

CHILL & THE RIVER PLATE
IN 1891.

BY G. C. MORANT

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sans
Gayeté

(Montaigne, Des livres)

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IN 1891.

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REMINISCENCES OF TRAVEL
IN SOUTH AMERICA.

BY

GEORGE C. MORANT.

London :

--PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY WATERLOW & SONS LIMITED,--
LONDON WALL, E.C.

1891.

P R E F A C E.

IT has been frequently suggested to me by friends that I should write a book containing some of the incidents of my travels in various foreign countries; but my reply has invariably been that, however interesting such incidents may have been to myself; I doubted whether a perusal of them would prove so to others.

Thus have I hitherto resisted the temptation; but as my recent visit to "South America" was made at a time when the financial crisis in the Argentine Republic, the Revolution in Chili and other circumstances had drawn public attention to that Continent, I decided, in a weak moment, to write some account of my experiences on this occasion.

The following pages are the result; and I can only express the hope that, among the facts and impressions recorded, some may be found which will prove interesting to my readers.

G. C. M.

LONDON, *August, 1891.*

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CHAPTER I.

A GOOD START.

THE sun shone brightly as the Royal Mail Steam Packet "Magdalena" left the quay at Southampton on the 12th February, 1891; and, compared with the weather which had been experienced for many weeks previously, the day was genial and springlike. But the "Magdalena" on her previous seven voyages had always had favourable passages, and was looked upon as a "fair weather ship," and this her eighth voyage was no exception to the rule.

She was a beautiful vessel, her appointments comfortable and elegant, and the cleanliness maintained on board was in striking contrast to some of our later experiences; while Captain Rowsell, though a strict disciplinarian, had the comfort of his passengers always in view, and he was ably seconded by his officers. Indeed, anyone who could not make himself or herself happy on the "Magdalena" must be difficult to please.

We did not get away from England, however, without a sign of the times, for at the last moment a little difficulty arose in the engine-room, two of the firemen not having paid their subscription to the Union, and the others declining to sail unless they settled up or were left behind. The latter alternative was ultimately adopted, but the incident caused some delay, and it was three o'clock in the afternoon when we left Southampton. At five o'clock we dropped our pilot in Alum Bay and before midnight we had passed the bright light at Cape Ushant and were making our way through the Bay of Biscay. Now if there was one part of the voyage which the majority of the passengers dreaded more than another it was the Bay of Biscay, and I had indeed myself at one time almost made up my mind to embark at Lisbon in order to avoid it; but in view of the tiring overland journey, and the formalities to be gone through with the Portuguese officials, I had decided at last to brave the perils of the Bay; and glad indeed

I was that I had come to this decision, for the sea was what is described in the weather charts as "moderate," the sun shone brightly, and although the wind was fresh and cool the passage was a most enjoyable one.

Those who had crossed before, and many others whom I afterwards met, gave me to understand that the Bay of Biscay was much maligned, and that although the water could no doubt be, and frequently was, very rough and the weather very tempestuous, yet as a rule it was no more so than many other seas ; and my own experience certainly bears out this opinion, for on both the outward and homeward voyages the passage through its waters was most agreeable.

Forty hours after leaving Southampton we sighted Cape Finisterre, and four hours later we anchored in the beautiful Bay of Vigo. The weather was still bright and comparatively warm, and the old-fashioned town, situate upon the mountain side and surmounted by a fort, presented a very picturesque appearance.

Several of the passengers (myself among the number) availed themselves of a stay of three hours to visit the town, and were much amused by seeing the women at the public fountains with jars balanced on their heads waiting their turn to draw water, under the direction of a policeman, who appeared to have a jolly time of it ; and by the gambols of a band of medical students, who, dressed in quaint mediæval

costumes of black velvet, adorned with coloured ribbons on the shoulders, black silk hose, and shoes with silver buckles, ruffs round their necks, and wearing cocked hats with horn spoons in the bands, were parading the town and, in accordance with some old custom, throwing their hats into the balconies to the ladies of the houses, who put flowers or money into them, and threw them back to their owners, by whom they were caught more or less dexterously. They afterwards came on board the "Magdalena," strummed a few airs on guitars, and gave us our first experience of the pleasures of Iberian society, by spitting about the promenade deck (hitherto so clean) and strewing it with the ends of their cigarettes.

At Vigo we took on board about 200 emigrants, bound for the River Plate, and it was most amusing to watch their embarkation. Seated in small boats alongside each waited until his or her name was called out by the agent at the head of the gangway; and much fun was caused by the repetition of the names from boat to boat until the right owner was found, the starting up at one and the same time of several who happened to bear the same name and the gathering together of the heterogeneous articles of luggage, consisting very largely of thin tin boxes adorned with gaudy designs or impossible flowers (these boxes suffered terribly in the hold and when strung up by the hydraulic cranes on arrival),

umbrellas of the Mrs. Gamp type, and bundles tied up in gay coloured pocket-handkerchiefs.

But the weather was bright, and good humour prevailed; while the kindly manner in which the emigrants were received by the agent and the ship's officers contrasted strongly with the treatment of certain Turks and their families returning from Bulgaria to Stamboul, which had come under my observation some time before at the Port of Varna. The Bulgarian officials treated the emigrants as if they were animals, and struck and abused them in the most disgraceful manner; but at Vigo there was a kindly word or a friendly slap on the back for each newcomer, even if he were not the one who had been summoned, and more than one woman struggling up the gangway with a babe in her arms and a child at her side had a kindly helping hand extended to her by the officials, who, had they been in Eastern Europe, would have seen them fall into the water unmoved.

Leaving Vigo at four o'clock in the afternoon we passed out of the Bay, admiring the sunset effects upon the group of rocks at its entrance, and once more put out to sea on our way to Lisbon. The scenery along the Portuguese coast, although not grand, is far from uninteresting, and castles, forts, ruins and lighthouses upon the rugged mountains formed in many instances striking pictures.

About eight o'clock the next morning we met a fleet of fishing-smacks (the rig of which was both

quaint and novel, for it seemed by the number of small sails that the object had been to get as many as possible out of a given quantity of canvas), and entering the Tagus, with its banks of lofty wooded hills, passed within view of Cintra and of the celebrated aqueduct which supplies the city; and the next object which attracted attention was the square tower of Belem, serving as one of the defences of the city, its architectural beauties contrasting strongly with the buildings of the gasworks, the gasometers, and the heaps of slag immediately adjoining.

At eleven in the morning we anchored opposite to the large open space called Praça do Commercio, but christened by sailors and generally known to travellers as "Black Horse Square," on account of the equestrian statue of Joseph I. by which it is adorned. From this square run some of the principal business streets, but neither here nor elsewhere in Lisbon is there much to be seen that is interesting; the lofty houses in the main thoroughfares of the district destroyed by the great earthquake of 1755 are, it is true, well built, and a singular feature is to be found in the frontages of glazed tiles of various tints and designs; but the streets in the old town are narrow and dirty, and the place as a whole is too strongly scented to make it an agreeable resting-place even for a short time to those accustomed to capitals where some attention is given to drainage and sanitary arrange-

ments. No wonder that the authorities enforce a rigorous quarantine upon all vessels coming from South America, for it would need but very little sickness to promote a serious epidemic in such a town!

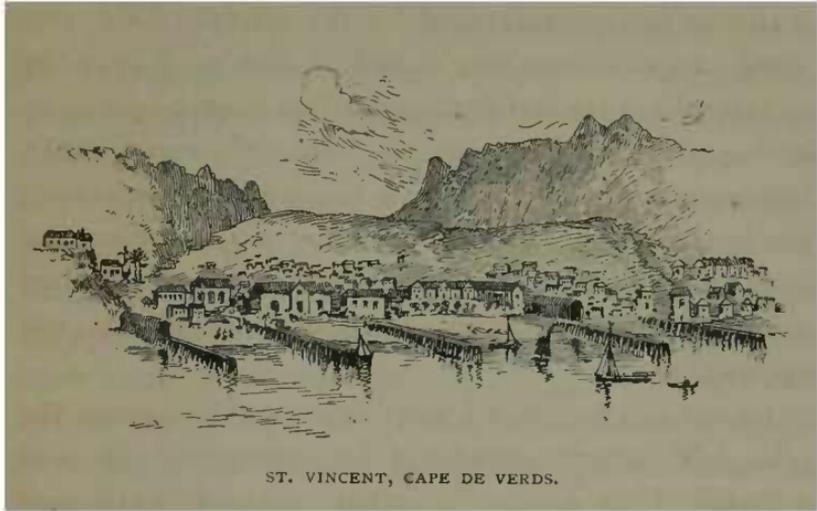
Another sign of the times occurred during our short stay at Lisbon, for on the Sunday evening (the day of our arrival) a travelling circus commenced a series of performances and, there being among the artistes some English clowns, the absurd and childish animus which prevailed at the time among the populace against everything and everybody hailing from or savouring of "perfidious Albion" found vent in such noisy and disgraceful behaviour that the performance had to be stopped, and the premises cleared by the police.

Nobody was sorry to get away from Lisbon, not even I should think the 350 Portuguese emigrants who embarked for Brazil; for, whatever might be the fate in store for them in the youngest of the South American Republics, they at least exchanged for a time their dirty native surroundings for the clean decks and dormitories of an English mail steamer and the fresh air of the South Atlantic.

But Spanish and Portuguese emigrants, however comfortable they may be on board an English steamer, do not take kindly to English food, and consequently there came on board at Lisbon a Portuguese cook, specially retained to prepare the

delicacies to which they were accustomed ; while the staff was further increased by the advent of a Portuguese major-domo, who acted in the dual capacity of interpreter for the Portuguese first-class passengers, and overseer and commander-in-chief of the emigrants, intervening in all difficulties arising with or among the latter, and keeping, I must say, a perfect control over them in a kindly but at the same time determined manner which admitted neither of argument nor opposition.

I must not forget our third Portuguese official, the pilot, who came on board at Southampton. He was a dapper little man, of swarthy complexion, dressed in a smart uniform, and from his manner and the interest which he appeared to take at Southampton in the loading of the mails I assumed that he held some position of responsibility in connection with the Post-office ; but I afterwards discovered that his responsibility was limited to piloting the vessel in and out of the Tagus, in all about eight hours' work in return for which service he received fourteen days' pay, being conveyed by the vessel from Southampton to Pernambuco (whence he returned by the next homeward bound steamer) in order to obviate the loss of time which would be involved in taking up and landing a pilot at the mouth of the river.



CHAPTER II.

AT SEA.

WE left Lisbon in the evening, and long before we arose the next morning were well out into the South Atlantic Ocean; the weather continued bright, and had gradually become warmer, but a heavy swell had set in, and we found that the "Magdalena" was a good roller. This continued until we reached St. Vincent, four days later, and we were informed that it was only the fag end of a North Atlantic gale; but it was not altogether an agreeable experience, although the majority of the passengers soon got accustomed to the movement, and an occasional breakage of crockery, or the sliding about

of the deck chairs became one of the elements of fun at this stage of the voyage.

There were, however, other amusements which served to pass the time and distract attention from the uneasiness which might otherwise have been experienced, and foremost among these during the morning was the "auction pool." This is a variety of nautical sweepstakes, the result in view being to acquire the number representing the miles covered by the vessel during the twenty-four hours preceding, which, after the usual observations have been taken, is posted up daily, at midday, for the information of passengers, in a notice giving distance traversed, latitude and longitude, and the distance to the next port. Unlike an ordinary sweepstake, however, the drawer of the winning number is not necessarily the winner, for all the numbers are put up to auction; and if the holder of a certain figure wishes to retain it, he has to buy it in, very often against a spirited competition, as was the case on the "Magdalena" with the number 338, which represented the distance traversed for three consecutive days while between Lisbon and St. Vincent. Numbers drawn by the ladies will always fetch a good figure in the hands of a skilful auctioneer, and we were fortunate in this respect, the result being very good pools; and as 10 per cent. is always put into the widows' and orphans' box, pleasure and charity went hand in hand, to the benefit of all concerned.

In the afternoon, after the usual siesta, while some indulge in reading others play at "bull," a game which consists in throwing leaden or india-rubber discs on to a board marked with squares containing ten numbers and two "B's," the object being to throw into the squares in numerical order without going into the "B's," a feat which requires some practice and dexterity, especially when attempted in a ship rolling heavily. The younger and more active of our male passengers also played cricket, practising for a match which it had been arranged to play at St. Vincent—and warm work they found it, but it helped to promote amusement and good-fellowship; and under the influence of pastimes such as these, simple in themselves though they be, it is astonishing how soon social restraints wear off and acquaintances are formed, many of which may afterwards develop into lifelong friendships.

The evenings, too, were not without their diversions, which tended principally in a musical direction, for, as it happened, many of the passengers were musical, and the "Magdalena" was provided with a capital music-room and an excellent pianoforte; and several concerts were got up, which resulted in further additions to the widows' and orphans' box, and it is to be trusted afforded some amusement to the audiences.

So much for the diversions of the saloon passengers: but they were not the only ones who amused

themselves, for among the emigrants were several who had brought with them musical instruments, varying between the tin whistle and the "*bandurra*" or Portuguese guitar, an instrument with six wire strings played by the finger-nails, and very effective, especially in conjunction with the ordinary guitar and the mandoline.

The crew, too, were not without means of relaxation, which were augmented on this occasion by services given in the fore-castle by two "Salvation lasses," who were proceeding to Buenos Ayres to join "the army" there. One of these held the rank of "Captain," and was evidently a very earnest worker, and both were well-conducted and sensible young women, doing credit to the cause which they had joined. I am doubtful whether their addresses created much impression upon the sailors, firemen and trimmers who formed their audiences, but this I do know, that when it came to the singing the choruses were taken up with a warmth which showed that this part of the service, at all events, was appreciated.

The voyage across this part of the Atlantic is somewhat monotonous, for during the run from the Tagus to St. Vincent we only sighted one vessel, and the gambols of a school of porpoises soon lose the charm of novelty; while the Peak of Teneriffe, which many were anxious to see, was passed late in the evening, and all that was visible was the light on the

side of the mountain. This, I find, is not unfrequently the case with objects of interest at sea; they are passed either before you get up or after you have gone to bed, or the rain or snow comes on and obscures them; or if they be objects not visible from the ship, but which you had hoped to be able to see by landing, either you arrive too late in the evening, or the sea is too rough for you to go ashore, or the authorities raise some difficulties, or some other obstacle intervenes. It is obvious, however, that we must bow to the inevitable, and so we made the best of our disappointment at not seeing the world-renowned Peak, and looked forward to St. Vincent, where we arrived early in the morning of the 21st of February.

St. Vincent, one of the Cape de Verde Islands, is important only as a coaling station; its situation, halfway between Europe and South America, being most favourable for this purpose; although, if it belonged to Great Britain instead of to Portugal, its importance even in this capacity would undoubtedly be increased. As it is, however, many of the principal lines of steamers to and from the East Coast of South America coal their vessels here, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company among the number, and accordingly the "Magdalena" made a stay of several hours for the purpose of coaling.

As the process is a dirty one, most of the first-class passengers went on shore; but before doing so

they had an opportunity of seeing the nigger boys, who came off in boats for the purpose of diving for sixpences, which they did with great dexterity and certainty, very few of the coins thrown into the water escaping one or other of the numerous little darkies of all shades, who plunged in and scrambled for them below the surface, regardless of the sharks which infest the bay. They are clever divers, and for two shillings one of them went under the hull of the vessel and came out on the other side; while as a further proof of their skill the Captain told me that on one occasion the "Magdalena" here lost an anchor worth £70, which was recovered by the help of these boys, who went down to the bottom in ten fathoms of water again and again until they had fixed the necessary ropes for hauling it up. Some of our passengers who had been to Aden did not consider them so clever as the Arab divers there; but their diving was certainly superior to that of the negroes at St. Pierre, Martinique, whom we saw on our return voyage through the West Indies; and they took a much higher commercial stand, for at Martinique the boys dive readily for coppers, while at St. Vincent the cry is "Silver, Mister" and they decline to go down for any baser metal.

The younger members of the community, both on sea and shore, are inveterate and importunate beggars, and, on landing, passengers are pestered and followed up in such a way as to make the visit anything but

a pleasant one. No doubt, in such a warm climate, and with a people naturally lazy, the opportunity of making money in this way is too good to be lost ; and it was rather amusing to see a mother take a child round a street corner and strip it of its scanty clothing so that in its nude state it might attract more attention from the foreigners and secure a greater share of the coppers which they so freely distributed ; although, on the other hand one did not quite know whether to be amused or annoyed by an over-fed young imp, about eight years old, who followed us up for at least ten minutes, holding out his hand and in a whining voice and with tears in his eyes declaring he had not had any food that day and that he was practically dying of hunger.

The Island of St. Vincent is said to be quite sterile, and many has been the joke about the one tree in a tub outside the Custom House, guarded by a Portuguese soldier with a loaded rifle. The town is however sadly maligned by this statement, for I counted at least twelve stunted trees in the square, and the gardens of some of the better houses contain at least one shrub or palm ; while in the interior of the island there are said to be beautiful valleys in which palms, bananas, oranges and other tropical trees grow luxuriantly—these valleys being favourite resorts of the British inhabitants for picnics and evening rides. I do not vouch for this statement, but merely repeat what was told me.

Certain it is, however, that the town and the visible country immediately adjacent are about as sterile as they can well be, rain falling but rarely and vegetation being practically unknown. How and where then were our young friends to play the cricket match for which they had been practising? This question was soon answered, for in a large open space of bare ground on the outskirts of the town we found the pitch already prepared with a strip of cocoa-nut matting stretched from wicket to wicket; and here, in the broiling sun, the match was played, and resulted in favour of the home team who were doubtless better accustomed than were their opponents to the peculiarities of the game under such conditions.

The scenery of St. Vincent and the adjacent islands, although wanting in the relief which is given by vegetation, is nevertheless very fine, the grand masses of rock and lofty mountain peaks presenting magnificent and bold effects; and as we left the bay and steamed out to sea again we could not but admire the rugged character of the coasts; but going at the rate of fourteen miles an hour the land was soon lost to sight and other sources of amusement had to be thought of. For a time the flying fish caused a distraction, but they were very disappointing in size and one soon tired of them, while the nautilus which should have put in an appearance at this point in the voyage, only showed up at very rare intervals. By the bye, our Captain, who was very good at yarns,

gravely informed one of the lady passengers that in the West Indies flying fish were now being trained and used in the capacity and the place of carrier pigeons ; but although she believed a great many of his tales I think this was rather too much for her. But I was certainly surprised myself at the length of time that some of the fish would keep on the wing, and the way they rose to avoid the coming wave and tacked from side to side, evidently at will, quite disabused my mind of the theory that their motion is not a flight but merely a spring made for the purpose of escaping from the larger fish by which they are pursued. Their bright scales flashing in the sunlight, it is easy to follow their flight, and I have seen a solitary fish rise and keep up for at least three minutes, covering in that time a distance of several hundred yards.

We left St. Vincent on a Saturday, and the following day, being our first Sunday at sea, Divine Service was held in the saloon, preceded by a muster of the crew and stewards not actually on duty at the time ; and a very good show they made, in all more than a hundred men—engineers, quartermasters, seamen, firemen, coal trimmers, bakers, cooks, butchers, carpenters and stewards. It is not until one sees a muster of the kind that one realises how large a number of persons are required to man one of our modern passenger steamers, and to attend to the wants of the passengers. I believe that the number of person actually employed on the “ Magdalena ” was 140.

We were now rapidly approaching the Equator; and the time-honoured ceremonies in connection with Father Neptune being no longer tolerated on the Royal Mail Steamers, as tending to too large a consumption of strong drink and consequent interference with order and discipline, it was left to the passengers to celebrate the event in their own way, which was done by the getting up of athletic sports, in which most of the Britons took some part, to the astonishment, I think, of the foreigners present, who evidently failed to understand how any sane person could in such a temperature go through such violent exercises; although they certainly appreciated some of the events and particularly the high jumping which was exceptionally good. But the amusing event of the occasion was "eyeing the pig," in which nearly all joined. The outline of a pig was sketched in chalk on the deck, and each person being blind-folded in turn, and provided with a piece of chalk, had to take three steps from a given point, and, stooping down, make a mark representing the animal's eye; and roars of laughter greeted some of the results—as when one lady placed the eye almost on the tip of his tail and another on the top of his snout.

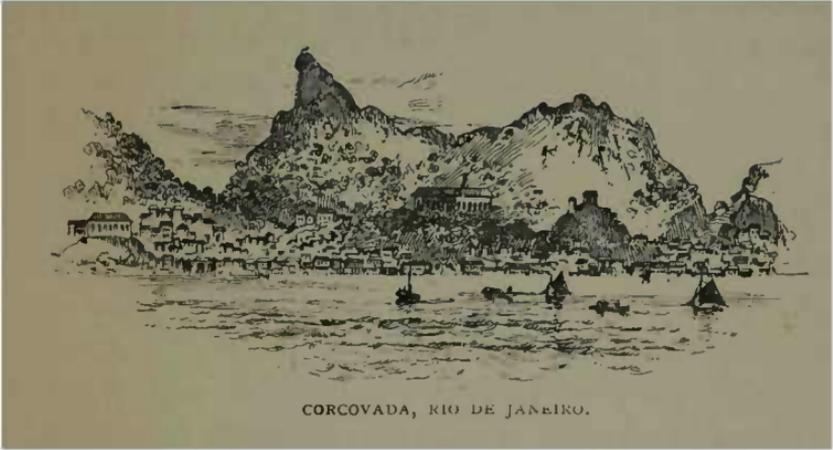
We "crossed the line" in the afternoon of the 24th February and entered the south-east trade winds; and the following morning passed the Island of Fernando de Noronha, the Brazilian penal settlement, situate about 300 miles from Pernambuco.

From the sea only a series of rocky hills are visible, one of them of a peculiar turret-like appearance ; but the interior of the island is very fertile, and is cultivated by the convicts, who enjoy a comparatively easy life and get so accustomed to it that more than one has preferred to remain there after his time has expired. Escape from the island is practically impossible, for the precipitous character of the cliffs makes descent to the water's edge a dangerous experiment ; and even if it were possible to get away in a small boat the distance from the mainland is so great that a fugitive would either perish in the attempt or be overtaken by the authorities.

An amusing tale is told to the effect that on one occasion a Brazilian man-of-war was sent to inspect and report upon the state of the island, but after an absence of several weeks, and when the Government had given the ship up as lost, she returned and reported that the island could not be found. It is said that the captain of an English man-of-war, lying at the time in Brazilian waters, offered to assist the Brazilian navy in finding the missing island ; but whether the offer was accepted or not is not stated. The tale is, no doubt, an exaggeration, but it is a commentary upon the efficiency of the Brazilian navy, which is on all hands affirmed to be sadly wanting in seafaring knowledge and skill. A similar tale, which is said to be true, is told of a Brazilian

admiral having on one occasion been sent to report upon the Obrolhas Islands, which he found by running his vessel ashore on one of them, with a loss of thirty lives.





CHAPTER III.

BRAZIL.

GOING along briskly with the south-east trade winds we reached Pernambuco on the 26th of February, and dropped our anchor in a heavily-rolling sea at some distance from the shore. There was indeed a swell which made it most dangerous to either embark or disembark, for at one moment a boat would be at the foot of the gangway, and, just as a passenger would be stepping in or out, away it would go down into the trough of the sea, rising perhaps ten or fifteen feet away, and it required considerable tact to drop in or jump out just at the right moment. We were told that the sea was on

this occasion comparatively calm, and that frequently passengers had to be hoisted on board in an arm-chair, while sometimes they were unable to embark at all. In the opinion of the uninitiated, however, it was quite bad enough, especially when it was noticed that several large sharks were swimming around the vessel, evidently in the expectation of some delicacy coming in their way; and a tit-bit was nearly provided for them in the shape of a Brazilian baby, one of a large family that came on board here, for just as a sailor in the boat alongside was handing it up to another on the bottom step of the gangway the swell carried the boat away and for an instant the infant was suspended as it were in mid-air; but the man on the ladder fortunately caught it by its clothes and saved it from its otherwise inevitable and unenviable fate, much to the relief of its relations and of the passengers (more particularly the ladies), who were watching the occurrence with some anxiety from the deck.

It may here not be inopportune to mention that of all the drawbacks of a sea voyage children are among the worst. When they are sea-sick they give vent to their feelings in hideous howls and cries, and when they are well they disturb your rest in the early morning; they tear past you in the afternoon shouting at the top of their voices just as you are taking your afternoon siesta in your deck chair; they swarm over the settees and sofas of the saloons; they strew the music-room with muddles and

messes; and generally do all in their power to make everybody but their parents wish them at the bottom of the sea. Poor little things, a sea voyage to them is after all by no means enjoyment and must after a time become very wearisome and monotonous, and allowances must be made for them; but, nevertheless, they are dreadful disturbers of the peace, and a source of annoyance to passengers and officers alike.

There are, however, children and children—and I must say that where we have had on board those of English or German parents they have conducted themselves to some extent in an orderly manner; but of all the uncivilized, untrained and uncontrolled little imps, destitute of manners and decency alike, it is impossible to beat the offspring of the Brazilians, Portuguese, and Spanish South Americans. But it is in this as in other matters “like father like son,” and the adults of all three of these nationalities leave as a rule much to be desired. Their habits are in many cases filthy: standing at the ship’s side they will deliberately turn to spit upon the deck rather than overboard; and whether a room is carpeted or not makes no difference to them in this respect.

There was a notice in English and Spanish on the “Magdalena” requesting passengers not to spit on the deck, and one of the officers told me that on one occasion a Brazilian, a first-class passenger and apparently a gentleman, having stopped to read it, showed his appreciation by deliberately spitting

on the notice itself. In other matters their manners are equally objectionable to more civilized and highly-trained nations, and they are at all times and in all respects anything but agreeable travelling companions. They are very fond of birds, and most of our passengers on this and in subsequent voyages brought with them one or more parrots and other bright-coloured species ; but I must add that many of them were sadly neglected, and in one voyage it was painful to see how a cage of beautiful birds had its numbers day by day diminished until at the port of their destination only a few remained. Monkeys too and marmosets are apparently much in request, and there are always many of them on board, the latter delicate little things nestling in the arms of their mistresses in a most amusing and old-fashioned manner.

But it is time to go on shore at Pernambuco if we intend to land at all, and, despite the swell, I made one of the party who set out in a boat manned by four strong rowers and made for the reef which gives its name "Recife" to a district of the town. It is a wonderful natural breakwater, running for a considerable distance parallel with the shore, and protecting the intervening water from the immense force of the sea, which breaks upon the rocks with such impetus as to send up clouds of spray to a considerable height. What nature provided science has improved and strengthened, and the result is a well-protected harbour, in which vessels of the heaviest tonnage can

lie peacefully, however rough may be the sea within a few yards of them on the outer side of the reef; but it is not an easy matter to enter the harbour from the ocean in a small boat, and without considerable strength and skill it would be practically impossible.

Our boatmen, however, had both these qualifications, and in a short time we passed over the immense waves into the calm water behind the reef, and pulled up at the steps beside an open space shaded by large trees, which forms the out-door exchange of Pernambuco, "where merchants most do congregate." Thence, taking the tramcar from the Post-office, we passed through the two principal streets of shops, the Rua Marquez Olinda and Rua Ia de Março, and, crossing the two bridges which span the broad streams intersecting the town, we approached the suburb of Magdalena with its handsome detached houses standing in beautiful grounds, the residences of the wealthy Pernambuco merchants, and alighted at the goal we had immediately in view, the "Hotel International," a comfortable and well-situated hostelry, where, in a cool dining-room of large dimensions we partook of a well-cooked luncheon, and being thus fortified proceeded to further investigate the city and its inhabitants.

The heat was intense, and, consequently, our investigations did not go very far; but we had a good look round, and found that the town was one of

considerable extent, the suburbs containing, as I have said regarding Magdalena, many handsome residences with beautiful shady gardens. In the outskirts the buildings consist to a great extent of ground floor only, while in the business parts and centre of the town they are of varying heights, many of them lofty, but, as a rule, narrow; and some of the shops therefore presented a singular appearance, making up in height and depth what they lacked in width, and having the front entirely open in order that sufficient light might penetrate to the back of the premises.

The streets as a rule are narrow, and the life and movement of the city more marked in consequence. Among the inhabitants are large numbers of negroes: the younger members remarkable here, as at St. Vincent, by the scantiness of their clothing; while the females appear to devote their time principally to lolling at the open windows, curiosity and idleness being, as I was given to understand, leading characteristics of the dark races in Brazil as elsewhere.

One of the principal articles of the commerce of Pernambuco is sugar, and fronting the river quays at one end of the town are ranges of solidly-built sheds in which the raw sugar is stored. It is transported in bags on mule-back, and certainly does not look very tempting as it oozes in the form of a slimy, dark syrup through the canvas covering.

But if the sugar in this state is not appetising the fruits of the country are, and the bananas, melons, green cocoa-nuts and, above all, the pineapples were delicious. In the tropical heat which prevailed at the time these fruits were most welcome, and nowhere out of Brazil did we find pines of such large size and excellent flavour.

We re-entered our boat well satisfied with our day's visit to Pernambuco, but with some misgivings as to our passage out of the harbour, for the wind had freshened and the sea ran stronger than when we disembarked, dashing against the reef with considerable violence. Our anticipations were fully realised, for we did not get out without a good splashing, and when we reached the "Magdalena" it required considerable dexterity to get safely on board.

Frankly speaking, we were not sorry when we set foot on the deck, although personally I would not have missed a visit to so interesting a city had I had to encounter a much rougher sea, for, seen from a vessel lying outside the reef, no possible idea can be formed of its character and extent.

Between Pernambuco and Bahia the coast is not interesting, consisting for the greater part of low hills, interspersed with stretches of sand and belts of palm trees, and occasionally a lighthouse or a group of buildings; but at night some life is given to the

landscape by the lights of the numerous fires, arising from the burning of forest or undergrowth, for the purposes of agriculture. Interesting, however, are the "*jangadas*," or small sailing rafts, upon which the natives go to sea in all weathers, and to great distances. They carry two sails, a square one in front and a triangular one aft, while between the two is a rough seat. So small are they that only the most limited supply of food can be carried, and so low that the occupants, except when sitting on the rough seat, practically stand in the water, while the steering gear is of the rudest description.

