door and looked up the sun-

lit valley. The little two-year-old son of the dead man had a stick, and was chasing some ducks toward the brook; he was radiantly happy. We commiserated with the old man. He thanked the señors and hoped the wine was as we wished. He did not know why his son died; the sweet Mother in Heaven knew; anyway, he had gone; could he get the señor another chair, for that he was sitting on could not be comfortable?

Back to Alta Gracia. Some of our friends had been playing golf, and we must go to the club-house. A well-laid-out nine-hole course, but the "greens" are of caked mud; they cannot grow grass out here as we can at home. There is the usual golfers' talk; there was "rotten luck being bunkered just in front of the fourth hole"; "That was a lovely drive from the eighth"; "Hang it all, he was quite off colour with his brassie, and he generally fancied himself with his brassie work"; "Well, of all the fortunate foozlers, a chap like that doing the fifth in three"—and so on. It was just like dear old England.

Somebody remarked there were gaucho races over on the other side of the town. Gaucho races—races amongst the men of the soil, the native cowboys of the Argentine prairies! Tune up that motor-car. I can see lots of golf in other parts of the world, but here was one of the things I had dreamed about coming out to see—a gaucho race-meeting.

No, I have no need to think out admiring adjec-

tives to describe that course. It was only a bit of a course. The posts were ramshackle, and the wire which had connected them was broken and trailed on the ground, or had gone altogether. There was what I took to be intended for a grand stand, a wheezy erection of unpainted wood, but there was nobody on it.

There were hundreds of gauchos, the real article, with skins like leather, eyes as black as night, and most of them were on ponies and astride Spanish saddles, and they were picturesquely garbed, but not so picturesquely as you see them in coloured illustrations. They were noisy, and prancing their horses about and challenging each other. They had ridden in fifteen and twenty miles, some of them, and their women had driven in the carts with provisions for the day. The women had little encampments in the bushes, and fires burning, and they made coffee and served their lords with chunks of food.

The men are all laughing and arguing the merits of their ponies. Nearly everybody is mounted. One gaucho is jumping from group to group, waving two paper pesos (about 3s. 4d.) and demanding who will lay two pesos against his pony. The jabber is interminable. He gets taken. Excitement runs through the crowd. The competitors each hand the money to an old fellow who stands on a rickety platform which serves as judges' box. Then they amble off toward a tree where they are their own starters. A native policeman frantically yells for

the course to be cleared. Some sort of passage-way is made, and then there is the customary confounded dog which will not get out of the way.

Here they come, and in a pelt of dust. They ride well and with a loose rein. The riders swing their arms and yell as though they would frighten their steeds to greater efforts. You can feel the quiver in the crowd. By go the horses, running neck to neck. But one has won by a nose. The winner trots up smiling, and he gets the four pesos held by the judge.

But the clamour has begun again. One man, rather a gaudy buck and with a fine horse, challenges the world. He will race any man for five pesos, and he has the money in his hand to show he means business. Well, he will lay his five pesos to anybody else's four. Everybody is talking about his own horse, or somebody else's horse, or egging two enthusiasts to cease their talking and have the thing settled by a race.

These gauchos belong to a long line of men who have lived on their prairies and had to do with horses ever since the Spaniards first landed. They go to horse-races not for a pleasant holiday, but because the fever of horse-racing is in their veins.

And that night after dinner we sat in the great light of the veranda, and the mighty purple night was beyond, and the air was heavy with the musk which rises from the plains after a hot day and the great locusts which swerved toward us! Some women gave little screams in fear they might

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

A TYPICAL HOUSE IN CORDOBA PROVINCE.

get amongst their hair. Men who knew their harmlessness—except when there was a crop of young wheat to be devoured—caught them in their hands.

We tramped through the dimly lit village and heard the songs of Spain and Italy streaming from the cafés. We saw the crowd of merry-makers packing into the train to return to Cordoba. And when the train, a streak of light, had snorted into the blackness till in the distance it appeared like a crawling glowworm, we got chairs from out of the private car and sat beneath the stars and smoked our pipes, and wondered what was happening in England. At first there was warmth in the air. But the chill of midnight had come, and the grasshoppers had ceased their song, before we climbed to bed.

CHAPTER XIV

BAHIA BLANCA AND THE COUNTRY BEYOND

If I were suddenly asked to name the town which has most rapidly sprung ahead during the last few years, Bahia Blanca would at once jump to my lips.

It is 350 miles south of the River Plate, and if you searched the coast line for six hundred miles below Buenos Aires it is only here you would find a natural harbour capable of receiving the largest of steamers. With the gradual silting of the River Plate, which, notwithstanding constant dredging, will be a constant handicap to the shipping of the capital and Rosario, Bahia Blanca, with advantages which neither of the other two towns possesses, will undoubtedly become the real Liverpool of Argentina.

In 1880 the place had a population of less than 2,000. To-day its population is 70,000, and it is increasing rapidly. Already it has third place in commercial importance amongst the cities of the country, and its ambition is to rival Buenos Aires itself.

Old timers—men who have been in the place a dozen years—waxed enthusiastic to me about the way in which an unpaved village, built on a flat, dusty, treeless waste, has become a city of broad paved

A STREET IN BAHIA BLANCA

streets and plazas, with imposing public buildings, public gardens, electric tramways, electric light, and an excellent water supply.

There was something exhilarating in driving in a motor-car along a busy thoroughfare, with big shops on either side, and with clanging tramcars picking up and dropping passengers, and to be reminded that seven years before the place was quite a wilderness. The way in which some men had made money quickly made the mouth water when one was shown a plot of land which had originally been purchased for a few dollars, sold a few years later for 10,000 dollars, and which had changed hands only a month or two later for 30,000 dollars.

Though open to the scourge of disagreeable sand-storms—I experienced one during my visit—the town is well placed, with fine open spaces; and though the public park is a little "raw," the fact that there is a park at all, with excellent drives and many trees, is the wonderful thing. I dined one night at an excellent hotel, and afterwards accompanied some friends to a wine hall, where men brought their wives and children and witnessed a pleasant kinematograph entertainment. Of course there is an Argentine Club, and, though without the sedate restfulness which English folk like to feel is the characteristic of their clubs, its dimensions and luxuriance provide a building which would be a credit to any town three times its size. Bahia Blanca has a model municipality, and, with all respect

to the Spanish-Italian Argentines, I believe the secret is that the development of the town has been chiefly in the hands of Englishmen.

With the opening of the country, fresh areas of land placed under cultivation and with thousands of miles lying at the back capable of wheat growing and cattle raising, Bahia Blanca is swiftly coming into its own. The land was practically useless so long as there was no transport, but now, with the Great Southern Railway, the Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway and other lines converging upon the town, every year marks an increase in trade. For instance, in 1901 seventy vessels were cleared from the port; in 1912 there were four hundred and twenty-two. In the same two years the shipments in wool jumped from 26,123 tons to 55,552; the number of hides from 394 to 77,401; the tons of hair from 3 to 248; and the tons of cereals from 188,875 to 1,747,702.

Let honour go where honour is due. It was the coming of the railways which gave Bahia Blanca its leap forward. In 1884 the Great Southern Railway first pushed its rails so far south. They ran through a country which, loosely, might be described as desert. The bringing of the railway was like putting new life into the desert. *Estancias* dotted the landscape. In 1885 an insignificant mole was built by the Great Southern to receive its own materials, but this mole has developed into the present Port of Engineer White—called after the man who built it—which deals with over a million

tons of public traffic yearly. This port is a little over four miles from Bahia Blanca, and has berths for ten vessels of less draught. I climbed through the two grain elevators, stacked with 26,000 tons of wheat in sacks. By means of electric bands grain can be conveyed to eight vessels at a time, and in the busy season ships have been known to take over five thousand tons in a little over six hours. Being a place of yesterday's growth all the newest appliances are to be found, including thirty electric cranes, powerful tugs, floating grain elevators. Indeed, the Southern company admit to an expenditure on the port of £2,000,000.

But the port made by the Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway Company, Puerto Galvan, occupying a position of fine natural advantage on the estuary of the bay and lying a mile or two across the flat from Engineer White, has also to be seen. At high tide there is a mean depth of twenty-eight feet, and plenty of good anchorage is in the mainway. Puerto Galvan is five miles from Bahia Blanca, and to a great extent has been built on reclaimed swampy ground. I see the day when warehouses and further elevators will cover this piece of reclaimed mudbank, and it should never be forgotten that Mr. Stevens, the engineer, a man of great ability and much modesty, has performed a fine piece of work. The port has accommodation for twelve ocean-going steamers, and the berths, which have a total length of over 4,000 feet, have been constructed with a view to the rapid handling of cargo. Here again

the appliances, elevators to handle 8,000 tons a day, thirty-six cranes, traversers, capstans, are all electrically driven. The total effective power amounts to 4,265 horse-power. The port and the shunting yards are all lit at night with electricity, and ships can be illuminated. There are special facilities for the embarkation of cattle. Large bonded warehouses are in course of construction. There is a flour mill with a capacity of 100 tons a day. Large storage tanks have been erected for the accumulation of crude oil, an important provision in a country so deficient in coal. I looked across the sweep lying between Puerto Galvan and Engineer White, and visioned the day when it will be occupied with warehouses and industrial enterprises, for oil fuel and electric power can be quickly and cheaply supplied.

One morning I visited the Victoria Wool Market, long rows of well-built sheds, where not only wool but cereals and general camp produce are sold. I doubt if anywhere there is a similar market quite so large, for it has a floor area of 484,000 square feet and a storage capacity of 50,000 tons. Close by are the deposits to receive the Mendoza wines, which will have a profitable European sale when once the supply grows beyond the Argentine demand. Then there are deposits for the storage of alfalfa. The spread of development was revealed by the remarks which came in reply to my inquiries. "Oh, that was built last year"; "This was erected a couple of years ago, but we are going to make extensions";

THE ELEVATORS AT INGENIERO WHITE.

" Five years ago we thought this place big enough, but we are going to pull it down and put up something ten times the size." Here was commercial progress expanding monthly. Here was a town which had been little more to me than a name on the South American coast before I visited it—and I consider myself a travelled man—and when I saw its energy and its growth I wondered how much the great industrial populations of crowded Europe knew of what was taking place so many thousands of miles across the sea.

The success of Bahia Blanca lies in the back country known as the pampa. I journeyed across it in a trip from Mendoza to Bahia Blanca, and, as the name denotes, it is a vast featureless plain. Most of it is naturally fertile, but even regions that are sandy will be productive in the growing of alfalfa, which seems specially suitable, and which will not only maintain herds of cattle, but is profitable as a feeding stuff to be exported. As yet the pampa has been little more than scratched. From the railway cars the idea is obtained that the whole of the country is converted to the use of man. Ten or twenty miles beyond the line you reach desert—desert so far as use is concerned, though the illimitable expanse of waving grass tells the tale of future possibilities. Wherever the railways stretch their arms there is cultivation, for the ever spreading population follows quickly on the laying down of the rails.

I have heard people talk about the monotony of

the pampa. But this territory has a special fascination of its own. There is a bigness, an immensity, an unendingness which lays hold of the imagination. The great silence, save for the play of the wind amongst the long grass, seizes the fancy. Sunrise and sunset come and go in a wonderful glory. At the birth of day all the grass sparkles with dew; the softest colours seem to brush the world. When the sun is up, and blazes from a sky with all the blue burnt out of it, a sort of oppressive hot hush rests upon the world. The long grass seems to drowse beneath the pitiless glare. You can travel for hundreds of miles and never see a hillock or a tree or a beast, or hear a bird. But into this land man is slowly but persistently penetrating. To folk who live at home the life seems deadening. Yet men come to love it, not passionately but clingingly, so that many a man who has "made his pile" and returned home to spend it in ease begins to crave for the pampa, and he is not content until he visits it again.

Gradually this area is being transformed. *Estancias,* with their eternal clump of trees and inevitable windmill pump, break the line of the horizon. Cattle stray over the prairie. The mud hovels of the colonists are black specks, and when you reach them you find that a big slice of the land has been given to the plough and is fenced with wire. Here also are the sheep farms, and, as I have indicated, Bahia Blanca is the chief market for wool. Yet sheep rearing in the Argentine, extensive though it is,

PLAZA RIVERDAVIA, BAHIA BLANCA.

may be said to be stationary. This is not because the limits of expansion have been reached, but simply because cattle and wheat have been found more profitable. The quality of wool, inferior to that of Australia, may have something to do with the restriction. The constant tendency is toward hair, and the natural condition of wool is only maintained by the importation of English sheep. Then the animals are disposed to be gaunt rather than good meat producers. These are drawbacks which have had their influence on breeding as a money-making business. But the Argentines are a practical people, and everything connected with agriculture they tackle in a scientific manner. That the consequence of their experiments in cross breeding will be the production of an acclimatised sheep, valuable for wool or mutton or both, I have no doubt. Farther south toward Patagonia, where the climate is more temperate and where there is fodder, I look upon as one of the great sheep tracks of the world. The European market for chilled mutton will be a spur to sheep-breeding.

Indeed, there are indications that the country at the back of Bahia Blanca is being appreciated as the sheep lands. It has been found that English sheep do better here than elsewhere. The Lincoln, Leicester, Romney Marsh, and Merino sheep do well. There is a good opening in this area for the British immigrant with money. Though there are something approaching one hundred million sheep in the Republic, there is room for hundreds of millions

more. But the indifferent strain, consequent on a long-woolled Spanish breed having run wild for over two hundred years, must be eradicated if Argentina is going to secure and hold a foremost place in the wool markets of the world. I have been told this has been done during the last half century, but I am by no means convinced. For a long time the West Riding of Yorkshire had a prejudice against Argentine wool. This no longer exists. The preference is given to Australian wool not for any patriotic reasons, but simply because it is better.

Argentina has for some time been attracting breeders from New Zealand, and they have done much, by the importation of stock from England, to improve the quality. At present three out of every four sheep stations are in the hands of men of British name. You can strike a line from a little north of Bahia Blanca, and then reckon that most of the country lying south, right down to Patagonia, is suitable for sheep. But it is not all of equal value. Sheep that are turned out on the alfalfa lands provide good mutton, but the wool is inferior. The fine grasses of the near south seem inclined to make coarse wool; yet careful crossing is doing much to prevent this. Still, I am strongly disposed to agree with M. Bernandez, that there is no reason why either the coarse or fine wools now produced should be abandoned. The coarse, long wool will always have its use not only in rough goods, but also in the warp of fine cloths, which in

A BAHIA BLANCA BANK.

THE TOWN HALL AT BAHIA BLANCA.

the great mechanical looms has to be extremely strong. He looks to the establishment of woollen manufactories in the Argentine, and, as a consequence, the development on a colossal scale of all the breeds.

CHAPTER XV

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

It is, as I have abundantly shown, a simple truism to say that Argentina is one of the principal agricultural countries in the world. But how far is the country going to advance?