Numbers of these "*jangadas*" were passed by us, the majority carrying two men, although on some we saw a third and on one a dog; and they continued their course undisturbedly far out at sea, even during a heavy squall which came down upon us suddenly when about 300 miles from Pernambuco. It was our first tropical storm and took everybody by surprise, for so suddenly and so violently did it blow and rain that, notwithstanding the general stampede which ensued, many were well soaked before they could get under cover. The water poured through the skylights, swept the deck in torrents, percolated through the awnings, beat against the windows, and trickled through the smallest opening in a most disconcerting and uncomfortable manner; but it was soon over, and as the sky cleared and the sun shone out again there were the "*jangadas*" in the distance, their occupants

caring apparently as little for the waters from above as for those below.

The Bay of Bahia, although not to be compared with those of Rio de Janeiro and Valparaiso as regards effect, has many picturesque features, and the approach to the town is extremely interesting. Passing the lighthouse, the vessel glides along in view of the heights on which the principal private residences are built, many of them large and handsome structures with beautiful gardens rich in palms and flowering plants, and ultimately stops opposite the warehouses which line the quays of the lower town. For Bahia consists of two parts—the one on the shore of the bay, where are located the Custom-house, the merchants' offices and stores (lofty white buildings gleaming in the sunlight), and the shops, bars and refreshment houses incidental to a commercial port; the other on the cliffs above, containing the residential quarters, the hotels, and the better classes of shops.

The upper town is approached by a tramway, running up a series of inclined planes, by a steep road, or by a lift. Selecting the last-mentioned means of access, we passed through a dark and dirty passage and entered the lift, a sufficiently large one to accommodate some dozen passengers, but very hot and stuffy, and reeking strongly of the castor oil used as a lubricant for the chains by means of which the lumbering cage is hoisted to the regions above.

Fortunately the journey is a short one, and we were soon again in the open air; but we were somewhat disappointed with the upper town, the streets being narrow and there being nothing attractive, except in the suburbs towards the Campo Santo, where are the private residences first seen on entering the bay.

We dined at the "Hotel de Paris," our meal and the house itself comparing very unfavourably with the "Hotel Internationale" at Pernambuco; and here I might mention that beyond the fruits there did not appear to be anything special in the Brazilian diet, except the use of a somewhat coarse meal known as "farinha," or manioc flour, which is much used to thicken gravies and sauces and is always placed upon the table for this purpose.

Among the principal features of Bahia are its negroes and negresses, an exceptionally fine race, whose sleekness testifies to the fact that they live well and thrive even in so evil smelling a place. They are to be seen in large numbers, especially in the lower town, in laughing, chattering groups of men, and still more interesting groups of women, squatting on baskets or on the ground; their dress very much *décolleté* and their bodies shining as if they had been well oiled. It is a fact which I have no doubt has been noticed by others, but which I nevertheless jot down, that there is a something peculiar in the voice and intonation of the negro races which distinguishes

them from white people; and indeed, we became in time so well able to distinguish it that whether speaking English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese, on the East or West Coasts of South America, or in the West Indies, we knew the negro by his voice and way of speaking. Certain it is that they are great chatterers, and apparently, like Gratiano, talk "an infinite deal of nothing;" but those among whom they live, or by whom they are employed, give them in general anything but a good character:—laziness, untruthfulness, and trickiness being among the leading characteristics.

Before leaving Bahia I must note down a disease very common there, and apparently unknown elsewhere, which is called "Berri-berri," a kind of dropsy, said to have been imported in some way from the East Indies; it is a most distressing and painful ailment, and sufferers from it swell out to an enormous size, but fortunately it is curable, the remedies being sea-bathing, a sea voyage, and arsenic as a medicine.

Out again to sea, with a run of two days and a half before us to Rio de Janeiro, the weather still fine, but very hot. Late in the first evening we passed the Royal Mail Steam Packet "Clyde," and interchanged compliments with her in the shape of rockets; and the second (being the last week-day we should spend in the company of friends landing at Rio) was devoted to a farewell concert. Early in the morning of Monday, the 2nd of March, we approached the Bay of Rio de Janeiro, the approach reminding

me very much of that to Piræus, the port of Athens, save that the numerous islands passed in the Archipelago have a rugged and barren appearance compared with those in the Brazilian waters, which are softened by groups of palms and other trees.

Entering the harbour, with the fort of Santa Cruz on the right, we pass the Sugar-loaf Mountain on the left, and come in sight of the city built upon and around the numerous hills beyond, with a background of grand mountains, of which at first are most conspicuous Gavea, with its flat rocky crown, and Corcovada, with its sheer precipitous face some 2,000 feet in height, surmounted by a belvedere, the approach being by a railway on the opposite side. Several fine buildings and an avenue of gigantic palms are seen as we come towards the city, while away beyond through an opening between the mountains lies Tijuca, with its well-known White's Hotel (which we had intended to make our headquarters during our stay), while on all sides rise magnificent peaks and gentle slopes, the city apparently nestling at their feet; and the bay is studded with islands, some rich with vegetation, and others less picturesque but serving the eminently useful purposes of coaling stations, this being a port at which large numbers of vessels take in their supply. Incidentally I may mention, as giving some idea of the extent of English trading interests, that I counted in the bay no less than eight steamers of the

Lamport and Holt line, distinguishable by their funnels coloured in black, white and blue.

About half-way down on the west side of the bay lies the island known as Governor's Island while in the distance, at the back, rise the celebrated Organ Mountains (so called on account of a fancied resemblance to organ-pipes in some of the peaks), and through a pass to the east of this range runs the road to Petropolis, the seat of the summer residence of the late Imperial family, to whom the greater part of the neighbourhood belonged, the Emperor having devoted much time and consideration to making this place an agreeable and healthy summer resort. It is used by many of the wealthy inhabitants of Rio as a residential district, the railway and ferry-boat communications with the capital making the place sufficiently accessible for this purpose ; for Rio de Janeiro itself is a most unhealthy place, and although several schemes have from time to time been discussed with a view to bringing about an improvement in its sanitary condition, it still remains, despite the natural beauties of its surroundings, the plague spot of the South American continent.

The scenery of its beautiful bay has been so often described, that more than the passing mention of it already made would be superfluous from my pen ; and I can only say that, doomed as I was by unforeseen circumstances to remain at anchor in its waters for four days, I did not tire of its beauties, which pro-

duced upon me an impression that can never be effaced.

We had heard, even as early in our voyage as St. Vincent, that there was an outbreak of yellow fever at Rio de Janeiro but, as this is usual at the time of year, no considerable importance was attached to the report and it was not anticipated that we should be prevented from landing. At Bahia, however, we learned that the outbreak was a serious one, and the following notice, posted up as soon as we had left that port, set at rest any doubts upon the subject and dispelled the hopes of those who had been looking forward to a visit to the city and its interesting neighbourhood :—

NOTICE !

Passengers for the River Plate are respectfully informed that in order to prevent their being subjected to quarantine on arrival there, the ship will during her stay in Rio be placed in quarantine, and no one will be able to go on shore or to receive anything on board.

No one will be received on board again should they disregard this notice.

R.M.S.S. "Magdalena,"

At sea, 28th February, 1891.

We were thus doomed, as I have said, to remain on board, but we were sufficiently near to the shore to be able to distinguish many of the principal buildings with the naked eye as the vessel shifted her position with the tide, and by means of a powerful glass I had with me I made the most of what I could see. In my imagination I walked up the Rua

Ouvidor, and purchased specimens of the dried beetles of various hues here sold as ornaments, and of the feather flowers which form a unique industry in Brazil; and, taking a "*bond*" (tramcar) to the celebrated Botanical Gardens, I wandered about these lovely grounds and gazed at their tropical beauties and at the wonderful avenue of royal palms towering overhead; while in the cool of the evening I took in fancy the train which runs up to the top of Corcovada, and wondering as I passed at the numerous triumphs of engineering skill and at the same time the dangers displayed, I reached the summit, and from this bold eminence admired what must be one of the most wonderful and magnificent sights which the world can produce.

Before leaving this, the last port at which we touched in Brazil, I might be expected to say something as to the political condition and prospects of the country; but on this subject I had little means of acquiring information, while the Republic is practically yet too young (having only been established in November, 1889) for any very definite idea to be formed as to its future. The election of a President took place just at the time I was in Pernambuco, and the ships in the harbour were gay with bunting, while salvos of cannon were fired in honour of the occasion, but it did not appear to me that the population took any very lively interest in the matter. General Manoel Deodoro da Fonseca, who had been acting

provisionally as President, was confirmed in this position by 129 votes against 87 for Don Prudente de Moraes, while General Floriano Peixoto was chosen as Vice-President. Judging from what I learned from foreign merchants resident in Brazil the country is not likely to prosper so well under a Republican as under an Imperial Government; and past experience in other directions shows that a Republic under military control is not one of the most stable of institutions, while the characteristics of the Portuguese race make them as little suitable to undertake self-government as are their immediate neighbours, the Spaniards. Time will, of course, show what will be the outcome of this latest addition to the South American Republics; but I do not think there is much doubt that a financial crisis and a revolution (not this time a bloodless one) are looming in the not very distant future.

We left Rio Bay on the afternoon of the 5th March, having first obtained the pass-word, without which no vessel can pass the fort of Santa Cruz commanding the entrance. Our pass-word was "Actos," which was displayed on a black board, and acknowledged by the dipping of the flag flying on the walls. By-the-by, the Brazilian flag deserves remark. It is of course a new one, the Republic itself being only of recent establishment, and it has departed from the usual Republican system of stars and stripes by adopting a somewhat novel design. The ground is

green and on this is a yellow diamond, in the centre of which is a celestial globe, crossed by a white band containing the words "*Ordem e Progresso*" (Order and Progress), which it is to be hoped may be typical of the future state of the Republic, though it will differ greatly from the remainder of the South American Republics if such be the case! The celestial globe also deserves attention, for on it is depicted the constellation of the Southern Cross, much spoken of in books, and inferred by the untravelled in southern latitudes to be something exceptionally brilliant, whereas it is the most insignificant, disappointing and unsymmetrical display that can be imagined. The cross itself is usually lopsided or upside down, or in some way out of condition, and the only bright features are the so-called pointers, which it always seemed to me were pointing, if anything, the finger of scorn at so overrated a constellation.





CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVER PLATE.

HAVING exhausted for a time quarantine as a topic of conversation, we found another soon after leaving Rio de Janeiro, for the captain promised us a pampero—one of the strong gales that blows every now and then from the south; but fortunately, it did not come off, and we soon fell back upon the subject of quarantine, which now became a serious question, as, from the independent and frequently unreasonable manner in which the health authorities of the River Plate act in this direction, it did not at all follow that, even after all our sacrifices at Rio de Janeiro, we should escape the lazaretto at Flores

Island (the quarantine station of Monte Video), or Martin Garcia (that of Buenos Ayres). Doubts and fears as to the progress and position of the revolution in the Argentine Republic also engaged attention, and altogether there was a considerable decrease of the cheerfulness which had characterised the earlier portion of our voyage.

On the morning of the third day after leaving Rio de Janeiro we came in sight of Flores Island, and the news soon brought all the passengers on deck, while field-glasses and telescopes were brought into requisition, and eyes were strained to get the first glimpse of the place where our fate was to be decided. It is by no means an inviting spot: three rocks, the principal one containing perhaps eight or ten acres, and the other two mere specks in the ocean, one of them connected with its larger neighbour by a bridge, and serving as the cemetery of the establishment. On the principal rock there stands a long two-storied white-washed building (this is the lazaretto), the upper floor of which is reserved for first-class passengers, the ground floor being for those of the second-class; while several ranges of wooden sheds at a little distance serve as the temporary homes of the third-class passengers and emigrants who may be unfortunate enough to be landed here. A lighthouse and the residence of the governor, some houses occupied by officials, and a disinfecting shed, complete the buildings visible; of vegetation, shade, or shelter

there is none, and the inmates have to take their exercise in the broiling sun in open yards (called by courtesy, gardens). I had never before seen a lazaretto station, and I was consequently somewhat interested in Flores, and in obtaining information from those of my fellow-passengers who had been there, as to the arrangements, food, supervision, etc., little thinking that before many months were over I should myself be doomed to pass some time in such a place. Thank goodness it was a more inviting and agreeable spot, for a fortnight in Flores Island is enough to kill even a healthy person, and its effects upon the weak and ailing who are imprisoned there are said to be, and indeed must be, frequently very serious.

At eight o'clock we stopped off the island, and a boat immediately left the shore and very soon drew alongside. How narrowly were the faces of the three officials who sat in the stern scanned by the anxious passengers; and as the conversation between one of them and the captain and ship's doctor proceeded, how attentively was every word listened to, and how fearful was everyone that perhaps by an untoward remark suspicion might be aroused, or perhaps offence given (for your health officer in South America is an important person, easily offended). But the papers were examined and the conversation continued:

“Were any letters received on board at Rio?”

“Yes; but they were immediately disinfected.”

“ Did any of the passengers go on shore ? ” “ Did anyone from the shore come on board ? ” “ Did you take in any provisions ? ” “ Did any of the lightermen or stevedores employed in discharging cargo come in contact with any of the crew ? ” To all of which questions came the answer, “ *Nada ! Nada !* ”

A short silence, a whispered consultation in the boat below, and another question, intended to be a poser :

“ Did you take in any coal at Rio ? ”

Fortunately we did not, although it is the practice to do so ; but the captain, anticipating the present difficulty, had taken in at St. Vincent sufficient to last him to Buenos Ayres, and again the answer was “ *Nada !* ”

Another whispered consultation, this time a longer one, during which the suspense of those on deck could be plainly seen in their faces, and had the typical pin then fallen its fall would have been distinctly heard, and then one of the officials, the commandant of the island, politely raising his hat passed up the papers to the doctor and gave us permission to proceed. Such a shout of “ Bravo ! ” went up from the deck as the decision was given ; and thanks were freely showered down upon the speaker, who again raised his hat in acknowledgment, as the boat made for the shore ; while the passengers congratulated one another and made their way to the breakfast-table with improved spirits and appetites.

An hour after leaving Flores Island we reached Montevideo, the capital of the Republic of Uruguay, and our papers being in order we obtained pratique without delay and commenced the discharge of passengers and cargo. We had now entered the River Plate, which in reality is not a river at all, but a broad estuary formed by the waters of the rivers Paraná and Uruguay, which meet just above Buenos Ayres. At its mouth, if it can be so called, this estuary is about 120 miles broad, but at Montevideo the distance has been reduced to about fifty miles, although the depth is no greater than fifty feet. The water here, so far from being silver-like, as its name would imply, is of a muddy colour and apparently a pea-soup consistency, and flows towards the sea with a strong and rapid current.

The Bay of Montevideo is much exposed, and the anchorage is far from good, of which fact we had an experience before leaving Montevideo. Lying at some distance from us when we anchored was a large vessel, the "Rio Negro," of the "Chargeurs Reunis" line of Havre, with about a thousand emigrants on board; and all of a sudden, while the passengers on the "Magdalena" were occupied in watching the departure of a young naval officer who had come out to join his ship, the "Bramble," an unusual movement was observed on board, and it was noticed that the distance between the ships had perceptibly decreased. Even then no

one knew whether we were bearing down upon the "Rio Negro" or the "Rio Negro" upon us; but it was obvious that the two vessels were rapidly approaching each other, and that a collision was inevitable.

It soon transpired that the "Magdalena" was dragging her anchor and that, unobserved, she had gradually drifted towards the French steamer. The decks of the "Rio Negro" were crowded with emigrants and presented a scene of great excitement, which culminated when the bows of the vessels came into contact with each other—gently, it is true, but with sufficient force to carry away the rail and some of the rigging of the "Rio Negro," and to cause a slight thud and shock. Our captain had in the meantime been called up and had gone into the bows, whence he quietly directed the men and gave the necessary orders; and the engineer having informed him that the steam was up, and the ship consequently entirely under command, he returned to the bridge and thence directed the further movements.

As the vessels met, the emigrants on the "Rio Negro" ran from the fore-castle, not forgetting, however, in their haste, to take up their bird-cages and such other impedimenta as came first to hand, while the captain on the quarter-deck stamped, gesticulated, and yelled out his orders in such a manner as to frighten rather than to reassure his passengers and crew; and, as if to enliven the scene, the French seamen who had been stationed in the bows with

fenders to break the force of the collision, availed themselves of the opportunity to quarrel and fight over their work, thus adding to the general confusion.

How different was the scene on the "Magdalena!" The passengers stood back out of the way, quietly surveying the occurrence through their glasses, and realising that, although a collision was inevitable, there was no actual danger to either vessel. The men stood by without excitement, ready to carry out the captain's orders, and when the right moment came, and the captain quietly gave the word, "Half-speed astern," we glided away from the "Rio Negro" to seek a more favourable anchorage, glad that the episode had not been more serious and heartily sorry, for our captain's sake, that a voyage which, under his command had been so agreeable and satisfactory should have been marred by even so trifling a disaster.

This occurred in the afternoon, about four o'clock, and at eight o'clock we started for Buenos Ayres, having first taken on board the River Plate pilot who, in his high buskins and shooting jacket, resembled a gamekeeper or forester rather than a seafarer. I use the word advisedly, although I am speaking of what is called a river; for to all intents and purposes it is a sea, and abounding as it does in shoals and other dangers, it requires the most skilful navigation; while the severe storms which frequently arise, sometimes with little warning, often make a

voyage from Monte Video to Buenos Ayres one which tries the mettle even of the most experienced seamen.

In addition to the regular lines of European steamers which ply to and from Monte Video and Buenos Ayres the traffic of the River Plate is carried on by an English Company, known as "La Platense," whose vessels run daily, or I should more correctly say nightly, between the two capitals; three times a week to Salto (capital of the Uruguayan province of the same name, and three hundred miles up the Uruguay River), at less frequent intervals to Rosario, Paraná and Santa Fé on the River Paraná, and weekly to Asuncion (the capital of the Republic of Paraguay) on the River Paraguay, about a thousand miles from Buenos Ayres. This company has a fleet of fine steamers specially built for this navigation, and some of the largest which ply between Monte Video and Buenos Ayres and go up as far as Salto are most beautifully fitted and equipped, making a voyage in them most enjoyable, provided the weather be favourable. I was sorry to see that "La Platense," like many other companies and undertakings at this time on the River Plate, was in liquidation; and it occurred to me that possibly too much money had been spent in the equipment of some of their vessels, which are much more luxurious and elaborate than the necessities of the service appear to require.

I have mentioned the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, the latter being a continuation of the former, and the two together from the source of the Paraguay to the confluence of the Paraná with the River Plate, covering a distance of no less than 3,200 miles; and also the Uruguay, which, rising in Brazil, has a length of 1,020 miles and in its course separates the Republic bearing its name from the Argentine province of Entre Rios or "between rivers," so called because it lies between the Paraná and Uruguay. These grand streams, meeting near Buenos Ayres, form the River Plate; and some idea can be formed of the immense volumes of water which they pour down when it is stated that, although the Plate is at this point at least thirty miles broad and the distance to Monte Video is considerably more than a hundred miles, the fresh water does not mingle with the salt until it reaches that city, while its muddy colour is said to be noticeable at a distance of a hundred miles from the coast.

I had an opportunity while at Buenos Ayres, of visiting the delta of the Paraná at Tigre, where the hundreds of fertile islands formed by the river, and the numerous intersecting streams are favourite holiday resorts; and on Sundays and holidays steam launches and rowing boats may be seen plying in all directions in the rivers Tigre, Lujan (which runs to Carapachajj) and Capitan (leading to Rosario) and the numerous reaches and creeks between the islands. The banks are

planted with willows and poplars ; the air resounds with the chirping and buzzing of the *chicharras* and other numerous insects ; but the waters are so shallow that, on going out into the open, at least a mile from the shore, we found on taking soundings that the depth was only two feet although the water was fairly rough and the current very rapid.

To return, however, to the "Magdalena." We left Monte Video, as I have said, at eight o'clock in the evening ; and early the next morning we sighted the opposite low-lying coast, and proceeding onwards at a distance of several miles from the shore, ultimately dropped our anchor fourteen miles from Buenos Ayres. I was somewhat struck by the large numbers of butterflies which we observed flying round the vessel, and wondered what could have induced them to fly so far from land, and whether they were able to sustain their flight sufficiently long to return, but was unable to solve either question satisfactorily.

Fourteen miles from Buenos Ayres ! and this was as near as we could get to that city in the "Magdalena." We had to wait for two hours and a half before the launch of the health officer reached us, and more than another hour before we were transferred to the company's tender which was to take us to our destination. At last, however, three hours and three-quarters after our arrival, we put off for the shore, arriving after an hour and a half at the quay, where we had to scramble across another vessel and climb

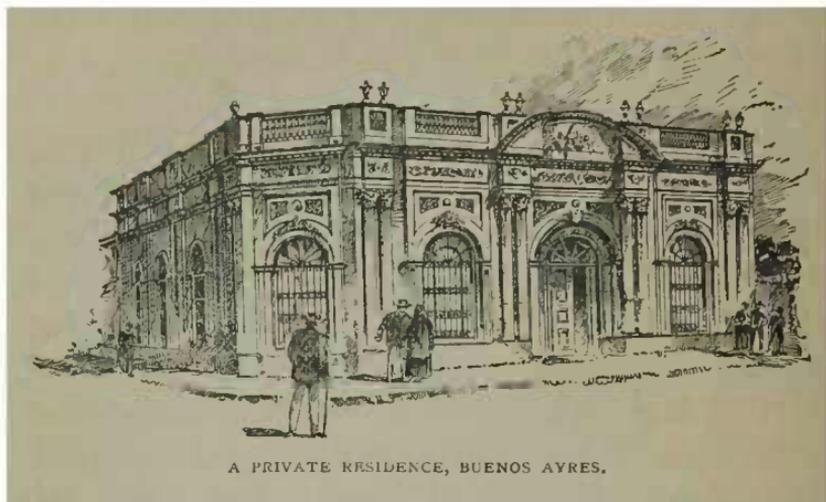
over the cases with which it was laden (a difficult task for the ladies of our party) in order to land, the agent of the company calmly surveying the scene from the bridge and making no attempt to secure a better landing for his passengers, as he easily might have done. Fortunately the agents of the Royal Mail Company at other places have somewhat more consideration or the service would soon be in bad repute. At Buenos Ayres, whether on board the tender or at the office in Calle Reconquista, they do not show even common civility to those who patronise the Company.

Not very long since passengers, even by the smallest steamers, had to be transferred to high-wheeled carts which came out into the water to meet them, sometimes to a distance of half-a-mile, so shallow was the water; but new docks are now in process of construction, and we were landed at the quay already completed and ushered into the Customs shed to await the arrival of our luggage, which had been handed over to Villalonga's Express, authorized by the Customs authorities to land and clear passengers' baggage. We had to wait here for more than an hour; and as we had not had an opportunity to take refreshment of any kind since the first thing in the morning, and the weather was intensely hot, the delay, coupled with hunger and thirst, did not tend to improve either our spirits or our tempers, and we were heartily sick of the whole business when, by

half-past three in the afternoon—seven hours and a half after the “Magdalena” had anchored—the examination of our luggage was completed, and we were able to make our way into the town.

The arrangements, from beginning to end, were discreditable to all concerned, and formed an exceedingly bad finish to an otherwise agreeable voyage. What may be done when the new docks and quays are finished it is impossible to foresee; but in view of the shallow waters and narrow channels, and the constant silting-up process that is going on, I doubt very much whether vessels of heavy tonnage will ever be able to reach them; and if not, passengers by ocean steamers will still have to put up with the delays and inconveniences to which I have referred, although much might be done by those concerned to minimise these, even under existing circumstances.





CHAPTER V.

BUENOS AYRES.

SEEN through a powerful glass, from the distance at which the "Magdalena" anchored, all that showed the presence of the city of Buenos Ayres was a slight hazy line upon the horizon; but as the tender gradually neared the shore this line took consistency, and at intervals appeared the towers and domes of churches, giving signs of the presence of a large town. So low, however, does the town lie, that even when close to it but little idea can be formed of its extent, although from the magnitude of the new dock works in progress and from the quantity of shipping seen in the river Reachuelo—a small stream,

which runs down to Buenos Ayres through the district known as the Boca—it is obvious that the place is one of importance and that its trade must be considerable.

The drive over the rough roads which lead from the docks to the town, and the badly paved and narrow streets through which we passed on our way to the hotel did not create a very favourable impression, while the perpetual noise of the tramcars, which ply through almost every street and interfere materially with other vehicular traffic, must make a permanent residence in the city anything but an agreeable one. The foreign community, however, do not as a rule live in the city, but in country houses, or, as they are called, "*quintas*," in the suburb of Palermo or still farther out at Belgrano to the north-west of the town, or at Quilmes to the south-east, where there is a very extensive English settlement.

In proportion to its population Buenos Ayres is, however, a very large place; and this is due to the fact that the majority of the houses consist of ground floor only, more particularly in the outskirts, although towards the centre and in the business parts of the town many buildings are found with upper floors, and some of recent erection are of several storeys in height. As the value of ground increases in the city no doubt loftier buildings will be put up; but, as a rule at the present time the buildings, especially

those used as dwelling-houses, are of the old Spanish type with an extensive *patio* or inner court-yard, thus covering individually a considerable space of ground and collectively forming a city of vast extent.

There are several hotels in Buenos Ayres, but none of them can be called first-class, the best being the "Grand Hotel" and the "Hotel de Provence," both in the Calle Cangallo and under the same management; and as the system obtaining here is that common to Spanish countries, whereby a payment is made of so much per day to cover board (excluding morning coffee and wines) and lodging, many travellers do not resort to hotels at all, but to one or other of the so-called *Casas Amuebladas* (furnished houses) where comfortable rooms may be obtained at a moderate price, but where no food is supplied. A well-known and much-frequented house of the kind is that known as the "Deux Mondes" in the Calle San Martin, and many of our fellow-passengers put up there; and as those who have friends in the town are usually offered an introduction to the comfortable and hospitable "Club de Residentes Estrangeros," this mode of living is more convenient and gives much greater independence.

There are also several good restaurants in the town, at some of which may be obtained the *mulito* (Armadillo), a favourite national dish, which tastes very much like sucking pig. There is, however, very

little novelty in the way of food either in the restaurants or in the hotels, and fish especially seems to be scarce, there being apparently but two varieties, one of which, the *pejerey*, figured in the menu every day during the whole period of our visit. The *pejerey* is, however, a palatable and a useful fish, and being caught in all sizes lends itself to the culinary art in a most enterprising way. Fried, boiled, broiled, baked, filleted or stewed it is a never-failing dish and apparently no dinner on the River Plate would be complete without it. While upon this subject there is another dish which I must not forget to mention, namely, "*carne con cuero*," or beef roasted in its skin. We pride ourselves in England upon our roast beef, and no doubt as far as texture, colour and fat are concerned nothing can surpass it; but for flavour "*carne con cuero*," although doubtless a somewhat barbarous dish, and one which savours considerably of savage life, leaves it far behind; and no one visiting the Argentine Republic should fail to taste it, if he can get it—for it is not always to be obtained in the towns being served only occasionally as a delicacy.

Although there are in Buenos Ayres many "*plazas*" or open squares, several of them of considerable size, there are few of any importance, the principal one being the "*Plaza Victoria*," on the north side of which are to be found the Cathedral (a large but plain building, without any special features

either external or internal) and the National Bank (a building much more substantial than the reserves which it contains); while on the east side, near the railway station and the old semi-circular Custom-house (once situated on the river's bank, but now cut off from water communication by the extensive new docks in course of construction beyond), stands the imposing pile of buildings forming the Government House, and at the corner of the south side the Congress Hall, an insignificant structure.

The largest *plaza*, however, is that known as "Plaza Constitucion," where the terminus of the Great Southern Railway is situated. It was formerly used as a wool market, but is now laid out as a public garden, and its principal feature is a grotesque pile of artificial rockery, embellished with rustic bridges, arches and steps, which in course of years when covered with vegetation will probably be sufficiently attractive, but which at the present time presents a hideous spectacle.

Churches and hospitals also abound, but I did not observe any very imposing buildings (the best apparently being the native and foreign banking houses); and there are many factories and industrial establishments, among which Bieckert's extensive brewery must not be overlooked, although the samples of its beer which I tasted were scarcely up to the standard of excellence to be expected from a place of such size and apparent importance.

The streets, as I have said, are as a rule narrow, and the pavements scarcely admit of two persons walking abreast ; while I looked in vain for the costly and curious stocks which I had been given to understand were to be found in the shops. Speaking generally, I should say that there are few, if any, shops in Buenos Ayres that could be called first-class from a European point of view, and the articles exposed to view were, in my opinion, as a rule tawdry and second-rate. Of gilded furniture and cheap German goods, French fancy goods and bric-a-brac, there was plenty to be seen, but a man of taste would scarcely have given them house room ; while as to the diamonds and jewellery with which the Calle Florida is supposed to sparkle, a much larger and equally fine assortment may be seen any day in the Palais Royal at Paris.

Calle Florida is nevertheless *the* street of Buenos Ayres, and dull as it is by day, at night between eight and ten o'clock, it presents a very lively appearance—the pavements thronged with men, young, middle-aged and old, civil, naval and military, strolling along or standing in groups outside the theatre, the adjoining confectioners and the “ Bar Florida,” (their sole employment apparently being to stare at and make remarks upon the passers-by) and the roadway lined with carriages ; this being the fashionable hour for driving, and the Calle Florida being about the only street not blessed (or cursed)

with tramway lines in which it is possible to drive with any degree of comfort.

The occupants of the carriages were mostly ladies ; and it was somewhat startling to a stranger to notice that the majority were in evening dress, or in costumes of light material and colour associated at home with ideas of garden parties and afternoon fêtes rather than evening drives. It was also startling to find, after all one had heard of the beauty of the bright-eyed and dark-complexioned *señoras* and *señoritas* of South America, that paint and powder were most important articles in their toilet, and many who doubtless were possessed of natural charms made themselves perfectly ghastly by the free use of cosmetics, enamels and powder. No doubt the cause of this practice is to be found in the sallowness of their complexions, for I found it to obtain more or less throughout the entire continent and had previously remarked it in various parts of Spain ; but I could not but associate in my own mind the practice itself with the haggard and prematurely old appearance which characterises comparatively young ladies both in the mother country and her colonies.

Throughout the whole length of Calle Florida arched iron gas-pipes, surmounted with opal or coloured glasses, are placed at intervals across the street for the purposes of illumination on special occasions ; and such an occasion presented itself during my stay in Buenos Ayres, when General

Mitré, who was President of the Republic from 1861 to 1868 and who had been for some time resident in Europe, was recalled by an important section of the community and nominated to succeed Pelligrini as President. The event, to which I refer at greater length in another chapter, was an important one in the chequered history of the Republic, and as such was celebrated by the displays of bunting and illuminations usual on such occasions, and it was then that Calle Florida shone resplendent, with its circlets of gas-lights producing an effect both unique and striking which might with advantage be copied in Europe on the occasion of exceptional festivities.

There is however another, and not a fashionable although a very important, district of Buenos Ayres, which must not be forgotten: it is known as the Boca and is situated beyond the south-east boundary of the city proper, whence it is approached either from the docks or through the broad thoroughfare known as Avenida Montes e Oca. This Avenida contains many handsome residences, some of them in the style of the old Spanish "*quinta*" and others of more modern and European architecture. But, although thus approached through a comparatively fashionable neighbourhood, the Boca is, as I have already said, not what may be called a fashionable district, nor does the construction or architecture of the buildings call for special remark, the materials used being principally wood, and the houses themselves being

as a rule somewhat barn-like, although some of them, constructed upon the *châlet* principle, and painted in various colours, have a picturesque appearance.

The Boca is, in fact, the seat of the Italian colony, a most important factor in the population of Buenos Ayres. Of the cosmopolitan character of the city one finds ample evidence in the neighbourhood of the Exchange, the streets devoted to business and banking purposes, and in the numerous first-class restaurants of these districts under old familiar names, such as "Criterion," "Bodega," etc., where one hears as much English and German as Spanish spoken; but there is another language spoken by a still greater number of foreigners, and that is the Italian. Of the emigrants to the Argentine Republic for many years past by far the greater number have come from Italy, and at the present time about one-half of the foreign residents are Italians, who are found in all parts of the country occupied at various trades and handicrafts. Being a sober, industrious, and careful race they save money, and many of them return to their native land; but, on the other hand, many settle down permanently in the country. Those who make Buenos Ayres their home live as a rule in the Boca, which, as mentioned elsewhere, lies beside the river Reachuelo, the actual name of the settlement being Boca de Reachuelo, or "Mouth of the Reachuelo." This river is crowded with sailing vessels from all

parts of the world, and the district presents all the usual features of a seaport town; but the roads are something dreadful, and a drive through the Boca is an experience scarcely worth repeating, while a walk through the district, especially in wet weather, is something to be avoided altogether.

I was surprised at the frequent inscription upon the shop facias of Buenos Ayres of the words, "*Casa de Remate*" (auction room) and also the numerous notices of auction sales in what appeared to be ordinary retail shops; but found, upon enquiry, that this mode of selling and purchasing is very common and apparently finds considerable favour. Every kind of stock is thus disposed of; but, as in other countries furniture, pictures, articles of *vertu*—so-called—and *bric-à-brac*, form the staple trade in this direction; and although establishments devoted to this class of business are to be found in the principal streets, some of them very extensive and attractive, the articles put up for sale appeared to me to be as a rule of a gaudy and second-rate character, manufactured for the purpose.

But if the furniture and other goods thus sold are of inferior description, there is one thing in Buenos Ayres which is to be obtained pure and unadulterated—and that is, milk; the practice being to bring cows round to the houses and milk them in the streets. They are generally driven by twos and are frequently accompanied by their calves, some of which, poor

little wretches, of very tender age, do not appreciate the rough roadways of the city any more than their enforced fast—for they are provided with leathern muzzles and it is sometimes amusing to see the unsuccessful efforts which they make to secure a meal.

Another and less interesting feature of street life is the continual whistling of the police, and the blowing of horns and tin trumpets by the drivers of the tram-cars, who have thus, under pain of being fined in default, to give notice of their approach at each street corner; for the town, being laid out in squares, all the streets run parallel and at right angles to one another, and thus it is impossible to see beforehand whether the road is clear for crossing or turning. In order therefore to prevent accidents, this system of trumpeting has been introduced, and the constant too-tooing from the earliest hours in the morning until late in the night, in every conceivable and unconceivable tone, becomes a perfect nuisance, and effectually disturbs the repose of those unaccustomed to it who may have retired to bed early. And when in the night the cars run less frequently, and gradually cease running altogether, and an interval of quiet repose is looked forward to, a policeman stations himself at the nearest street corner, and commences blowing a whistle which is answered by others from all sides, keeping up this little entertainment for perhaps half-an-hour at a time.

Between the tramcars and the police, day and night are alike disturbed; but Buenos Ayres is not the only town where this is the case, for the same two evils are inflicted (although perhaps to a more limited extent as regards the tramcars) upon all the towns in South America; and I am sure it would be impossible to exaggerate the way in which we were annoyed by a police officer who was stationed just outside our hotel in Valparaiso, from which point he blew his whistle at intervals throughout the whole night, the signal consisting of three blows, the first two sharp and the third a long drawn out and droning sound, the constant repetition of which was most irritating and to persons of nervous temperament would be extremely distressing.

We heard many anecdotes of the fighting which had taken place during the recent revolution and were daily in expectation of another outbreak, for at the time financial matters were almost at breaking point, and nobody could foresee what might or might not happen. The city was still under martial law, the police force on the alert, and precautionary measures of various kinds were taken by the authorities; but the elements of disorder are numerous and powerful in such a place, and among such a people it would need at any time but very little to produce a serious collision between the people and the authorities. The police are a very mixed lot, most of them small in stature, and apparently drawn

from a variety of races ; but they are an evil-looking and determined set of men, ready upon the least provocation, and frequently without any at all, to use the arms with which they are provided, and they do not fail to assert their authority in a manner which to an Englishman appears very objectionable. During our visit the Senatorial elections took place, and at the churches where the votes were recorded the police were on duty, and they maintained the greatest order in the most determined and quiet manner. One of the regulations was that no walking sticks or umbrellas should be carried (presumably so that they should not be converted into weapons of offence), and this was rigorously enforced.

At the time of our arrival at Buenos Ayres the weather was extremely hot, the season being autumn and the rains which are then expected not having commenced. Walking was most tiring, sleeping was out of the question, and the mosquitos most irritating in their attentions, especially to new comers, who appeared to suffer acutely from their bites. Notwithstanding mosquito curtains, we did not escape them ; but others fared worse, and two of our fellow-passengers, whom I met one day at the Strangers' Club, were "perfect sights," their faces and heads and hands bitten and swollen almost beyond recognition.

Under such circumstances, the telegram which appeared in the *Standard* (of Buenos Ayres) on the

11th March, reporting a great snowstorm on the previous day all over England and the Continent, with interruption of traffic and telegraphic communications, was quite refreshing, and for a moment we almost wished we had been at home to enjoy it, notwithstanding the accompanying inconveniences ; but we had not very long to wait for a refresher on the spot. For several days the long-expected and much-talked-of rain came down at intervals, as if it were being poured out of a bucket, the lightning flashed incessantly, at night illuminating the flat roofs of the houses, the domes of the churches and the shipping in the river, while the thunder rattled and rumbled overhead in a most appalling manner.

Such storms with us are unusual, but on the River Plate they were looked upon as quite the proper thing, and were heartily welcomed and appreciated, although they found out all the weak spots in the houses and converted the surrounding country and gardens into beds of mud. From the light alluvial character of the soil the outskirts of the city become practically impassable after a heavy rain, and a friend who had invited us to dine at his *quinta* near Belgrano had, in consequence of one of these storms, to ask us to defer our visit as the roads were so deep in mud that his house was practically inaccessible. I noticed the effects of the weather in driving out shortly afterwards to the suburb of Palermo, and more particularly on the road to La Plata

where the grass had sprung up in places which a few days previously had been quite bare.

Palermo Park, which is a favourite resort, contains a zoological collection arranged upon a somewhat novel plan, the enclosures, dens and cages being distributed here and there over a very large area intersected by walks and drives and the ground, entirely unenclosed, being thus at all times open to the public without payment.

In the immediate neighbourhood is the race-course, with grand stand and other arrangements in true European style; while not far beyond is the fashionable suburb of Belgrano, with many handsome "*quintas*"; and still further along the northern section of the Central Argentine Railway lie the summer residential suburbs of San Isidro and San Fernando, the former having an extensive view over the river and the islands forming the delta of the Paraná. The branch line by which these places are reached terminates at Tigre, referred to in the chapter on the River Plate. This is a very popular holiday and Sunday resort, and quite the place to spend a happy day. It is also the head-quarters of the Buenos Ayres Rowing Club; and there is, moreover, a large hotel on the river bank, where excellent luncheons and dinners are served; but it is not to be recommended for a lengthy residence as the place must be terribly dull at other than holiday times and it swarms with mosquitos.

We visited Tigre on a Sunday, and found the dining-room and verandah of the hotel, and also the balcony of the concert and ball-room which overhangs the water, filled with visitors, who utilised the time between their meals by making excursions on the river and among the numerous islands. On the banks of these islands are many pretty *quintas*, some of them having large open summer-houses built on piles at the edge of the river, where their owners were passing the afternoon in hammocks and rocking-chairs, with cooling drinks upon the tables and cigars in their mouths; while the younger members of the families disported themselves upon the waters.

Steam launches, yachts, sailing-boats, rowing-boats, canoes and small craft of every kind, skimmed over the creeks; and among others we noticed an eight-oared boat propelled (I had almost said "manned," but that would scarcely be appropriate) by young ladies, in very becoming white and blue sailor costumes, who, under the guidance of a lady coxswain, were doing some very creditable rowing. We also noticed a house-boat, belonging to a Buenos Ayres merchant; and lying up in the Government Naval Yard were eight torpedo boats, which, I was given to understand, gave more employment to painters than to seamen or gunners, as they are rarely seen upon the water or in practice, but are constantly being painted, to keep them, I suppose, from rusting. They are probably only maintained for the purpose

of overawing neighbouring republics, for I was informed that in naval matters the Argentines are about on a level with the Brazilians, the sailors of both countries being more at home on dry land than at sea.

Before leaving Buenos Ayres I paid a visit to La Plata, the capital of the province, which may be reached by either the Southern Railway or by the Buenos Ayres and Ensenada Railway, the time occupied in both cases by express train being about an hour and a quarter. Choosing the latter route we started from the central station, the train passing slowly through the streets of the Boca in many cases without even a railing or fence to protect the pedestrians and the children playing about on the pathways; and a run of half-an-hour brought us to Quilmes, which might almost be called a British colony, in view of the large number of English, Scotch and Irish who make it their place of residence. The roads here, as elsewhere, were bad, but there are many nice houses with pleasant gardens especially along the bank of the river; and being within easy reach of the city, the place is much affected by those whose business calls them daily thither.

Soon after leaving Quilmes we came to the open country, and passed through the *estancia* (cattle farm) of Don Leonardo Pereyra, one of the most extensive in the country, over which roam thousands of horses and oxen. I also noticed here several flocks of

ostriches, but they were of the variety *Rhea*, and not the *Struthio* or true African ostrich ; and I observed elsewhere later on that most, if not all, of these birds seen in the camp (as the open country is here called) were of the same species, although I was informed that large numbers of African ostriches had been from time to time imported and turned out with their South American congeners for the purpose of improving the breed.

Nearer to La Plata we passed through another large *estancia*, that of Mr. Bell ; and it struck me as somewhat to be regretted that within so short a distance of a port, and with a line of railway running through it, the land in this district should not be devoted to wheat growing for which it would seem well adapted, rather than to the raising of horses and cattle for which so much ground is available in more remote parts of the province.

There is no doubt that at one time this part, if not the whole of the province, was covered with water, as is proved by the frequent occurrence of banks of "*conchillas*," as they are called, small shells mixed with lime and fine sand, which are used for ballast on the railway, garden paths, and other purposes.

We reached La Plata in due course, and from the extent and appearance of the railway station it was evident that the place was considered one of some importance ; and well it might be, for there is probably no other town in the world which has in so short

a time developed to the same extent and in the same manner.

From the time of the first invasion by England in 1806, followed by the rising against Spain in 1810, the Argentine provinces were the scene of continuous revolutions and internecine struggles until 1861, when the Republic was reconstituted under the celebrated General Mitré, recognised even to the present time as one of the most honest and capable men who have ever ruled over this otherwise badly administered and unfortunate country. The question of a capital for the new Republic, or Confederation as it was then called, was not, however, settled until 1881, when the province of Buenos Ayres, until then disaffected, was finally brought into line, and it was decided that the city of Buenos Ayres should be made the capital of the Republic and the Provincial Government be removed elsewhere.

The point arose as to the place to which the latter was to be transferred, and after much discussion it was decided to found a new city, and the site ultimately fixed upon was about thirty miles S.E. of Buenos Ayres, where accordingly, in 1884, the new capital was duly inaugurated. The provincial authorities evidently intended that it should be a capital worthy of the name, for the streets and squares were laid out regardless of expense and of space, the general plan being that of square blocks as adopted in Buenos Ayres and other cities, but these are intersected by

broad boulevards running the whole length from corner to corner of the town, with occasional large open spaces and ornamental public gardens. Altogether the place is planned upon a grandiose and ambitious scale, and, from the great width of the streets, may be well called a "city of magnificent distances."

Many of the dwelling-houses first built were of wood, but those since erected are of massive construction, and some of them of large and handsome dimensions, one private house having been pointed out to me as containing no less than twelve bath rooms. But it is in its public buildings that La Plata stands pre-eminent as a capital, most of these occupying a whole square and standing in the midst of beautiful gardens adorned with handsome trees and statuary, among them being the Government House, the Courts of Justice, Library, Police Offices, National Bank, and last but not least a magnificent Opera House standing in several acres of ground.

All this is strictly in accordance with Argentine principles, which appear to be to incur enormous liabilities without considering where the money is to come from; and a parallel case of an opera house is to be found at Rosario, where, at the time I visited it, an enormous pile of buildings was being erected as an opera house or "Gran Politeama," extensive enough for a city of five times the size and importance.

There is, however, one building at La Plata which must not be overlooked, and that is the Museum, a truly grand building standing in the midst of extensive park-like grounds beautifully laid out and adorned, and containing what will, no doubt, in course of time become a magnificent collection. As it is it contains specimens of the fauna, flora, mineral, vegetable, animal, ethnological, osteological and fossil productions of the Republic, arranged and classified with the greatest care, and is a place well worthy of a visit, even to those who have seen the finest collections of the kind in Europe. The entrance leads to a large circular vestibule, around which are paintings representing the early inhabitants of the country, among which I noticed one of some primitive race "mit nodings on," as Hans Breitman would put it, stalking the *Dionysaurus*, *Megatherium* and some other specimens of antediluvian animals; and others of the gigantic Patagonians, the Fuegians preparing a mammoth turtle for dinner (a treat which in the present day they rarely if ever enjoy), and some Pampas Indians on horseback apparently returning from a successful raid against the early Spanish settlers. As I have said, this museum will no doubt in course of time become one of much importance and interest; but I am constrained to say that at present it is a dreadfully dull and oppressing sort of place and, beyond the friend who was showing me the lions of the city and myself, I do not think there were more

than three or four visitors in the building ; but there were plenty of attendants, all of them most polite and attentive, and it is only to be regretted that they had not more visitors to look after ; but in its museum as in other things La Plata is far ahead of its time.

At first I believe it was found somewhat difficult to induce the officials of the province to settle in the place, as they preferred to live in Buenos Ayres and come down daily to their offices, but I understand it is now a rule that they shall live there, and they are accordingly resigned to their fate. La Plata is the very home of officialism, and as such must be a very unpleasant place of residence for ordinary mortals ; but nevertheless many of the latter have made and lost large fortunes in land and building speculations, and at the present time some of the magnificent houses which have been erected might be bought for comparatively nominal prices ; indeed I was told of a gentleman at La Plata who had erected a building at a cost of some \$50,000 gold, but could not obtain a mortgage upon it for \$15,000 even at 8 or 10 per cent. interest which he was prepared to pay for the accommodation.

About three miles from La Plata, on another branch of the same line of railway, lies Ensenada, at one time the port of Buenos Ayres and used as such by the early Spanish settlers, and by many looked upon as the future port of the Argentine Republic. Some years ago works were commenced with a view to re-

opening the port by removing the bar which now obstructs the approach to the harbour and dredging a channel to a depth sufficient to admit vessels drawing 20 feet of water, but whether these works will ultimately be completed or not remains to be seen. Should they be successfully carried out, the new port will doubtless supersede Buenos Ayres to a great extent ; but it is an open question whether it will be able to compete with the more important dock works in progress at the latter place, notwithstanding that it will be in direct railway communication with that city and much more easy of access for ocean steamers.





CHAPTER VI.

THE CAMP.

THIS title is applied in the Argentine Republic to the immense pampas or prairies which cover over 500,000 square miles, from the River Pilcomayo in the North to the River Negro in the South, and of which a very good idea can be formed during the railway journey from Buenos Ayres to Rosario.

The weather was still hot, and the ground had long since absorbed the heavy rains which had fallen a few days previously, so that the journey was a dreadfully dusty one. We were obliged to keep the windows open to get the air, and the dust simply came in in clouds covering seats, luggage and

passengers, and producing considerable thirst, which fortunately could be assuaged *en route*: for the carriages are built on what is generally known as the American system, with internal communication throughout, and are provided with a bar and an official bar tender, who brings cooling drinks to the passengers upon application—and payment.

On leaving Buenos Ayres, I had noticed that the majority of male passengers wore long overcoats of drab or other light-coloured alpaca, giving them very much the appearance of wool brokers, meat salesmen, or others who attend markets or places where ordinary clothing is apt to be soiled; and the object was not at first quite clear to me. I soon realized the necessity for such a covering, however, and wished that I had one myself, for the journey was indeed a dusty one; but perhaps this is scarcely to be wondered at, when it is remembered that there is no such thing as a stone as large as a pea throughout the district, and that the soil is of a light alluvial character, easily caught up by the current produced by the passing train.

But although the soil was light and dry and the autumn season was far advanced vegetation was visible in all directions; not in the form of trees, or even shrubs, but in an interminable plain of what I should call coarse grass, interspersed freely at intervals with large thistles which grow to a considerable size and the stalks of which are used by the inhabitants.

as fuel. As far as the eye could reach, there was this never-ending plain, broken at very rare intervals by the trees planted around the houses of an *estancia*; and it did not take any very great effort of imagination to picture the Pampas Indians roaming over it only a few years ago, or to call up the scenes once so common on these immense tracts.

But what all this was and what it is now, are two different things; and the views of the Pampas Indians would, I imagine, have been very much akin to those of our fox-hunters at home with regard to the wire fencing now so freely used to mark boundaries and keep the cattle from straying too far from home. It is true that the enclosures are, as a rule, hundreds, and in many cases thousands of acres in extent, but still the objectionable wire is there, and its use is pretty general for many a mile beyond Buenos Ayres. Further on one sees less of it, and ultimately it disappears altogether; but in course of time, no doubt, as the land gets more cut up, and more particularly in the neighbourhood of towns, it will be even more generally and freely adopted. It is, indeed, the only fencing available in this particular district, for, as I have said, of trees and shrubs there are none save those planted to give shade around the dwellings of the *estancieros*, and in any case hedges would not be suitable, while to import timber for fencing would be too expensive; and as there are no rocks or stones of any kind, the

rough walls which are used as boundaries in mountainous and rocky districts are equally out of the question.

Roaming about within these extensive enclosures or upon the apparently boundless plain, as the case may be, are herds of horses and cattle or flocks of sheep, some of them comprising very large numbers, of which, however, it is difficult to form an estimate. I was informed that the number of horned cattle on an ordinary *estancia* would be about 10,000 head, and that the total number of horned beasts in the province of Buenos Ayres exceeds 6,000,000; the number of horses about 3,000,000; while the number of sheep is given at 70,000,000, the average number on one sheep-farm being about 20,000.

What struck me in connection with these vast herds and flocks was the absence of any apparent control or watch, for human beings were scarcely seen except at the railway stations and in the settlements and towns passed at rare intervals. Now and then a horseman made his appearance, either walking leisurely along or galloping at full speed across the plain, but never a man on foot; and it is noteworthy that the herds of horses and cattle take no notice of a horseman except by keeping out of his way if possible; while a pedestrian would be to them such a novelty, that out of sheer curiosity he would be surrounded and probably attacked. Such cases have indeed frequently occurred, and it is dangerous

to wander about the camp otherwise than on horseback.

I spoke of the horsemen whom we saw on the *estancias* as "*Gauchos*," but was told that this title was now looked upon as one of opprobrium, and that it would be as well not to use it in conversation with any of the men thus employed, or they might resent it unpleasantly. "*Gaicho*" is, I believe, the name originally applied to the pastoral and agricultural inhabitants of the country, a bold, rough and hardy race, devoid of any high code of morality, inclined to be lazy, quarrelsome and cruel, but not on the whole bad fellows of their sort.

As a rider, however, the *Gaicho* is scarcely to be equalled and certainly not excelled, and a foreigner must be thoroughly at home in the saddle to take work among such men on the *estancias* of the country, for the *Gaicho* judges of a man by his riding, and despises anyone who cannot keep his seat under all circumstances. I may mention that the method of guiding a horse is not the same here as in Europe, for, instead of the bit being pulled, the rein is merely pressed lightly upon the neck on the side on which it is desired to turn the animal; while to stop him, it suffices to drop the reins upon his neck, and I several times saw horses come to a dead stand while galloping, upon this being done. I say "him," for mares are never broken in nor ridden in the camp; their business in life being to nourish their offspring,

and their ultimate destination being the *Saladeros*, where, I understand, several hundred thousand are slaughtered annually, although whether they are then converted into meat extract or are merely killed for the sake of their hides and tallow, I do not know.

The slaughtering which takes place at certain seasons in these *Saladeros* is something enormous and is probably only approached in extent by that of the pig-killing establishments at Chicago. The details of the business although interesting are at the same time somewhat sickening; and the work is said to be very demoralising to those who take part in it, which is scarcely to be wondered at in the case of men naturally callous and cruel as are the half-bred races of South America.

I referred to the *Gaucha* as a bold and skilful rider—and in my present use of the term I include (rightly or wrongly) all the horsemen employed in the pastoral industries of the country—but there is another art in which he also excels, and that is the use of the lasso and the “*bolas*.” Everyone knows that the lasso is a long plaited rope of raw hide, provided with a noose, used for the purpose of catching cattle; although it is difficult in imagination to form an idea of the dexterity which is required and displayed in its use by these men, or the skill with which the trained horse and its rider manipulate the captured animals; but the “*bolas*” are less generally known, and I may therefore be excused for explaining that

they consist of two, and sometimes three, balls of stone or iron connected by leathern thongs, and that these are swung rapidly around the head, and then thrown in such a way that they twist round the legs of the animal pursued, and throw it to the ground. To do this when on horseback and at full speed must require years of practice, but the dexterity of the Gauchos with this weapon is such that they rarely miss their mark, although I believe they frequently kill the animal upon which it is used. A gentleman whom I met, and who had been visiting at an *estancia*, told me that while there he was asked one day by the owner if he would like to see the way in which they caught the horses, and on his replying in the affirmative was requested to single out any animal he fancied in a large herd at a distance. He picked out a beautiful bay; a Gaucho immediately pursued the herd, detached the bay and threw his bolas round its hind legs at the first shot, bringing the animal to the ground with such force that one of its legs were broken, to the sincere regret of the visitor who little anticipated such a sudden and tragic end to the poor beast merely to gratify his curiosity—for the leg being broken the animal was of no value, and the Gaucho dismounted, cut the throat of the “beautiful bay,” stripped off the hide and left the carcass to the birds of prey which abound in the pampas.

It is somewhat of a weird sight, even in travelling by rail, to see so many skeletons of oxen and

horses lying about—for beyond taking the hide no thought is given to a dead animal, and the skeletons, when stripped by the birds, lie and bleach in the sun or rain until the bones are collected, as they are at intervals, by an employé sent out for the purpose.

I was much struck by the quantity of game on the pampas, but more particularly by the very large number of hawks, which settled down even on the rails close to the passing trains in the most unconcerned manner; and among other birds the horned plover, bittern, black-necked swan, flamingo and ibis appeared to be most plentiful. But the birds which most interested me were the little owls which sat blinking and nodding on the edge of what appeared to be large rabbit-holes and heaps of earth, with which in some districts the plain was dotted in all directions—for these little birds are co-tenants of these excavations with an extraordinary animal called the *Viscacha*, whose habits are as singular as his appearance. It is, however, somewhat difficult to get a good view of him, for all day long he remains underground, and it is only as the sun sets that he ventures out, and after sitting for a few minutes on his haunches at the mouth of his burrow, disappears upon the plain. Now, as there is scarcely any twilight in these regions, there is very little time allowed for the traveller to observe either the appearance or the habits of the *Viscacha*; but we were

fortunately crossing a plain covered with the burrows of this animal just as the sun was sinking; and keeping my attention closely upon the scene I noticed that the very moment the sun set the little owls disappeared and were replaced, as it were almost by magic, by dark brown animals, about twice the size of a hare, which sat up erect and motionless at the entrances of their runs. The scene was extraordinary, for in all directions were visible the forms of these little animals standing out clearly in the fading light; but it was only for a few minutes, and off they scampered in all directions, their movements being only just visible in the gathering darkness. I say "scampered," but this word does not correctly represent their movement which is somewhat slow and awkward; and their fore legs being very short and their tails long and carried erect they present a very singular appearance. In habits they would appear to resemble the so-called prairie dog of North America (but they are a very much larger and not so pretty an animal), whose abode is likewise shared by the owls, and also by snakes; though whether snakes are to be found in the burrows of the *Viscacha* I could not learn, but I was informed that reptiles are few and far between in the Argentine Republic, and that only one venomous snake, known as the "Vivora de la Cruz," is to be found in the pampas.

The Province of Buenos Ayres is separated from Santa Fé by a small creek, called the Arroyo del

Medio ; and it is a curious circumstance that directly this is crossed the nature of the vegetation changes and the pampas grass appears. From a pastoral we suddenly come into an agricultural country with hundreds of thousands of acres under cultivation and extensive fields of maize in all directions ; but unfortunately the province suffers from the ravages of locusts, and they had been very busy during the season immediately past, as was visible by the bare stems of the Indian corn which had been left standing, having been entirely stripped of leaves and fruit by these scourges. Although the masses of these insects had disappeared for a time many individuals were still about, and several flew into the windows of the railway carriages, and later on into our rooms at the hotel in Rosario. From their size it can readily be understood that a cloud of them settling down would make short work of a few hundred acres of maize, although, I believe, it is the young and smaller locusts that do most of the mischief. To all intents and purposes they resemble immense grasshoppers, but their legs are even more powerful, and the colouring of their wings is very beautiful ; although nothing like so delicate as those of another insect we came across in Rosario, about two inches in length, of a most delicate green colour, with a long neck and prominent eyes, and its gauzy wings resembling long green leaves—a variety of leaf insect which I was informed was known locally as the Jesus Christ

insect, from a black thread-like cross which is marked on its back.

Rosario, the principal port and commercial town of the Province of Santa Fé, is an extensive place which has grown and is still growing very rapidly ; but like the rest of the cities of the Republic it appears to have a tendency to “out-run the constable”—as is evidenced by the opera house in course of construction, to which I have referred elsewhere. It possesses, however, a very good hotel, the “Hotel Central,” built in Moorish style with open courtyard in the centre, and all the rooms opening on to galleries running around it ; and if it had not been for the mosquitos, no doubt we should have been very comfortable there. Rosario being the head-quarters of the Central Argentine Railway there are many English residents and in the dining-room of the hotel one heard as much English spoken as any other language. For the same reason it was noticeable in most of the new stores that the ceilings were vaulted with brick-work between iron rails, for the Company having recently relaid its lines the old rails were sold to contractors, who have made use of them in this most desirable manner.

Although a large town, Rosario is an essentially dull and uninteresting place, and life was noticeable only in the neighbourhood of the Custom House, where the shouts of the drivers and struggles of the wretched horses who toiled up the steep hills into the

town caused some little excitement. The method of harnessing these horses is somewhat unusual, although I saw the same system adopted in other towns of the Republic. A cart to be drawn by a single horse is provided, not with shafts, but with a centre pole as if for a pair, and at the extremity of the pole the horse is fixed by a ring affixed to a broad belly-band; consequently he pulls sideways, instead of from the shoulders by a collar as with us, and his efforts are supplemented in uphill work by those of a saddle-horse attached to the side of the cart, whose rider urges the beasts over the rough and steep roads with a plentiful allowance of spur, whip and strong language.

But I appear to have got away from the Camp, and as it is not my intention to write a description of Rosario, or any of the other towns which I visited, I revert to the heading of my chapter, with a few closing remarks upon the subject of emigration.

South America generally is altogether unsuited to British emigrants, and the Argentine Republic, which has been looked upon for some time past as a sort of Eldorado, is particularly to be avoided. The towns are already filled with young men who have learned no handicraft, can find no occupation as clerks, and are only too eager to earn their living even by the most menial labour; while the work to be obtained in the Camp is only suited to those who can rough it to an extent hardly to be imagined by the inhabitants of

European countries ; and even then, unless they can speak Spanish, they have very little chance of obtaining employment. I know of the cases of educated young men working as navvies on the lines of railway in course of construction, or as herds on sheep farms quite out of the track of civilization, associating with Indians of the lowest types and leading lives far inferior to those of the poorest agricultural labourers at home ; and another was brought under my notice of an M.A. of an English University, with a knowledge of several languages, who, after trying in vain to obtain suitable employment, was working as a waiter in Buenos Ayres. To young men who think of emigrating to the River Plate, especially at the present time, I would give the advice long since given by Mr. Punch to people about to marry—Don't !