In the great industrial lands of the earth the tendency of population is away from the land. But the increase of population means a bigger demand for food. The time is swiftly coming when the United States will have difficulty in growing sufficient to feed her own people, and must look elsewhere. The wheat area in Canada is immense, but its extent is now well known. The wheat lands in the Dominion are travelling farther north, and though a short summer with long hours of sunshine are sufficient speedily to raise crops, there is the danger—and it is foolish to close one's eyes to it—that a summer frost may produce a sudden shortage in the world's wheat supply. Russia is capable of further development in wheat growing, and there are huge possibilities in Siberia, which, physically, is a twin country to Canada. But the Russians are the poorest of farmers, and the agricultural progress of the land of the Tsar is doubtful.

Then there are plains of Australia which ought

to be doing much more in food production. But it cannot be said that the native-born Australian is really fond of life in the back blocks. Anyway, the disproportionate size of the urban to the rural populations would indicate he is not. Though of late years something has been done to stimulate immigration, the result is not sufficient to meet the needs of a country like the Commonwealth.

One reason is that Australia is so much farther off than Canada, and there is a belief amongst the country people of Great Britain that the prospects of success are not so immediate. Further, there is the unfortunate but undoubted and growing idea amongst Englishmen that Australians, as a whole, are not kindly disposed to new-comers, and that the fresh arrival has a rough time of it before he shakes himself down to the fresh life. I do not discuss these points. I mention their existence as some reason why Australia is not able to play the part it is entitled to play as a great wheat country.

Now the best wheat lands of Argentina lie within the semi-tropical or temperate zone. I have already explained why it does not have the attractions which British colonies can offer to the man with grit and muscle who desires to secure independence. But it does draw to its shores a big army of workers from Italy and Spain, without the ambition of Britons and content to be the servants of other men. Labour is comparatively cheap. The country is easy to reach. The drift is not to the towns but to the agricultural districts. The range for

wheat growing is boundless. But the possibility of drought is not to be overlooked.

The money invested in agriculture falls short of that invested in live stock. But there are more persons directly interested in the growing of cereals, and I am one of those who believe it counts more for the genuine, happy prosperity of a nation that a large proportion of the population should be attached to the soil than when greater wealth is secured by a smaller number. In my opinion it would be better if there were easier means for the comparatively small holder, the man with anything from three hundred to a thousand acres, to settle. I was not unconscious of a movement, such as there is in Australia, to break up the big estates, but at the present it is nebulous, merely something in the air; and though the Latins, when they act, will act swiftly, the type of colonist and labourer who lands, though he votes Socialist when he gets the chance, is not of the brand to take vigorous political action to secure land. His conditions are improved in comparison within his native country, and he is inclined for the present to be content.

There is, however, a rustling amongst the leaves. There is a feeling amongst Argentine politicians that the peon and the colonist have little chance of becoming owners of small farms unless they are assisted by credit banks. Various proposals have been made; but the one now before the Chamber of Deputies, fathered by the Minister of Agriculture, provides for the establishment of agricultural banks

and the erection of warehouses to receive produce as a pledge against cash advances.

It is reckoned that between £8,000,000 and £9,000,000 is necessary to set the scheme on its legs, and the idea is that the State should find half the money and private capital provide the other half.

Further, as most of the best land is in large estates and private ownership, there is a growing public opinion that the Government would do well if it bought up some of these enormous *estancias* at their present value, cut them into small holdings, and let them on the deferred payment system to colonists. This would reqiure enormous capital, State provided. But, human nature being what it is, men in one part of the country are opposed to finding money for the benefit of another part. They do not look upon it as a national investment which will bring good return to the State as a whole so much as increasing the productivity and population in particular parts. However, some progress has been made when you get a general consensus that, unbounded though Argentina's capabilities are, closer settlement is necessary to provide ballast in the economic progress of the nation.

"Give us of the best; let us be up-to-date and scientific; let us have the latest twentieth-century equipment so that Argentina may have first place"—that is the temper of the people toward agriculture. Much has been done, an amazing amount, to place Argentina in the front line of agrarian education.

In giving praise there is, I know, always the danger of overdoing it. And whilst the Argentine has a good conceit of himself, he has the quality, not always readily discernible in a new country, of being able to see his weak points and being willing to learn. Here is a frank statement which I cull from the *Anales de la Sociedad Rural Argentine:* "Up to the present agriculture has hardly been carried on in a scientific, regular, methodic, reasonable and economic manner with the endeavour to get from the soil all the benefit and yield it can give. The empiric methods of cultivation often employed up to now have given profits on account of the fertility of the land, its exuberance, which, without great expense, yields a return far larger than the general average known in other agricultural countries."

Less than forty years ago it took Argentina all its time to grow enough wheat to supply its own needs, though its population was only a third what it is at present. Within the memory of many Argentina had to import wheat. Indeed, as near as 1876 thousands of tons of flour had to be brought into the country. It is the recollection of this, in comparison with the conditions to-day, which proclaims better than any attempts at fine writing the strides which have been made. Look at the jumps. In 1888 the crops covered some 6,076,500 acres, representing an increase of 4,626,500 acres in sixteen years, an addition that seven years later had reached 6,012,000 acres. By 1895 the total was 12,088,000. Then came the wave. By 1908 the

total was 43,692,228 acres, an increase of 31,603,728 acres in thirteen years, or 261 per cent. In 1911 the area cultivated was 54,258,772 acres, and at the time of writing it must be approaching 70,000,000 acres. That tells its own story. Yet only one-sixth of the country suitable for cultivation has been broken by the plough. The value of the principal products of Argentine agriculture, wheat, maize, oats and linseed, for 1913 is estimated at something over £80,000,000.

One strong advantage Argentina has is that the crops are spread over an extensive area. They are grown in regions so far distant from one another that no fear is felt at any time of a total loss of the harvest. The Republic now sends her products to countries that were her purveyors up to a few years ago. In the production of linseed she has first place amongst the nations. In maize she figures in the third place, coming after North America and Austria-Hungary; but in export of maize she comes first. In the production of wheat Argentina holds the sixth position, coming after the United States, Russia, France, India, and Austria-Hungary; but in export of wheat and flour she has first rank. We in Britain have Canada so much before our eyes that we assume her progress is unequalled. The *Anales de la Sociedad Rural Argentine* is responsible for some interesting comparisons directed to show that the Argentine farmer can produce for 43s. 5d. an acre what it costs the Canadian farmer 88s. 4d. to produce. Whilst the occupancy of land has increased

75 per cent. in thirty years in Canada, it has increased by 284 per cent. in Argentina. Whilst Canada has 20,000,000 more acres occupied than Argentina, the Republic is far ahead of the Dominion in the value of her live stock.

Though the capabilities of Argentina in wheat growing have been known for centuries, and have not recently come in the nature of a revelation as may be said in regard to Canada, the reason the boom has been so long delayed has been because the country was in the throes of revolution, thereby frightening off foreign capital, and because of the lack of transport. But revolutions can now be described as things of the past, and for its population Argentina has the longest mileage of railways in the world. The day is not far distant when Argentina will produce 10,000,000 tons of wheat a year. Remarkable and gratifying, from a trader's point of view, though her increase of exports are, the figures are not so satisfying from a national standpoint. Her increase of population, big though it is, is by no means keeping pace with her increase in productivity.

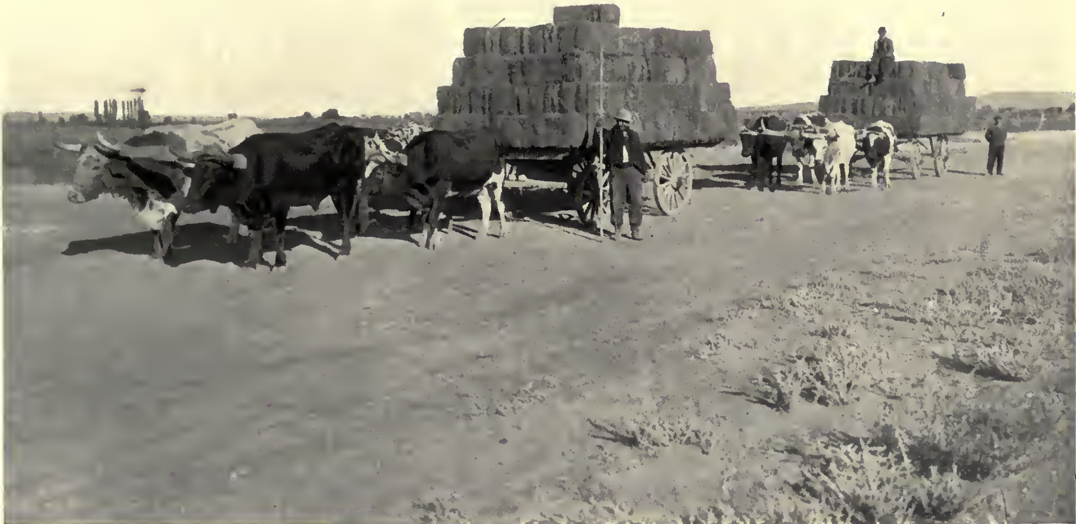
Notwithstanding the spread of agricultural education, I must say that full value is not got out of the land. Much of the farming is slovenly. This is partly due to race, but chiefly because the farmers are not owners, but only occupiers in return for giving a proportion of the crop to the owner. Further, if there is an unsatisfactory season the colonists neglect the land, take their departure, and try their luck elsewhere. The Argentines are conscious of

the difficulties, and, as I have indicated, the remedy will probably be found by the State purchasing great estates, cutting them into small farms, and letting the colonists become the owners on easy terms. In alluding to the immigration in a former chapter I mentioned that a number of Italians and Spaniards return to their own countries. The migrated Latin always finds the old country pulling at his heart-strings—a feeling, however, which completely disappears in succeeding generations. But the immigrants who go to Argentina to make money rather than to settle are inclined to be reckless concerning care for the soil. The rough-and-ready, haphazard, careless farming is, of course, understandable in a new and fertile country. Only the passage of years and closer settlement, and therefore more careful culture, will tend to put things right.

The average production of wheat in Argentina is only 11.3 bushels per acre, which is about the same as Australia. Canada does better than that, for Manitoba can give 13½ bushels to the acre and Saskatchewan 17 bushels. In England the yield to-day is 30 bushels. Germany has the same return, whilst Roumania has 23 bushels and France 20 bushels to the acre. There is not the slightest doubt that with improved conditions of cultivation Argentina can do much better than she is doing. The United Kingdom is now purchasing over £30,000,000 worth of foodstuffs a year from the Argentine. Indeed, the Republic supplies us with a quarter of the food

we purchase from abroad. In cereals alone we purchased in 1912 from Argentina 619,000 tons of wheat, 592,000 tons of maize, 60,000 tons of linseed and 383,000 tons of oats.

Mr. C. P. Ogilvie, one of the most astute authorities on the development of Argentina, and whom I had the pleasure of meeting in Buenos Aires, has demonstrated how the growing of alfalfa is useful for resting the land after crops of wheat, maize, etc. I have already told of the way this sanfoin plant has the property of attaching to itself micro-organisms which draw the nitrogen in the air and make it available for plant food. Every colonist knows the value of alfalfa for feeding his cattle, says Mr. Ogilive, 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'être* for growing alfalfa is 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 six to eight tons per acre of dry alfalfa for each year. A ton of such hay is worth about twenty to thirty dollars, and, after deducting expenses, there is a clear return of about fourteen dollars per acre. The figures supplied by one large company show that on an average cattle, when placed upon alfalfa lands, improve in value



CONVEYING ALFALFA TO A RAILWAY STATION.

at the rate of two dollars per head per month, so it is easy to place a value upon its feeding properties.

Thus, Mr. Ogilvie proceeds, 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 dollars sterling. An animal that has been kept all its life on a 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. . . . 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 among 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 bac-

teria 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 takes up with great care a root of alfalfa, and care is taken in exposing the root, 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 microscopic 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 nitrate, 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 has as much nutrition as two tons of wheat.

The cost of growing alfalfa depends largely on the situation of the land, and whether labour is plentiful. But, says Mr. Ogilvie, we will imagine the intrinsic value of the undeveloped land to be

£4,000, 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 could be fattened thereon, and the land would have increased in value to £20,000 or £30,000. To improve the undeveloped land it must be worked, and the plan usually adopted is to let the land to colonists who have had experience in the class of work. Colonists usually undertake to cultivate 500 to 600 acres. They pay to the landlord anything from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the crops, according to distance of the land from the railway. The first crop grown on fresh broken soil is generally maize. The second year's crop linseed, and probably a third year's crop of wheat is grown before handing back the land to the owner, ready to be put down in alfalfa. Sometimes the alfalfa is sown with the colonist's last crop, the landlord finding the alfalfa seed. After the completion of the contract the colonist moves to another part. The owner, who has annually received a percentage of the crops, takes back his land. Fences now will necessitate a considerable outlay, also wells and buildings. The more of these the better, as the land will carry a larger head of cattle, and the camp being properly divided makes the control of the cattle easy.*

Allowing for the disadvantages—stretches of drought, pests of locusts—I know of no new country

* Extracted from "Argentina from a British Point of View," by C. P. Ogilvie (1910).

balancing one thing with another, where the future is so bright. Given a good year, an Argentine farmer makes 30 per cent. on his invested capital. He thinks he is doing fairly well if he gets 20 per cent. He grumbles if his return is only 10 per cent. He can afford to have one bad year in three—I believe the average works out one in five—and yet be doing very well compared with farmers in some other parts of the world.

CHAPTER XVI

MENDOZA

If I were called upon to make my personal choice in which part of the Republic I would like to live, I would choose Mendoza—or at any rate some part of Mendoza province. It lies far west, within the shadow of the snow-crowned Andes. The glacier-fed rivers from the mountains are making it one of the biggest vineyards in the world. The city is several thousand feet above sea level, and the air is clear and invigorating. Like most Spanish-Argentine towns, it has a long history, but its tale of abounding progress does not stretch beyond the last seven or eight years. There are over a quarter of a million people in the province, and the capital numbers nearly 70,000 of them.

It is the old story of " Go west, my son." Whenever I fell into praise about places in the east, or in the middle parts of the country, there was generally somebody at my elbow to whisper, " Ah, but wait till you get to Mendoza."

Hardened traveller though I am, I admit a little thrill of anticipation when, after a hot and rather dusty day in the railway cars, I first caught a glimpse of the gleaming Cordillera, and then ran long miles through flourishing vineyards. So right

into the heart of the town of luxuriant avenues, through the main street it seemed, with tall poplar trees on either side, and beyond the cool road rows of picturesque but modest houses, white washed, blue washed, pink washed, and even with a touch of quaintness about the houses that seemed to be neglected. Thus I made acquaintance with a city of broad boulevards and fine squares, an extensive park, and announcing its prosperity to all who pass that way and have eyes to see.

But whilst there is much to be enthusiastic about, it is well not to let enthusiasm run away with one. There was nothing of the raw west about the people. The ladies were as well dressed as those you will see in the Rue de la Paix. Then I was reminded that every woman out here dresses as well as she knows how, even though she and her family live sparsely at home. People judge their fellows by appearance, by show, and everyone feels it a duty to be ostentatious. Next I was impressed with the extraordinary number of motor-cars. "Yes," remarked my Mendoza-English friend, "but I think there is only half the number now that there were a couple of years ago. You had to own a motor-car, or you were not considered worth knowing. We had nearly three hundred motor-cars, the best the United States or France could supply, and their value ran into millions of dollars. People had them with little prospect of paying for them. But then, everybody is optimistic, expecting a pot of money to be coming along soon. There is lots of money,

THE ENTRANCE TO THE PARK AT MENDOZA.

but some folks did not get what they expected, and so a great many of the cars have been seized for debt."

We were making a little tour in a car. Most of the houses are single-storied as a provision against earthquakes, which are not infrequent in these parts. Indeed, one morning during my stay, whilst I was shaving, there was a quiver and a jolt which I thought was due to some heavily laden train passing. At breakfast I learnt there had been a respectable earthquake. Everybody tells you about the great earthquake of 1861, which completely destroyed old Mendoza. The only remaining evidences are the ruins of the cathedral. The population of the city at that time was 20,000, and I was told that half the population was killed. Then there was the agony of fire, and—with horror piled on horror, as those were lawless days—bands of miscreants began plundering and murdering the affrighted inhabitants who remained. Tremors are now frequent, and the prospect of another earthquake is like an abiding nightmare. That is why the streets are so wide, the houses nearly all of a single story, and made of a particularly light brick with a considerable admixture of cane amongst the clay, so that the structure has a springiness and does not crack when the shake comes. Really the only big and substantial buildings are the Legislature and the Palace of Justice, and they are imposing.

Mendoza continually reminded me of Salt Lake City. Like the capital of the Mormon faith, it is in the lee of a mighty mountain range; there are

trees bordering most of the streets, and along the main ways are innumerable rivulets. Boys are constantly employed to souse the road with water and so keep it cool. The entrance to Western Park has exquisite bronze gates. It is rather surprising, however, to see they are mounted with imperial crowns. The explanation is that they were originally made for Abdul Hamid, the deposed Sultan of Turkey. Owing to political upheaval in Turkey they were never delivered, because there was no one prepared to pay for them. Mendoza made a bid and bought them for £5,000. Broad roads through this lovely domain, leading through avenues of trees and past radiant flower gardens, make the Western Park beloved of Mendozians. There is a band-stand; and on Thursday evenings, the whole place flashing with electric light, the road is blocked with automobiles and carriages, and thousands of people listening to the music. There is a rustic chalet where people can sit and have refreshment. There is a lake nearly a mile long. Here take place boating races, and for the accommodation of the spectators there is a grand stand which can hold 3,000 persons. There is a zoological garden. There is what is called "The Lilliputian Railway," so that a tiny little train starting from a miniature station can take passengers all over the extensive park, through tropical vegetation, up tiny valleys, diving through small tunnels, giving anybody who cannot provide a private carriage an easy and cheap means of seeing the park.

THE PROMENADE IN MENDOZA PARK.

Mendoza occupies a prominent place amongst the cities of Argentina. It is a magnet of attraction, especially to Italians who have experience in wine making; and now every year the province receives something over fifteen thousand immigrants. Some freshly developed countries have a law that no immigrant shall enter under "contract," that no man shall (without special permission) be allowed to land if he has a job and a definite wage awaiting him. There is no such regulation in Argentina. There is an Immigration Law under which fresh arrivals are housed and fed by the Government, and work found for them. But less than half come within the operation of the law. About 150,000 fresh arrivals every year come out to situations, or have sufficient money to look after their own interests, and naturally many of these strike far west to Mendoza.

As I have intimated in an earlier chapter, the Federal Government has occasionally a little difficulty owing to the independent spirit of provinces like Mendoza. Mendoza, for instance, has its own paper money, so that whilst the Federal dollars are acceptable in the province, the Mendozian dollars are not currency beyond its own borders. It has all the modern equipment of government: a House of Senators and a House of Deputies. Each eight thousand inhabitants are entitled to a deputy, and each department or county returns one senator. The trouble of some democratic lands, strikes, are prohibited, and if attempted the soldiers are called

out. The Governor is elected for four years. Voting is obligatory, and if a man will not vote he is put in prison. The State has full legal equipment in one supreme court, two courts of appeal, and two criminal courts. Whilst there is a public prosecutor there is a State lawyer, whose business it is to defend the poor, and another to defend minors when they come within reach of the arm of the law. Taxes are not high. There is a considerable amount of Government land, and this is sold in order to raise money for public works. Of course, there is the usual boom in land values. In 1909 the estimated value of property in the province (vineyards, orchards, cultivated and uncultivated land, and buildings) was a little over £50,000,000. Up to July 31st, 1913, property had increased in value to well over £70,000,000. This is creditable for a population of 260,000.

In no other province in the Republic has there been so much land sold as in Mendoza. From 1909 to 1912 inclusive transactions in land represented a turnover of £37,000,000. In the neighbourhood of Mendoza City land is as dear as close to Buenos Aires, rising to £2 a metre (3.28 feet). In 1909 193,061 hectares (hectare = 2.47 acres) was under cultivation. Now there are 330,000 hectares. Development is not restricted to the neighbourhood of the provincial capital. Take San Juan, in the north, an old town which jogged along with viticulture till ten years ago, when it made a bound, and progress in growing grapes has been consider-

THE GRAPE HARVEST IN THE SUBURBS OF MENDOZA.

able. Some six hours by rail south-east of Mendoza is San Rafael. Twenty-five years ago the only flourishing product was the Indian; and you could have bought quantities of land at twopence a hectare. To-day ordinary uncultivated land with water rights is worth from £140 to £160 per hectare. Cultivated vineyards are worth from £600 to £650 per hectare, according to class. Till 1903 San Rafael had no railway connection with anywhere. The journey to Mendoza, which is now done in half a dozen hours by train, then took eight days by cart. Railway building has facilitated the development of the San Rafael district, which is just at the doorway of its prosperity. The San Rafael grape has a richer colour and more sugar than the Mendoza grape. If I had a large sum to invest I think I would take my chances at San Rafael.

Now, whilst there is all this material progress, it was refreshing to note that care is given to other things than just money making. I have described the constant movement to beautify Mendoza. Education is carefully nurtured. In the province are (1913) two national high-grade colleges, two normal schools, twenty-five private schools, and one kindergarten. This kindergarten is, so far as my knowledge goes, unmatched in the world. It was not the size that impressed me, but the thought-out plans to provide everything to attract and stimulate the young intelligence. Beauty is the basis, not only in the schoolrooms but in the theatre and playgrounds. Whether it be a school, or a fire-station,

or a penitentiary, expenditure is lavish in providing a handsome building. Of course ambition, rivalry, town conceit—the desire to show something better than another town can show—is behind much of the enterprise. But the result is there, and it is the fact that counts.

Primarily, this abounding fortune of Mendoza is due to its vineyards. I read in an official publication that the province has the finest soil in the Republic. That is incorrect; but it has a soil that is peculiarly adapted for vines, together with a climate and a situation which for viticulture could not be improved—though there is a fly in the ointment, of which more anon. Besides, the inhabitants have not had to grope their way in the growing of grapes and the making of wine, as has been the case in many instances in California and South Australia, good though some of the wines are, through the cultivators coming from lands where the grape industry is not natural. It may be fairly said that all the folk in the province engaged in viticulture are from the wine-growing regions of Italy and Spain. Further, wine has been made in this region for several hundreds of years, though in the absence of transport its consumption was purely local. Now it is drunk throughout the Republic.

Neither the Californians nor the Australians are a wine-drinking people. Wine producers have to look to markets beyond the seas. Not so the Mendozians. The Argentines, being Latin, are a wine-drinking people. Everybody drinks wine. The

labourer on the railway has wine with his frugal lunch. It is not at all unusual for children to have watered wine with their meals. On the big emigrant ships wine is included in the charge for fare and food.

Well, here is a wine-drinking population of 7,000,000 living next door to the vineyards. Therefore the market for wine is enormous. Great though the output is, it does not meet the demand. As a consequence scant justice, from a connoisseur's point of view, is done to the Argentine wine, for it never has an opportunity to mature. Again, the wine is cheap; and it would never suit the wealthy Argentines if they were seen drinking anything but expensive foreign wine. I did taste some wine with delightful bouquet, such as that of the Château Norton; but, as it is the crowd which drinks the wine, it cannot be said that the average quality of native produce is high. With such piled-up orders for quantity, growers have not bothered very much about quality. They told me that sometimes they have felt rather ashamed to send out wine sour with youth; yet the dealers must have it. More than once the railway companies have been congested with barrels ready to be taken east. There are millions of acres, as yet untouched, suitable for vines.

When one thinks of the people in South America, and of the prospective expansion of population, all wine-drinkers, one must conclude that the future of this land, amongst the foothills of the Andes, is very bright. In the turn of time some rich Argentines

will set the fashion of drinking the wine of their own country. That will call for the production of a better vintage, and then, very likely, Argentine wines will be introduced to the other markets of the world. As it is, fortunes are being rapidly made. Many of the vineyards are quite small. Two and a half acres (one hectare) will grow between three and four hundredweight of grapes, which can be looked after by one man, and ought, in an ordinary season, to yield an income of about £100. A family with a small holding of four or five hectares can live most comfortably. In 1913 the province produced 592,969,670 kilos (kilo = 2.20 lb.). Of this 399,517,099 litres of wine were elaborated (litre = 0.22 gallon).

Now I have mentioned there is a fly in the ointment, and I should not be doing my duty if I failed to call attention to it. The soil is there, the climate is there, grapes are carefully acclimatised. But there must be water, and whether there will always be a sufficiency of this is a doubt which sometimes comes into the minds of men who glance ahead. The rainfall is not heavy. Various scientific experiments have been made to attract rain, but without much success. The principal supply is from the River Mendoza, fed by the melting of the snows in the mountains. At first the wine growers helped themselves to what water they desired. But as the industry developed, and as there was suitable land without water, irrigation canals were introduced. Sometimes a man tapped water to which he was not entitled, and then there was trouble. As a

IN A MENDOZA BODEGA.

consequence, the Government has boldly grappled with the problem of irrigation. I drove out about a dozen miles to inspect a weir which had been constructed across the Mendoza River. This holds back an immense quantity of water, and the supply is regulated by the weir gates. Irrigation channels zigzag across the country, and the cultivator pays a small sum for his supply. These works fertilise over a million acres of land. Irrigated land has bounced in value. Waterless land which could have been obtained for £1 a hectare now fetches twenty, or even thirty times as much. This has emboldened the Government into making contracts for several million dollars for the damming of smaller rivers, and providing further irrigation works. Still, there is much water which goes down the River Mendoza that is not used at all. I asked a man who has the right to speak as an authority how much country could be placed under viticulture if all the available water supply was nursed and utilised. He told me three times as much as at present. So, although there is a big difficulty ahead, it is so far distant that the average man of the present generation does not bother his head much about it.

There are just 873 bodegas in Mendoza, though 800 of them are comparatively small. I went over two of the biggest and found them equipped as well as the bodegas of Europe. Some of the vats hold tens of thousands of litres of wine. Modern vats are built of cement lined with glass, and one of them will hold over 100,000 litres. But what

was annoying—it is exercised elsewhere—was the practice of giving a well-known name to a wine which it does not properly represent. There is nothing so delicate as the grape in being affected by soil. Similar vines, but grown on slightly dissimilar soil, produce a different quality of grape, and give quite a different flavour to the wine. So, generally speaking, the wine of Argentina has a different tone from that of France, Italy, or Spain. The vintners endeavour by blending to produce a European type, a hock, a moselle, a burgundy, a medoc, a bordeaux, even a champagne—which, though good wines, are not always good imitations of something else. It would be much better if they classified and titled their own wines. The European plan of one type of wine being produced in one particular district is ignored. Therefore you will find the big bodega producing from grapes grown in one vineyard a dozen brands which originated in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Portugal.

It might be thought that in Mendoza, where wine is the cheapest beverage procurable except water, there would be drunkenness. Not at all. Perhaps the case of the people is like that of the girls in confectionery shops; there are so many sweets about they never think of making themselves ill. Now and then, however, there is a relapse. But a Mendozian "drunk" is not fined and sent to prison. Armed with a pail, he has to give two or three days to getting water out of the rivulets which run down the sides of the main streets, and sprinkling the

dusty road with it. This is work usually given to boys. So when you see a disgruntled man engaged at it you will be quite right in coming to the conclusion he has been imbibing, and the authorities have put him to this job to disgrace him.

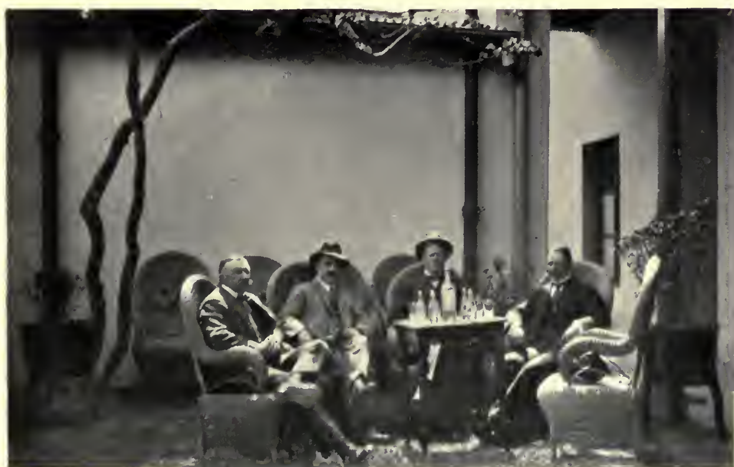
I have dealt rather fully with the wine-making business because it is the chief source of the Province of Mendoza's prosperity. But it is a happy country for other kinds of fruit, particularly the peach. Also there are oranges, figs, quinces, nectarines, and cherries. Several fruit canning concerns, turning out many thousand tins of fruit a day, have sprung into existence and are doing well. Abundance of fruit has been rather a cause of neglect in rearing, so that I do not place the quality too high. For instance, the oranges are not within measurable distance of the splendid oranges which New South Wales grows. Improvement will assuredly come in time. As it is, the fruit season in Argentina is when it is raw winter in Europe; and, as transport is quickening, possibilities of an extended market are great. Sometimes I hear young Englishmen, discontented with home, say they would like to go to America and start fruit farming. They might inquire into the prospects of Mendoza.

CHAPTER XVII

A TRIP INTO THE ANDES

It was intended to be a jolly party. We were going to Puerta del Inca and to make a picnic of it. There was the Englishman, born in Australia, trained in the United States and now an engineering expert in Argentina. He was the biggest man I met in the Republic, and his friends called him "Chico," which means the little one. There was the Scot, grizzled and cautious, who disappeared for months and was away exploring the unknown mountains up in the snows, carrying his camp with him, never seeing anybody with whom he could converse, coming back with maps of possible new routes over the frozen shoulders of the Andes, and who loved long hours in the English Club in Mendoza, expressing Carlylean views about the world, quoting poetry and enjoying long games at cards. There was the man who came out here from England many years ago to help in the building of the Transandine railway, married a Spanish wife, has taken to vine growing, and knows he now speaks his native tongue with a foreign accent. There were others, men who had knocked about the world and had done things; men with none of the light talk of stay-at-home Englishmen, but showing strong character kneaded by rough circumstances.