ARGENTINE FIVE-CENT NOTE.

CHAPTER VII.

ARGENTINE FINANCES.

I CAN scarcely leave the Argentine Republic without making a few remarks upon the unfortunate state of its finances, which at the time of my visit engrossed attention both at home and on the spot. For some time past it had been obvious to those who followed the course of events that it would not be long before something happened to check the over-speculation rife in this direction, although it was scarcely anticipated that the crisis would come so soon, or that it would involve an old-established London banking-house of high repute, and so seriously menace the existence of many other firms and

companies as to become a matter of almost national importance, necessitating extraordinary and unprecedented action on the part of the leading financiers of the day. But such was the case, and the events of the autumn of 1890, and the initiative taken by the Bank of England in the measures then adopted, have become matters of financial history, into which it would be needless for me to enter.

The immediate results of the crisis were the collapse of Argentine stocks, a rise in the premium on gold, and the extraordinary and almost despairing efforts made by the Government to check the tide of disaster and bring money to its depleted coffers by means of duties and taxes of the most unusual and unjustifiable nature ; and I was not surprised on reaching Monte Video to learn that an attempt was being made to raise a further internal loan, and that to gain time a three days' public holiday had been decreed. This loan was known on the spot as the "Patriotic Loan," and was, I believe, first suggested by the manager of one of the English Banks on the River Plate, with the object of obviating the further issue of bank-notes to the extent of \$200,000,000 proposed by President Pellegrini. It was to be for a sum of \$100,000,000, to bear interest at the rate of six per cent ; and the London and River Plate Bank headed the list with \$5,000,000, Carabassa's Bank following with \$3,000,000, the Italian Bank of the River Plate with \$2,000,000, and the French Bank of

the River Plate with \$1,500,000, while many of the leading local merchants subscribed sums varying between \$100,000 and \$250,000. The greatest excitement prevailed when I arrived at Buenos Ayres, and the streets in the neighbourhood of the principal banks were crowded with people anxious to take part in the patriotic movement which was to save the credit of the country.

As a matter of fact, however, not much (if any) more than \$50,000,000 were subscribed; and even if the whole amount had been obtained, the relief would have been but temporary, for the foreign debts of the Argentine Republic amount to £64,500,000, in addition to internal loans reaching \$251,000,000 and cédulas \$400,000,000; while of the \$280,000,000 of paper dollars current in the country not more than one-third is covered by reserves in coin or metal.

The matter stands thus:—

Foreign national loans	..		£25,800,000
Foreign provincial loans	..		£38,700,000
Federal internal loans	..	\$207,000,000	
Provincial internal loans	..	\$44,000,000	
Cédulas	\$400,000,000	
Currency	\$280,000,000	

\$931,000,000 or £69,825,000

converting the dollars at the arbitrary exchange of 1s. 6d., or three-eighths of the normal value, thus producing a total liability of

£134,325,000

The first question that arises is, what has become of this money? Both the Provincial and National Banks are in a condition bordering upon bankruptcy, the State railways have been sold, the Customs

Revenues are mortgaged, and the Treasury is practically emptied. The answer is, that the country has been robbed ; and by whom ? By those who are paid to protect its interests : by its Presidents, its Ministers, and its officials ; for there is little doubt that, from the highest to the lowest of them, the great, if not the sole object of the majority, is to feather their own nests—which many have done very satisfactorily to themselves. There must of course be exceptions to every rule, though it is to be feared that in this case they are not numerous, but I heard General Mitré spoken of as an honest man, and the only President who had not retired with a fortune ; and the “ *Caja de Conversion* ” (or Treasury), as constituted at the time of my visit, was looked upon as an honest department. On the other hand, however, a President who recently retired from office is reported to have taken with him a fortune of £12,000,000 ; and on all sides I was given to understand that bribery and robbery were every-day factors of official life.

But, as it was naïvely put to me by one who knew something of the circumstances, temptations were put in the way of certain officials by financial houses abroad and notably in London, whence suggestions as to new loans, concessions and companies for this or that or the other were constantly being made, no doubt with an eye to the commission to be made out of such transactions ; and as the British public were so eager to take them up, why should not the financial house make its commission, and the Argentine official pocket some of the money thus, figuratively speaking, put under his very nose ?

There is no doubt that this is a view generally entertained on the other side and it is only to be hoped that the experience which has been gained by many English investors and speculators may be of service to them in the future—as it will be if it only leads them to think twice before lending their money to South American Republics.

I have spoken of the amount of the Argentine foreign debts and, although statistics are altogether out of place in a work of this kind, I cannot refrain from giving a few figures concerning the loans best known in the English market, as showing the depreciation which has taken place during the last few months.

		Latest price as per Stock Exchange Year Book, 1890.	Price on London Exchange, beginning of February, 1891.	Price on London Exchange, beginning of August, 1891.
GOVERNMENT LOANS—				
Argentine 5 %	1884	93	58/62	30/35
5 %	1886/7	94	74/76	57/59
4½ % (Internal)	1888	83	54/56	27/30
4½ % (Sterling)	1889	83	55/57	29/31
3½ % (External)	1889	103	41/43	24/26
PROVINCIAL LOANS—				
Buenos Ayres, 6 %	1883	100	67/70	31/34
6 %	1882/6	99	66/69	28/31
Cordova 6 %		92	35/40	16/20
Entre Rios 6 %		99	40/45	18/23
Santa Fé 6 %		97	40/45	18/23
Tucuman 6 %		94	45/55	25/30

I must not overlook the question of Railways, which have developed materially of late, and have been, almost without exception, promoted and main-

tained by British capital, under certain Government guarantees ; while those which originally belonged to the State have lately been transferred to English companies—the Central Northern for £3,200,000 and the Western of Buenos Ayres for £8,200,000. The managers, office staff, and principal employés are, as a rule, English, and the lines give employment to more than 30,000 persons, exclusive of the labourers working upon those in course of construction. Indeed, it is quite remarkable at the various stations to hear either the station-master or some other official speaking in English to some friend or brother official passing through in the train ; and it is also noticeable that the accent in a large number of cases savours greatly of the north of the Tweed.

Again I venture to introduce a few statistics as showing the extent of railway enterprise in Argentina, the figures being taken from a recent Consular report :—

	Capital.	1889.			
		Earnings.	Passengers.	Tons Goods.	Miles open.
	£	£			
Great Southern	8,560,000	1,458,000	1,980,000	930,000	830
Western Buenos Ayres ...	6,720,000	1,430,000	1,950,000	2,100,000	750
Buenos Ayres and Rosario	8,400,000	1,000,000	1,260,000	645,000	345
Central Argentine	5,240,000	920,000	366,000	610,000	272
Great Northern	5,400,000	610,000	350,000	390,000	690
Great Western	3,400,000	260,000	201,000	167,000	320
Pacific... ..	3,350,000	190,000	160,000	165,000	425
Santa Fé Colonies	2,000,000	180,000	203,000	185,000	430
Ensenada	1,200,000	380,000	2,176,000	519,000	66
Entre Rios	1,200,000	60,000	42,000	82,000	—
East Argentine	1,000,000	70,000	25,000	71,000	97
Andine	880,000	170,000	54,000	145,000	160
Northern of Buenos Ayres	600,000	130,000	2,050,000	430,000	20
Various	2,050,000	192,000	233,000	276,000	615
Total	50,000,000	7,050,000	11,050,000	5,715,000	5,020

Other lines are in course of construction, one of the most important and interesting being the Transandine which is to run across the Andes from Mendoza in the Argentine Republic to Santa Rosa in Chili, thus giving direct through communication between Buenos Ayres and Valparaiso, and enabling passengers to reach the latter port in comfort in about five days instead of making the long and dreary voyage of sixteen days viâ the Straits of Magellan. The operations in this direction were, however, stopped by the recent financial crisis; and when they are resumed as it is to be hoped they will be (although I should think it doubtful whether the undertaking will ever be a paying one), some years will probably elapse before the works are completed, for the engineering difficulties are very great, as the line will rise to a height of nearly 11,000 feet, with some startling curves and tunnels at intervals.

Speaking generally, as far as I was able to form an opinion, I should say that railway undertakings, like other matters in this Republic, are being somewhat overdone, and as competition increases between the various lines the profits will be materially diminished. The Central Argentine line is already feeling its effects, and I understand that the staff has recently been considerably reduced.

To come back, however, to the financial crisis. Notwithstanding the Patriotic Loan, the premium on gold continued to advance until it stood at 350 (I

believe at one time it even went to 380), and the effect of this was naturally felt in all directions.

I have been frequently asked by those unaccustomed to foreign exchanges what is meant by the premium on gold; and, even among those who know something of such matters, I have found many who were under a misapprehension as to this mode of quotation, and I venture, therefore, to offer a few words in explanation.

The standard currency of the Argentine Republic is a dollar, equal to about four shillings (the actual par of exchange, or normal value, being fixed at 5.04, *i.e.*, £1 equals \$5.04—five dollars and four cents); but in consequence of the frequent issues of paper money without sufficient reserves, the value of the paper dollar has gradually decreased until it is quite out of proportion to the value of the gold dollar, which naturally remains practically undisturbed. Thus the premium on gold means neither more nor less than the depreciation of paper; and when it is said that the gold premium stands at 350 what is meant is that 100 gold dollars are equal to 350 paper dollars; and the way to find out the value of the paper dollar is to multiply the premium by the par of exchange, thus:—

Premium. Par of Exchange.

350 × 5.04 produces \$17.64;

or in plain English, as change for a sovereign you receive \$17.64 instead of \$5.04, or three-and-a-half times the normal value.

As the current paper dollar thus decreased in value prices naturally went up, and thus an article which at one time cost a dollar was perhaps sold at three dollars; and, as wages were paid in paper, a man earning, let us say, \$1,500 a year found his money go only as far as if he were earning \$500. In some instances, however, prices could not be put up, as was the case with the Tramway Companies who hold their concessions upon the understanding that they are to charge certain fares; and thus the four-cent fare instead of representing to the companies twopence, as was originally the case, only represented a fraction more than a half-penny, and the Government declined to allow any increase to be made.

I have said that only paper money was current: and filthy stuff some of it was after passing through innumerable hands, for the small notes of twenty cents, ten cents and five cents naturally circulate among the poorest classes, many of them anything but clean, either in habits or person. It was a novel experience to pay for a box of matches or a newspaper with a bank note, and in travelling by tramcar it was impossible to pay the exact fare—for the smallest note was five cents, while the fare was four cents, and the conductors could give no change. Most people, therefore, paid five cents for a four-cent ride, but if change were asked it was usually given by means of a one-cent postage stamp.

It need scarcely be said that this state of affairs interfered materially with business, as no one knew from day to day what his dollar might be worth ; and during the three days' bank holiday to which I have referred some money-changers absolutely declined to change gold at any price, in view of the great fluctuations.

So much for the question of exchange, and now a few words about the banks. The principal local banks are the National Bank and the Provincial Bank, and next to them was Carabassa's Bank (since absorbed by the London and River Plate Bank) ; while the principal English Banks were the " London and River Plate " and the " English Bank of the River Plate," which last has unfortunately since had to stop payment ; and in addition to these were the comparatively newly-established Anglo-Argentine Bank and several Italian, French and German Banks. Some of the banks have magnificent premises, those of the Provincial and National Banks coming first in this respect, and after them the London and River Plate and the English Bank ; and banking would appear to be one of the institutions of the country—so much life was always observable within and around the various banking houses. I have said that the Italians of Buenos Ayres are a thrifty people, and most of them had opened banking accounts, principally with the Provincial Bank, the depositors being for the greater part small tradesmen and artisans.

When, therefore, matters were at their worst—just at the time I was in Buenos Ayres—these small depositors naturally took alarm and rushed for the Provincial Bank, their pass-books in their hands, to get their savings out before it was too late. The extensive hall was thronged by them the whole day; they struggled with one another at the doorways and at the counters, but were kept in order both outside and inside the building by the police; and the crush was sometimes so great that it was almost impossible for the clerks and tellers to do their work properly. Outside the building they were waited for by anxious relations and friends, and among the crowd were several light-fingered gentry who managed to relieve some of them of the money they had been at so much trouble and inconvenience to withdraw.

But it was not only on the Provincial Bank that there were occasional runs—the English and Foreign Banks had similar experiences, and a very amusing fact came under my notice in connection with one of these. The London and River Plate Bank had taken over Carabassa's Bank, an old-established concern, much affected by the Italian working classes; but as the office of the latter continued open and business was carried on as usual these depositors probably did not believe in, or did not understand, the amalgamation and many of them drew their money out of the one and rushed across the road to put it

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into the other, although the transfer had actually been completed and the two were practically one.

To come back again to the Patriotic Loan. As this had not realised the expectations formed of it, a scheme previously contemplated by the President was brought up again, and had it been carried out would have made "confusion worse confounded." It was neither more nor less than the issue of a "forced currency" (*curso forzoso*), to consist of one hundred millions of paper money, to be known as "metallic notes," with a fictitious value of two shillings or one half the value of the gold dollar, and they were to be computed at double the value of the existing paper dollar, while debts in gold could be paid in metallic notes as if the two were of equal value, and customs duties were to be allowed to be paid half in gold and half in "metallic notes."

Explanations as to the effects of such a disastrous scheme are unnecessary as they are only too obvious, and it was a fortunate thing for the country that it was not carried out; but something had to be done, and matters culminated ultimately in what was euphoniously called a "Moratorium," or temporary suspension of payments, an experiment that succeeded so well that it was repeated. The word has a funereal sound, and the experiments have had a similar effect, for they have brought to the grave the English Bank of the River Plate, and have absolutely demoralised business—as can readily be realised, for

creditors are unable to obtain the money due to them although to carry on their business this money is absolutely necessary ; while debtors can incur fresh liabilities with impunity, if they can only find anyone weak enough to give them further credit. What is to be the end of all this it would be difficult to say—and I certainly am not capable of judging—but that the results can ultimately be otherwise than disastrous to many thousands of investors and to the trade, commerce and enterprise of the country, there is no reason to hope ; and perhaps the sooner the final crash comes the better for all concerned. The Argentine Republic is a grand country and will no doubt rise “phœnix like” out of its present difficulties ; but unless it can put its house in order, and find honest and trustworthy men to administer its affairs in future, it is to be feared that the present will not be the last crisis to be recorded in the River Plate.

The finances of a country, and especially of a South American Republic, are so intimately associated with its politics that it is not to be wondered at that, in view of the position arrived at, public opinion turned towards the man whose administration, if not free from errors of judgment (as in the matter of the Paraguayan war), was at all events an honest one, and under whose guidance the commerce and welfare of the country had been satisfactorily maintained. Fifty years ago Bartolome Mitré, a native of Buenos Ayres,

entered the army of his country and, having done good service on many a field and attained the rank of General, he was, in 1860, elected Governor of the Republic of Buenos Ayres, and afterwards President of the Argentine Confederation, which position he held with credit to himself and advantage to his country from 1862 to 1868, when he retired from public life and, devoting himself to literature, resumed the editorship of the *Nacion*, a newspaper established by him many years previously, and of which his son is at the present time editor. Early in 1890 he left for Europe; but, in their trouble a large section of his fellow countrymen urged him to return and be nominated for the presidency, in succession to the present President, Pelligrini; and yielding to their wishes General Mitré returned, arriving at Buenos Ayres on the 18th March, 1891, when he met with such a reception as would be flattering to a monarch, and must indeed have been to him more than a reward for what he had done for his country in the past.

The day was exceptionally fine, but very hot; business was entirely suspended, and flags and banners were hung out in every street in the town. On the arrival of the Platense Steamer "Eolo," by which he came from Monte Video, he was met by quite a fleet of vessels carrying many of the leading citizens; thousands thronged the quays to receive him, and the streets through which he passed were crowded with people who threw flowers upon him as

he walked up from the water side towards the Plaza Retiro, a square eight acres in extent at the north end of the city, where he was to be publicly proclaimed candidate for the presidency. The procession was composed of prominent politicians, councillors, and residents, and political and other societies carrying banners with appropriate devices, its movements being enlivened by the music of numerous bands; and although I could not learn how many persons took part in it, I can only say that it took quite half an hour to pass a given point, which will give some idea of its magnitude. I was standing on a balcony in the Calle Piedad where it intersects Calle Florida, and as the procession passed through the latter street, I was wondering how long it would be before the carriage containing the illustrious citizen and General made its appearance—for I could not imagine that at his age and on so hot a day he would walk so great a distance—when the redoubled shouts which went up from the crowd in the streets, at the windows and on the housetops, told me that he was approaching, and I looked with interest at the man who had obtained so great a hold on the respect and esteem of his fellow countrymen.

He was walking bare-headed (having put up an umbrella to protect himself from the flowers that were poured upon him from every side), and although smothered with dust after his three miles' walk from the quay where he landed, he bore

himself remarkably erect for a man of not less than seventy years. But the effort must have been a great one, for the people pressed upon him from all sides, and at some points he could scarcely proceed. Indeed, a few blocks further on he found it impossible to do so and, reluctantly I believe, entered an open carriage and proceeded to his destination, the vehicle being in a few minutes crammed with floral tributes.

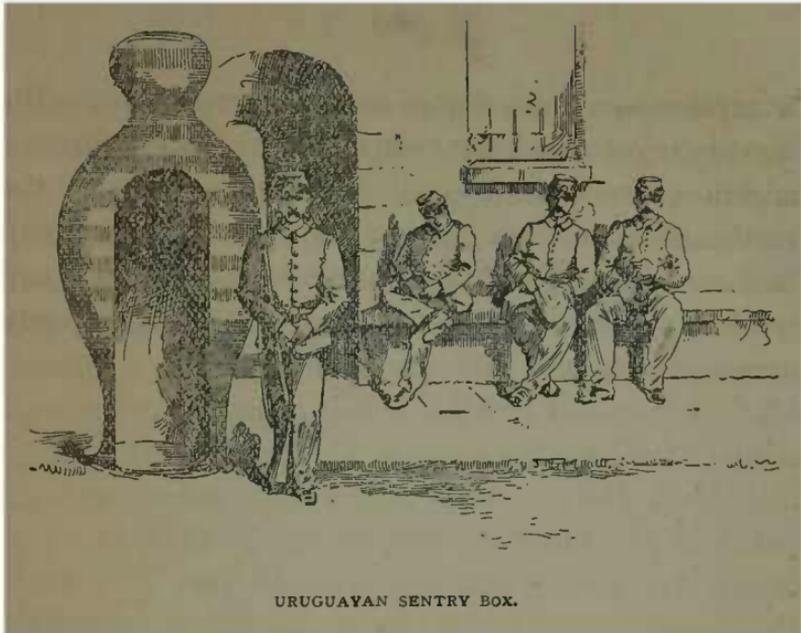
Buenos Ayres was *en fête* that evening; the Calle Florida shone at its best; the General's house adjoining the offices of the *Nacion*, in Calle San Martin, was surrounded by thousands who pressed forward to leave cards and bouquets, and the door being open, I noticed in the *patio*, among others, a splendid trophy of roses in the shape of the Eiffel tower, five or six feet in height.

Such was the reception of General Mitré, whose coming had been for days the topic of conversation; and it is to be hoped that, should he be elected President, he may amply justify the anticipations which have been formed of him, and if he cannot do impossibilities and from an empty exchequer pay twenty shillings in the pound, that he may at any rate place the finances of his country upon a somewhat sounder and more honest basis, and lay the foundation of a more prosperous future.

One does not like on such occasions to strike a jarring note ever so lightly; but my own impression was that he had come back too soon, and that his

reception was somewhat of an ante-climax ; for, in the long interval which must elapse before the Presidential election, a revulsion of feeling may take place and the enthusiasm which might now have been of so much assistance to him in re-establishing order will probably have cooled down, thus making his already onerous task more difficult.





CHAPTER VIII.

MONTE VIDEO.

SEEN from the bay, standing out in the bright sunlight with its low flat-roofed white buildings, with towers rising at intervals, Monte Video presents a somewhat Oriental appearance; but the effect is marred by a huge block of lofty buildings in the foreground close to the Custom House quay, which I found upon enquiry to be the buildings of the "Grand Hotel," built some two years ago by a company styled the "Compania de Obras Publicas," with which the well-known Mr. Casey was connected. I learned, also, that it was not yet occupied as an hotel, as the furniture had not been cleared from the Customs'.

warehouses for the very good reason that the money was not forthcoming to pay the necessary duties ; and a fellow-passenger, who knew all about the matter, informed me that the contract for furnishing had been taken up by a London firm, who sent out one of their representatives to superintend the arrangements, and that after waiting about in Monte Video for several months he had returned to England without fulfilling his mission, for the reason already stated. I did not hear whether the firm had been paid for the furniture, but, unless it was their first South American contract, I presume that they took the necessary precautions to secure payment before shipment.

Whoever took the initiative in promoting the establishment of the Grand Hotel was evidently alive to one of the requirements of the city, for its existing hotel accommodation leaves much to be desired. Indeed, speaking generally, this is the case throughout South America ; and the proprietors as a rule are most independent and, indeed, frequently rude in their behaviour. They have a nasty and inexplicable habit of trying to palm off upon travellers their worst rooms ; and neither they nor their employés appear to care whether the guests are comfortable or the contrary ; while the accommodation as a rule is not of the best, and the food is far from first-class. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but they are not to be found at Monte Video ;

and certainly not in the "Hotel Oriental," which, although the largest in the town, was well described in the words of a fellow-sufferer as "*muy malo é muy caro*" (very bad and very dear). The following is a specimen of the dinner served, being a truthful rendering of one of the menus, although not couched in the grandiloquent French titles given to the dishes in the original :—

Potato Soup.	Cold Fried Fish.
Hashed Veal.	Steak and Boiled Potatoes.
Salad.	Boiled Rice and Milk.

I was told that the Hotel des Pyramides is a better, although a smaller hotel ; but it is close to the Cathedral, and the wayfarer's rest is apt to be disturbed by the chiming of the clock and the ringing of bells for early services.

Monte Video as a city is much superior to Buenos Ayres, as regards the width and cleanliness of its streets (especially in the new town), and the general appearance of its buildings. Like Buenos Ayres, however, it appears to be deficient in first-class shops, although it seemed to me that the goods displayed were as a rule of better quality ; and it suffers, though not to so great an extent, from what I may call the tramway curse. Like Buenos Ayres too, it has one principal street, in which the retail trade of the best class appears to be concentrated and which forms the evening promenade—the Calle 25 de Mayo ; but there is also a fine boulevard named 18 de Julio,

in which are numerous handsome shops and dwellings. There are many plazas in Monte Video and among them Plaza Constitucion, where the Government buildings and English club are located, is worthy of notice. Convents and hospitals too are numerous, and among the latter that known as "Caridad" is the principal—it makes up several hundred beds, and is partly supported by voluntary subscription and partly by a public lottery.

We arrived at Monte Video on the morning of Good Friday, and availed ourselves of the opportunity to visit the Cathedral and some of the principal churches, all of which were draped in black or violet on this occasion. In the Cathedral a transparency, representing the scene of the crucifixion, was displayed in front of the altar, covering the entire width of the chancel and being illuminated by six candles; and short sermons appropriate to the occasion were given at intervals to the crowded congregations thronging the building; while a magnificent marble monument in memory of some deceased prelate, near one of the entrances, and several of the side altars, were hung with funeral wreaths. All the worshippers were in mourning, and appeared to be much impressed and depressed by the ceremonies of the day; but on coming out of the Cathedral, I noticed in the immediate vicinity announcements of fancy dress balls for the following Saturday and Sunday nights, from which I inferred that they intended

making up later on for the gloom by which they were at the time apparently so overpowered.

Easter Sunday was a grand day, and the finest ornaments and decorations were brought out in all the churches; while in the Cathedral the altar, late so solemn and funereal in its appearance, now resembled a transformation scene (if the simile is not too irreverent), being hung with white muslin adorned with tinsel stars, and decorated with real and artificial flowers of various colours. The building was again crowded, but how different the congregation! The female sex predominated as usual, and had donned their best and brightest dresses; and within the railings of the side chapels sat groups of ladies, among them many of remarkable beauty and bearing. From the fact of their being favoured with these reserved seats I assumed that they were of some consequence, and certainly they were worthy in appearance of the bright setting and prominent position; as were others present who were not thus honoured.

I do not pretend to be a judge of female beauty, but after all that I had heard and read I was somewhat on the *qui vive* in this respect while in South America; and without wishing to make odious comparisons, or to reflect in any way upon the ladies of the other cities I visited, I must honestly say that in my opinion those of Monte Video stand first; and it seemed to me also that their beauty was more natural and their bearing

less affected, while they did not appear so much addicted to the use of paint and powder as many of their fair sisters elsewhere on the same continent.

The handsome church of the Immaculate Conception in the new town was also well attended, and likewise the new church of San Francisco in the immediate vicinity of the Hotel Oriental; but the worshippers were of a different class—and so also apparently were the priests who officiated, for the depraved looking men who shuffled round the church of San Francisco, mumbling out their prayers and droning out their versicles without the slightest semblance of reverence, preceded by a cross-bearer (who resembled a convict rather than an acolyte), and a troop of grinning and unwashed boys bearing lighted candles, certainly took precedence of anything of the kind I had ever before seen, even in Spain.

Another unusual feature in connection with these Easter services was the presence in every church of several policemen, who kept order and cleared the way for the processions, all of them wearing their *kepís*.

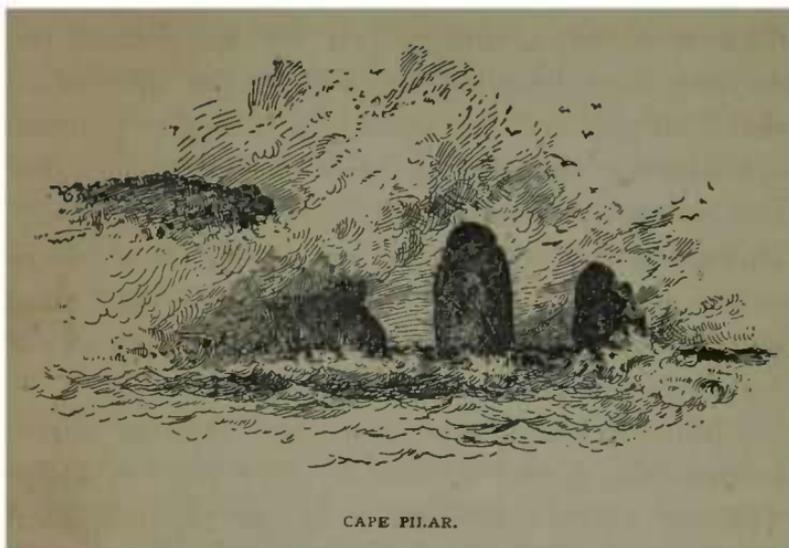
In the afternoon of Sunday we paid a visit to the suburb of Paso Molino, one of the fashionable residential districts, in which are many handsome *quintas* standing detached in their own grounds; but the dust which covered the shrubs and trees spoiled the effect of what otherwise would no doubt have been

a pretty scene. The tramcars run out to this suburb and some of them go as far as the Cerro, a lofty conical hill facing Monte Video on the opposite shore of the bay. This hill is the first object that meets the view as the city is approached from the sea, and it is surmounted by a fort and lighthouse ; while at its base along the shore are situated several of the large slaughtering and salting establishments known as "*Saladeros*," in which several hundred thousand head of cattle are slaughtered every year.

On the road to Paso Molino we passed the infantry barracks, and we had an opportunity of seeing a regiment of Uruguayan soldiers—and a more cut-throat looking lot of men it would be difficult to find. They were of every possible shade between white and black, and clad as they were in loose and badly-cut uniforms of brown holland, they presented anything but a smart and soldier-like appearance, although possibly they possessed excellent fighting qualities. Certainly they looked like men to whom one would give a wide berth if met on a country road or in a lonely place, and I was not altogether surprised when I learned that they were recruited largely from the prisons and from the dregs of the population. The Uruguay flag consists of four light blue horizontal stripes on a white ground, and the sentry boxes are painted in the same colours, their peculiar shape giving them the appearance of gigantic pepper boxes.

Like most of the Latin races the Uruguayans are fond of lotteries, and tickets for an approaching drawing were in great demand at the time of my visit, and at every step I was importuned to purchase the winning number. A prize of \$25,000 (£5,000) was certainly a temptation, but I resisted it as I afterwards did similar offers at several other places, and notably at Lima where I must have had many hundred chances of buying the ticket which was to draw a similar sum.

Although I did not receive the \$25,000 prize I carried away a very favourable impression of Monte Video as a city, and regard it as one of the best in South America; and with improved hotel accommodation it would be a place well worthy of a more extended visit. Lying as it does on a promontory, and thus obtaining fresh air from both sides, it is a much cooler and healthier place than Buenos Ayres; and were its bay less exposed, or more protection afforded for shipping, its trade, already considerable, would undoubtedly be materially increased. It is, however, a very dear place—as are all places in South America which have a silver currency—and prices which to a European appear absurdly high are asked for the most trivial articles, while the heavy import duties make the charges for luxuries in many cases practically prohibitive.



CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH THE STRAITS OF MAGELLAN.

THE steamship "Britannia" was timed to leave Monte Video in the afternoon, and passengers were informed that the tender would leave the Custom House quay at half-past three o'clock. At that hour we, with the rest, were accordingly on board, but the tender did not start. Half-an-hour went by, and still there we lay; an hour, and we were no nearer departure. What could be the cause of the delay? There we were on a dirty tug, sitting within a few feet of the chimney-stack—the only place where seats were provided—in the broiling sun, without any

awning, bumping against the quay, much to the disgust of the passengers and apparently of the skipper also ; and there we were destined to stay for two hours.

Meantime the swell in the harbour had been increasing, and when we reached the " Britannia " we found it most difficult to get alongside ; and still more so to get on board, for the gangway on the lee side had been damaged, and that on the weather side was half drawn up, so that it was no easy task to walk up the edge of the steps. Why then this delay and consequent inconvenience ? The explanation was that the captain had been for a drive, and the passengers had to wait for his return. No doubt a captain requires some relaxation, but it seemed to the passengers of the " Britannia " that this should hardly be taken at the expense of their comfort and convenience. But the Pacific Steam Navigation Company has a monopoly of this route, and those who take it have to put up with scant consideration, high prices, inferior accommodation, and equally inferior food.