"CHICO" IN CHARGE.



A CORNER OF THE ENGLISH CLUB AT MENDOZA.

The trip was arranged amongst the orange trees which grow in the little courtyard of the English Club. It was when the night was warm and we stretched in easy chairs, puffing smoke rings at the moon. "Chico" was master of ceremonies. What he arranged was to be right. And we were to be ready early the next morning, for a special coach was to be fastened to the express coming through from Buenos Aires on its way to Valparaiso.

The early morning air was crisp and invigorating. The transcontinental train had just come in, and whilst the early birds were out on the platform, half-drawn blinds revealed the drowsy countenances of other travellers who had no disposition for a peep at Mendoza, or who had seen it before and lacked ambition to see it again. There was the usual jostling on the platform of folk who had just arrived and those who were taking their departure, joyous greetings, and sad farewells. The stranger had to stand on one side and smile at the way Argentine men held one another by one arm half round the neck, and with the other hand gave continuous slaps in the small of the back. Yesterday morning's papers from Buenos Aires had arrived, and there was a scramble round the bookstall whilst the slow-moving newsboy undid the strings and we could buy our newspapers, and were able to read what the Prime Minister of England had been saying the day before yesterday.

"Chico," with hat stuck on the back of his head, hastened up to our group with the intimation that we had better get on board if it was not our intention

to be left behind. "Have you got plenty of food," was the inquiry, "for we are as hungry as hunters?" "Yes, plenty," was the answer. "And drink?" "And the drink." "You have not forgotten the cigars?" "No, the cigars are all right."

Our car was attached to the express. It was a long, narrow car, with a table down the centre. We were met with the refreshing odour of ham and eggs being prepared in the adjoining kitchen.

The long train panted toward the hills, leaving leafy Mendoza behind and winding away through aisles of great grey boulders by the side of the muddy Mendoza River. There was a dreary forlornness about the country as the train, with the river as its guide, seemed to be making for a huge black cutting in the mountains. We did not mind, for the Spanish cook and his assistant were busy serving us with ham and eggs, and coffee, and freshly baked rolls.

Maybe it was the breakfast, or the exhilarating air of the hills, or the genial company, or the pleasure of the post-breakfast cigar; but we were the merriest party imaginable. The engineer who had turned vine grower became reminiscent of the days when he helped to build this line, and of how, when work was over in the evening, he frequently mounted his horse, rode twenty miles to attend a Spanish dance, mounted his horse again at four in the morning, and was back at work in the hills by sunrise. Of course, he was quite sure that those were romantic and adventurous days compared with the present.

We were not travelling fast. The line was gradu-

ally rising, and the engine was giving off sounds as though it were suffering from asthma. We got into country—wild, moorlike, and broken with many streams—which reminded some of us of parts of Scotland. We struck into what had looked like a black defile, through which the river came racing, and on either side of us rose gaunt rocks, black and brown, which suggested that a terrific fire had once raged.

No snow was in sight—nothing but fierce, repellent crags. Suddenly we came upon an upland valley with a wide stretch of grass, a straggling village, and a big hotel—just the sort of hotel you are constantly bumping into in the Swiss mountains. The passing of the train for Chili is probably the one excitement. The Italian folk gathered about the little station and gazed with curious eyes at the passengers.

Years ago I went down Kicking Horse Pass, in the Canadian Rockies, with a seat on the "cow-catcher." It was now my good fortune to ride on the "cow-catcher" of this train bound for Valparaiso. As luck would have it, I met an American and his wife whose acquaintance I had made on the Atlantic, and to whom I had bidden "good-bye" at Rio de Janeiro. They were now returning to the United States by way of Chili, and, being of an adventurous turn of mind, they, too, were eager to enjoy a ride on the front of the engine. Over the "cow-catcher" a seat was fixed, with a brass rail in front so that there was little danger of falling off. We knew how cold it would be later, and so we put

on our heaviest coats and wrapped ourselves in our thickest rugs. We were "in the front row" to obtain a view.

The way was now increasingly steep. It was necessary to have two engines, one in front to pull and one behind to push. Slowly we grunted on our way. There was a chill ping in the air which made our cheeks smart. We kept close to the river, as though it were a guide that we did not intend to allow to forsake us. Sometimes we ran not far above the level of the scouring waters. At other times we seemed to be running along a high-perched ledge on the rock side, so that when the engine gave a sudden swerve round the elbow of a hill there was one traveller who shut his eyes when he thought what might happen if the engine had suddenly taken it into its head to make a leap into the abyss.

The hills closed in. They towered above us so that there was the sense of going through a long gully. At every turn the engine shrieked, and the echoes reverberated amongst the mountains. Now and then we came upon gangmen engaged in the repair of the line. They jumped aside whilst the train trundled by.

Then came a dip, with a great open, verdurous cañon in front of us. The steam of the engine was shut off, and the train seemed to free-wheel into the valley. We jumped and rocked and curved in the most exciting way. There was no protecting fence. We gave a start when, swinging round the

bend, we came across a couple of scampering horses. We held our breath, for it seemed certain we should crush into them. One animal gave a violent jump amongst the adjoining boulders, and then, when we were within a dozen yards of the other horse, it swerved, and we just missed hitting it.

Again we started climbing. We ran past tiny stations, and on the hillsides, where there was vegetation, we could see little chalets and horses and cattle about. Once we had to cross a bridge very slowly, for it was under extensive repair. The chief engineer was a young Englishman, and he ran up and exchanged a few words with friends. We went through long black tunnels, and the experience was eerie, for the engine shrieked like a maniac that was being chased.

Still we kept fairly close to the Mendoza River. At one spot the hills widened out where a tributary, the Rio Blanco, ran into the main stream. At the joining place there was a chasm which it would have required an enormous bridge to span. We avoided that difficulty by the line running a little distance on one side by the Rio Blanco to where the valley narrowed so we could cross by a small bridge; and then the train started going the other way on the other side of the fall, and proceeded with the Mendoza River on the right, having dodged the chasm by a sort of V-shaped loop.

By the side of the chasm was a melancholy little cemetery. There was no grass, or trees, or flowers; just a group of uneven headstones telling of the

last resting-place of the men who had died years before whilst engaged in constructing the line.

We now seemed to be running along a scooped-out way over a great height of shingle. We knew it was here that some of the hardest work was done in building the line. For after the melting of the snows and the torrential rains, great masses of shingle rolled, breaking the line, and on one occasion throwing a whole train and the engine right into the bottom of the river. One felt that the engine itself was trembling with fear as it made a path across this dread hillside. It was bitterly cold. The wind cut with icy blast upon us from the precipices. Higher still we climbed to where there was no vegetation, nothing but scarped rocks and strange shaped and strangely coloured mounds, reminding us of the volcanic origin of the Andes.

Reaching another flat level we ran into the mountain station of Zanjou Amarillo. Here were engine sheds, for it is necessary to change the engine at this place. We dismounted from the "cow-catcher," and, shivering with the cold, watched a heavy black engine attached. From this point until the other side of the Andes is reached part of the way is covered by the use of a rack rail. The railway is too steep for an ordinary engine to climb. Accordingly, in the centre is a third line with cogs. The engine has an extra wheel with cogs, so that it does not run but grips its way to further heights.

The day was bright. Through clefts in our shut-in way we could see snow on the mountains.

THE HOTEL AT INCA.

We travelled up a valley of desolation. We knew that in the old days this was the main road from Chili into Argentina, and in places we saw tumbled-down shelter houses, now deserted, but of use in former times when travellers crossed the mountains by mule, for always they were provided with food and fuel. There was something wonderfully fascinating, crawling as it were to the roof of the world. It was easy to understand how superstitious Indians believed that evil spirits had their homes in the inaccessible fastnesses. There was no living thing to be seen anywhere except a couple of eagles.

Gradually the panorama opened. We got a glimpse of the snow-covered heights in front of us. Then the brightness of the day disappeared; the sun was shrouded; there was a weird wail in the wind. A snowstorm came upon us. Still the engine, with something almost human in its determination, gripped the cogs and pulled us higher and higher yet. It was so cold we closed all windows and put on our coats, and called for the attendant to bring us beverages which we expected would produce warmth.

Midday arrived before we reached Puerta del Inca, which was as far as we intended going. We had our car detached, and waved our hands to those on the express train, which soon disappeared amid the rushing snow.

You may take it that the Incas never came to this part of the world. That they did is a piece of imagination. The so-called "Bridge of the Incas" is a natural formation. A little river has eaten its

way through the hillside, and the tear and drip of water during untold centuries has formed a great natural arch. The water is volcanic and steamy, and has mineral qualities which stain the rocks with strange colourings.

Of course, the benefits of the waters for rheumatism, and a score of other ailments, have been exploited. Galleries have been built under the arch, bath chambers cut above the rock, and water taken in pipes into each, so that visitors may have a "cure." In the summer time there are many visitors to Puerta del Inca to gain benefit not only from the waters, but from the mountain air, and to have a pleasant time by excursions into the hills. There is a commodious hotel.

In the winter time, when the snows are heavy, two trains a week are run over to Chili. Sometimes the snowfall is so severe that the traffic is completely blocked, though with the construction of snow-sheds, and fences to resist the drifting snow, there is less danger than formerly. However, there have been times when trains have been held up, and passengers have had to stay for a week at Inca. First-class passengers fend for themselves at the big hotel; but down near the railway station there is a great caravanserai of a place where poorer passengers are provided with rough accommodation, and where they can obtain food at cheap prices.

The snow had ceased, but there was a knife-like wind whilst we battled up the hillside, making for the hotel standing gaunt and solitary amongst the

THE INCA BRIDGE IN THE ANDES.

barren mountains. We did not object to the little discomfort. It was delightful to get into the warm rooms, to sit down and have a meal, to smoke, to chat, to play billiards, and some of us to have a doze. Then, in the grey of the afternoon, with occasional gleams of sunlight through the heavy clouds which swathed the mountain tops, we sauntered about this straggling, high perched village.

There was no passenger train to Mendoza that day. But we had arranged for an engine to take charge of our car and run us back in the dark. So at nightfall we climbed once more into the coach. The stove was ablaze because the air was increasingly cold. Trains only run along this mountain route in the daylight, and so perhaps there was a little nervousness in making the journey down through the valleys in the blackness. In the front of the engine was a great searchlight. So we went groaning and rocking, with the whistle of the engine shrieking in the cañons, on our way back to Mendoza. Once there was a violent jerk when the engine was brought almost to a standstill, for some cattle had strayed upon the line and it was with difficulty they were frightened off the track.

We were snug enough in our well-lit coach, where before and after dinner the hours were wiled away with games of cards. Occasionally we halted at the tiny hamlets, and the residents ran out to have a look at the unusual sight of an engine, with a huge gleaming eye in front, picking its way, as it were,

through the ravines, whilst behind was an illuminated car with a party of merry Britishers.

Once I went on the little platform at the rear of the coach. The whole world was wrapped in blackness. After a time I got used to it. It was possible to discern the ragged silhouettes of the hilltops, and to peer into the cimmerian gloom of the valley where the Mendoza River was hastening noisily toward the plain. No wonder the natives had a horror of these hills.

There was a kind of crunching clatter as the engine ran over the stretch of the line with the cogged third rail. When we reached less precipitous ground the worst danger had passed, and the engine rattled and bounced on her way. Down and down we sank till at last, with a long-drawn scream from the engine, we passed through the gates of the hills. We piled more coal on the stove, and sat round smoking and telling yarns, and wondered when we should all have a similar trip again. It was one o'clock in the morning when we got back to Mendoza.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CAMP

"To govern is to populate" is the maxim which has guided the policy of the Argentine Government ever since the first days of political emancipation. The immense wealth of the fertile plains must remain unappropriated just as long as there is insufficient labour to sow and reap, to tend, to feed, and shear.

As a result of this policy the immigration organisation of Argentina may now be regarded as the finest in the world. Everything that could possibly be done to bring a large number of useful emigrants to the country has been done, with the result that while in 1858 the number of immigrants was only 4,658 it increased until in 1913 it reached 300,000. The increase has been steady except in 1888 and the two following years, when the figures were 130,271, 218,744, and 77,815 respectively. These were years in which an experiment was made with assisted passages, and the result was that the supply of immigrants jumped up and soon exceeded the demand. The misery and poverty which followed the arrival of the too numerous thousands caused a reaction. Assisted passages were abandoned, and in 1891 the number fell to 28,266. But since that date it has risen steadily to its present height.

The reason for the great preponderance of Italians is that the climate is more suitable to them than to those of any more northern nationality. Labour is what is needed, and for hard manual work in an almost tropical climate, quite unsuited to Englishmen, Italians are not only fitted but expect considerably less wages and a lower standard of comfort. The best chances come to those who can speak Spanish, and this the Italians learn somewhat more quickly than the other immigrants.

Argentina is not a country for the casual Englishman whose motives for leaving home are poverty or a longing for adventure. He cannot work as a labourer. Other positions where money can be earned are few and difficult to obtain except by personal influence. The Italians, too, are quiet and frugal in their living—qualities which are not typical of the English immigrant, and it is often remarked that an Italian will thrive where an Englishman would starve.

Clerks and shop assistants, and those who can only do office work, are not wanted at all. Farm labourers, dairymen, and stockmen of practical experience are welcomed, and there is a fair demand for mechanics. Engine-drivers can get work if they can speak Spanish, and Englishmen have been found useful as butchers at the freezing works —but that is not an occupation which will absorb an unlimited number.

A considerable number of overseers are required on *estancias*, but for these posts personal introduction and previous practical experience are necessary. Dis-

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

GENERAL VIEW OF AN ESTANCIA.

appointment and chagrin await the young man who arrives in the country with nothing except a large amount of physical energy and high spirits, and wishes at once to obtain a big salary on a ranch. If these ignorant adventurers feel they must go to that part of "abroad" their best way is to go on a ranch as apprentice for some years at a nominal salary. They will find the work hard, but the life is not without its pleasures, and at the end of the time they will probably be better qualified to take up good positions. If such a one, in disgust at the hardness and the monotony of the work, should give up and should succeed in obtaining a place in a bank or railway office, he will find himself better off in money, but somewhat poorer in prospects than he would be at home.

There is little chance of the immigrant securing a small holding and forming a home. Even on established farms good openings are not abundant. The colonists are often short of capital, and not long ago farming operations throughout an entire district were almost stopped because the colonists were unable to buy seed. The position was only saved by the railway company providing the seed on easy terms and without any security.

Among the more prosperous farmers are the small Welsh colony founded at Chubut in 1865. There are 400 of them, who are mostly doing very well, and maintain in habits, language, and religion the customs of their own country. In the Andes, about 400 miles from Port Madryn, there is another

colony of about 500 Welsh people. One hears there on a Sunday the sound of Welsh hymns from the chapel.