Another interesting feature of the start in this direction was that the vessel went first from Monte Video to Buenos Ayres ; and I enquired whether it would not be possible to join her on the return journey, instead of wasting two days on the River Plate, but was told that this could not be done, as on her return she would simply drop the pilot and

continue her course. I was therefore surprised, and that far from agreeably, when on the next evening the "Britannia" anchored again off Monte Video, and when, on the following morning, the captain again went on shore, returning about half-past eleven with a camera—from which I inferred that he was an amateur of photography. This I afterwards learned was the case, and the two delays to which I have referred were thus to be accounted for.

At length we got under way, about one o'clock in the afternoon, and it was not long before we had some experience of the waters we were destined to travel over for the next few days. The air became colder every hour, we had frequent heavy showers, and the white crests on the waves foretold the rough weather into which we were gradually steaming. The only redeeming features of the scene were the magnificent rainbows, which followed one another in quick succession. But these we soon lost, and by the next day the sea had become so rough, and the cold so severe, that both walking and sitting on deck were quite out of the question, and there was nothing left for passengers to do but to retire to their cabins, or fall back upon a game at poker in the smoking-room. The vessel, too, had scarcely any cargo on board, and pitched and tossed in a most disagreeable manner; while, being one of the old type with her saloon aft, the motion of the screw made sitting at table a work of difficulty, and altogether the situation was not a

pleasant one. So rough, indeed, was the weather, and so strong the waves, that between mid-day on the second day and the same hour on the third we went at the rate of only six miles an hour, progress being frequently quite impossible even with the engines at full speed. On the third day we lost the showers, but the sea still ran high, and the cold had become intense. The sun shone, but with a cold grey light, and the sky was of a dull leaden blue colour, quite unlike the blue of other climes.

When we left England the snow was on the ground, and I was wearing a fur travelling coat, which became somewhat of a burden to me a few days afterwards, and which I had, while on the River Plate, christened my "white elephant"; but now it came into requisition, and more than one of my fellow-passengers envied me its warmth.

On the fourth day the sea moderated somewhat, but an intensely cold and strong wind blew straight from the South, and the deck was deserted; and soon after midnight the sudden stoppage of the vessel told us that we were entering the Straits. For four hours we crawled along, sounding as we went, and then, as the day was breaking, we went on at half-speed between low sandy banks and pulled up about eight o'clock off Punta Delgado, where a Mr. Wood has a large sheep farm from which we took off several sheep—clean looking animals, with capital fleeces. Gradually the Straits widened out, but the banks

were still low and barren—no trees, no houses, no vegetation, desolation all around—till after a two hours' run the water formed several channels among rocky islands, and taking the widest of these we found ourselves in what had the appearance of an extensive lake, many miles in width, and in the distance rose ranges of mountains above which several snowy peaks stood out boldly in the sunlight.

Steering towards the high land on the North-West, and leaving the open water we had a better view of these mountains; while conspicuous above them rose the two magnificent peaks of Sarmiento, reminding one in the distance of the Jungfrau, and of these we had a fine view, as the air was at the time very clear and the sun shone brightly. Proceeding onwards through another channel we again entered the open water, which now assumed the dimensions of an inland sea; and bearing to the North, we dropped our anchor at Punta Arenas (Sandy Point), a settlement of frame buildings standing in a clearing among the trees, which now, for the first time, appeared upon the coast. This place, which is the world's southernmost town, apparently does a considerable trade, importing general European merchandise, and exporting wool, hides, seal-skins, and gold. As regards the last-mentioned article, although explorations have from time to time been made both on the mainland and the opposite islands with a view to mining operations, there is no reason to believe that

the metal exists in any quantities ; and I was informed by an old resident that hitherto it had only been found in the creeks after heavy rains, and in such small quantities as had only paid for the labour involved.

Punta Arenas is a rising place, possessing two hotels and several large warehouses ; but the trade appears to be principally in German hands, and the mixed and lawless nature of its population must make it far from a desirable place of residence. Its curse is drink, which is sold everywhere, even to the barbers' shops, and being freely consumed and of very inferior quality it does not tend to improve the morality of the population.

From this point the coast of the mainland continued well wooded and for a time the Straits were many miles in breadth, until towards evening we approached a range of lofty rugged mountains with ice-clad peaks beyond, and about six o'clock entered the narrows leading to the Pacific Ocean. The steamers of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company do not, however, pass through the grandest scenery which is in Smyth's Channel, and to see this it is necessary to proceed from Punta Arenas by one of the smaller vessels of the German (Kosmos) line of steamers. The passage in both cases is a dangerous one, not only on account of the narrowness of the channels and the possibility of running upon unknown rocks, but also because of the uncertainty of

the weather, heavy storms of snow or rain coming on suddenly and frequently rendering navigation most hazardous and in many instances impracticable.

In such a storm the "Cordillera" ran aground some years ago, and as night drew on and we entered the narrows we passed the wreck still lying upon the rock where she struck—not altogether a pleasant reminder of the possibilities of the situation.

Close by, too, the "Cotopaxi" came into collision with a German steamer and afterwards, steaming slowly up Smyth's Channel to avoid the heavy sea off Cape Pilar, ran upon a hidden rock and sank within three minutes. Fortunately on neither of these occasions were any lives lost, but we met on our various voyages along the coast several officers and passengers who were in one or other of the disasters, and heard from them of the privations and dangers to which they were subjected. The place is by no means one for a pleasure trip, for nature here is met in her wildest and most dangerous form; and, skilful and experienced as are the captains who command the vessels, the unknown and unexpected must always enter largely into the navigation of these dangerous waters, combining sometimes to defeat all the skill and experience which may be brought to bear.

The run through the narrows occupies under favourable circumstances about twelve to fifteen hours, and as the weather on this occasion was.

favourable, that is to say there was no rain or snow or immediate prospect of either, our captain took advantage of the opportunity and pushed ahead without delay. The night was dark, but the mountains on either side of the channel stood out boldly, and with the engines at full speed the captain directed the course from the bridge, never leaving his post until seven o'clock the next morning, when we passed out of the Straits into the ocean beyond.

It was an extraordinary sight even at night; the channel now so narrow that you felt you could almost touch the rocks on either side, and then spreading out so that you lost sight of them altogether; the mountains sometimes towering up so high that the sky looked like a broad band above you, while occasional glimpses of glaciers and waterfalls were caught even in the darkness. The current ran in some places so strongly that even with engines doing their utmost the vessel scarcely progressed at all, and the cold was so intense that you wondered how it was possible, even with the protection afforded by the canvas screen around the bridge railings, for any man to remain at his post during the whole night.

We were inclined to regret that the passage was made at night, but the captain evidently had his reasons for pushing onwards, and we were afterwards glad that he had done so; for not many hours after we passed Cape Pilar, which lies at the extremity of Desolation Island, the weather changed and an unpleasant

experience would probably have been in store for us had we not been well out at sea at the time ; for if the passage through the Straits is dangerous owing to the difficulties of navigation, the exit into the ocean is no less so on account of the tremendous seas usually running and strong gales frequently blowing off Cape Pilar, which next to Cape Horn is looked upon by sailors as a spot to be dreaded and avoided.

There was indeed something very forbidding in its appearance as we passed the rugged mountains shrouded in clouds and mist, and came suddenly upon two gigantic pillars of rock, standing out in the ocean with the waves breaking against them and dashing over them, filling the air with clouds of spray ; and we could well understand that to encounter bad weather here would be far from agreeable. As it was the sea ran high and the wind blew fresh as we steered North-West past a group of dangerous rocks known as the Evangelists and began to beat along the rock-bound Chilian coast ; and it was not long before we were heartily glad that we were out of the Straits, for the weather became gradually worse, its principal features being heavy seas, cold rains and thick mists, and the vessel being light and the screw as often out of the water as in it the feelings of the passengers were not of the most pleasant, and the opinion was generally held that the word " Pacific " was a misnomer for such waters.

We had before us a run of 966 miles to Coronel, the first port on the Pacific Coast, and it took us

nearly four days to accomplish it, the sea being rough the greater part of the time, although overhead the weather cleared, and we had frequent views, at first of snow and ice-clad peaks, and afterwards of the bold mountains and dangerous outlying rocks which line the coast. Since leaving Monte Video we had seen very little animal life, the whales and seals which we had expected to find being conspicuous by their absence; but now we had come into the district of the albatross, and for two days they followed our vessel in large numbers, some of them immense fellows at least fifteen feet across the wings. Their strength of wing must be tremendous, and the ease with which, after lagging miles behind to squabble over some dainty morsel, they overtook the ship going at the rate of twelve miles an hour was astonishing, as was also the distance which they covered, some of them which we were able to identify following us at least 500 miles.

At length after a run of twelve days we anchored at Coronel to take in coal, and here we obtained our first news and first experience of the revolution then in progress in Chili. The port was one still in the hands of the Government and therefore the news obtained was very meagre and, as we afterwards found, very unreliable; and as the telegraph was not accessible we could obtain no information from Valparaiso. I availed myself of the opportunity to post a letter, however, informing friends at Valparaiso of our

approaching visit, but it did not reach its destination for eight days, four days after our own arrival; and this I learned was at the time no exception to the rule by which letters were delayed and tampered with by the authorities.

Coronel is an important coaling station, there being extensive mines in the neighbourhood; and, although the coal of this district seems very light and dusty and emits a large quantity of dense black smoke, it is said to be very good steam coal, and there is consequently a considerable demand for it both here and at Lota, an adjacent port of equal importance. At the latter place are situated the properties of the celebrated Señora Cousiño, the widow of one of the wealthiest men in Chili, who is said to personally administrate and to have materially increased the value of the vast concerns left to her on the death of her husband. The whole of the town of Lota is hers, the adjacent coal mines and other mining properties elsewhere in Chili, numerous ships, and properties of every description, said to represent many millions sterling.

She has a splendid country house at Lota, surrounded by the most beautiful of gardens, over the arrangement of which neither time, money nor art have been spared, and which form a veritable oasis in the midst of the adjacent coal fields. These gardens are open to the public, and form one of the show places of Chili.

I have said that at Coronel we had our first experience of the revolution, for we found that in consequence of the recruiting which had been going on, there were not enough lightermen to coal more than one vessel at a time, and we consequently had to wait until another which had arrived before us had secured her supply. In all directions drilling was going on and the place was filled with soldiers, some of whom were at the time employed in a somewhat novel military experience.

Lying close to our own anchorage was a German vessel, the "Romulus," and from the number of soldiers on board we assumed that she was employed as a transport; but this was not the case, for she was merely a trading vessel which had taken on board at Iquique a cargo of nitrate, and having put into Coronel to coal had been seized by the Government, who demanded from the captain payment of the export duty upon the cargo. The duty had already been paid at Iquique, but as that port was in the hands of the revolutionists the Government maintained that the payment was not valid, and notwithstanding that the captain's papers were quite in order they marched him off to prison, and commenced to discharge the nitrate. Now although Great Britain, the United States and France had war ships on the coast to protect the interests of their respective countries, the German navy was not represented; but the matter was brought to the

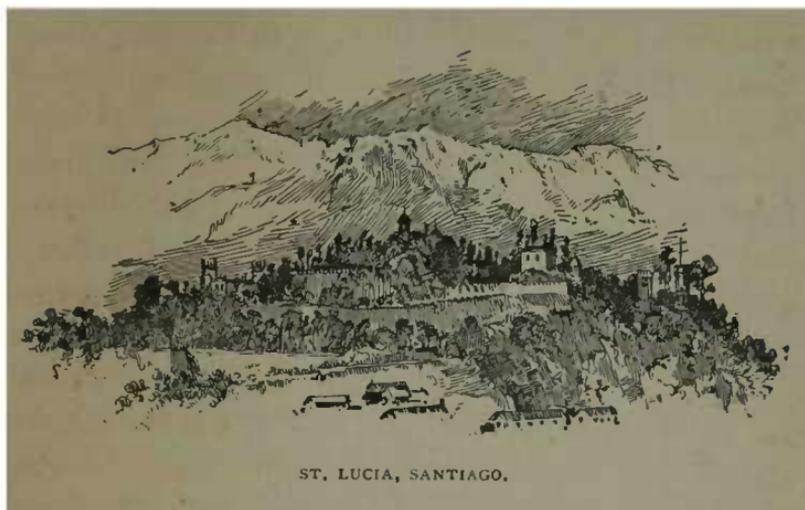
knowledge of the German Minister at **Santiago**, with the result that at the time we were at **Coronel** the captain had just been released and had gone to **Santiago**, while the soldiers whom we saw on board the "Romulus" were re-shipping the nitrate which had been removed ; a lesson rather humiliating to the Government, but useful, as teaching them that however the inhabitants of a country may squabble and fight among themselves, the interests of foreign and friendly countries must be respected. I afterwards learned that £2,000 had been paid to the owners of the vessel, and I presume that some personal compensation was made to the captain for the indignity to which he had been subjected.

This incident was instructive, but what impressed the passengers on board the "Britannia" most was the rumour that arrangements were in progress to bombard **Valparaiso**, and that the bombardment would probably come off on the following Wednesday. Among our number were several families resident at **Valparaiso** and returning from visits to Europe; and the anxiety which they had before felt and expressed was much increased by this bad news, which to ourselves also was not very cheering.

Leaving **Coronel** early in the afternoon of the day after our arrival we reached **Talcahuano** the same evening, and here again the rumours which had reached us were repeated. **Talcahuano**, in railway communication with the important town of **Concep-**

cion, is the principal port of shipment for the extensive grain growing districts in the neighbourhood. The season having been an exceptionally good one, and the crops very heavy, the numerous large warehouses along the quays were filled with grain, large quantities were lying on the quays themselves, and at all the stations along the line of railway, awaiting transport and shipment; while numerous vessels, most of them carrying the British flag, were lying in the bay; but men again were wanting to do the necessary work, and grain might lie at the railway stations and rot, and vessels go empty away, because the Government were beating up recruits and impressing men as soldiers in all directions. The town seemed to be filled with soldiers; on the quays, in the Custom House warehouses, in every available building, here, there, and everywhere, nothing was to be seen but troops in brown holland uniforms marching and drilling, while the air resounded by day and by night with the sound of bugles and military bands, and it was a relief to get away from the place whatever might be the reception awaiting us at Valparaiso.

Eighteen hours from Talcahuano, and sixteen days after leaving Monte Video we reached Valparaiso, and cast anchor in its celebrated bay at nine o'clock in the morning, thankful to have got so far safely on our journey, but with serious misgivings as to the fate in store for us.



CHAPTER X.

VALPARAISO AND SANTIAGO.

THE bay of Valparaiso has been so frequently eulogised that it would be superfluous for me to describe it. It has been compared to that of Sydney, New South Wales, and to Rio de Janeiro. The former I have not seen, but it certainly does not, in my opinion, in any way equal the latter, as its natural beauties are less varied. It is none the less a fine bay and, seen from a ship's deck on entering, the town of Valparaiso is not wanting in picturesque features, although frankly I may say that I was disappointed in its appearance. Possibly, however, the season of the year may have had something to do with this. for the

hills forming the background were not in their summer garb of grass and flowers, but were of a dull reddish brown colour which neither harmonised with nor relieved the white buildings at their feet. The town faces the north and is exposed to strong winds called "northers," which sometimes play havoc with the shipping; and in form it may be compared to an irregular crescent, of which the Customs' warehouses form the extremity of one horn and the railway station that of the other. The commercial portion is in the centre, the shipping offices and the bars and saloons incidental to a seaport town to the east, and the shopping and manufacturing district in the west; while the hills which rise abruptly in the rear are surmounted by dwelling houses, those on the centre hills, known as Cerro Alegre and Cerro Concepcion, being frequently of handsome architecture and proportions, for this is the district affected by the English and German residents, while those on the hills to the right and to the left, are almost all of wooden construction of the most tumble-down and dilapidated character, inhabited by the poorest classes; and although undoubtedly picturesque from their situation and surroundings, and forming capital subjects for paintings and photographs, they certainly as structures have not much to recommend them.

On one of the hills on the road leading to the Cerro Concepcion lie the cemeteries of Valparaiso, most picturesquely situated with beautiful views over

the harbour and town. The tombs in the Protestant section show how mixed is the population of the city, for there is scarcely a European country not represented in this charming resting-place of the dead; while in the portion appropriated to the Roman Catholics the mural niches in the boundary wall are very interesting. There are many hundreds of these small chambers in each of which is a coffin, and each space is rented for a given number of years, after which the coffin is removed and buried with others in a common grave. The idea is not altogether an agreeable one, and I was not astonished to find that the majority preferred an ordinary tomb of their own. In the Protestant section I noticed a handsome monument covering a vault, the property of one of the Fire Brigade Companies of the town, in which are buried members of the company who may meet with their death in the discharge of their duties.

Considering the extent of the trade of Valparaiso I was surprised at the limited area of its commercial district, which is comprised in three streets—Calle Blanco (containing the warehouses of the wholesale merchants), Calle Cochrane (where the offices of the brokers and agents are located), and Calle Arturo Prat, which contains the banks and financial houses, among the former the National Bank of Chili and Bank of Valparaiso being handsome and commodious buildings. I was surprised also at the limited

number of shops, and the somewhat antiquated fashions of the goods displayed.

At the time of my visit the shops were all closed before six o'clock in the evening, and the place seemed deserted after that hour; but this may have been due to the revolution and to the state of anxiety which then existed, and possibly in happier times it may be a more cheerful place than I found it. But to reside on the Cerro Alegre or Cerro Concepcion means, at any time, an isolation to which habit alone could make one accustomed, for although there are two lifts by which these heights are approached, no one would think of going up unless resident there, or for the purpose of paying a visit; and to drive up by road is anything but agreeable, in consequence of the steep and dangerous character of the roads, and the wretched vehicles by which the ascent is made. In Valparaiso itself some good two-horse carriages ply for hire, but these cannot get up the hills, and for this purpose there are specially licensed vehicles provided with an extra horse. I have written the word "horse" and I allow it to stand; but the poor half-fed beasts, with broken hoofs and various infirmities which are thrashed up and down these hills dragging so-called carriages equally dilapidated and unsafe, are frequently scarcely worthy of the name.

And here it may not be inopportune for me to remark that the inhuman treatment of animals

which characterises the South Americans generally is even more marked in Chili than elsewhere, and the tremendous spurs which are invariably used must make the lives of saddle horses one of continual pain. The stirrups of the *Huascos*, as the natives are called, resemble Dutch "*klompen*" with the heels cut off, and suspended to the stirrup leathers by a heavy iron band the constant knocking of these ungainly appendages against a horse's forelegs must be anything but pleasant ; but in addition the animal has to bear the continual application of spurs with rowels several inches in diameter (I purchased quite an ordinary pair of which the rowels are five inches across, each spike being two inches long), and it is no unusual thing to see the blood dripping from a horse's belly or flanks as he stands waiting for his master while he does some shopping, or stops to speak to a friend. Those whose purses do not admit of their purchasing, or whose inclination leads them to despise, boots wear the spurs strapped to their naked feet ; and indeed a *poncho* (or double blanket with a hole cut in the centre through which the head is passed), a broad straw hat and a pair of huge spurs, appear to form the equipment of the *Huaso*, who as a horseman is quite equal to the *Gaacho*. But the cruelty practised is not confined to the use of spurs, and when I called the attention of a resident to circumstances which I noticed he remarked that in Valparaiso one had to shut one's eyes to such

matters, as the ill-treatment of animals is unfortunately only too common.

Horseflesh in Chili is however very cheap, and very little thought is given to the comfort of the animals, while the only food they get is *alfalfa* (lucerne clover). I was astonished on visiting the tramway stables to find that they are not provided with straw or litter of any kind, but stand or lie on the bare stones, and that they have no oats nor any food other than *alfalfa*; but I must say that the appearance and scent of this food was most appetising, for it is baled in a half green state and not thoroughly dried as is our own hay and clover, and the animals appear to thrive upon it.

The question of horses brings me naturally to that of tramcars, and these conveyances ply through the town of Valparaiso not only by day as elsewhere, but throughout the night also; and combined with the whistles of the police serve to disturb the repose of the inhabitants. That they should do this does not appear at all necessary, for the night cars carry few passengers, and frequently none; but I believe that this was one of the conditions of the concession and has to be adhered to. The tramcars of Valparaiso moreover present two novel features—the one being that the conductors are all women, dressed in dark costumes with white aprons and black sailor hats. They are provided with a seat on the platform of the car and, although necessarily drawn from a not very

high class of society, I will give them credit for most quiet and seemly behaviour. Special arrangements are necessarily imperative for their accommodation at the terminus, and they are relieved at meal-times and at night by men ; but the experiment is said to have proved a most satisfactory one to the company, especially from a financial point of view. In reply to my enquiries I was informed in explanation of their employment that, take what precautions they might, the company was sure to be robbed by its *employés*, and that they found they were robbed less by women than by men ; for, said my informant, a man smokes and drinks and has other expensive habits, and at holiday times he has to treat the women, and consequently requires more money, while a woman on the contrary has no one to treat, has no luxurious habits, and thinks more of a smaller sum.

I thought, as the explanation was given to me, of the employment of women in other and lighter capacities in Scandinavia, and of the explanation of a merchant at Helsingfors in Finland, whom I asked why all the clerks in his office were females, and men only employed in outside work among the shipping and in the Custom House, and who replied that men drank too much punch at night, and their heads were not clear for office work in the morning, but that the fresh air did them good, and they could do outside work very well. Perhaps this is also the reason why in the barbers' shops in the north of Sweden the operators

are generally females, whose hands may be supposed to be less shaky than those of the male *figaros* of the country. I can vouch for their steadiness, having more than once submitted myself to their tender mercies.

There is a second feature of novelty in connection with the tramway service of Valparaiso—which is, that the company provides the small change of the city; for, as in the Argentine Republic, all the current money is paper (although the standard is a silver sole, equal to three shillings), and small coins are conspicuous by their absence. The Tramway Company supplies the deficiency by issuing discs of vulcanite, of the value of 10 cents (red) and 5 cents (black), which are taken in payment at every shop, restaurant, hotel or other place where it is possible to spend money; by waiters, cabmen, newspaper boys, porters and boatmen; and in fact are at the present time considered locally to form a part of the currency of the country. When these discs are not on hand, no change is forthcoming; and I was much amused at one of the principal stationers in the city where, having made a few purchases, I waited patiently for five minutes while one of the assistants vainly endeavoured to get some small coin from the neighbours, and ultimately had to take a packet of luggage-labels, of which the selling price was 35 cents, but which the assistant let me have for an equivalent of 30 cents change, waiving the odd 5 cents to avoid further

complications. That a city like Valparaiso should have been reduced to such shifts was indeed a commentary upon the condition of Chili!

In the centre of Valparaiso the buildings are of good construction, the old wooden structures having been gradually replaced; but there is one singular feature in connection with those in the commercial district, which is that most of them run through the blocks from one street to another, thus having an entrance at either end. Here and there, and more particularly in the outskirts, there are, however, still many remnants of old Valparaiso—wooden buildings, with overhanging balconies, many of them mere tinder boxes, and in looking at them one can understand the necessity for the numerous volunteer fire brigades which are in existence, and whose members render a good account of themselves whenever a fire occurs.

Valparaiso has suffered much from fires; but frequent as they have been shocks of earthquake are still more so, and we had not been there many hours before we experienced one of these. The movement was of a trembling and vibratory nature, such as might result from artillery practice, and, not thinking of earthquakes, I concluded that this was the cause, until I was told next day that there had been a shock. I noticed, both in Valparaiso and Santiago, that all the ceilings of the houses were of boards, the constant occurrence of earthquakes making the

use of plaster both dangerous and inconvenient; and I was not surprised, under the circumstances, to learn that in the English churches in that part of the litany where the congregation pray to be delivered from battle, murder and sudden death, the words "and earthquakes" are invariably introduced.

Situated as Valparaiso is at the foot of steep hills, there is no outlet for its natural expansion, and for many years past the business and office accommodation has been so limited, that it is no uncommon thing to find several firms or individuals occupying the same room, while even cellars are in some cases converted into offices. To meet the growing requirements of the city, it was decided some time since to reclaim a portion of the bay to the east of the commercial district, and this has been done by removing portions of superfluous hills and filling up the water. By this means a very large area has been taken in, upon which many substantial buildings have already been erected, and which in course of time will, unless the present political difficulties cause unexpected delays, constitute a very valuable and important addition to the city.

There is a very good hotel at Valparaiso, the "Hotel de France," but the cuisine here, as elsewhere in South America, is not of the most varied and appetising character. Every meal in Chili, even to breakfast, appears to be commenced with a plate of "*cazuela*," a thin broth with meat and vegetables; another

invariable dish is "*puchero*," or fresh beef boiled with vegetables—both very good in their way, but apt to pall upon one when taken three times a day. Oysters are plentiful and good, though small, and turtle is generally to be had, but vegetables seem to be somewhat scarce.

At Viña del Mar, a small town situate on the bay at a short distance to the east of Valparaiso, there is also a very good hotel, with an exceedingly pretty *patio* adorned with palms and other tropical plants, and with beautiful gardens attached. This place is much frequented during the bathing season, and is also affected as a residential resort by foreign merchants, some of whose houses look very pretty in the midst of their gardens; but it seemed to me quite as dull as the hills behind Valparaiso itself, and the sandy nature of the roads would not recommend it to me as a place of residence.

I noted with surprise the absence of private carriages both here and in Valparaiso, and was informed that very few persons kept them, for the very good reason that there is nowhere to drive to. On the other hand saddle horses are numerous and cheap, and an animal can be engaged for the day at a nominal price. They are much in request by the sailors of the British men-of-war, and it is amusing to see the horsemanship of some of these jack tars, and their comrades, the marines; but I understand that it is the custom of the horsekeepers to exact prepay-

ment from these customers, who otherwise have a nasty habit of dismounting on their return at some distance from the stables, and leaving the horses to find their way home alone — which they are not slow to do, under the circumstances.

The journey from Valparaiso to Santiago is accomplished by rail in about five hours, there being two express trains daily, provided with a drawing-room car, from the windows of which good views of the scenery are obtained. The railway skirts the bay to Viña del Mar and then strikes inland, the scenery being varied but not particularly striking, except when about half-way the line gradually rises among the mountains and passes over a magnificent valley by an iron bridge (Puente de los Maquis), from which a fine view is secured. At the time of my visit this bridge was carefully watched in view of the possibility of its destruction being attempted by the Opposition party. Shortly after passing it we reached a station bearing the Indian name of Llaillai, where time is given for refreshments, and where the trains to and from Santiago meet and connect with the branch line running to Santa Rosa, at the foot of the Andes, at which place it is intended that the Transandine line from Mendoza in the Argentine Republic shall ultimately connect with the Chilian system.

Santiago, the capital of the Republic, is beautifully situated in a valley surrounded by lofty mountains, and is a much more lively city than Valparaiso, the

shops being more numerous and extensive, and the goods displayed more varied and tasteful. Indeed the district around the Plaza Principal would no doubt under ordinary circumstances present a gay scene in the afternoon when the ladies do their shopping and the roads are crowded with carriages and the sidewalks with pedestrians; but when I was there, although there was more life than in Valparaiso, the streets were not thronged nor were the shops full of customers, for many of the best families had fled from the city, and others had relations in prison or in exile, and did not know from day to day what would happen. All the Clubs had been closed by order of the Government, the telegraphic and telephonic services were suspended, distrust and anxiety prevailed in every direction, and spies watched the movements of every stranger and suspected person; and generally the gay and festive Santiago was under a cloud. Incidentally I may mention that I was followed to Santiago and back again, and have reason to believe that I was under observation during the whole period of my stay both here and in Valparaiso. I may also note that just at the time I left for the capital the bombardment of Valparaiso by the Opposition was daily expected, and upon my enquiring of the British Consul as to the advisability of my leaving the port under the circumstances, I was consoled by the assurance that, should this event occur, the fact would be duly made

known in Santiago, and I should have plenty of time to return within the usual twenty-four hours' notice.

The Plaza Principal to which I have referred is an extensive square, with gardens and fountain in the centre, the Cathedral on one side, public buildings on the second, and so-called "*portales*" or arcades (which form favourite promenades) on the third and fourth. The Portal Fernandez Concha always presents a busy scene, and in this block are the principal shops and hotels, while it is intersected at right angles by arcades similar to our own Lowther Arcade, known as the Passage Matté, a capital place for walking or shopping in wet weather, and containing some good stores.

The Avenida de las Delicias, a broad boulevard which runs from the railway station through the centre of the town, contains some good buildings; and in the neighbourhood of the Plaza are the Congress House, Law Courts, and a little further off, the Mint, in which President Balmaceda was at the time a self-made prisoner. In front of the Congress House is an enclosed garden, with a marble monument in the centre in memory of the victims of the disastrous fire which occurred on the evening of the 8th December, 1863, in the Jesuits' Church, known as the "*Compañía*," which, at that time, stood here. Two thousand persons, mostly women, were burned on this occasion, and it was decided not to re-erect the church upon a

site which had been the scene of so serious a disaster. The Chilian women appear to be devout Catholics, and their usual costume greatly resembles that of a sister of mercy or member of some religious body, consisting of a plain black dress and a black shawl thrown over the head. This funereal garb produces a somewhat depressing effect upon those accustomed to the gayer tints and more fashionable costumes of European capitals, but it seems to be quite general among the natives, and is doubtless appreciated by their husbands as being far more economical. The foreign ladies wear European costumes, most of them, however, of materials and styles which have gone out of fashion at home.