When the immigrant, after his long train journey, arrives at some station on the plains he finds that the centre of life is the camp town. Whether he comes from Italy or Spain, Syria or Bulgaria, he will probably consider the camp towns are the ugliest he has ever seen, unless he arrives at sunset, when the glow and colour turn everything to beauty. The roads are about as bad as roads can be. There is no stone anywhere, and if holes are filled up it is with earth which brings mud to mud and dust to dust. When it is wet they are almost impassable through depth of mud, and when it is dry the dust is even worse—one can see the cloud of dust above a town sometimes a dozen miles away.

The inhabitants of the camp town—as distinct from those in the cities—seem never to have developed the idea of making it beautiful or even pleasant. Extra buildings are run up just where and how the owner likes. The prospect is marred everywhere by the crude lines of galvanised iron roofs. The houses are built along the uneven street in an irregularity which has no charm. Refuse and dead dogs are left lying about until someone specially affected, or possibly the policeman, removes them a little farther off. The houses are all one-storied, and have the street frontage built up to look twice as high as the house really is. In these small towns the inns —generally at the corner of the street—are one-

Photograph by A. W. Boote & Co., Buenos Aires.

A GAUCHO AND HIS FAMILY.

storied also. The bar is a restaurant for the peons, who in the evenings gather there to drink and gamble. Inside is a more private eating-room, and beyond this the yard round which are the bedrooms. The sanitary arrangements leave much to be desired, and there is everywhere the strong odour of garlic.

The most characteristic figure of the camp town is the gaucho. He is the native of the plains, and is usually of mixed blood. The idle, independent, nomad gauchos are almost an extinct class. In the early days they refused to settle anywhere, or do any regular work. They were horsemen and hunters, and roamed over the plains, staying here and there in ramshackle huts till restlessness, or the owner of the land, moved them on. They were the gipsies of the Argentine. Whenever there was a war or a revolution the gaucho would be found in the vanguard, and in times of peace he would enliven the dullness with private feuds which did not end with words.

But civilisation has been too strong for him, and the modern gaucho is a more law-abiding and useful person. He still wears his old, picturesque costume, the broad sombrero, the shirt, and wide Turkish trousers, which may be of any colour in the spectrum, tucked into his boots. In cold weather he wears over his shoulders the poncho, a blanket which has as many varieties of hue as his trousers. His saddle is ornamented with silver, and he has fancy stirrups and jingling spurs. But the chief part of his equipment is the big knife—often a foot long, and usually

of fancy pattern—stuck in his belt. This is used freely for defensive purposes, or to avenge some real or imaginary insult; it also serves when eating his lunch.

In spite of his rough appearance and manner, the gaucho is often kind-hearted. He is, however, quarrelsome in his cups, and has all the native capacity for fancying an insult and much tenacity in revenge. Much of his spare time is spent in gambling, and any money he does not lose in this way he spends in drink or extravagant and useless purchases.

At the heart of the camp town stands the camp store, and the gauchos will always be found near it. It is the post office, the exchange, the rendezvous. Under its roof are formed and discussed the ideas that count in local self-government. Business is transacted with a delightful absence of hustle. All the slowness of Spanish courtesy is added to the deliberation of the dweller in wide solitudes. The result is an unhurrying way of buying and selling which would make a Smithfield salesman white with despair.

The gauchos are responsible for the chief amusement of the camp town—other than drinking and gambling—for it is they who organise the horse-races. These primitive meetings are not quite so frequent as they used to be, but they still take place on many Sundays and holidays, and for them the gaucho makes preparations such as he cannot be stirred to at any other time. He gets a new suit of

clothes, cleans and polishes the saddle and bridle of his horse, puts round his neck a silk scarf of gorgeous design, and has an unwonted show of silver both on his horse and himself. Only on horseback is the gaucho thoroughly at home, and on these days he looks his best. There is no finesse about the racing; it is a test of sheer endurance of man and animal, and when the race is over both are exhausted. The handicapping has none of the careful science of Newmarket. When the best horse is in full course, running as fast as it can be urged, the handicapper catches one of his hind feet in a lasso and gives a quick jerk so that horse and rider are flung heavily to the ground. This, as may be imagined, gives the second horse a very fair chance of equalising a disadvantage in pace or staying power. Although the riders are perfect horsemen, there is little attraction for the European spectator in such a wild ordeal to man and animal. The prizes are usually a saddle, a bridle, a suit of clothes, or even a piece of beef of ample size and unusual quality. The gaucho, it may be mentioned, is very fond of beef, which he roasts with the hide on.

The duties of the gaucho are to look after the stock on the ranch, chiefly in connection with the "rodeo," or mustering of the cattle. Mounted on horseback, the gaucho drives the animals to the meeting-place. The herds are never allowed to stand still, but even at the end of their journey are kept moving in a sort of rough circle so that the chance of panic and stampede is minimised. The

cattle are counted by driving them in ones or twos through a narrow line, a task requiring considerable activity—especially when the herd, after being counted, has to be divided into two or three lots—if a stampede is to be prevented.

Perhaps the only fear in the gaucho's life is that he may take anthrax from the cattle, for should he do so, and the wound be not cut or burnt out by the third day, his chance of recovery is slight.

With the changes that have come over the *estancias* during the last twenty-five years—fenced fields of alfalfa appearing where formerly there was nothing but the open plain—the days of unrestricted gallop over the prairie are over. The rider now passes through an endless series of enclosures, through gate after gate. The law of trespass, formerly unknown, may even prevent him from approaching the lagunas. Barbed wire, too, has been introduced; but though injuries sometimes occur, the cattle seem to have learned to keep clear of it.

In the house itself the change is as remarkable. The old cramped quarters and ugly furniture have given place to more rooms, better furnished, and pictures, pianos, and books are not at all uncommon. Fruit and flower gardens have been laid out. Sometimes on a large ranch a dairy is found; there is a blacksmith's and carpenter's shop, and gardeners and book-keepers are kept. Better accommodation is also provided for the peons. Still, generally speaking, these are the exceptions.

Around the ranches of Britishers there are many

signs of national individuality—a tennis court, cricket grounds, even a golf course. Pheasants and rabbits are sometimes reared so that the exile may not be without a chance of shooting such as he would enjoy at home.

The houses themselves are not costly structures. Some are of the soft, dark red Argentine brick, which mellows rapidly, and in a few years looks as picturesque and soft-toned as English brick does after a century or so.

The houses of the colonists are mostly built of mud. The new colonist, when given his unprepared land, does not trouble to build anything but the simplest of dwellings. Boards are built up so as to leave a narrow oblong space of the same shape as the outer walls of the house are to be, and in this is placed mud mixed with straw. When this has dried the boards are removed, and the four walls of the required height are left standing. Spaces for windows and doors are then cut out, a thatched roof is put on, and, without much further elaboration, the tenants put in the furniture and begin life in their new home. Sometimes the walls are made of mud bricks.

A curious feature of the camp are the large carts, with wheels 8 feet high, on which the wheat is taken from the camp to the railway station. They are drawn by oxen, ten or twelve being required for each cart, which will carry several tons. As the axles are never greased the noise made by these carts is frightful.

Labour, especially at harvest time, is scarce, for owing to the lack of granaries and elevators the grain must be gathered and threshed quickly, and though the latest reaping machines are, of course, used, the best of them require much auxiliary labour. Even in the busy harvest time, however, the midday siesta for everyone in the camp is not omitted, as the sun is extremely hot for two or three hours about noon.

The huge flocks of sheep, varying in size from 12,000 to 80,000, are mostly owned by New Zealand ranchers who have settled in Argentina in recent years. They are shepherded on the open pampas by gauchos on horseback, whose chief duty is to keep the flocks apart, and so prevent confusion of ownership or the spread of contagious diseases. Formerly the mutton was burnt as fuel, only the wool, tallow, and skins being sold; but since the advent of cold storage it has been exported. The wool is not washed before sale, and therefore fetches a low price. The shearing, which used to be done by hand, is now nearly all done by machinery. Travelling from ranch to ranch each shearer deals, on the average, with about a hundred sheep a day.

There is one farm where a flock of about 13,000 Lincoln ewes are milked in dairies, and a considerable profit made. The milk is made into cheese, which finds a ready sale. It is only in exceptionally rich pastures that this is done, and the utmost care is taken that the lamb does not suffer from the deprivation.

One of the most important changes of recent years has been the introduction of windmills for pumping water. In the absence of rivers and lakes a well worked by hand was used in the old days to draw water for the house, while the cattle would drink at the shallow lagunas in the hollows of the plain. But as the best land is higher up wells and troughs had to be made. First there was the "jaguel," worked by a horse and rider. Next came an arrangement of buckets on an endless chain, which brought up water and emptied it into the troughs or reservoirs. This was the "noria," and was worked by a horse or mule. But when the water level began to fall—some say through the introduction of alfalfa—and the lagunas to dry up, it was found necessary to dig deeper wells, and to adopt the use of semi-artesian wells. The water, which often is saline, is specially so when drawn from these semi-artesian wells.

The great scourge which the camp has to fight, as already shown, is the swarms of locusts which have come down annually from the north since 1905. Previous to that there had been freedom from this pest for five years. The invasion usually begins in October, when a few flying locusts may be seen. In a day or two they are arriving in millions, and at the worst are so numerous that they form a cloud over the face of the sun, and make a shadow beneath them. The principal damage is done by what is left behind by the locusts—for millions upon millions of eggs are deposited in the ground. In

about six weeks the young are hatched. They cannot fly, but jump like grasshoppers, which, indeed, they very much resemble, except for their bright colouring—red and yellow, black and green. They move in swarms from stem to stem, and every fragment of green leaf disappears before their devouring energy. After they have visited a cornfield nothing is left but naked stalks. Six weeks later they develop wings, and swarms of them begin to fly across the sky like clouds or smoke from some great conflagration. They will alight in such heaps on a railway track that they sometimes stop a train.

Reference has already been made to the way in which the Government assists the landowners to fight this plague. Under penalty of a fine every landowner must maintain men to fight the locusts. But even if it were possible to exterminate all those on one estate, they might arrive in equal numbers from adjoining land, and a million are not missed from a thousand million. Unanimous action alone would be effective, and this the Government are trying to bring about. Meanwhile, a commission has been appointed to deal with the subject. It is probable that if the northern source from which they come could be found the country could rid itself of the trouble within a few years.

LA RAMBLA, MAR DEL PLATA.

CHAPTER XIX

A MIXED GRILL

In the hot months, December, January, and February, it is the proper thing to move to Mar del Plata. There the rich Argentines disport themselves with the gorgeousness of the Russians at Yalta in September. If the ladies do not bathe in pearl necklaces they wear exquisite "creations"; and propriety insists that the men must wear a costume which is a cross between a frock coat and a suit of pyjamas. The Parisian houses have their representatives in the Republic, and an Argentine lady who does not change expensive dresses five times a day is out of the fun. There is gold and gambling and dancing at the most elaborate, though not the gayest—for the Argentine is not gay—seaside resort in the world. As for the "tango" dance, no respectable Argentine ever dances it. I have seen it performed in tempestuous manner amongst those who do not mind whether they are considered respectable or not—a very different thing from the milk-and-water efforts in London ballrooms.

It is not quite decided whether the phrase "filthy lucre" comes from the United States or from Argentina. There is only one dirtier thing in the world than the American dollar note, and that is the

Argentine peso; but in extenuation of its filth one has to remember it is less than half the dollar's value. I am convinced that one of the reasons money is held in small regard in the Argentine is that nobody can have any respect for a worn, tattered, and evil-smelling piece of paper, even though its equivalent be a shilling and eightpence. I never appreciated the genuine value of money till I changed a bilious and decrepit ten peso note for half-crowns, shillings, and threepenny bits. Of course, the Argentines have no money but paper and nickel, though you are assured there are untold millions of gold in the cellars of the national casa. But you never strike anything but paper. When I drew English gold from the bank for use on my voyage home, and swaggeringly emptied an envelope of sovereigns on the table at a luncheon party given by the British Minister, my lady neighbour gave a little shriek of delight at the blessed spectacle of a real English sovereign. The only coin which holds good the world round is the British sovereign.

Now of the cosmopolitan throng exploiting the resources of Argentina it has been left to the Jews to work on distinctive racial lines. The Hebrew population numbers 40,000, a community founded and fostered according to well-defined plans which not only ensure the comfort and well-being of the thrifty, but mark a revival of agriculture as one of the industrial arts of the Jews.

Centuries of wandering, of persecution and oppression, of lethargic waiting for the "return to the

promised land," divorced the Hebrew from his original position as an agriculturist. In the Argentine he is beginning to rehabilitate himself. Backed by the Jewish Colonisation Association, and aided by that commercial talent which has become characteristic of the Jew wherever he may be, the Jewish farmer in South America represents a new type in the great Israelitish family.

What more natural than that the Argentine should be regarded as one of the likely homes for the wandering tribes by those who for years have promoted the Jewish settlement movements? Jewish patriarchs and philanthropists looked longingly at the map of South America in search of a goal for racial and religious aspirations. The oppression and persecution of co-religionists in Russia and Roumania in the early 'nineties called for action as well as ideals. Shelter had to be found where thrift and enterprise were offered their due reward. Argentina was fixed upon, and the foundation of to-day's well organised scheme was inaugurated through the munificence of the late Baron Hirsch. Under his last will and testament the financial stability of the colonisation scheme was secured.

A society representative of Israelites in Berlin, London, Frankfort, Paris, and Brussels, as well as the Anglo-Jewish and other Hebrew associations, was formed under English jurisdiction. Only the interest of the fund left by the baron may be spent in assisting Jewish colonists to the ownership of their farms, and the tiding over of the inevitable

depressions in agriculture. Every two months the executive of this society meets in Paris and considers the destinies of Jewish colonists not only in the Argentine, but in the United States, Canada, Asia Minor, Palestine, Brazil, and Russia.

The memory of Baron Hirsch is perpetuated in Argentina by the prosperous colony bearing his name in the province of Buenos Aires. Altogether the Jewish Colonisation Society owns some 250 leagues of land in the country. The property in the Baron Hirsch Colony alone covers 44 square leagues, and is served by three important stations.

In many respects the colonisation of the Jews in the Republic sets an example in thoroughness that might well be copied. The main purpose of the scheme—to succour the oppressed—is carried out without prejudicing the financial security of the society. Houses are provided in each of the Jewish colonies for the new immigrant, and here the family is cared for till work on one of the farms has been found for the father. Only those who have fled from oppression are granted the financial assistance of the Colonisation Society in establishing their own independence. Jews from Germany and Great Britain are not granted holdings by the society. The probable explanation of this rule is that the English or German emigrant arrives forearmed, and is financially equipped for colonial enterprise before leaving these free countries.

The applicant for a holding, roughly 350 acres, must first of all have had two years' residence in the country, and show that he has had practical experi-

THE ESPLANADE, MAR DEL PLATA.

ence in farm work. His application is sent to Buenos Aires, where the interests of the Jewish Colonisation Society in the Argentine are watched by a permanent administration. From there a report is forwarded to the international executive in Paris before the land is finally allotted to the applicant. The rest follows the ideals of those who are working at the rural and agricultural problems in Great Britain. At practically cost price the land is sold to the new tenant farmer. The rate of interest charged by the society is 4 per cent. Twenty years for repayment of the capital is fixed as a minimum as well as a maximum period. However successful the farmer may be, he is not allowed to receive the title deeds of his allotment until twenty years have elapsed. The value of this precaution has often been proved. For one thing, it hinders any tendency to traffic in the land and to raise mortgages on the slightest provocation. The successful tenant can always find use for his year's surplus in developing and improving the estate which is one day to be his own. On the other hand, the rapid increase in land values leaves the society on the safe side should the tenant purchaser be unfortunate or lacking in enterprise. Apart from the land, the society advances the tenant 3,000 dollars in the form of horses, machinery, and equipment. In the event of the farmer failing to make his way, the society only stands to lose a year or two's interest on the capital outlay. And the natural increase in the value of the land, as I have before shown, is sufficient to cover any such deficit.

A variation of these conditions operates in the Baron Hirsch Colony. Here, instead of being advanced the value of 3,000 dollars, the applicant for a farm has to prove possession of such a sum before he is qualified to take over an allotment.

With wise foresight the Jewish colonies have been set up in various parts of the Republic. This prevents the scheme from being dedicated to one class of agriculture, and enables the colonist to try his hand, say, at cattle rearing if crop-raising does not prove to his liking. In the northern colonies the industry is chiefly in cattle, corn, and olive growing, while in the south the cultivation is chiefly in wheat, rye, and oats.

A good year sees the industrious farmer with a surplus of anything from 10,000 to 20,000 dollars (Argentine). Should bad weather or working misfortunes turn the account the other way he has only to apply to the administration in Buenos Aires, and the money advanced is simply added to the purchase price of his holding.

On the whole the Jewish colonists are thrifty and prosperous. They have their own co-operative societies for the purchase of necessities and the distribution of their products; they have their sick funds and local hospitals; religious freedom has enabled them to establish their own tabernacles and to observe the Jewish feasts. They have set a splendid example in citizenship to their neighbouring colonists. In the Argentine, perhaps more than elsewhere, the Jews are on the high road to a re-

storation of their ancient virility, and are best fulfilling their destiny as a great race.

With the exception of the Welsh settlements already alluded to, the Jews stand alone as colonists on purely racial lines. The effectiveness of their organisation is the measure of their contentment and prosperity. We have the contrast in the case of other immigrants. Many of them are captured by the political agitator. They are taught to see in revolt and industrial uprising the short cut to affluence and ease. Strikes are frequent, discontent is sown, and time is devoted to attacks upon authority which might be better employed in individual effort. Politics are so inseparable from the daily affairs of the country that discontent in the main becomes wholly political. Its manifestations have no bearing upon the social and commercial possibilities of the Argentine. With wise and tolerant government on the one hand, and patience and perseverance on the other, much of the friction that now arises would disappear.

For it has to be admitted that some of the attacks upon the bureaucracy are not altogether inexcusable. With the influence of officialdom forcing itself upon every interest of the working classes, the inevitable increase in the cost of living, and the instances of bureaucratic tyranny frequently brought to light, it is not to be wondered that the unorganised labourer adopts the exaggerated point of view of the agitator, and sees in revolution alone the pathway to reform.

In Buenos Aires, for example, the cost of living

is greater than elsewhere, though the scale of wages is also higher. Imported goods are dear, rent high, efficient labour scarce, and municipal rates heavy. The result is that even the highly paid worker finds himself with only a moderate balance when all charges are met.

With the agriculturist things are not so bad. He can produce for himself most of the necessaries of life, and can avoid many of the burdens of the townsman in the way of expensive clothing and other imported luxuries. Strange as it may appear in a country supplying most of the world's markets, meat in Buenos Aires is nearly as dear as in England. The same applies to many other commodities produced or producible in the country. A comparative list shows few things cheaper in the Argentine than in the Old World.

The cost of the breakfast table might be reduced considerably if more trouble were taken with what one might describe as the by-products of agriculture. The people are invariably out for the big deal in cattle or corn. Insufficient attention is paid to dairy-farming, poultry rearing, gardening, fruit-growing, and the production of those little comforts that are now part and parcel of agriculture in England and France. The cultivator's first and, in the majority of cases, only thought is the land and its direct yield. With the same opportunities many an English small-holder would make a quick fortune in Argentina. In this oversight the Argentine has gone the way of most new countries. The question

of "agricultural smalls," however, as I have shown, is now being considered in conjunction with the increased cost of living.

Labour is so scarce in some parts that the introduction of Chinese or Japanese colonists has been suggested. Such a step, however, would arouse as fierce a criticism as did the introduction of Chinese coolies on the South African Rand mines. They were tried in Chili, and are by no means liked. The lumber trade of Posados still requires thousands of workers. The natives cannot be kept at work to any extent, and to meet the demand Russians, Poles, and Finns have been brought over in thousands. Timber for railway sleepers is the principal product. Each year some two million logs are sent down the Parana River to be used in railway construction at home and abroad.

The lessons of the great coal strike in England during 1912 were quickly grasped by the Government of Argentina. Like other countries depending upon Great Britain for coal supplies, Argentina had to consider the disastrous consequences of any disorganisation of her transport service. Substitutes for coal fuel had to be counted. The crisis of this period proved a blessing in disguise. Government attention was directed towards the discovery of oil in widely separated districts of the Republic. A law has now been passed reserving to the Government 12,500 acres of the petroleum zone of Comodora Rivadavia, and prohibiting the issue of any mining or proprietary rights. To displace coal, Argentina

would require 2,000,000 tons of oil fuel and about 150 wells. A start has been made in the south, where fresh wells are being sunk at Comodora Rivadavia. Five wells produced 18,000 tons of petroleum in a year of experiment. In 1913 it rose to 28,000 tons. When the Argentine can turn its attention from the sources of wealth now being tapped, who knows what will follow the enterprise in oil? But nothing has been found which would warrant a "boom" in Argentine oil.

Meanwhile, an annual increase of 1,000,000 tons in the shipping trade of Buenos Aires has left Argentina, like Oliver Twist, asking for more. The cattle-breeding industry responds to each stimulus given by the provision of more refrigerating vessels. The supply of meat is always greater than the means of distribution. Already America is looking to the Argentine for meat to augment her own supplies. It is the only country to which she can turn with confidence. Other parts of the world have for years been fed from here. The dependence of the outer world upon the meat and cereals of Argentina almost suggests that the country was pre-ordained to be the larder of the human family.

For the hunter and traveller, Argentina and its bordering lands have their full share of attractions. The plains and mountains of the Andean land are the haunts of the jaguar, puma, wild cat, and various breeds of wild deer. Its birds include the vulture, hawk, albatross, penguin, snipe, bustard, partridges of several kinds, as well as singing birds in great

variety. In fact, many of the birds of the mountain and forest are still unclassified, and are the study of ornithologists and naturalists from all parts of the world. The martinetta, a big grouse, brings into sport something of a novelty. It is slow to fly, and is often caught by snares into which it is driven. For variation, however, it is forced to take wing by means of a rope dragged by riders across the path. The rope pulls the martinetta off its feet. As soon as it flies the third huntsman behind the rope fires. Three are necessary to form a party, and the turn with the gun is arranged.

A peculiar type of llama is found in these parts. In shape the long neck and head resemble those of the giraffe and camel respectively. The body is like that of a donkey and the legs are as graceful as those of a deer. Their voracity makes them unpopular with sheep breeders, except for the value of their skins, for it has been estimated that one guanaco—as they are called—will eat as much grass as nine sheep. The beautiful humming bird is found in parts of the Argentine as well as in the Andes. Many of the vultures are also to be seen. The condor is a bird of such immense size as to be worthy of special mention. From wing to wing it measures 9 feet. To hatch its eggs it seeks the remote crags of the Andes, and has been found at an altitude of 20,000 feet.

In Patagonia we are able to revive memories of the schoolroom, and to see how far juvenile fancy has exaggerated the stature of what the teacher said

were the biggest men in the world. Their actual height is from 5 feet 10 inches to 6 feet 4 inches, but their stature is rendered more impressive on account of their huge arms and massive chests. As the name implies, and as the school-reader reminded us, the Patagonians have huge flat feet. Their adoption of such civilised habiliments as boots would mean a revolution in the standards of the boot-making industry. Among travellers the Patagonian has a good reputation for honesty, amiability, and kindness to his womenfolk. The people have no idols, but believe in witchcraft.

Patagonia is almost virgin land, and Santa Cruz is, perhaps, the most dreary region of the country. It is considered, however, to have a future, and some promising settlements have already been established. The Patagonian pastures have not as yet been bothered about by Argentines, because they are still wanting more workers to develop the enormous northern areas.

The force of the alliance between good government and good health is ever present to the traveller in South America. The continent has witnessed the greatest ravages of leprosy. It is significant that the greater number of lepers are found where governments are unstable and administration uncertain. In Chili and Argentina, where government is something more than a symbol, lepers are relatively few, and are practically disappearing. Farther north the position is worse, and again there comes the analogy between bad government and disease. Venezuela,

Colombo, and Ecuador, where the life of no government is certain for above twenty-four hours, are among the worst areas of leprosy. Complete segregation is the only effective method of coping with the disease. This can only be accomplished with firm and effective administration.

CHAPTER XX

TUCUMAN AND THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

It was my good fortune to visit Tucuman in the northern area of Argentina during the height of the sugar-cane harvest. Here one was about as near the centre of South America as could be desired. The vegetation was wildly luxuriant, and seemed to have lapped over into Argentina from the jungles of Brazil. Here, also, the Latin colonists seemed to have been left behind, and one ran into a strangely mixed people, mostly native Indian in origin, but with a tincture in their veins from the Spanish settlers of centuries ago, together with a subsequent negro admixture.

I had looked forward to visiting a tropical town, of long streets of mud shanties heavily thatched, and with innumerable palm trees waving their plumes overhead. This kind of thing was to be found in the suburbs, where the Spanish-negro-Indians wore big, rough-made, straw-plaited hats, and their dusky mates, in bright garments, gossipped in the shadows, whilst their prolific offspring—often stark naked—gambolled in the sand. But Tucuman itself is much like other Argentine towns, for it has its plaza and statues and public gardens, its imposing houses and hotels and restaurants, its tramcars and electric light.

Tucuman has played its part in the history of the Republic. It was here that Independence was proclaimed in 1810, when the overlordship of Spain was repudiated; and it was here that, after much fighting, the treaty of peace was signed on July 9th, 1816. The house in which this took place was a modest building, not much bigger than a cottage. Sentiment prevented it being swept away before the rush for improvement, and so it has been left standing. But about it has been erected an imposing structure. Here is a house within a house; and a stout dame conducts the visitor into a gaunt room where Argentina's first parliament assembled; where there are paintings of fierce-eyed national heroes, frescoes depicting the proclamation of Independence, the chair where the first president of the Republic sat, and in which the visitor is invited to sit; and there is the customary visitors' book to be signed.

Tucuman vies with Cordoba in having amongst its residents some of the real old Spanish aristocracy of Argentina. Indeed, Tucuman puts forth the claim that it has the most beautiful women in South America. Certainly at the hour of promenade, when the sun begins to dip and before nightfall comes swiftly, and the people take to walking amongst the orange trees in the Plaza, or sauntering along the main thoroughfares inspecting the attractions in the shop windows, there is no difficulty in imagining that this is a bit of Madrid instead of being a little-visited town tucked away in the north of

Argentina. Several enthusiastic residents assured me that their ladies were as close to the fashions as Paris itself. I am no authority on these matters; but I can say that the womenfolk appeared as well garbed as they are in the capitals of Europe. Along the clean streets whizzed expensive motor-cars. Before the restaurants were the little round marble-topped tables with which most of us are acquainted in European cities; and here men sat and drank their amer piquant and puffed their cigarettes, whilst the band played music, ragtime and other, with which we are so familiar at home.

The main avenue, still in the making, promises to be a gorgeous thoroughfare one of these days. There is a casino, a theatre (the Odeon), a palace for the bishop, barracks, a hospital, a brewery which cost £250,000 to build, and a "Savoy Hotel," where there was on sale whisky "as drunk in the House of Lords," and where one's admiration was only checked by finding the telephone system defective.

Tucuman is the centre of the sugar-growing industry. For many miles around the country is covered with sugar plantations, and the railway companies have little belt lines running through the cultivated area to facilitate the gathering of the crop. When I was there in 1913 the harvest had been the most prolific within knowledge. In places the line was blocked with wagons piled high with the cane, whilst in several quarters I heard grumbling that there was not a sufficiency of trucks to cope with the trade.

A HISTORIC BUILDING: "CASA INDEPENDENCIA" AT TUCUMAN.

One day, accompanied by several friends, I made an extensive motor-car trip to the sugar plantations. As soon as we got beyond the town, and upon the broad road which stretched as far as eye could reach until it was lost in the shimmer of sunshine, we experienced the inconvenience of a bad way. With all its excellences, Argentina, as I have before remarked, has as bad roads as you will find in the world. There had been no rain for months, and our route was across miles of powdery earth. We sank into it almost to the axle. We churned up dust so that soon we were smothered in it. Our faces were almost as grimy as though we had been in a coalpit. Gaucho horsemen pranced past us in clouds of dust. When we overtook an ox-drawn wagon it was like pushing through a fog of dust. On either side the vegetation was profuse and rank, and the terrific heat of the tropics filled the air with a strong, nauseating aroma.

When we were in the sugar-cane district we saw hundreds of tawny-skinned men cutting the cane. Armed with an instrument which seemed to be half knife and half butcher's chopper, the peon seized the top of a cane, cut it off near the root, gave it a swing in the air, and with rapid slashes removed the protruding leaves, and then pitched the stalk on one side, where a heap was lying to be gathered by women and children and carried to the waiting wagons.

Twice we halted to watch the dexterity of the cutters and to visit the mud huts. These were

picturesque but not pretty. They looked like disreputable brick-kilns, and although possessed of a door, were deficient in windows. The interior was dark, but most of the family spend their time out of doors under the trees, where they have their fires and prepare maté, the native tea, which is served in a shell and sucked through a tube. Whenever the natives have nothing else to do you are sure to find them drinking maté.

Around Tucuman are twenty-five sugar mills, and it is reckoned they produce 200,000 tons of sugar, of which between 60,000 and 70,000 tons are exported. We went to the fine mills at San Pablo belonging to Nouges Brothers, and the senior partner was good enough to show me over the place, so that I could inspect the whole process, from the arrival of the cane until the sugar is loaded in sacks ready to be sent to Buenos Aires.