I have said that Santiago lies in a valley, around which are lofty ranges of mountains; but this is not noticeable in the city itself, and to thoroughly realise the beauty of the situation it is necessary to ascend the Cerro de Santa Lucia, a remarkable hill to the east of the Plaza. This rocky elevation has been converted by art into a pleasure resort of the most beautiful description. Entering the grounds the first thing that presents itself to view is a waterfall tumbling down through masses of rock, upon and among which grow various tropical plants and flowers; and following the broad winding road which leads to the very necessary restaurant and ball-room near the summit, we pass over a so-called Roman aqueduct, look through an old Spanish gate-

way, have a glimpse at the theatre with accommodation for at least 2,000 people, while on all sides are nooks and corners, embellished with statues or kiosks, or provided with seats; and in every direction various trees of beautiful foliage, among which the pimento, laden with its soft pink coral-like berries, produces a charming effect. It is impossible to overrate either the beauties or the variety of these grounds, or the care which is bestowed upon them; and as the top is gradually approached the views of the city and the surrounding country become more and more interesting, until at length from the Belvedere on the summit we have an uninterrupted view of the whole magnificent panorama: the city at our feet with its buildings of various heights and picturesque appearance, interspersed with churches, and in the outskirts with well wooded gardens, the broad Avenida de las Delicias on one side, and the river Mapocho, usually a mere dry channel, but frequently a raging torrent, on the other; and all around, forming as it were a frame to the picture, rise the Andes, varying in size and appearance from undulating hills clad with verdure and vegetation to the bold and rugged snow-clad mountains which form the eastern boundary, while in the distance the magnificent Aconcagua rears its bold form over the surrounding heights, 23,400 feet above the level of the sea.

I must not leave Santa Lucia without a word about the restaurant where they know how to serve

a good dinner, and where under ordinary circumstances on a fine evening all is life and excitement. Unfortunately, when I visited it, the prevailing depression made itself felt there as elsewhere, but the friends with whom I dined did their best to make things cheerful by engaging a party of native musicians, who during dinner gave us specimens of national and other music on guitars and a mandolin.

Nor must I omit to make reference to the *Quinta Normal* or Botanical and Zoological Gardens, beautifully laid out, and containing a very good collection of specimens of the fauna and flora of the country, many of the former having been transferred hither from the Exhibition Gardens at Lima after the war between the two Republics.

Altogether Santiago is a fine and lively city, and it was a thousand pities that at the time it should have been in so depressed a condition in consequence of the unfortunate political difficulties which brought about the revolution, broke up its homes, paralysed its trade, filled its prisons, and disturbed the otherwise peaceful and agreeable life of its gay and light-hearted inhabitants.





CHAPTER XI.

WITH THE OPPOSITION.

FRIDAY, the 24th April, 1891, was a sad day in Valparaiso. When I left my hotel in the morning I noticed groups of persons at the street corners evidently discussing some question of interest. In front of the Intendencia a large crowd had assembled; merchants and brokers meeting one another in the streets stopped, with a depressed air, to interchange a few words, and passed on with a mournful shake of the head. What could have happened? I was not left long in doubt, for the first question that greeted me was, "Have you heard the news? The 'Blanco' has been sunk by torpedoes in the Bay of Caldera,

and all on board have perished." Some were inclined to doubt, and were of opinion that the statement was a trick on the part of the Government; but as the morning wore on their doubts were dispelled and the longer the news travelled the worse it became. The torpedo boats "Lynch" and "Condell" had surprised the ships lying off Caldera, and had sunk not only the "Blanco" but also the "Bio-Bio," a small gun-boat. The "Warspite" had brought the news, so that there could be no doubt about it. No! it was not the "Bio-Bio," but an English trading vessel, the "Gulf of Florida," which had been sunk. Next the "Gulf of Florida" became the "Samson" (also an English vessel trading on the coast), and speculation was rife as to what would be the result of the sinking of a ship of a friendly country. At length came the official announcement in the form of the report of Commander Moraga, on a strip of paper affixed to the walls at the street corners, and translated it read thus:—

"VIVA EL GOBIERNO LEGAL !

"At 4.40 a.m. on the 23rd inst, I attacked with the two torpedo catchers under my command a part of the revolted squadron anchored in Caldera, and destroyed it.

"The vessels are two, one is the 'Blanco' or 'Cochrane,' I am inclined to believe it is the former, and the other is the 'Huascar.'

"I congratulate your Excellency, the Supreme Government, and the country for this triumph, which the insurgents will do well to meditate."

This was worse and worse, for the "Blanco" and "Cochrane" were the two crack vessels of the

Chilian navy (sister ships of some 4,000 tons); while the "Huascar," originally belonging to Peru, but taken by the Chilians in the war with that country in 1879-80 after it had sunk their own war-ship the "Esmeralda," was considered the best fighting vessel, and one of the most valuable in the hands of the Revolutionary party.

Later information showed that the "Warspite" had not brought the news, that the "Blanco" was the only vessel sunk, and that some of the officers and crew had been saved; and at the same time it transpired that after destroying the "Blanco" the torpedo boats "Lynch" and "Condell," hastening back to Valparaiso, had met and attacked some of the transports taking troops down to join the Revolutionists; with what result however was not known.

This news was enough to damp the spirits of the most sanguine, and gloomy indeed were the forebodings of all classes. Valparaiso had been dull enough before, but the general depression now became simply intolerable; more especially as following immediately upon the opening of Congress the spirits of the Government party had been proportionately raised and the officials and military had become more truculent than ever. Military demonstrations were made by the marching and counter-marching of troops and bands of music through the streets, and this was continued until a late hour at night; while access to the public offices became most difficult, the

roughest of soldiery forcing back in the rudest manner those whose business called them to the Intendencia.

Unfortunately I was one who met with such a reception; for, having arranged to leave Valparaiso on the following day, it became necessary for me to make application at the Intendencia for a passport, without which the steamboat companies were not allowed to issue tickets; although I must say that having once passed the cordon and obtained access to the Secretariat I had no reason to complain of want of courtesy on the part of the official with whom I came into contact; as he politely gave me immediate attention and, having examined my Foreign Office passport and taken such particulars of my personal appearance as were necessary for the purpose of identification, informed me that the required document would be at my disposal at one o'clock the next day, no passports being issued until the day on which the vessel actually sailed.

My anxiety to get away from Valparaiso was increased on the following day when I found how entirely not only the residents of the city, but also the strangers within its gates were at the mercy of the Government, and how little reliance was to be placed upon official utterances. At the hour fixed I called at the Intendencia, and found the crowded approaches guarded by soldiers.

"No admission!" said the sentry as I approached the entrance; and declining to listen to my explana-

tion that I came there by appointment, he placed his musket across me and roughly ordered me to stand out of the way. Application at another entrance was equally unsuccessful, except that I was told that I might come in half an hour's time and see if the office was open. At the end of this interval I accordingly presented myself again, but this time all parley was out of the question. "Stand back!" was all that was vouchsafed to applicants for admission, and the looks and actions accompanying the words made it pretty evident that the order was not to be disregarded.

Our boat was timed to start at five o'clock in the afternoon and the orders were that no one should go on board after four, so that I had no time to lose, and it appeared to me that the only course left was to apply for advice to the British Consul. I did so, but did not meet with the reception usually accorded to Britons who, properly accredited, and having a Foreign Office passport duly *viséd*, seek the assistance of the representative of their country; for after the circumstances had been explained to him, all he had to say was that I could not expect the officials to dance to my music, although to me it certainly seemed that I was dancing to theirs; and the only advice he could give was "try again." Acting upon this advice I returned to the charge, but although I was accompanied by a well-known resident of Valparaiso, who endeavoured in vain to

explain the situation to the guards, our efforts were absolutely fruitless and we were peremptorily ordered away from the Intendencia.

It was now past two o'clock, and my time was becoming short, so I reported to the Consul the result of my further efforts, and was then advised by him to see what I could do with the steamboat company. Beyond this neither advice nor assistance was to be obtained in this direction, and I mention the circumstance as it was in such contrast with the line of conduct pursued by the British Minister at Santiago and by the Admiral of the Fleet lying in Chilian waters, both of whom have been most jealous and careful in the protection of British interests, both general and individual.

Thanks to the courtesy of the general agent of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, tickets were issued to me upon the strength of my Foreign Office passport upon the understanding that the risk (if any) should be borne by me; and I hastened back to the hotel (where my wife was anxiously awaiting my return, not knowing the reason of the delay), and lost no time in despatching my luggage to the quay.

On our arrival at Valparaiso the boatmen who took us ashore filled up the boat with the luggage of other passengers to such an extent as to make the passage an unpleasant, if not a dangerous, one; and in engaging a boatman to take me on board on my

departure I stipulated that no other passengers or luggage should be taken by him. We were therefore somewhat annoyed when, just as our boat was putting off from the quay, a stout gentleman stepped in, causing the boat to give an unpleasant lurch; as he did so the boatman pulled away, and not wishing to cause any unpleasantness with one who might possibly be a fellow-passenger on a long voyage I refrained from the protest which arose to my lips, being myself only too glad to have got away from the shore without any unpleasant enquiries being made for my passport; and away we went towards the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's Ship "Mendoza."

The gentleman who had joined us made a few remarks in excellent English as to the calmness of the water and the absence of danger, and I then had an opportunity of observing him more closely. He was a man of strong build, between fifty and sixty years of age, with closely-cut grey whiskers, pointed beard and long moustaches, a keen penetrating eye, and an air which denoted firmness and determination. When we reached the vessel he followed us on board, and when I had secured my cabin and disposed of my luggage I looked round for him, but among the crowd rapidly filling the decks I did not recognize him. There was indeed a crowd, and ladies and children mustered in great force, much to my surprise; but this circumstance was afterwards explained by the

fact that for many weeks past there had been no communication with the Chilian ports north of Coquimbo, at all of which, however, the "Mendoza," thanks to the intervention of the British Minister, now proposed to call. The Chilian Government had indeed prohibited vessels from touching at these ports, declaring them to be blockaded; but the British Minister had, a fortnight before, explained to them that a mere paper blockade could not be recognized, and that the next outgoing vessel of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company would be instructed to call, notwithstanding their prohibitions. The vessel in question was the "Serena," which sailed on the 15th April, and the authorities kept back from the mails which she carried all letters addressed to the northern Chilian ports, and intimated their intention of firing upon her as she left Valparaiso should she be dispatched for the ports in question; whereupon Admiral Hotham of the "Warspite" made known his intention to convoy the "Serena" out of Valparaiso Bay and to return the fire should she be molested. All this took place at the last moment, and consequently no passengers had booked; but the ice being thus broken, there was a great demand for passages by the next boat the "Mendoza," on the part of families and individuals who had been detained at Valparaiso. The Chilian Government however, declined to grant the "Mendoza" dispatches for any port below Mollendo, and tickets had to be taken to

that point ; but, as afterwards transpired, a considerable cargo was carried for intermediate ports and duly delivered.

The hour for sailing approached, and my feelings were not altogether agreeable when I saw a party of Chilian officers come on board and commence a general search, at the same time demanding the production of passports from all on board. With as much unconcern as we could muster, my wife and I strolled about the deck ; and I had almost come to the conclusion that we had been overlooked, when two officers approached us and demanded my passport. Without hesitation I produced my Foreign Office passport and pointed to the *visé* of the Chilian Consul in London ; but this did not by any means satisfy them, and they informed me in Spanish that what they wanted was the permit of the Intendencia, without which no one could leave the port. The position was an awkward one, and no time was left to me to give it consideration, and the only course that suggested itself to me was to feign absolute ignorance of the Spanish language. This I did, and the more they tried to explain what they wanted the less I appeared to understand, stolidly presenting my English passport and calling their attention (in English) to the fact of that being all that an Englishman required under any circumstances. They at length called to their aid another official, and assuming from their so doing that he had some know-

ledge of my language I at once asked him if he spoke English, but, although he answered in the affirmative, I found that his knowledge of it was very limited, and I proceeded to explain to him the position, with the result that after a short consultation I was allowed to pass in peace. Whether this result was due to my explanations or to his desire to conceal his ignorance of what I was saying and cut short the interview I can never know, but it was a great relief when they left me and proceeded with their investigations elsewhere. They were evidently more successful in other directions, for four passengers were detained and taken off by them when they left the vessel.

At six o'clock we weighed anchor, and as we steamed out of the Bay it was quite cheering to hear the band of the "Warspite" playing "Bonnie Dundee" as we passed, and to feel that I should have been able to appeal to an officer of Her Majesty's navy for protection against any forcible removal that might have been attempted, as I certainly should have done in case of need. As soon as we were under way the dinner-bell rang, and I found myself seated at table next to our mysterious fellow-passenger from the shore, who informed me, in reply to my remark that not having seen him since we had come on board I thought he had gone ashore again, that he had been in concealment; and in explanation of his unceremonious entry into my boat, told me he was a member of the Opposition Party, had been

brought down to Valparaiso a prisoner, but had escaped ; and waiting on the quay for an opportunity to get on board the "Mendoza," with two political friends on the look out, he had noticed the luggage being put into our boat, and finding when we came up that we were strangers, he had made up his mind to avail himself of our convoy as less likely to attract attention ; and having made a signal to the boatmen, which they evidently understood, he had stepped on board, and, thanks to us, had thus got safely away.

He added, however, that he should have to go back to his hiding-place, and remain concealed until the vessel had left Coquimbo, as that port was still in the hands of the Government, who would there undoubtedly institute another search ; and being probably satisfied that I could not be a spy, he also told me that there were some thirty or forty young fellows hiding on board, who had got away without passports, and were going to join the army being raised by the Opposition in the North. He talked of these young fellows as "my boys," from which I assumed that he occupied some position of importance in the movement, as I afterwards found was the case ; and in subsequent conversation he gave me much interesting information, not only as regards the revolution, but also as to matters generally connected with the political situation, the commerce and the industries of Chili. As I may have occasion to refer further to him, I purpose calling him Mr. X.,

as I should naturally not wish to prejudice one who thus, as it were, placed himself under my protection, especially after the compliment which he paid to my country; when he told me that as we were English he felt sure we should not betray his confidence.*

The day after leaving Valparaiso we arrived at Coquimbo, where we found the French warship "Volta" and the English storeship "Liffey." As Mr. X. had anticipated, the military authorities again searched the ship; and I learned that they had instructions from Valparaiso to search particularly for a member of the Opposition whom the Government were anxious to secure, and who, from the description, was no other than Mr. X. himself; but their efforts were unsuccessful, for the next morning, when we reached Huasco, our friend sat down at the breakfast-table, jovial and hearty as ever. Nor did they discover the hiding-places of the thirty or forty "boys," although they remained on board until nearly eleven o'clock at night, two only of the number being caught and taken ashore; but this did not surprise me, as the officers forming the search party devoted the greater portion of their time while on the ship to the consumption of champagne, and, unless Chilian heads are exceptionally strong, I should think theirs must have been slightly muddled

* The circumstances which led me to write thus no longer exist, and I may mention that our mysterious friend was Señor J. Walker Martínez.

when they left us. Possibly others on shore thought the same, for while we were weighing anchor a boat came off from the shore with instructions to detain the "Mendoza" till the next morning; but the captain, having his dispatches and being already under way declined to stay, and away we steamed, no doubt to the intense relief of the unfortunate fugitives, who for the previous twelve hours must have been in a state of suspense, only equalled by the discomforts of their hiding-places.

An incident worth recording, as showing how trade is affected by such a state of affairs, occurred at Coquimbo. On board were about fifty mules, first-class animals, well fed and in excellent condition, and a large supply of *alfalfa* for their consumption, consigned to Callao (Peru), and freight paid to that port. Both animals and fodder were taken possession of by the military authorities, notwithstanding the protest of their owner who was on board, and they were unceremoniously transhipped into lighters and landed, the owner receiving an "order" for what these authorities were pleased to consider their value. I understood this value to be less than their actual cost, and that the prospect of payment against the "order" received was, to say the least, somewhat remote.

After leaving Coquimbo we had a rough night of it, the swell outside the bay being very heavy, portmanteaux and cabin trunks, and all loose articles

had a gay time dancing about the cabin, and sleep was out of the question ; but in due course we made our next port, Huasco. The situation and surroundings of the town on a bleak, rocky, and inhospitable coast, with not a vestige of anything green to be seen in any direction, scarcely prepared one for the sight of numerous boats coming alongside laden with grapes, melons, pomegranates, and other fruit. Yet here they were, and the decks were soon over-run by the women offering them for sale ; for behind the rugged mountains in view lie fertile valleys, producing the best fruits on the coast, and among others, stoneless grapes, which form excellent raisins in much request in the North, these also being offered for sale in primitive boxes of local manufacture.

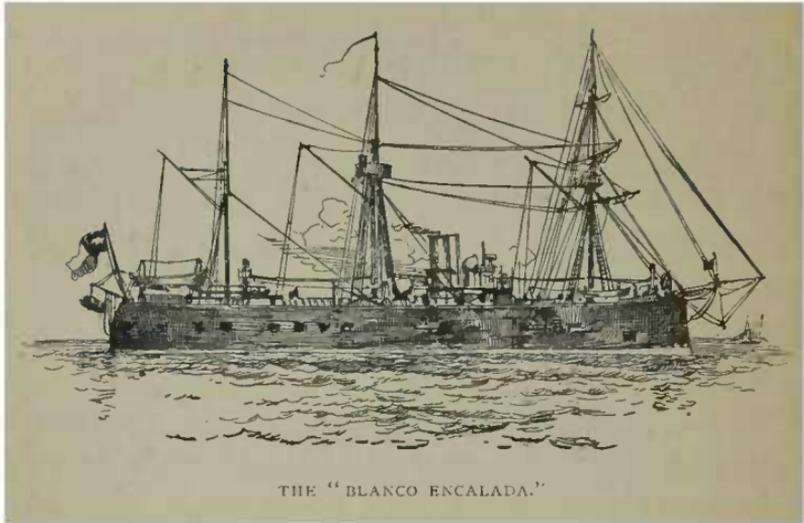
But others now were also thronging the saloon deck, and what appeared to be stokers, firemen and sailors in rough patched clothing, with blackened faces and grimy hands, were taking possession of first-class cabins. These were Mr. X.'s boys, hitherto concealed among the cargo, in the sail room, lying in bunks in the forecabin, or making pretence of working among the coal trimmers ; who, being now in the land, or rather on the waters, of the Opposition, were at liberty to come forth and throw off their disguises. Laughing gaily they swarmed into the cabins of their friends to change their clothing, and wash off the dirt of the hold and forecabin ; the bath rooms were in great demand, and there was general excitement and jubila-

tion ; for these young fellows numbered among them the sons of some of the best Chilian families, and were known to the other passengers, all of whom apparently were of the same party ; and for some time the only topics of conversation were the success of their scheme and the prospects of the cause. I could not but think as I looked at these young fellows of the hardships in store for them, the incessant drill, the tiring marches, the privations, and probably the dreadful wounds and death which many of them would have to suffer in their patriotic efforts to vindicate the liberty of the subject, and maintain inviolate the constitution of their country.

Whether in the right or the wrong, whether ultimately successful or not, there could be no doubt that they were animated by a spirit of patriotism which would not fail to render a good account of itself in the hour of trial ; and if they were lighthearted and gay it were surely better thus to enter upon the stern business to which they had devoted themselves, than to go about with a sad and gloomy air. The day was not long enough for these young men to discuss the present and the future of their cause ; the dinner table was a perfect Babel, and if talking would have settled the matter, it would have been settled long before we reached the next port. But "lights out at 11 o'clock" is a salutary rule, especially when a ship is freighted with politicians, as the best of arguments fall somewhat flat in a dimly-lighted saloon, or on a

dark deck ; and passengers not particularly interested in the matter—I believe, however, that my wife and myself were the only persons on board in this position—were glad to have a little respite from the interminable chatter that was constantly going on on board the “Mendoza.” Do foreigners talk louder than Englishmen? I have long since come to the conclusion that they do ; and they certainly talk more, especially the men, against whom an equal number of women would have little chance, whatever may be the general opinion to the contrary in our own country.

It seemed to me that our enthusiastic young friends had hardly ceased talking one against the other immediately outside our cabin, and that I had only just fallen asleep, when we were aroused by shouts of “Viva !” and hastily jumping out of my berth and opening the window I found that we were passing what in the dim light I took to be a fairly large tug, whose crew were responding heartily to the shouts from our vessel. I found afterwards that this was the naval tender the “Esmeralda” and that we were entering the Bay of Caldera, the time being 4.30 a m. From this moment further rest was out of the question, and when the ship dropped anchor shortly afterwards there was no alternative but to get up and make a long day of it with the rest in the now famous Bay of Caldera.



CHAPTER XII.

THE SINKING OF THE "BLANCO."

CALDERA, a small town of which the prominent feature is its church standing high above the surrounding buildings, lies at the head of the bay of the same name, and is in railway communication with the larger and more important interior town of Copiapó. The bay itself is about a mile across at the mouth, and runs back about a mile and a half, varying in depth from twenty-seven fathoms at the entrance to six and four fathoms near the town. On either side are low mountains, while the town itself lies on a sandy plain, rising gradually upwards towards the higher

range of mountains forming the background, behind which Copiapó is situated.

But, although the town and its surroundings are of comparatively little importance, the Bay of Caldera will long hold a place of interest in the history of Chili, for here the Opposition met with their first serious reverse in the loss of one of the two principal vessels of the Chilian navy—the “Blanco Encalada,” more familiarly known as the “Blanco.”

On the night of the 22nd of April, 1891, the “Blanco,” with her full complement of 300 men (officers and crew), lay in about ten fathoms of water in the south-west of the bay, about three hundred yards from the shore and the same distance from the jetty, her head towards the north, while behind her lay the “Bio-Bio.” The majority of the officers had spent the evening on shore at a banquet, and whether in consequence of their absence or owing to a general laxity of administration, the usual precautionary measures for the protection of the ship were not taken. It is said by survivors that on every previous evening guard boats had been stationed round the vessel, but that this had not been done on the evening in question. Probably the festivities referred to had something to do with the matter, but apart from this there seems little doubt that not only the navy but the leaders of the Opposition generally, were at the time over-confident in the success of the movement, and inclined to under-rate the resources of the

Government ; while they fondly anticipated that if the two torpedo boats " Lynch and " Condell " left Valparaiso at all it would only be to join their ranks.

A bitter lesson was, however, in store for them, for while officers and crew slept soundly in their fancied security the " Lynch " and " Condell " crept into the bay from the north and getting into line approached the doomed vessel from the east. The enterprise was a hazardous one, for had a proper watch been kept and the approach of the torpedo boats have been discovered, the " Blanco " could have knocked them both to pieces with her guns in a few moments ; while at the same time it was a somewhat foolhardy one, for unless Commander Moraga had better and more definite information than appears probable from the fact that he was himself not certain as to what vessel or vessels had been sunk, there was a great risk of making a mistake and sinking some passenger or trading ship, or even a war vessel of some friendly Power, although for the credit of the navies represented on the coast I should hope that a more careful watch would have made this last alternative quite out of the question.

The attack was however boldly conceived and bravely carried out, for as soon as the two boats came within range of the " Blanco " they simultaneously applied their deadly missiles with fearful results. In all six torpedoes are said to have been discharged, of which one passed under the " Bio-Bio "

and was afterwards recovered near the shore, two were lying in the bay at the time of my visit, one buoyed to show its whereabouts and the other not then discovered, and the remaining three struck the vessel on her starboard side, causing her to sink immediately. Too late to be of any service, the watch on the "Blanco" had noticed the enemy's approach, and the crew of the "Condell" stated that they distinctly heard the cry of "*los torpederos*" from on board. As the vessel sank those who were on her decks were thrown or sprang into the water; and it is stated by the survivors that, in response to their appeals for help, one at least of the torpedo boats opened fire upon the struggling men, and shouted to them, "Ask your Congress to save you."

Such an action as this appears almost incredible, especially when it is borne in mind that friends and relations might be on opposite sides; but the statement was confirmed by a young midshipman of the "Blanco" who was saved, and who went on with us in the "Mendoza" to Iquique. Singularly enough this young fellow was in our own man-of-war the "Sultan" when she foundered off Malta.

Such are, however, among the horrors of civil war, and from such people as these when once worked up no quarter was to be expected on either side. Their fighting powers were shown in the Peruvian war, and from incidents which were mentioned to me I had no doubt that when the opposing parties met

in the present struggle the conflict would be severe and terrible indeed. By the South Americans, as by their progenitors the Spaniards, life is held at a low value, and when once they have tasted blood they set as little store by their own as by that of their opponents. Their callousness, indeed, goes in my opinion too far, and I was not agreeably impressed by the levity which was displayed on the day when we lay in the Bay of Caldera. So far from being depressed by the untoward incident which had taken the lives of so many of their friends and comrades in arms the occasion was made a sort of general picnic, and boats were plying all day between the "Mendoza," the various transports and the "Huascar," carrying gay parties whose principal object appeared to be to get as much excitement and amusement as possible out of the event.

The ladies on board were not behindhand in this direction, and many expeditions were made to the unfortunate "Blanco" in search of relics of the disaster. One would scarcely have believed it possible that so soon after the occurrence, and with the bodies of 220 of their party lying almost at their feet, so much levity could have been displayed; but a climax was reached when at dinner in the evening the naval commander of one of the transports (who had passed the afternoon on the "Mendoza") ordered champagne to be placed upon the tables and proceeded to propose a toast which, however, was hardly

intelligible, owing to the fact that the speaker was considerably the worse for liquor.

I must, however, do justice to some of those present on the occasion by adding that, although every table was occupied and the din of conversation had up to that moment been intolerable, the toast was not received so noisily as I had anticipated, many of the older and more consistent men present refraining from joining in the "Vivas" of their younger and more enthusiastic brethren. I ventured afterwards to express to Mr. X. my surprise at the incident, and my opinion that the whole affair was being treated too much as a carousal, and from his replies I gathered that he shared these views; and I have reason to believe that the next day he took the opportunity of remonstrating with his followers as to their conduct.

To return however to the "Blanco." The torpedo boats having performed their deadly task steamed out of the bay and steered for Valparaiso, but they had not gone far when they met the "Aconcagua," one of the transports in the hands of the Opposition, making her way towards Caldera, and under the impression that she carried a large number of revolutionary troops they at once opened fire upon her. The incidents of this fight were afterwards narrated to me by the captain of the "Aconcagua" an experienced seaman and a well-known and valued officer of the Chilian line of steamers; who, as he informed me,

little bargained for such a job as this when he became captain of a passenger vessel.

The "Aconcagua" had landed the troops which she had carried and was proceeding to Caldera when, as mentioned above, she was attacked by the torpedo boats. The captain at once realised the position, and judging from the movements of the attacking vessels that their object was to ram him, he tacked about in such a way as to make this impossible, the course which he was holding at the time being favourable to his movements. In the meantime the torpedo boats kept up their fire, though singularly enough all their shots went too high, not one having struck the hull ; but considerable damage was done, as I afterwards saw, to the upper parts of the vessel, the saloon, the engine room and the promenade deck ; the ventilating shafts were riddled, the awnings and iron supports cut away in various places, the shells cutting grooves in the deck as they burst and spent themselves in the woodwork. One shot passed through the engine room, cutting its way through the iron plating at either end and carrying away an iron bar in the centre as it passed, while another went through the brass cap of the compass-box without in any way injuring the instrument.

But those on board the "Aconcagua" were not idle. The troops had indeed been landed but the naval officers appointed to the vessel were on board, and, ably aided by the crew, such defence was made

by them as was possible. The "Aconcagua" had been armed with four cannon, two in the bows, and one on each side amidships; but unfortunately the midship gun on the port side had been removed a few days previously, and as she was sailing between the enemy and the land, and dared not go out to be exposed to fire on both sides, her starboard gun was simply useless, and the only weapons available were the two guns in the bows, which were handled by a boatswain and a young midshipman with such good effect that several of the officers and crew of the torpedo boats were wounded, if not killed, in the encounter, while the vessels themselves received considerable damage.

The "Aconcagua" kept boldly on her course at full speed, captain and engineers doing their utmost to save her, while all on board, even to boys of eleven and twelve years of age who were employed in carrying the shot forward, worked with the greatest coolness, as if they had served their time on a man-of-war instead of on a coasting passenger steamer; and thus for more than an hour the running fight continued. What would have been the ultimate result it is difficult to say, but as they approached Caldera, the English man-of-war "Warspite" hove in view, and the "Lynch" and "Condell," mistaking her for one of the Opposition ships, drew away, while the "Aconcagua," availing herself of the opportunity, made her way into the Bay and

at last found the safety which she had so bravely earned.

I visited the "Aconcagua" while we were lying off Caldera, and also had an unexpected opportunity of examining the wreck of the "Blanco," and obtaining some interesting information from one of the officers of the "Champion" who was superintending diving operations from a lighter moored alongside, the event being one of considerable interest to naval men, as it is, I believe, the first occasion on which Whitehead torpedos have been effectively employed in actual warfare.

This officer kindly directed us so to shape our course as to see the wreck to the best advantage. As I have stated, the vessel was lying in about ten fathoms of water, and she was struck on her starboard side about twenty feet from her bows, by two if not three torpedos, which tore a hole in her hull below the water line about thirty feet long by twenty wide, causing her at once to fill and founder. Beyond this she appeared to have remained intact, and the water being very clear we were able to row over the whole length of the vessel, which at the stern was so near to the surface that we had to keep the boat off to avoid running foul of her after deck ; although all that was actually out of water were the ends of the two yards on her foremast. Following the line of the vessel as she lay with the muzzles of her three port guns staring upwards like large eyes, and her port lights

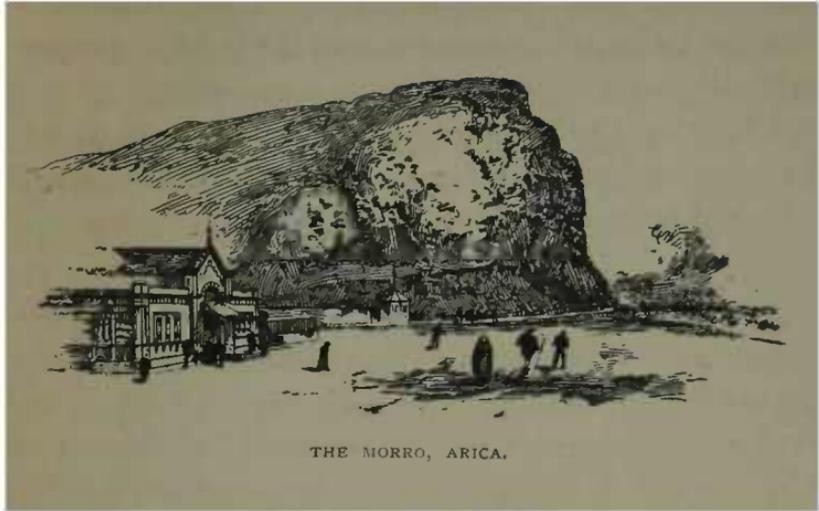
looking like smaller eyes gazing from the deep, producing a singularly weird effect as they seemed to move in the swell of the water, it appeared to me that the force of the blow caused her not only to fall over on the side on which she was struck, but that it had also caused her to go down by the head in such a manner as to imbed her bows deeper and more firmly in the bottom. The officer to whom I have referred stated that it was very difficult to get about in the wreck, and that the number of dead bodies made the job a very uncanny one. He had, I understood, himself been down in diver's dress, and it is from his information that I have given the size and position of the breach effected by the torpedos; no doubt in due course a complete report will be made to the Admiralty, and more exact details will be furnished as to the effect of these new and dreadful appliances of naval warfare. One thing is beyond doubt and that is that the work of the torpedo is speedy and effective, and that a new danger has been added to such warfare, against which both bravery and endurance are powerless; and if no other lesson is to be learned from this disaster it should at least bring home to all naval officers the absolute necessity for increased and never-failing watchfulness.