The stalks, as high as a man, are thrown into a machine which literally chews them up. As they pass through heavy rollers they crunch and crack, and yield their juice which runs in a nasty brown fluid into a trough. Again the mashed-up cane is subjected to further squeezings between rollers, until practically the last drop of the syrup is squeezed out. The treacle-like stuff is run into big basins beneath which furnaces are blazing, and is kept at a simmer until the sugar reaches the consistency of dough. After that it is sluiced into highly heated steel cups, which are constantly whirling.

It is interesting to stand by in the sickly-sweet

atmosphere and watch how, in the constant spinning and evaporation from the heat, the stuff loses much of its brown appearance and becomes, when thoroughly dried, like the cheap brown sugar as we know it at home. It is further refined in other hot chambers until it is quite white. Then men with sacks catch the stream of sugar as it rushes from the mouth of the refinery. Much of it is spilt, and the men are up to their boots in sugar. But the bags are quickly filled, pushed on one side, sewn up, hastened on lorries to waiting carts, which, when loaded, convey the freight to the railway wagons close by. Señor Nouges told me that at that time his firm was turning out 175 tons of sugar a day.

The sugar-cane must have plenty of sun and water. The rivers I saw during harvest time were miserable, shallow streams, meandering their way through what looked like a broad boulder-strewn bed of what once had been a wide stream. I was there, however, in the dry season, but was told that in the rainy season these streams are increased a thousandfold in volume, are frequently a quarter of a mile wide, and, when the torrents are heavy, overflow their banks and inundate the land. Irrigation is carried to a high point, so that in times of flood the waters of the rivers can be conveyed many miles and utilised in providing moisture to the cane.

It has only been in comparatively recent years that the possibilities of the extensive region of North Argentina, of which Tucuman is the centre, in regard to sugar have been realised. There is the initial

expense of clearing the ground of jungle, and providing irrigation. Once, however, this has been done, and the cane planted, a paying crop is obtained the first year. The same roots grow useful stalks for three or four years, and then comes the process of gradually planting new roots and removing the old ones so that the same soil can be made productive. Weeds are numerous, and in the early months of growth these have to be constantly removed, first of all to prevent their smothering the young shoots, and secondly to give the cane all the nutriment there is in the soil. There is also the danger of invasion by locusts, and the occasional possibility in the cold months—say about May and June—of frost doing injury to the saplings. Allowing, however, for these disadvantages, the advance in the sugar industry in Argentina during the last dozen years has been nothing short of amazing. Still, I could not help feeling that the industry is only in its infancy. As soon as the foreigner appreciates what northern Argentina can do—at present most of the sugar growing is in the hands of Spanish-Argentines—there will certainly be enormous development. One of the things which will appeal to the foreign capitalist who takes up sugar growing on an extensive scale is that there is a quick return on the money invested in development.

Though Tucuman is the capital of the sugar growing interest, it may be said there are plenty of areas equally favourable for raising the cane. Sugar growing at Tucuman began about thirty years ago,

long before the railway ever reached the place, and to meet purely local demands; because in those days the transport of imported sugar, as of other goods, by cart was expensive. When the railway put Tucuman into near communication with other parts of the Republic, the possibilities of a great trade were at once recognised. Tucuman sugar, however, could not in those days compete, either in quality or price, with that which came from other countries. It was, therefore, decided to give encouragement to Argentine sugar growing by a tariff on sugar which came from across sea. As one who favours the saving of a struggling industry in a home country from being strangled by vigorous foreign competition, I believe this was the right thing to do. Sugar growing bounded ahead. Not many years elapsed before the sugar growers became a powerful combination, with much influence on the Government. The result was that, whilst at the start the duty on imported sugar was small, it was gradually increased until it became prohibitive. Therefore at the present time very little foreign sugar comes into the country, and the Argentine industry has gone ahead in a remarkable manner.

Mr. N. L. Watson, in his publication "The Argentine as a Market," describes how Tucuman became a veritable El Dorado. Two years sufficed to give a net return four times as great as the capital invested. As a natural consequence, labour and capital flowed into the sugar districts. Lawyers deserted their professions, workmen their

tools, to throw themselves with a regular fever into an occupation so full of promise. Works sprang up as if by magic, palaces were constructed to house the staffs, capital was lavished on the industry by individuals and banking houses alike. While fortunes were being created in the cultivation of the sugar-cane, orchards, orange crops, pasturage, and arable land were being either transformed or neglected.

Something like a trust has been formed amongst the sugar growers, with the object of maintaining prices. But public opinion is becoming so pronounced that, whilst there is no disposition to let the foreigner come in and undersell the native production, the tariff should be reduced in order that there may be more competition between the native and outside growers, with a slight advantage always given to the Argentine grower. The Republic is quite capable of growing all the sugar its inhabitants may require; but fair competition from the sugar of other countries will do much to regulate prices.

THE STATUE OF SAN MARTIN AT TUCUMAN.

CHAPTER XXI

THE INDUSTRIAL SIDE OF THE REPUBLIC

THE main energies of Argentina must for some time be devoted to her most obvious source of wealth. Yet it would be unwise to neglect a consideration of her industrial possibilities. Naturally she is anxious to supply herself with the commodities essential to daily life and comfort. But up to the present the Argentine has relied chiefly upon the exchange of its products, even for commodities which might be produced at home. This is due to the tendency common to new countries of going in for the "big deal." In this sense the agricultural industry has still a long journey to go. Intensive culture has so far not become a necessity. Extensive culture has yielded such good profits that no impulse has been given to the full exploitation of Argentina's hidden resources. This partly explains why the casual observer is confronted with the apparent anomaly of vegetables, fruit, eggs, and other foodstuffs being dear in an agricultural country.

It is on the lines of finishing her existing industries, attending to by-products as well as main products, that the foundations of Argentina's industrial future will best be laid. The immediate obstacle is the scarcity of labour. The essential requirements

already exist, a good climate, excellent means of communication, a growing population, an open Custom House for most of the machinery and implements required for national industries, and a stable credit.

Few countries have been able to inaugurate home industries under more favourable auspices. Nothing can deprive Argentina of her agricultural eminence. But how she will fare when embarking upon the more uncertain career of a home manufacturer depends upon many things. Necessity is already driving Argentina seriously to face the problem of producing for herself her more obvious needs. The comparatively high cost of living is a growing trouble. Infant though she may be industrially, Argentina has already experienced the evils of industrial unrest. The principal manifestations have been in Buenos Aires, which, in addition to being the port and the centre of national activities, has been the storm centre of the rush to exploit her resources. It is the pulse of the Republic. Like other great cities, it is crying out against the diminishing value of the dollar.

Argentina's readiness for home manufactures is an urgent problem confronting the Government. The Government wants a more all-round development of the country's resources. Interwoven with this problem are important considerations: a more equable distribution of the population; the provision of more centres for the exchange of commodities; the relation between taxes for revenue and protective

tariffs; the selection of what industries are to be established at an economic profit; the extent to which foreign manufacturers can be induced to start their industries within the Republic.

So far, the only industries that have continued with success are those producing articles difficult of transport, or of an expensive character. With a greater mobility of trade in the country, and a more scientific manipulation of the tariff, there is no reason why Argentina should not provide herself with many of the things which to-day furnish the labour agitator with opportunities for tirades against " costly living." Backed by agricultural wealth, and supported by splendid railway facilities, Argentina should be able to make advance on particular lines. Take wool as an illustration. Argentina produces more than sufficient for her own requirements, and yet she obtains woollen goods from other countries. Is it to be taken as final that the absence of coal in the country makes the development of woollen industries at home an economic impossibility? It is not, perhaps, so much a question of labour and initiative as the absence of natural advantages.

It is necessary to look farther afield than Buenos Aires in considering the chances of a new industry. The concentration of trade in the capital has probably been a hindrance. The congestion of all interests, commercial, political, and social, in " B.A." has caused land to increase enormously in value, an important consideration in setting up factories. In turn, other charges are correspondingly increased.

Trade rises and falls according to the season. There is less stability for the worker, more fluctuations for the trader.

But, with railways linking up the interior with the coast, there is now no necessity for the drama of Argentina's commerce to be confined to a single theatre. There must be more centres of exchange, fresh districts for production and manufacture. If the auxiliary industries to corn growing and cattle raising were better fostered there would be no necessity for inland towns to go to Buenos Aires for vegetables, eggs, cheese, butter, and poultry. The market garden, the dairy, the poultry farm, the orchard, and the auxiliary factories would pour their products into the provincial centres. Local needs would be met locally. The surplus would be sent on with the grain and the cattle to the markets at Buenos Aires.

These, after all, are probably the safest lines upon which a new country can travel in her march to greater economic independence. First the purely agricultural; then the by-products of agriculture as a supplement; then gradually the establishment of whatever manufactures are practicable and profitable. For the present Argentina has greater need for cheaper eatables than for cheaper motor-cars.

Countries doing a big trade with the Argentine are beginning to see the force of providing goods on the spot. The crowding of agents in the principal towns has increased competition to a point at which the next move by certain competitors must be in

the direction of producing in the country or losing the trade entirely. This will be all the better for Argentina. She has long had justifiable cause for complaint against those who are sent to Buenos Aires and other parts to barter for her trade. A well-worn lament in the reports of the British Consul concerns the English trader's lack of adaptability to the peculiar conditions of Argentina. Mention is made of quotations in English, the sending of representatives unacquainted with the language and business terms of the country, the adherence to methods applicable only to England.

On the other hand, the British exporter has grumbled at economic conditions calling for long and sometimes exaggerated credit; the taxes levied on commercial travellers; the difficulty of dealing direct with customers. Between the two points of view is the fact that commercial enterprise has stopped with the arrival of trade representatives in Buenos Aires.

The Argentine has already made shots at industry building. Tangible signs of an industrial future were visible on many occasions during my tour. Tall and smoking chimneys and busy factories for tinned meats, clothing, and boots were evidences of the start already made. Before, however, an advance can go towards full development there must be a more definite scheme of working, and a clearer apprehension of the end in view. There are, for example, greater possibilities for brewing and distilling. A recent census showed that these two

activities engaged about 160 factories. Sugar, too, has proved for itself that when worked on proper lines it is a most profitable industry. Sugar-canes, formerly exported for others to refine, are now refined in the country, where the product finds a ready market.

It would be well-nigh hopeless for Argentina to attempt the introduction of industries to compete in her own market with well-established foreign industries of the same kind without the aid of tariff protection. This might mean a temporary loss in revenue by checking imports; but compensation would come through the success of the home industry. At the present time Argentina exports in raw wool over £10,000,000 worth annually. She imports woollen goods worth nearly £3,000,000. Her imports are increasing and her export of raw material decreasing. In ten years the latter fell considerably in actual bulk, through the rush to make quicker money from meat. Meanwhile, the question arises as to why Argentina should not prepare and manufacture woollen goods for home needs? The existing market is a large one. Textile industries already exist. They are few, but the fact that the number of establishments has increased is a clear proof that textile industries can be profitable. The opportunities here presented for the investment of capital are invaluable. There is room for new and increasing enterprises in a growing country with many years of growth before it.

It is essential to all industrial expansion that a

country's credit should be good and its currency stable. Argentina is well off in this respect. Contrasted with some other American republics, in which revolution, revolt, and financial distress are painfully frequent, Argentina is a political and financial paradise. This stability, if not in itself an inducement to the investment of capital, is at any rate a guarantee that capital may be invested with safety. And in these days safety itself is a big inducement. Paper dollars form the everyday currency of the country. Careful provision has been made to establish the paper in circulation on a definite gold basis. Since the Caja de Conversion, the Government institution for the issue, exchange, and conversion of the paper currency, was established in 1899, the paper dollar has always been worth $.44 gold (between 1s. 8d. and 1s. 9d.). Certain specified resources are appropriated for the formation of a conversion fund, which guarantees the paper currency.

During the latter part of 1913 there was a considerable shipment of English sovereigns to the Republic. Under the Pellegrini Law passed in 1902 the Caja de Conversion must hold in gold an equivalent to the paper money in circulation. Indeed, the National Conversion Office, the National Bank of Argentina, the London and River Plate Bank and other banks had in June, 1913, an accumulation of gold amounting to £67,188,039. The gold in the Caja de Conversion began with the insignificant sum of £568 on December 31st, 1902; in 1904 it was just over £10,000,000; the next

year it was up to over £18,000,000, and on June 30th, 1913, it was £53,306,866.

Argentina has a number of well-established banks, affording many facilities for the development of trade and industrial enterprise. One of the principal, the Banco Hipotecario Nacional, makes a feature of special loans for building and land improvements. Its loans are made on the mortgages of property by the issue of bearer bonds in lieu of cash to persons mortgaging properties to the bank. It need not be feared, therefore, that industrial enterprises of reasonable prospects will starve for the want of financial credit during the difficult years of inauguration. On the contrary, there is a good supply of money waiting fresh outlets. Bankers realise that it is to their own as well as to the country's advantage to have a wide field of financial operations. They have the money if others have the enterprise and the initiative.

The point has now been reached at which manufactories might well be harnessed to agriculture not only for the fuller working of Argentina's resources, but for remedying some of the social difficulties that have arisen through her relying too much upon one source of wealth.

CHAPTER XXII

THE NORTH-EAST COUNTRY

ALTHOUGH travellers in the Republic usually visit Rosario, it is seldom they devote much time to studying the full capabilities of the province of Santa Fé, of which Rosario is the chief town. Yet Santa Fé and Corrientes to the north, and Entre Rios to the east, deserve much more than passing recognition.

Though in the north of Santa Fé, towards the region of the Chaco, there are thick forests, the southern part is treeless, except for the ombu, and is a plain with rich pasturage and soil. Along the side of the province runs the Parana River, which can be ascended by flat-bottomed stern wheel vessels for many hundreds of miles; and from ports like those of Santa Fé and Villa Constitucion much agricultural produce in maize, wheat, linseed, and barley are dispatched. The sugar industry is gradually creeping into Santa Fé province. Nearly fifty flour mills have been erected, and there are also sawmills, meat preserving factories, and works for quebracho extracts. Though railways are penetrating in all directions through the province, having at the present time 3,000 miles of lines, the River Parana is, and long will be, the chief highway, because circumstances in the old times led to the

principal towns being constructed on its banks, and because some of its tributaries are also navigable for a considerable distance.

The Parana River stretches away north into Corrientes. There are places with tremendous areas of well-watered pastures; but the farther north one journeys the more the country becomes swampy and covered with heavy forest. The vegetation is tropical, and parrots with gay plumage disturb the silence of the woods with their shrieks.

It is here that the forest Indians are to be found, particularly the Tobas and the Matacos. Formerly the tribes kept to their own territory; but with the coming of the white man, and particularly the importation of Russians, Poles, and Scandinavians to work in the lumber camps, this custom has gradually been broken down. The Indians resent the presence of the intruders, and there is many a black story of massacre. The forest Indians cannot be induced to work in the hewing of timber, but missionaries are doing a great deal in persuading them to take to farming and raising crops of maize or bananas.

The Indians near the towns on the Parana River are taking to wearing European clothes. In the time of the sugar harvest in the west they will work for a month or so, but on their tramp back of several hundred miles they frequently fall out with one another, and there is fierce fighting and murdering of which the outer world never hears. Far in the forests, up to the present but little penetrated, the Indians are found in their original state, naked save

THE LONGEST GIRDER BRIDGE IN THE REPUBLIC, NEAR SANTA FÉ.

for a loin cloth, producing fire by the rubbing of sticks, still utilising bows and arrows in warfare, and following the practice when an enemy has been slain of cutting off his head and using the skull as a drinking bowl.

All this may seem to suggest that Corrientes is a somewhat forbidding province, especially as much of its territory is marshy. For instance, Lake Ibera and its marshes covers an area of something like 15,000 square miles. The vegetation is dense, the climate is bad, and there is little to attract man unless he be a sportsman. But so vast is the province that there are wide areas which are very productive, because the province is well provided with rivers and streams.

There are in the province about 5,000,000 head of cattle, over 3,000,000 sheep, and about 600,000 horses. Besides cattle, there are the timber trade and the sugar industry, also tobacco growing, to be counted amongst its sources of revenue.

It was only in 1908 that the province of Entre Rios entered the Republic. As will be gathered from its name, the province lies "between rivers," the Parana and Uruguay, both of which are navigable for many hundreds of miles. There are many smaller rivers which, although not much good for traffic, are most useful in watering the country. Entre Rios has as fertile a soil as will be found in any part of the Republic. The country is more picturesque than can be said of Argentina as a whole, and with its many farms it is often reminiscent of

England. In the north there are extensive forests; indeed, one-fifth of the province is covered with valuable timber. Agricultural products and live stock are, as elsewhere, the chief source of prosperity.

In the more pleasant undulating parts of the province there are many prosperous *estancias*, often in the possession of Englishmen. Here, more than in any other place in the Republic, are to be found small freeholds owned by Austrian, Poles, Russians, and Scandinavians. The Spanish and Italian Argentines seem to have left most of this area to north Europeans, who in many cases retain the costumes of the countries from which they emigrated. Formerly Entre Rios had a bad name because of the stories of the way in which the old settlers shot every Indian on sight. That, however, is a page now far back in the history of the land.

Until comparatively recent times the only communication with the outer world was by means of the rivers. Now, as mentioned, Entre Rios has a fine railway system. The capital of the province, Parana, is a happy-looking, clean town, with exquisite gardens and, of course, the usual theatre and band.

Most of the meat extract supplied to the world by the Liebig and Bovril companies comes from Entre Rios. Both these companies own great *estancias* to breed cattle for the purposes of their business. Liebigs, which afterwards changed its name to Lemco, practically built the town of Fray Bentos, where there were schools, public halls, and, altogether, a model settlement. Subsequently, how-

ever, the works were removed to Colon. The Lemco company own eighteen great estates, covering 1,750,000 acres with nearly 400,000 head of cattle. The area of their estates is nearly equal to that of Kent and Surrey.

It was as far back as 1850, long before the frozen and chilled meat trade came into existence, that Baron Liebig saw the possibilities, instead of killing cattle merely for hides and tallow, of boiling down the meat for extract. The first exportation of 80 lbs. was in 1865, and it was sent to Germany.

The Bovril company, in Entre Rios and the adjoining province of Santa Fé, have nearly half a million acres of freehold and a quarter of a million acres of leasehold land. On their estates they have about 150,000 cattle. Most of the cattle are of the Durham breed. Between 80,000 and 100,000 animals are slaughtered annually, principally at Santa Elena; and whilst the meat is sent to England to be converted into meat extract, the hides and tallow are dispatched to Buenos Aires, where they are sold.

Altogether there are about a quarter of a million beasts slaughtered in Entre Rios each year. As in other parts of Argentina, all the slaughter-houses are under Government inspection; indeed, every carcase is subjected to examination before it is passed. Entre Rios is still a long way from the end of its journey as a meat producing country.

CHAPTER XXIII

PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

ARGENTINA is a land without ideals. Religion is at a discount, and as yet nothing worthy of the world's note has been produced in art or literature. There is no national conscience. It is a country for money-making, and, although I may have been unfortunate in the men I met, I encountered few Argentines who had thought beyond money.

The Argentines are a people numbering seven millions—drawn from the sturdier sections of the Latin race, reinforced by adventurous spirits from other races, and backed by the finance of London—and their ambitions are large. Argentina is a country to count in the new regions devoted to providing the food of the world; and the end of its possibilities is many generations away.

The travelled Argentine is conscious of the shortcomings of his countrymen when engaged in the battle of commerce with men of other nations. So he sees the need of a helping and guiding hand from other folk, particularly British. Gradually, however, other countries are getting their fingers into the pie: Germany and France. The United States is making a big endeavour, but, though the North Americans

lack nothing in energy, they have completely failed to win the confidence of the Argentines.

Yet the educated Argentine feels, as foreigners are quick to notice, that the amalgam of races, with the Italian leavening the whole, is creating a new people. The Argentine lad is quick-witted and adaptable, and he is alert to learn the ways of the foreigner. So, though it is true enough that you find Englishmen at the head of many of the great concerns, the Argentine is pushing his way in and sometimes beating the foreigner at his own game.

The new spirit is revealed in the way the young Argentine is taking to sport besides horse-racing: rowing, tennis, and particularly football. As every child born in the Republic is by law an Argentine, it is subject for notice that many young English fellows native born are more Argentine than those of Spanish and Italian parentage. It is inevitable that, proportionately, the strictly Spanish population will decrease. But the Spanish language remains. It has a hold in the Western continent from Mexico to Patagonia.

Notwithstanding all that has been accomplished, one has only to look at a map to realise this region is to be the home for the overflow of Latin Europe, and that the scope of commerce at present is slight compared with its probable dimensions within a few years. Having some acquaintance with the great business countries of the world, I say unreservedly that if I had a son, and intended to put him into commerce in the hope of his making a fortune quickly,

I would have him taught Spanish and send him to South America.

However, there is a slowly accumulating public opinion that Argentina can do without the foreigner, that the hour is coming when she should no longer be exploited in order that large dividends be paid to investors who live on the other side of the Atlantic. There is a sort of sub-conscious feeling that it is the genius of the Argentines themselves which accounts for the sunshine, the rich soils, the general productivity. Evidence of that state of mind can be found in other countries besides Argentina. Yet, though it is apparent to the most casual observer of the world's conditions that Argentina must wax in strength and become increasingly independent, it is clear that were she to attempt to stand, far less run, alone she would come a tremendous cropper.

The pride of the Argentine has to be reckoned upon. The nation recalls its decrepit past; it sees the abundant blossom of the present; it eyes are large when viewing the future. It declines to confound its destiny with any other South American Republic. For its northern neighbour Brazil, Portuguese and negro in population, it has a scorn which raises a smile on the lips of the outsider.

It resents the patronage of the United States. When the States preaches the Monroe Doctrine, and announces it will not allow any European Power to acquire fresh territory on the American continent, Argentina says: "It is very kind of you, but we do

not require your help; we are quite capable of looking after ourselves."

Behind this is the belief that the Monroe Doctrine is but a design to permit the United States to become the ruling factor in American higher politics, if not to extend her sphere of authority the entire length of the continent. The manner in which the United States got possession of territory in Central America in order to construct the Panama Canal rankles in the minds of Argentines, as it does in the minds of most other South Americans. Bitter though the feeling is between rival South American States, they are at one in their resentment of United States patronage.

Occasionally, United States Ministers of high position travel south, and beat the pan-American drum. They are received politely, but there is chilliness in the courtesy. In blunt truth these Republics—be they right or be they wrong in surmise—do not trust the United States. I think I am well within the facts when I state that there is an agreement between Argentina, Brazil, and Chili—known as the A.B.C. combination—to take common action if there is any step south of the Panama isthmus savouring of aggression on the part of the United States.

Both in Argentina and Brazil, when I conversed with public men, I was given clearly to understand how deep-seated is this dislike of the United States. There is annoyance at the manner in which President Woodrow Wilson has lectured the Latin Republics of America for granting concessions to European

syndicates for the development of their countries. President Wilson laid it down that the growth of foreign interests in these Republics was unwholesome, because they were sure to influence the political life; therefore, he said, it was the duty of the United States to assist in emancipating them from such subordination. This was a considerable extension of the Monroe Doctrine. The much-preached creed that the United States will not tolerate any other Power acquiring territory in the Western hemisphere had been expanded to mean that the United States is going to use its influence to free the Latin Republics from being under obligation to European countries which have given their millions of gold towards making those Republics commercially prosperous which, so far as financial assistance from the United States counts, would have remained practically undeveloped. At the latter end of 1913 Mr. Page, United States Ambassador to Great Britain, stated at a public dinner that President Wilson was determined to assert the principle that no sort of European financial or industrial control could, with the consent of the United States, be got over the weak nations of America so far as this control affected political influence.

What European countries think about this attitude of the United States in practically warning off European financiers if the investments or concessions have an influence over politics—which, of course, they must have in all trading countries—it is not for me to discuss here. But this over-lordship, this

placing of the Latin Republics in a position of tutelage to the great Republic of the north, is denounced and repudiated by every Latin American public man.

I quite agree that it would be better for countries like Argentina and Brazil if they were not so dependent on the foreign capitalist. That is a view held by probably the majority of South Americans themselves. But they are not going to accept dictation from the United States, especially as they know that United States financiers and syndicates are not only endeavouring to control the meat trade of Argentina, but within the last year or so have been engaged in gigantic negotiations to secure ultimately a controlling voice in many of the most important railway concerns.

In the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies in December of 1913, Señor Pedro Moacyr questioned whether, even should the United States spare Brazil the fate meted out to Colombia, in regard to setting up the baby Republic of Panama so that the North Americans could construct the Panama Canal, Brazil would accept the tutelage over Latin America which President Wilson, improving on the imperialism of Mr. Roosevelt himself, and yet further accentuating the disquieting deviations of the Monroe Doctrine, had proclaimed? What it came to was, said Señor Moacyr, " that the Latin Republics are no longer to have the right to grant to foreigners such concessions and privileges as it may suit them to grant, and, under pretext of preserving them from a problematical European imperialism, the United States will

subject them to its own domination and control. What, in this case, becomes of the integrity and sovereignty of Latin America for which the great Republic displays so much solicitude? More and more the Monroe Doctrine, new style, displays this manifest tendency: America for the United States. . . . Will the great Latin Republics be willing to submit to this American control, and subordinate their foreign policy and their economic orientation to the views and interests of Washington? We do not believe it."

It is only right that United States financiers should receive privileges the same as are accorded to the financiers of other countries; but such a pronouncement as that of President Wilson only intensifies the distrust of South Americans, so that when looking beyond their own frontiers for money they are more disposed to direct their gaze across the Atlantic than to the people of the United States. What may be taken as quite certain is that the big Latin Republics have sufficient confidence in themselves to refuse to accept any lectures from North Americans.

Coming late into the field the United States is now making strenuous endeavours to increase its trade with Argentina. Operations in regard to railways, and creating a meat monopoly in the hands of Chicago firms, provide the most striking proof. In regard to the creation of a meat trust, there is now a Bill before the Argentine Parliament providing that any contract relating to commerce or transport

affecting the price to the consumer of articles of prime necessity is illegal. Those who form the trust can, under this measure, be punished for misdemeanour, and directors of companies or associations will be held personally responsible, and on repetition of the offence their companies or associations dissolved and effects confiscated.

At the present time there is a great American railway scheme to link up the railway lines in Argentina and Brazil with a line running through the Republics right up to New York, making a track over 10,000 miles in length and involving the building of nearly 3,700 more miles of line. The British Consul-General at Buenos Aires, Mr. Mackie, one of the most distinguished men in the British Consular service, says, in regard to this pan-American railway enterprise: "It would seem that out of the 3,648 miles of railway over which it was sought to acquire control, only 1,906 miles needed for carrying out the scheme in Argentina have been acquired up to the present. This untoward circumstance must of necessity substantially increase the original estimates of the mileage needed for linking up the railway systems of the Republics lying between Buenos Aires and New York. The dominion of the American controlled enterprise is not apparently to be confined to the narrow limits of railway undertakings, but it would seem that a lengthy list of subsidiary companies has been grouped with the syndicate, in whose London offices appear to be centred a South American lumber company, three development and

colonisation companies, a Para rubber company, a port company, two navigation companies, a tramway company, light and power company, and an hotel company."

With such endeavours on the part of the United States to extend its power in the south, it is the obvious commercial duty of Great Britain not only to take stock of what is happening, but to take steps to meet it. When I was in Buenos Aires I was glad to hear of the formation of a British Chamber of Commerce. Hitherto English people with interests in Argentina have worked independently and sometimes in rivalry. Of course, wholesome rivalry should continue; but there are occasions when the British commercial community should act in concert, and the creation of the British Chamber of Commerce, with Sir Reginald Tower, the British Minister, giving it his active patronage, should be of immense advantage.

But all foreigners, be they British, German, French, or belonging to the United States, must recognise the ambition of the Argentines ultimately to do without them and to "run the show" for themselves.

The nationality of Argentina is not founded on tradition; it comes from the fervour of self-appreciation. Despite the growth of Socialism in the ports the country gives unprecedented scope for individual daring—gambling on the future if you like. The doors are open to all the races of Europe to become Argentines. The terror of Asiatic labour, which roubles some other new countries, will be slain

by the readiness with which all Europeans are received, be they Russians or Turks. By marriage the race is a jumble of Spanish, natives, Italians, and northern Europeans. In North America a man or a woman with a drop of black blood is called "a nigger." Unlike Brazil, there are few negroes in Argentina; but many of the best families have native Indian blood in their veins. In South America a half-caste, a *mestizo*, is always counted as a white. Thus there are no race prejudices such as are to be found in so democratic a country as the United States.

Yet there is no new country where there is such a gap between one section of the population and the other. I ascribe the scanty intellectual life of the Argentine to the big break between the plutocracy and the labouring classes. The poor immigrant has an enormous struggle to raise himself above the condition of a serf. There are plenty of exceptions, but notwithstanding this the statement holds good. To those who have wealth, money to play with, increase in possession comes rapidly. There is little scope for the salary-earning middle class—a most valuable class in all communities—and, though wages are high according to European standards, the advance is not so great when the heavy cost of living is borne in mind.

So far I have endeavoured fairly to picture Argentina as it is. It would be idle not to count the disadvantages along with the merits of the land. I did not go to South America with any preconceived ideas, but to see what I could and write about what I saw

and learnt. It has not benefits for poor agriculturists such as Canada offers, though the life is more pleasant. Out on the plains the climate is splendid. It is not a country for the clerk whose knowledge of Spanish is nil.

But it is an amazing country nevertheless. For ages it has been lying in the womb of Time. It has just been born, and its growth is one of the wonders of the world. Its inhabitants are quickly adapting themselves to modern needs. The revolutionary days are of the past. It has millions of acres under the power of man; it has many millions more awaiting population. It is crying out for population. And great steamers from Spain and from Italy are driving southwards over the line of the Equator carrying what Argentina needs. She receives nearly three hundred thousand new arrivals annually. And within a couple of years most of them become Argentine citizens.

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