The Admiralty chart of the Bay of Caldera shows that the entrance is only a mile in width, and that at the south-west of this entrance is a lighthouse, which might and ought to have been used

as a look out, and under these circumstances there can be little doubt that the sinking of the “ Blanco ” was due to gross carelessness, and the want of proper precautions on the part of those responsible.

I have only to add that eighty persons were saved by swimming ashore, among them the commander, who had been a midshipman in the English navy.





THE MORRO, ARICA.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NITRATE PORTS.

THE mineral wealth of both Chili and Peru has contributed largely to the past welfare of these countries, and the extensive mines of copper and silver have long given employment to both capital and labour; but of late years the article which has played the most important part in the commerce of the coast has been its nitrate, the supply of which is practically inexhaustible. Nitrate and Guano have been aptly called the curses of Peru, for fortunes have been so rapidly made by their aid that other and perhaps more legitimate sources of commerce have been neglected, while the money thus so easily

earned has been squandered, as it might not have been had it been more difficult of acquirement.

Originally the nitrate trade of Chili was restricted to one port, Taltal, which we reached the day after leaving Caldera, having in the meantime touched at Chañaral, with its numerous smelting works and important shipments of copper ore. At that time a prosperous business was carried on at Taltal, especially when Peru placed heavy export duties on its nitrate; but the difficulties which gave rise to the war between Chili and Peru in 1879 and ended in the annexation by the former of considerable territory, entirely altered the circumstances of the trade, and Taltal now plays a comparatively small part in the nitrate exportation of the country.

At one time the Republic of Bolivia, now cut off from the coast, held the two ports of Cobija and Tocopilla whence its nitrate shipments were made; and to obviate difficulties between Chili and Peru which even then were looming in the distance, the ports of Antofagasta and Mejillones were added to Bolivian territory under treaties entered into between its two more progressive and prosperous neighbours. As might have been expected however the Bolivians no sooner became masters of a more extensive coast line, than they themselves brought about the climax it was desired to obviate, by the difficulties which they were constantly causing on the Chilian frontier; until at length, unable to endure the position any

longer, Chili approached Peru in accordance with the terms of the treaties entered into, with a view to joint action being taken by the two to remedy the existing state of affairs, and bring Bolivia to a sense of its duties and obligations. The sequel is a commentary upon the way in which matters generally are managed in the South American Republics; for Chili found that, instead of support, only opposition was forthcoming from Peru, and that the latter had actually entered into a private treaty with Bolivia in direct contravention of the terms of its former treaties with Chili.

Whatever may now be the position of Chili, and however much that position is to be commiserated or blamed, there can be no doubt that until the recent internal difficulties arose it was in many respects a model Republic, and certainly stood at the head of the South American Republics as far as its administration was concerned, while matters both of home and foreign policy were dealt with in a more intelligent and liberal spirit than were usual among its neighbours, and the great desire of the people was to maintain peace and thus promote prosperity.

But though desirous of maintaining peace Chili was not unprepared for war, as Peru found to its cost, for the result of the latter's breach of its treaty engagements was the commencement of hostilities which crippled Peru, drove Bolivia beyond the outer range of the Andes, and added to Chili the rich

nitrate grounds of both its opponents, with the important ports of Antofagasta, Iquique, Pisagua and Arica.

At the first of these, Antofagasta, we arrived the day after leaving Taltal, and its appearance was certainly not attractive. A town built entirely of wood, many of the buildings being mere shanties, on a sandy plain at the foot of lofty mountains, over which the railway runs to Bolivia and to the nitrate fields and silver and copper mines which supply the material for the various factories which adorn the town. Beyond these mountains is a desert where the soldiers of the Opposition army were at the time being trained and accustomed to the hardships in store for them, and several of our young fugitives were landed for the purpose of joining their ranks, while thirteen others came on board, having escaped from Valparaiso in a French trading steamer then lying in the harbour. As showing how widespread was the revolutionary movement, I may mention that among these thirteen there was one young fellow, the son of a leading lawyer in Santiago, who, holding an appointment in the Chilean Legation at Buenos Ayres, had thrown it up and travelled across the Andes, down to Valparaiso, and had lain concealed among the baskets of fish forming the vessel's cargo while the ship was searched, putting up with all the inconveniences and hardships of the journey in order to enrol himself among the Opposition forces.

Our next port, Iquique, although larger and much more pretentious than Antofagasta, did not to me seem much more inviting, although I certainly saw it under unfavourable conditions, for it had already played an important part in the revolution, and the blocks containing the principal shops, hotels and offices had been destroyed early in the campaign. On the 16th of February a small party of Revolutionary troops held the Custom House and, failing to dislodge them, the Government troops deliberately set fire to the business part of the town in the hope that the wind, setting towards the sea, would drive the smoke over them and render the position untenable. This would seem hardly credible were it not that responsible eye-witnesses have placed it upon record, and that foreign Consuls have investigated and verified their statements. The best portion of the town was burnt and the property of the inhabitants, the majority of them foreign merchants, wilfully destroyed, causing heavy losses, and to some bankruptcy and ruin—not by the fortune, or rather misfortune of war, but by a deliberate act of incendiarism on the part of the Government authorities.

The example thus set was speedily followed by the ruffians of the town, (and their name is legion), who set fire to buildings in other parts with a view to plunder, and one gentleman showed me the house of his partner (then in England) which had been fired and sacked. Although he was on the spot

within seven minutes of the outbreak not an article of furniture was left, and it was with difficulty that the building itself was saved. Saved, but for what? Three days later, on the 19th February, the war vessels in the hands of the Opposition anchored in the Bay, and Iquique was bombarded and the Government troops driven out—the house referred to and many others suffering severely.

Although there is a *mole*, or as we should call it, a pier, at Iquique, the landing is a dangerous one, the small boats by which it is effected having to pass between rocks over which the waves run, breaking in all directions, and it is by no means an uncommon event for them to be over-turned by the breakers. On the morning of our arrival the sea was very rough, and I feared the possibility of such an occurrence, but fortunately we escaped with a good wetting only; and later in the day, on my return, although the roll was still heavy, the tide being high the rocks were well covered with water, and the boatmen being familiar with the position of each, I reached the ship in safety.

Taking all the conditions and circumstances of the place into consideration the question arose in my mind as to how men of education and good social standing, accustomed to the refinements and luxuries of civilization could possibly settle down there; but the fact remains that they do, for many of the merchants are men of wealth and position, and the ladies with

whom I came in contact on the steamer were worthy of better surroundings. The inducement no doubt is "money," for what with nitrate and silver there are many opportunities for making it; and several leading firms, such as Anthony Gibbs & Son, of London, and Gildemeister & Co. of Bremen, have branch houses there, while one at least of the inhabitants, the well-known Colonel North, has amassed a large fortune. From the way in which the recent disasters have been met by the foreign residents, it is to be assumed that the game is worth the candle, for rebuilding had already been commenced by some whose premises had been destroyed, although others, bearing their losses as philosophically as might be, thought it better to wait a little longer, not knowing whether Iquique had yet seen the last of its revolutionary troubles.

I may mention that since leaving Coquimbo not a vestige of anything green had been visible, the coast line being absolutely sterile, and the towns built either on rocks or sand; and this characteristic continues northwards until Peru is reached. Many of the towns have no water supply whatever, depending entirely upon condensation, and as it never rains the sterility of the soil is easily accounted for; but Iquique has recently been provided with water works, and obtains a good supply from the interior. Nevertheless its streets are ankle deep in sand, and it is without exception one of the driest places I have

ever seen, although it has a local (ironical) reputation for being the "wettest" place on the coast, and its numerous bars and drinking saloons, well frequented at all hours of the day, go far to bear out the imputation.

Iquique being the head-quarters of the Opposition, all that were left of our revolutionary friends went ashore here, much to the relief of the remaining passengers, who were getting rather tired of their interminable arguments and conversation. Lying in the bay was the "Almirante Cochrane," sister ship to the unfortunate "Blanco," and also two transports with prisoners on board; while at Pisagua, the next port at which we touched, were the "O'Higgins" and "Abtao" also with prisoners, and still reminding us of the struggle going on. Our arrival at Pisagua, however, was considerably delayed, as the authorities at Iquique were probably so much absorbed in politics that they kept the "Mendoza" waiting for her dispatches from three o'clock in the afternoon until late in the evening, and it was two o'clock on the following morning before the anchor was weighed.

The contour of the coast, which had been mountainous and sandy as far as Antofagasta, had become more rocky as we approached Iquique, and after leaving that port it became much more precipitous, and the mountains behind more lofty, this formation continuing as far as Arica. Although rugged and barren, however, the scenery was not uninteresting, as

the varied shades of the rocks, red, green, purple, and neutral in tint, produced striking and beautiful effects of light and shade, especially at sunset.

Here, too, we came upon the pelicans, which from this point northwards almost to Callao were always *en evidence*, sometimes but a few together and at other times in flights of hundreds, dropping like stones into the water as their keen eyes sighted the fish sufficiently near the surface, and securing their prey with unerring accuracy; or towards night flying in long lines of Indian file towards their accustomed haunts—clumsy birds enough both in rising from the water and on the wing, but with a cunning, old-fashioned look which made their company at all times amusing and interesting. The waters in these parts teem with fish, and schools of porpoises were constantly in the wake of the ship, while seals were numerous, the young ones jumping out of the water in the same way as porpoises.

Leaving Iquique at two o'clock in the morning, we reached Pisagua at six. Although leaving much to be desired in the matter of construction, the houses being built of wood and many of them mere shanties, this town presents a pretty appearance, for being built upon a group of rocks, the houses are upon various levels, some raised upon piles in front and resting on the rock at the back, others perched upon a rock and approached by flights of wooden steps; while being painted in different colours (light blue

predominating) the effect produced is extremely picturesque, and it is heightened by the handsome memorial lighthouse standing on a rock in the centre of the town, a landmark visible for many miles around. But one of the most interesting features of Pisagua is the nitrate railway, which commencing at the water's edge rises by inclined planes until it reaches the ridge of lofty mountains forming the coast line and, disappearing over the summit, afterwards comes into sight again, and gradually climbing upwards emerges again into view upon the still loftier range behind, and ultimately disappears through a cutting at the very top of the range and proceeds on its course to the nitrate fields beyond. The line is a specimen of engineering skill, and judging from the number of trains passing to and fro, the nitrate trade of the port of Pisagua must be a considerable one.

A run of six hours in a heavily rolling sea brought us next to Arica, the last of the Chilian ports, where we lay for the night; and the following day being Sunday many of the inhabitants availed themselves of the opportunity to spend the morning on board the "Mendoza," a practice very general along the coast, the vessels on their arrival being frequently boarded by numbers of people, male and female who, without having any business or other connection with either the ship or its passengers, make themselves quite at home, stroll about the decks, look into the

cabins, strum upon the piano in the saloon, and generally enjoy themselves in their own way, not unfrequently to the discomfort of the passengers on board. No effort is made to stop the practice although the captains and officers generally disapprove of it; but upon my suggesting that a small charge made by the Steamboat Companies for each visitor might help to diminish it I learned that at some of the Peruvian ports the captain of the port levied a fee of a dollar for every person going on board, a Custom House officer being always on duty at the gangway to collect it; and that at these places there were very few visitors in consequence.

Our visitors at Arica did not have what our Transatlantic friends call a good time on this particular occasion, for the ship was rolling heavily the whole day; and two gentlemen who had brought a party of young ladies evidently specially dressed for the outing, had to take them on shore again earlier than they had intended, for after they had walked round and inspected the contents of such cabins as were open, and had favoured us with some very crude performances upon the pianoforte, the young ladies found the saloon somewhat close and began to long for fresh air, and some of them not having brought their sea-legs with them made hasty rushes to the side, so that it was thought advisable under the circumstances to make for the shore again without delay.

Not having seen any vegetation on the coast since leaving Coquimbo it was quite a pleasant change to see a fertile plain lying near to Arica, and on going into the town itself to find a pretty little Plaza adorned with flowering plants and shady trees. Among the former were noticeable three varieties of the Datura, white, yellow and purple, the large and handsome flowers hanging down in such numbers as to produce a most beautiful effect, while among the latter the pimento with its graceful drooping bunches of coral-like seed was largely represented.

Arica, though a small place (being practically only the port of the more important town of Tacna lying forty miles inland and connected by a railway over which one train runs daily in each direction) compares very favourably with the other towns on the coast, with its handsome little Custom House, somewhat imposing iron church, and well-built barracks and offices.

It originally belonged to Peru, and played an important but sad part in the war of 1879-80, for it was the scene of a disaster happily not frequently paralleled even in South American warfare. Lying immediately to the south of the town is a bold mass of rock many hundred feet in height, jutting out into the sea and forming really the end of the mountain range which marks the coast line to this point; it is called the Morro and was used by the Peruvians, as it is now by the Chilians, as a fortress—resembling

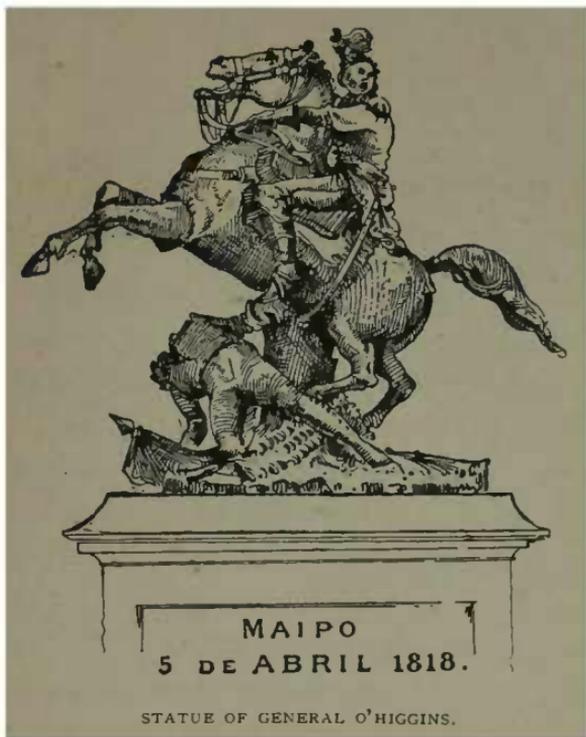
somewhat a miniature Gibraltar, save that it is easily accessible in the rear. The Morro was, at the time of the occurrence referred to, held by several hundred Peruvian soldiers, but the Chilians stormed the height from the land side and, charging the enemy, literally drove those whom they did not kill over the edge of the cliff, whence they fell upon the jagged rocks below, to die a most horrible and painful death. At least 300 men are said to have thus perished, and burial being out of the question petroleum was ultimately poured over the bodies and they were thus consumed.

A considerable number of troops were garrisoned at Arica at the time of our visit; they looked a rough, hardy body of men, suitable to the climate and the work. Their uniform was of brown holland, and no superfluous expense had been incurred, for as denoting the arm of the service to which they belonged two crossed cannon were depicted in ordinary writing ink upon their sleeves and caps; while I was much amused at a sentry outside the barracks upon whose trousers was the mark "40 yards" in a prominent position and bold letters.

We lay at Arica until late in the afternoon, the heat being intense and the ship rolling heavily the whole time; but we were repaid for these inconveniences by the fine views which we had of the snowy peaks of the inner range of the Andes,

although the "Misti" volcano, which is also visible from here, did not condescend to show itself on this occasion.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE REVOLUTION IN CHILI

IN the course of enquiries which I made upon the subject, no less than five different causes were assigned as having given rise to the Revolution in Chili ; but the actual causes I believe to be two only : the one the Government interference with the right of voting, the other the right of a President to nominate his successor.

According to the Constitution, every Chilian who has not committed any legal offence, or been convicted of any crime or misdemeanour, is entitled to a vote in the election of delegates to Congress ; but it is said that, acting probably upon instructions, the

Government officials by whom the registers of voters are prepared have for a long time past so misapplied the law as to exclude upon the most trivial and vexatious grounds all persons whose views have been supposed to be contrary to those of the Government, or who were known to be within the influence of members of the Opposition party. It is also said, and I have reason to believe with truth, that they have even gone so far as to produce false witnesses in support of their objections, and strong measures have for a long time been necessary on the part of the Opposition in order to secure even the shadow of equity in some of the northern districts, where the actions of the Government party were most freely discussed and called in question. This was undoubtedly a grievance which warranted determined action, unless the country had been prepared to accept the President as a dictator and give up all privileges without a struggle; and no one can blame the Opposition for encouraging the people to assert their rights.

The second cause of the difficulties was the question which had been raised as to the right of the President to nominate his successor. This course was not contrary to the Constitution, and had indeed been adopted by former Presidents; but Balmaceda, although a man of ability and intelligence, was never popular nor had he gained either the respect or support which was accorded to his predecessors; and

when he announced his attention of nominating as his successor San Fuentes, an equally unpopular man, Congress took the general question into consideration, and passed an Act making such nominations unconstitutional in the future. Balmaceda declined to ratify and sign this Act, and thereupon Congress refused to vote supplies; thus creating a deadlock which lasted for a certain time, until Balmaceda stated his intention to confirm the Bill; but as at the same time he sent out a private circular to the *Intendentes* of the principal towns instructing them to support San Fuentes, and as in other ways he was gradually assuming the rôle of Dictator, it became evident that a crisis was approaching.

The Opposition party, which numbers many of the richest and most influential men in Chili, had long anticipated such a situation, and in the action which they took they had with them the sympathies of the majority of the native population, most, if not all, of the foreign residents, and last, but not least, of the Navy, upon which arm they relied for the material assistance to be rendered in the event of a peaceful solution of the difficulties becoming impossible. Of funds they had no lack, for among their leaders were wealthy men, ready to help in carrying on the struggle, and they knew that others would be forthcoming when the time arrived to assist in what they considered the patriotic task that had been undertaken.

The crisis arrived sooner than had been anticipated, for Balmaceda, although not popular, had naturally many supporters especially among those who held office upon his appointment, and was well-informed as to what was going on; while, being undoubtedly a man of intelligence, he had himself laid his plans to meet any hostile movement on the part of the Opposition. In view, therefore, of the disaffection of the navy, he issued orders for the vessels lying at Valparaiso to proceed to sea, in order to remove both officers and men for a time from the influence of the Opposition. The Opposition, however, received an intimation of what was coming, and a brief council having been held, it was decided that rather than be placed in the wrong, as they would have been had the navy declined to obey the orders of the Government, the best course would be to precipitate matters and take possession of the fleet before the orders were received. This was accordingly done, and the vessels steamed out to sea thus throwing down the gauntlet and commencing the unfortunate series of events which have done serious harm to the commerce and credit of the country, whatever may be their immediate and ultimate political effect and influence.

The movement has generally been spoken of as the "Chilian Revolution," and undoubtedly the action of the navy cannot be considered other than a revolt against the constituted authorities; but the revolution-

ists themselves did not look upon the matter in this light, and they spoke of themselves, and were spoken of by their sympathisers and supporters as the "Opposition." Call them what one will, however, or sympathise with them as much as one may, there can be no doubt that a civil war was brought about, in which relations holding different political views met in conflict and shed one another's blood.

And after all what has been gained? Chili has been, it is true, in the past a model Republic, and the prudence and consistency of its Government has done much to promote the prosperity to which it has attained; but having before us the past history of other South American Republics, and bearing in mind the characteristics of the people, there can be little doubt that whatever may have been the reasons assigned for the outbreak, one of them was to be found in the desire for power and office on the part of those who under the existing régime were unable to obtain them. In other words the "outs" wanted to be "in," and it is to be assumed that in Chili, as in the neighbouring Republics, the game is worth the candle. The office of President of a South American Republic is simply a splendid opportunity for amassing a fortune, and very few who have held this office have failed to avail themselves of the opportunity, while there are pickings to be made out of all the Government appointments, and why (the Opposition no doubt argued) should these be

reserved for one family or one set of men to the exclusion of others, equally deserving and patriotic?

Coming back, however, to the circumstances of the Revolution, the Opposition having thrown down the gauntlet to the Government, the navy proceeded northwards (for it is from the northern ports that the larger portion of the country's revenues are obtained) and after sundry small skirmishes at other ports, approached Iquique, where, in the meantime, their party had not been idle, having successfully held the Custom House against the Government troops, as described elsewhere.

On the 19th February the navy bombarded the town, and ultimately took possession of it, and notwithstanding the promise of three days' sack, which had been made by the commander of the Government forces as an inducement to his troops, these were rapidly driven back from the town. Then followed the battle of Pozo Almonte on March 7th, when the Opposition with about 1,000 men engaged the Government troops numbering 3,000, and after some terrible fighting utterly routed them, causing them to retire towards Camina, whence they crossed the Andes, and made their way southwards to reunite their scattered forces. Some terrible atrocities are said to have been committed by the Opposition soldiers on this occasion, but these are unfortunately the inevitable accompaniments of such occurrences in all parts of the world.

The Opposition having obtained possession of Iquique, proceeded to make sure of the ports of Taltal and Antofagasta, thus securing to themselves the export duties and revenues of the richest provinces of the Republic, for of a total 70,000,000 soles derived from export duties in Chili in 1890, no less than 25,000,000 soles came from the province of Iquique alone.

Having thus the sinews of war they proceeded to take one port after another and, having secured Arica and thus the whole of the province of Tarapaca, they proceeded southwards until they reached Caldera, beyond which they had not gone at the time of my visit. But what they most wanted were arms; men were coming in from all parts to join the army being raised for the purpose of advancing upon Santiago; and out of 12,000 which the Opposition leaders considered a sufficient number, 7,000 had already been enrolled, and were in course of training, principally in the desert behind Antofagasta, where the hard marching in the sand and sun was considered to be an excellent preparation for the work to be accomplished; but even those already enrolled could not be supplied with arms, for considerable difficulty had been experienced in placing an order; and although 16,000 Remingtons were expected from the United States, there appeared to be some doubt as to when they would arrive.

Later on, while in Peru, I heard of the adventure of the "Itata" and the action taken against the Chilian

agent, Senor R. Trumbull, for having shipped on board the schooner "Robert and Minnie" large quantities of arms and ammunition, which were afterwards transferred to the "Itata" to be convoyed by the cruiser "Esmeralda" to Iquique, but I did not hear whether the shipment reached its destination or not. I did not quite understand, nor did others with whom I came in contact, upon what grounds the United States Government intervened; but this matter has, I find, been so fully discussed by the English press that I need not allude further to it.

Suffice it to say that the longer the Opposition had to wait for arms the longer would the struggle have been continued; for so long as they remained in the northern provinces and had the command of the men-of-war then in their hands, it was quite impossible for the Government to interfere materially with them; and so long as they collected the export duties of these northern ports they could afford to wait, until by some means or other they could obtain sufficient arms and ammunition. Meantime their soldiers were drilling and preparing for the advance which it was understood would probably be first upon Coquimbo, and afterwards upon Santiago, and possibly also Valparaiso, although the leaders of the Opposition naturally desired if possible to spare the latter city, most of them being owners of considerable property there. But having once put their shoulder to the wheel, even this consideration was not likely to deter

them, for it had become "war to the knife," and given the necessary arms, there was no doubt that the Government forces, pressed from all quarters and all nationalities, would stand but little chance against the Opposition army, comprising as it did the flower of the best Chilean families animated by a spirit of patriotism which no enforced levies could withstand.

Besides this, there can be no doubt that the Opposition had the sympathies of the country at large, at least 70 or 80 per cent. being known to be in favour of the movement; and their success was sure to be hailed with satisfaction, even in the capital itself.

And what would become of the President?

He doubtless expected assassination for, when I was in Santiago he was practically a self-made prisoner in the Mint, afraid to stir abroad, and in constant anticipation of treachery at home. Report said that all his food was prepared by his mother, who was his constant attendant; and although he certainly did open the Congress in person, his progress through the streets of the city was anything but a triumphant one, for the public were excluded altogether from the streets through which he passed, and were kept back the distance of a block by the soldiers; while so vigilant and suspicious were his body-guard, that an unfortunate photographer having placed his camera on the sill of an upper window for the purpose of taking a view, had it at once perforated by bullets,

and was himself injured, the soldiers apparently having taken the harmless instrument to be an infernal machine.

Under such circumstances it may be said why did not the President make his escape? I believe that he was personally a brave man, and, as has been seen, he maintained his position to the end regardless of consequences; but he doubtless knew, as I did, that there were people on the look-out for him in all directions; and in the Andes—which route would probably have been taken if he had attempted to escape—a number of young men had been, and were then, waiting under various disguises, determined that he should not get through alive; but apart from this, the climate would at the time have rendered the attempt difficult if not almost impossible, for the Andes were clothed in their winter garments, the snow was deep and the cold intense.

This then was the position of the President, and what was that of the country under the existing state of affairs?

The business of the important port of Valparaiso was practically paralysed; many of its leading merchants and bankers had been thrown into prison, the private banks were closed, more than one of the best mercantile houses were in enforced liquidation, the value of the dollar had fallen to 15d., there was an absolute want of confidence, and depression reigned on all sides; while Santiago, the capital, usually a

bright and cheerful city, full of life and movement, was insufferably dull. All amusements had ceased, and streets which in the afternoon are generally crowded with the carriages of ladies shopping or taking the air, were almost deserted. By Government orders the clubs had all been closed, telegraphic and telephonic communications had been stopped, newspapers had been suppressed, and in some cases the editors and publishers have been imprisoned, while spies watched the movements of every prominent resident, and every stranger in the city.

Countless too, had been the indignities and degradations to which inoffensive citizens had been subjected ! It were impossible for me to cite all the authentic cases which came under my notice, quite apart from those which were mentioned to me by third parties ; but as specimens I may mention that of Doña Edwardes, an aged lady of Valparaiso, very wealthy and equally charitable and beloved, the mother of one of the principal bankers and richest men in the country, who on several occasions had the privacy of her bedroom invaded at night by soldiers, with a view to extorting from her some information as to the whereabouts of her son, who was one of the chief members of the Opposition party. A similar case is that of Doña Walker Martinez, of Santiago, whose bed was surrounded by soldiery, and from whose custody was taken her grandson, fourteen years of age, who was removed to prison and flogged

so that he might divulge the hiding-place of his father, Don Juan Walker Martinez, also a prominent member of the same party.

Neither sex nor age were spared by Balmaceda and his myrmidons. Señor Besa, a gentleman seventy-nine years of age, the head of a well-known and old-established mercantile house in Valparaiso, was summoned to Santiago and ordered to remain there; but made his escape disguised as a countryman, and in this disguise assisted in driving a herd of cattle down to the seashore (walking the whole distance, a journey of several days), whence he was able to get away on a steamer to Cállao. The manager of the firm received a similar summons and was imprisoned for fifty-three days, and ultimately the Government ordered an enforced liquidation of the business, which was being carried out at the time of my visit. The offence of both these gentlemen was that they were of the Opposition party, and sympathized with the Revolutionary movement.

Another case of the kind came under my notice at Santiago, where I was introduced on the platform of the Railway Station to a Valparaiso gentleman who had in like manner been summoned to the capital and ordered to remain there. He had already been there some two months, and in the meantime his business was literally going to the dogs. I suggested to him in a jocular way that he might jump into the train by which I was at the time leaving; but he

assured me that he was at all times, and at that moment, closely watched, and that the President would only be too glad for him to make the attempt, as it would give him an excuse for proceeding to more severe measures.

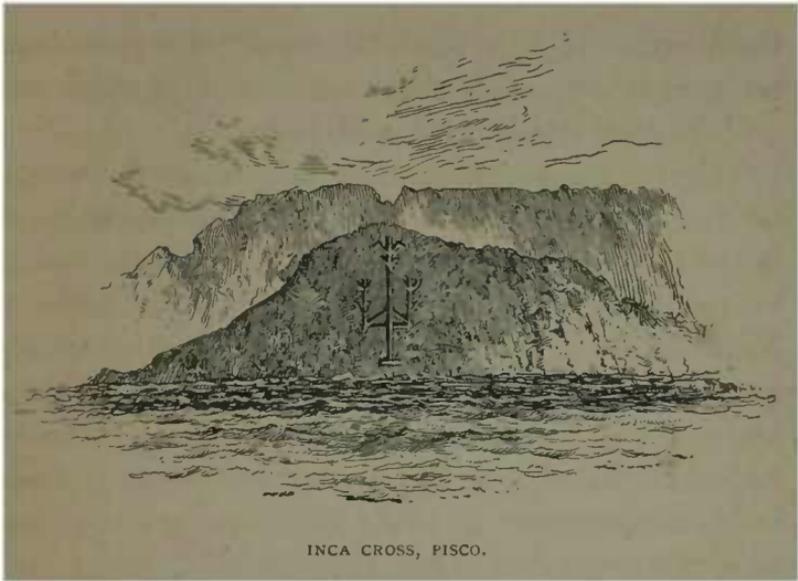
Such a list might be extended almost indefinitely ; Robbery, confiscation, wrongfully estreated bail, treachery, imprisonment and flogging of innocent men and youths, indignities of all kinds, and many acts bordering closely upon murder—these were the acts instigated and countenanced by a President chosen by the people to maintain the integrity of their Constitution, to protect their interests, their property and their lives.

And by whom was this President supported in these measures? By his own family, his own set, and the officials of his own appointment, but not by the people ! As far as I could judge, the mercantile and trading classes almost to a man were against him ; the working classes and peasantry probably knew little of the merits of the case, and possibly cared less, but they could see for themselves that those whom they had been accustomed to look up to as men of influence and position were with the Opposition, and their sympathies went with them. Out of Santiago the President had apparently few, if any, supporters save officials ; and his army, raised as it were by force from among all sorts and conditions of men, would just as soon have served one side as

the other, or in all probability would only have been too glad to get out of their uniforms altogether and go back to their peaceful avocations.

The closing scenes of the Revolution have now been enacted, and the details are doubtless so fresh in the memory of my readers that it is unnecessary for me to refer to them at any length. The battle at Viña del Mar, the entry of the Opposition Army into Valparaiso, the excesses committed in Santiago and the flight of Balmaceda, constitute, it is to be hoped, the last act of this most unfortunate and sad episode in the history of an otherwise peaceful and progressive country; but the financial, social, and commercial prosperity of Chili must have been materially prejudiced, and the effects of the Revolution will doubtless be felt for many years to come.





CHAPTER XV.

FROM CHILI TO PERU.

UPON leaving Arica the features of the scenery entirely changed, the lofty mountains having terminated with the "Morro," and the coast line, at first low and sandy, gradually rising and showing a volcanic formation. As the coast had changed its character so also had the ocean for, instead of the moderate or calm seas of the previous few days, we had to contend with a heavy and continuous roll, which necessitated the fiddles being brought out and fixed to the tables, and confined many of the passengers to their cabins. This rolling motion continues all along the Peruvian coast, and makes the

discharge of cargo and the embarkation of passengers most difficult and dangerous.

We arrived at the first port—Mollendo—early in the morning, and the Company's buoy being at the time in use by another vessel we had to trust to our anchor only, the result being that until the following afternoon we lay broadside on to the heavy swell which always rolls in here and makes life on board ship a perfect misery, upsetting the livers and the tempers of officers and passengers alike. But there was no help for it, as the weather had for some days been so rough that the lighters which had taken cargo from the various ships lying there had been unable to land it, and until they had done so they were not available for us; fortunately they were able to discharge in the course of the day, or we might have had to wait longer at this most inconvenient port. As it was, we had to carry on the greater part of the cargo which should have been landed here. Why a town should ever have been thus located seemed to me a mystery; but on making enquiries I found that, as is not unusual in these parts, as elsewhere, jobbery had something to do with the matter; that the original port of Arequipa was Islay, and not Mollendo, and that the former place had been deserted and the latter established in order that the line of railway to the inland town might pass through a certain district in which somebody was interested.

Mollendo however, notwithstanding its inaccessible position, its rocks and dangerous landing, is not wanting in picturesque elements, while its setting in a multi-coloured sandy plain, at the foot of undulating hills, clothed in bright green, makes it quite pleasant to look upon to those coming from the barren and rocky coasts of Chili.

Soon after leaving Mollendo we passed Islay, the deserted, which in the clear light of the setting sun presented a most singular effect, reminding me somewhat of the ruins of ancient Rome; the houses, of which many had been built of *adobes*, standing in ruins on either side of the deserted streets, the forsaken cemetery outside the town, and the general air of desolation produced a feeling of sadness which did not wear off till the place was lost to view in the darkness, which in these latitudes follows almost immediately upon the sunset.

Our next ports were Quilca and Lomas, both mere villages unworthy of note save as shipping places for cattle. At the former we shipped a large number of oxen, which were hoisted on board by their horns; the method seems cruel, but the utter absence of feeling towards dumb animals is a characteristic of all the South American native races. I have seen horses with their hoofs torn and bleeding, thrashed up precipitous hills and over wretchedly paved roads regardless of the suffering which they showed only too plainly; oxen with open sores which served as useful

spots upon which to goad them, and other similar scenes which produced in me a feeling of sickness and disgust, but which by these half-civilized races were taken quite as every-day occurrences, and excited neither attention nor remark.

Beyond Lomas the character of the coast again altered and the rocks rose in sand-covered terraces, sometimes eight and ten in number, the summits apparently flat table-land, increasing in height as we approached Pisco, our next port. Seals and birds became more numerous, and the water was frequently black with the immense flocks of pelicans which settled down upon it—for we were approaching the celebrated guano islands, another fertile source of revenue to Peru. To some of these we passed quite close, and were able distinctly to see the gradually increasing deposits, but the Chincha Islands, which have produced the largest output, we only saw in the distance. These having been to a great extent exhausted are not now worked and, as after such disturbance as is necessarily caused by the presence of a number of ships and crowds of men, it is some time before the birds return to their haunts, many years must elapse before they can again be utilised ; in the meantime the islands are carefully watched, and all access strictly prohibited.

Besides the islands at this point there are many others off the Peruvian coast some of which are still being worked, but the recent heavy rains, practically

unprecedented in these latitudes, had done considerable damage to the guano fields, as they had to the sugar and cotton crops on the mainland. For during the early months of 1891 the rains were heavier than have ever been known in Peru, and the injury done in all directions to crops and property had been considerable. Rains are however expected once in every seven years, the profits of the remaining six more than compensating for the loss in the seventh, for in some districts nature is so prolific that two crops are gathered in each year.

But we were approaching Pisco, a picturesque town as seen from the sea, lying as it does on a beautiful fertile plain and having a fine iron pier about half a mile in length, and two handsome churches, in size quite out of proportion to the town itself. Upon closer inspection, however, the town presents a somewhat dilapidated appearance, the churches which look so handsome from a distance being in a very poor state of repair, a condition which is shared by most of the houses.

But Pisco, besides being the port for the inland town of Yca, has a reputation of its own, being the seat of the manufacture of the grape spirit which bears its name and which is shipped in large quantities in quaint Etruscan looking earthenware vases, both for home and foreign consumption; the best quality is known as "Italia" and is a most agreeable stimulant.

We were here, too, in the heart of the land of the Incas, of whose beneficent and comparatively enlightened rule many interesting relics are found in the neighbourhood, not the least interesting being the landmark known as the "Inca's Cross," carved on the face of a rock in the vicinity of the town.

The origin and object of this landmark (if I may so call it) are now unknown; but there it remains as distinct as when first cut, the absence of vegetation and the action of the wind preserving it without any human aid, although I must say that it resembles a candelabrum with three branches rather than a cross. The centre upright is about 300 feet in height, and the two side branches each about 150 feet, but the ornamentation is not quite identical in these latter. The fact that the cross faces the Chincha Islands can have nothing to do with its existence, as I presume that the use of guano was not known to the Incas, who certainly had no sulphuric acid with which to dissolve it; nor was it actually necessary as a landmark at a spot where many bold headlands and outlying rocks would have better answered the purpose; but there it is, and no one with whom I came into contact could give me any information about it, except that it had always been there, and that no steps have ever been made to preserve it.

The coast continued fertile to Callao, varied with occasional rocks, among the latter being that known as "Friar's Rock" at the small port of Cerro Azul, a

singular formation having in the distance the exact appearance of a gigantic bishop in mitre and gown raising his arms as if in the act of pronouncing a benediction. Fine views, too, of the distant Andes were from time to time obtained, but the sea kept up its continuous roll, and it was a relief to many on board the "Mendoza" when she put into the port of Callao, after a run of thirteen days from Valparaíso. The only drawback to the satisfaction of some was that she was three days late, thus causing those who wished to proceed northward to lose the connecting steamer; but this is apparently the rule rather than the exception on the Pacific Coast of South America.

I must say, however, that we had been very comfortable on board the "Mendoza," and had received great attention from all the officers and members of the staff with whom we had come into contact. My thanks are especially due to Captain Hay, a typical Englishman and a capital navigator, from whom I received much interesting and valuable information as to the various places at which we put in, and the objects which we passed. Under the exceptional circumstances of the voyage, his duties were not always agreeable, and his position was an embarrassing one; but he met all the annoyances and inconveniences with a hearty good nature, which infused itself into those around him, and rendered most agreeable what might otherwise have been a wearisome trip.

We arrived at Callao early in the morning, and for once were able to land upon a quay without the unpleasant intervention of the usual rowing boat, for Callao is provided with extensive and commodious docks. But although we escaped the small boats, we did not evade the "*fleteros*" or boatmen, for when the concession for the docks was under consideration, a cry was raised that the numerous boatmen of the port would lose their means of livelihood if passengers were landed direct upon the quays, and it was accordingly arranged that they alone should have the privilege of transporting luggage between the docks and the railway stations; the consequence being that it costs as much to get a portmanteau a few hundred yards as it would have done to convey half-a-dozen boxes from a vessel lying half-a-mile out.

The "*fletero*" himself condescendingly takes your dressing-bag, and hands over the heavier articles to his subordinates, who carry them as far as the dock gates, where a carman is brought into requisition to take them less than a hundred yards to the station, and the whole lot of them (about a man to each article of baggage) form a procession with the traveller, their combined remuneration amounting to a most extortionate and heavy tax upon his purse and good humour. Possibly those who know how things are done in Callao get off differently, but to those visiting the place for the first time the arrangements are both costly and vexatious.

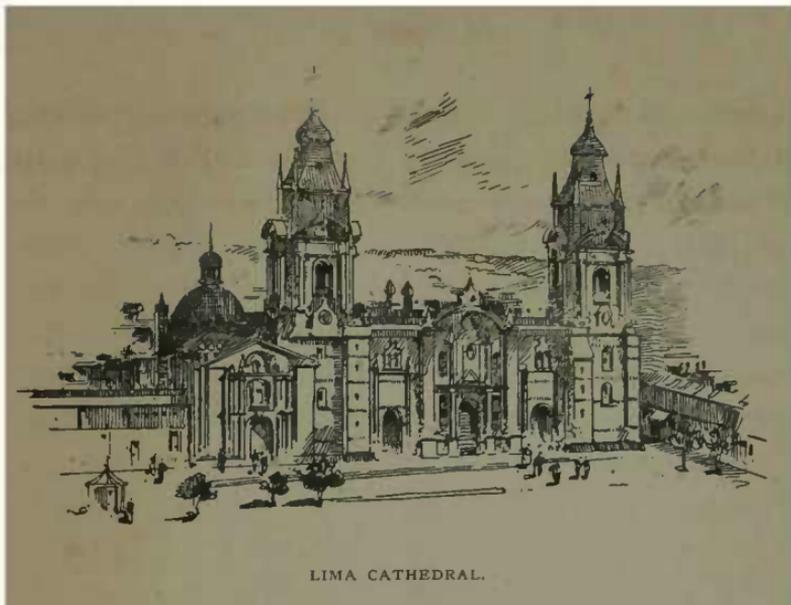
Callao is a large and busy place, with a very mixed, and as far as I could judge, a very demoralised and low-class population. I had occasion to spend several hours there on the day of my arrival and again on that of my departure, and during my stay in Lima I also paid two visits to the place, and I must say that I saw more drunkenness and immorality there than in any other town in South America.

The buildings consisting mostly of ground floor only (except just in the commercial portion near the docks) the town covers a large area, and its importance as a port is shown by the large number of factories, timber yards, and engineers' workshops, and also by the ship chandlery stores, bars, saloons and other drinking places with which it abounds; but it must be anything but a sweet and agreeable place of residence, and I was not surprised to hear that the merchants, shipping- and Customs- agents and others who could afford it, had their homes in Lima, and travelled backwards and forwards daily to their places of business.

The Customs warehouses in Callao are, however, well worthy of a visit from those who take an interest in such matters, and who can manage to secure admittance, which is by no means easy. They are situated within the walls of the castle or former fortifications, and the cleanliness and order maintained in the various departments, and the careful

classification and arrangement of the goods deposited, might serve as an example to many larger and more important places of the kind elsewhere.





CHAPTER XVI.

LIMA.

THERE are two lines of railway from the port of Callao to the city of Lima, the one known as the "English" and the other as the "Central" line, the journey by the latter being the more interesting as it skirts the bay and afterwards the River Rimac, and lands the traveller at the Desamparados Station in the centre of the capital and in the immediate neighbourhood of the principal square.

In either case the journey is but a short one, and the distance from the station to the hotel is but a few minutes. I chose the "Hotel de France et Angleterre," a rambling place consisting of two or three

blocks of buildings with the windows and doors opening on to covered galleries overlooking the interior courtyards, or "*Patios*." The principal *patio* serves as a dining hall, and it is agreeable enough to take one's meals in the open air, especially when, as here, the viands provided are good ; but beyond this the hotel has little to recommend it, the furnishing being of a very inferior description and the sanitary arrangements anything but perfect. I was afterwards informed that the "Hotel Maury" is to be preferred in these respects, and should I again visit Lima I should give it a trial ; for, whether it was due to bad drainage or to the climate, Lima was the only place at which, during the whole of my tour, I felt out of sorts. The climate may have had something to do with it, for it is certainly not an agreeable one, and although it is said never to rain in Lima, the thick mist which falls every evening very closely resembles fine rain, and is in my opinion much more dangerous ; for one cannot very well put up an umbrella, nor wear an overcoat with comfort, and fever or ague is very likely to result from the insidious, although almost imperceptible, dampness.

A heavy rain would scarcely be appreciated in Lima, for the houses are constructed of *adobes* which do not well withstand moisture, while the upper floors, when such exist, are of "*tabique*" which consists of a framework of wood filled in and plastered with mud. Most of the buildings, however,

are of ground floor only, except in the centre of the town, where ground is most expensive and the requirements of trade or other circumstances have led to the addition of an upper storey ; but where these upper stories exist they add materially to the picturesque character of the buildings, for they are almost invariably provided with enclosed balconies which project some distance over the pathways, many of them being constructed of an apparently hard wood, and either from age or artificial colouring presenting the appearance of oak, while their fanciful carvings and latticed windows give the houses a quaint and mediæval appearance.

Taken as a whole the city looks somewhat second rate, and many of the houses and more especially the churches and public buildings seem to be sadly in want of repair. The world-renowned Cathedral has a particularly shabby appearance both outside and inside, and the iron crosses on its towers being much out of perpendicular, the general effect produced is not a favourable one. But if the outsides of the churches look shabby, what shall be said of the insides, adorned as they are with the most hideous and tawdry figures I have ever seen in such places ? The figures themselves, carved in wood and painted in the most gaudy colours, are in many instances simply ridiculous, and the tinsel and cut paper ornaments with which they are bedecked match with the threadbare altar coverings, with borders of

cheap lace sometimes over strips of coloured glazed calico or other materials of the cheapest and commonest description. I cannot refrain from alluding to one dreadful caricature of the Saviour sinking under the weight of the cross, his head provided with hair of dyed tow, which hung down over his face and was plentifully bedecked with *yellow marguerites!*

There are, however, some good buildings in Lima, and among them the Hospital, under the charge of Sisters of Mercy ; this place is not only handsome in appearance, but it is fitted up in the most perfect manner, and the cleanliness which prevails shows the care and attention which is bestowed upon it by the Sisters who devote themselves to the charitable and self-sacrificing work carried on within its walls. The buildings are said to contain no less than seven hundred beds, and with such a climate I was not surprised to hear that consumption was one of the principal diseases which helped to fill them.

Facing the Cathedral is the Grand Plaza, having on two sides covered arcades similar to those described at Santiago, where the principal retail stores are to be found, plentifully supplied with last year's European fashions and interspersed with the shops of money changers and vendors of cheap jewellery ; while on the fourth side are the Government buildings replacing those destroyed by fire some years ago. From this square run the principal streets, and there is a circumstance connected with the nomenclature of

the thoroughfares of Lima which makes it a most puzzling place for a stranger to find his way about in.

The city is constructed on the old Spanish block system, being laid out in squares, and originally each of the four streets which surrounded a square had a separate name, the consequence being that in a street of ten blocks there were no less than ten names to be remembered. The obvious inconvenience of this arrangement induced the municipal authorities some years since to adopt the more sensible plan of giving every street one name only, which was duly affixed to the walls of the houses at either end; but the inhabitants prefer to adhere to the old system, and thus if you make enquiries as to the location of a certain shop you learn that it is, say, in "Coca" Street for which you search in vain, until you ultimately find out that this street is a part of that now called "Carabaya." The plans of Lima, therefore, contain two sets of names, and the result frequently is confusion.

Like all the other principal South American towns, and for the matter of that I think I may safely say all the principal towns of the world, Lima is well provided with tramcars; but the difficulty as regards small change which presents itself in Buenos Ayres and Valparaiso does not arise here, for Peru is a "silver" country, and if anything there is too much of this metal about. Before the war with Chili paper money was also current, but when the paper sole

(the normal value of which was three shillings) had come down until it was worth about one penny, the authorities realised that the *reductio ad absurdum* had been reached and withdrew the paper altogether, falling back upon the precious metal which had originally tempted their Spanish progenitors to the country and had led to the ruin and extermination of the Incas ; and which is to be obtained in such plenty within the mountain ranges of this coast. And they have not stinted the supply, for the sole is as large as the recently introduced and most inconvenient double florin, and is minted in large quantities.

I had occasion to draw from the bank here a sum of £150, and upon presentation of my little slip of paper in the form of a draft the paying cashier began emptying silver coins on to the counter from a large bag while I began to wonder what I should do with the money when I had it. He next took a wooden tray with a rim about two inches high on three of its sides and began counting out the coins and putting them up in piles of twenty until he had fifty such piles, when he shot them out on to the counter before me. As I had to make a call after leaving the bank I felt that even if I could manage to get the one thousand pieces of plate into my pockets, which seemed to me doubtful, I should present a somewhat extraordinary and weighed down appearance and I enquired if it were not possible to have the money in some more commodious form, but receiving a reply

in the negative I made the best of the business and proceeded in turn to count out the coins. It had taken the cashier some minutes to do this, but it took me still longer, and when the work was accomplished I found that the entire operation had consumed about ten minutes and that my hands looked as if they had been blackleaded, for the metal is soft and each coin had left its mark upon me. However the job was over and upon my request the cashier kindly furnished me with a bag in which to carry off the spoil ; I have the bag still, and its dimensions are sixteen inches deep by twelve inches broad.

While engaged in this important transaction in silver I had been observant of the actions of the numerous persons who came into the bank either to pay in or withdraw money, and I noticed that they carried these bags on their shoulders (sometimes one on each) ; but as I scarcely saw my way to doing this, I decided to see whether the manager could assist me, and carted off my bag accordingly to his room, where I was able to obtain relief in the form of a cheque for a portion of the amount which I had to pay at the shipping office ; the balance however was still pretty heavy and was a source of anxiety to me for several weeks until I had crossed the Isthmus of Panama, for I could only carry about a small portion at a time, and as payments from Lima northwards could only be made in silver it was always necessary

to have a supply of these coins in my pocket, while I was always doubtful as to the safety of those which I had left at the hotel or in my cabin, as the case might be.

There was one thing, however, which helped me to reduce the stock rapidly, and that was the high prices charged in Lima: three soles (nine shillings) for a bottle of ordinary claret, and one sole (three shillings) for a bottle of Bass's pale ale were among the charges at the "Hotel de France et Angleterre;" and generally speaking I found Lima very much like Monte Video in this respect, and came to the conclusion that with English bank notes or sovereigns in one's pocket a country where the currency was paper and the premium on gold a high one was to be preferred.

Yet business was dull in Lima and everybody was complaining, for the country has not yet got over the effects of the war with Chili, and it will be some time before things are upon a sound and satisfactory footing. Here as in the other cities of the continent I found that there was little if any amusement to be had; the theatres closed because the people had no money to spend and did not patronise them, and impresarios who ventured to give things a trial going away with heavy hearts and empty pockets; and singularly enough the only amusement offering at the time in Lima was a variety entertainment provided by a troupe of English and American artistes whose clever performances certainly merited better

support than they received. The party had put up at the "Hotel de France et Angleterre," and we thus had an opportunity of seeing in the garb of ordinary mortals the Champion Bicycle Rider with his wife and daughter, the marvellous Foot Equilibrist and the unrivalled performers upon the Horizontal Bar, not to speak of the world-renowned performers on the Flying Trapeze, the Lion Tamer, and the wife of the Impresario himself, a lady of about thirty, who appeared on the platform on the evening when we were present as "Miss _____ a native of Australia, fourteen years of age, who will perform on the zither on this occasion only."

I had some conversation with the manager, and found that the troupe had been having a bad time of it. It had been organised to make the tour of South America, and commenced in the Brazils immediately after the Revolution, next proceeding to the River Plate and arriving at Buenos Ayres just as the Revolution occurred there. They then made for Chili, which they reached in time for a third Revolution; were ordered out of Valparaiso, and proceeded to Peru, where they performed to half-empty houses; and, as the manager informed me, it would take them three years to make up the money they had already lost in the venture. They were leaving for Guayaquil, Panama, and intermediate towns, and contemplated extending their trip to Central America, where I hope better luck attended them; for, as they gave us

the only opportunity which presented itself in South America of breaking the monotony of hotel life by a little very innocent amusement, I should be ungrateful if I did not wish them well.

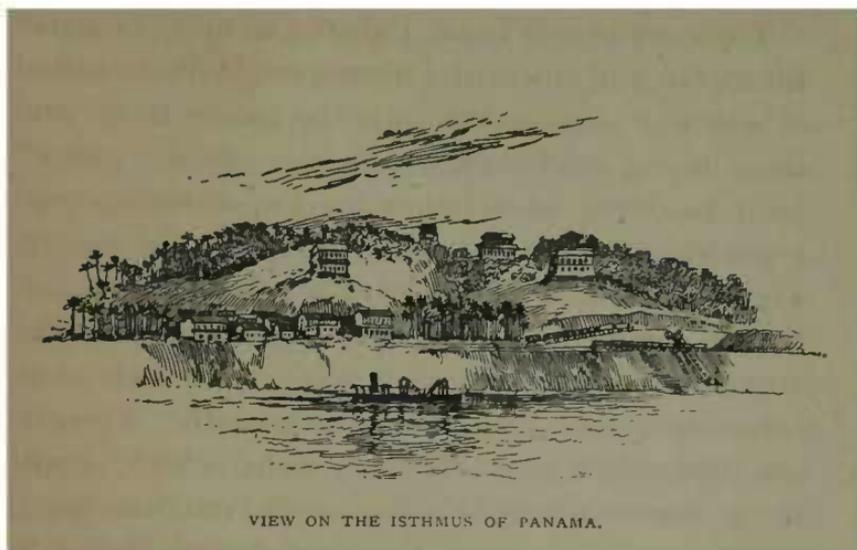
Their performance brings to my mind the fire brigades of Lima ; for as we were leaving the theatre we heard the clang of a bell in a building opposite, and noticed an unwonted excitement in the neighbourhood. Soon we observed men hurrying along, and moving in the direction which they took, we passed a station where a party were engaged in getting out a truck of American fire ladders, and having brought it into the street they caught hold of the pole, and away they went at a brisk trot. By this time we had reached the Plaza, and finding that this was on the line of route to the scene of the fire, we took our station there and watched the proceedings. From all directions came parties with hose reels, ladders and other appliances, all drawn by hand, and accompanying them were men carrying lanterns and torches swaying at the end of poles, and others bearing what in the darkness resembled halberds. The swinging lights coming up the various streets, the variety in the costumes worn by the various companies (white riding breeches and coloured sashes appeared to be very much affected by some of them), the antiquity of many of the appliances, and the manner in which all trotted across the Plaza, produced an extraordinary and picturesque effect, which, with

the Portal de Escribanos as a background, resembled a mediæval scene from some well-mounted play rather than an every-day occurrence of the nineteenth century.

Among the favourite resorts on Sundays and feast days are the Exhibition Gardens; which are situated in the outskirts of the town, and are well worthy of a visit; for not only are the grounds extensive and well arranged, provided with seats, kiosks, buildings of various descriptions and more or less artistic merit, band-stands and other adjuncts of such resorts, but there are also good specimens of tropical trees, plants and flowers; and the manner in which all the lawns and flower-beds are sunk below the level of the paths and irrigated by means of small water courses is most interesting.

The population of Lima appears to be very mixed, and contains a large number of Europeans. I did not, however, see many specimens of the female beauty for which it is said to be celebrated—indeed, most of the women about the streets seemed to me rather plain, and the free use of paint and powder, coupled with the funereal garb affected here as in Valparaiso and Santiago, gave them, in my opinion, somewhat of a ghastly look, which was only exceeded by that of the sallow complexioned Indian women, of whom numbers were to be seen on horseback, riding astraddle, with cigarettes in their mouths, and presenting anything but a feminine appearance.

There are also in Lima, Callao, and other Peruvian towns, large numbers of Chinese, originally imported I believe in connection with the guano trade, and these having intermarried with the native "*cholas*" have produced an addition to the already varied types which is certainly not remarkable for beauty. We had several specimens of this mixture on board, both in coming up to Callao and afterwards on the voyage to Panama, and their habits were such as to induce us to give them a very wide berth. There is one thing which we particularly noticed with regard to the women generally of the South American races, and that was their laziness. They do not appear to have any resources or to take interest in anything, not even their children, and their whole time is passed in lolling and lying about, the men even nursing the infants, dressing the children, and performing offices which no European man, even in the humblest and poorest walks of life, would dream of undertaking. The men certainly are excellent and attentive fathers, but the women are the very impersonification of idleness.



CHAPTER XVII.

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA.

ACCORDING to the Company's notices the P.S.N.C. steamer "Santiago" was to leave Callao at ten o'clock in the morning, and it accordingly became necessary for us to rise early in order to get ourselves and our luggage down from Lima before that hour. We were heartily glad when the operation was over and we were comfortably on board; but we need not have hurried ourselves, for the vessel did not start until four o'clock in the afternoon, and at the last moment received orders to call at ports which were not in the advertised itinerary, much to the disgust of ourselves and other passengers bound for Panama, as

it seemed probable that we should miss our connection with the next European steamer and be detained for a week or ten days in that most unsavoury town. We should have preferred one of the vessels of the South American Line, which connect at Panama with the Royal Mail Steamers, but as the Chilian Government and the Opposition had between them captured most of these to serve as transports, and were on the look-out for the few that were still plying in the service of their owners, the experiment was rather a risky one, and we had decided to go by one of the P.S.N.C. Line and proceed to Europe by the next French Mail Steamer.

There is not much to choose between the two lines as regards comfort, for the vessels of both are most conveniently and in many instances luxuriously fitted up, while as regards navigation the captains and principal officers are in both cases English, and the same classes of travellers are to be met with on both lines.

The "Santiago" happened to be one of the finest of the Company's coasting boats, and it is worthy of some description. In all these vessels the deck proper is used for the storage of such perishable merchandise as is not consigned to the hold, and for the accommodation of live stock and second-class passengers, the former being tied up near the bulwarks, while the latter make themselves at home as best they can in the centre, surrounded by their impedimenta and

baggage, among which they spread out their mattresses, if they have such luxuries, or lie down upon their blankets or on the bare boards, if they have not.

Raised above this real deck, upon stanchions, is the first-class accommodation, most of the cabins being so placed that the doors open on to a broad passageway at the side, and thus by leaving doors or windows open the passengers catch the fresh air and breeze (when there is one), a great desideratum in such warm climates. On the "Santiago" each cabin contained two broad berths, a sofa, and two washstands (self-supplying); the fittings were of plated metal, the lighting was by electricity (turned off however at 11 p.m.), and there were electric bells; but the bells did not ring, and upon my mentioning this to one of the officers he told me that they had been obliged to cut off the communications as the native passengers used to amuse themselves (and when in port their friends also) by ringing for the stewards to give them a match, or to ask some trifling question, and frequently without any object at all, except to see how the bells worked. This is quite typical of the usual class of traveller on the coast. But they go even further than this—and when the "Santiago" was first put on the line and exhibited for a few days to all comers at Valparaiso, the visitors unscrewed and took away the plated curtain hooks and hat pegs, and even stole the curtains from the cabin windows.

The handsome saloon and bath-rooms (fitted with marble baths) were on the cabin deck, and above this came the promenade deck, with a most luxurious and very large drawing room, provided with pianoforte and harmonium, and furnished with settees and easy chairs richly upholstered and a Wilton carpet and silk tapestry curtains which would have done credit to a West-end mansion. No doubt the fares charged on this coast are excessively high, and the companies can probably afford to furnish and decorate their first-class accommodation handsomely; but the surroundings are altogether too good for the large majority of the passengers, and to see them lie at full length on the settees, and spit at random upon a carpet which cost at least 7/6 per yard, and in writing at the tables smear the ink over the artistic chenille covers, is most irritating to those who have been brought up and accustomed to some degree of decency.

We had time for a good look round the "Santiago" as she lay at the quay at Callao, but there was much that was interesting to be seen on shore, and not the least so was the arrival of a battalion of infantry, who were to go with us to Payta. The men were of smart appearance, and looked well in their blue trousers, white cotton tunics and red kepis, although it seemed somewhat odd that all their rifles should be encased in red baize covers; I wondered what could be the reason for this, and came to the conclusion

that it was to prevent them from being rusted by the sea air or the evening dews. The usual parting scenes with the women who came to see them off having been enacted, the men were marched on board, to the music of a good band, which played what I presume were national airs, all of which were in minor keys, and many of them of a very mournful and touching character.

The voyage to Guayaquil, the capital of Ecuador, took five days, and on the way we touched at the ports of Salaverry, Pacasmayo, Eten, Payta and Tumbes, but the only one of these at which I landed was Payta, a tumble-down looking place, which had suffered severely from recent unprecedented and heavy rainfalls. Under ordinary circumstances the place cannot be an inviting one, with its houses constructed of bamboos filled in with mud, its unpaved and narrow streets, and the general air of depression and poverty which pervades it; but with the mud washed away from its bamboo houses, leaving them in appearance like wicker bird cages, and exposing the very limited domestic arrangements of the inhabitants, and its streets cut up by the torrents which had poured down them, it certainly had a most forlorn appearance. I visited the wooden church with its rude images and common-place adornments—and it was quite refreshing to hear the choir, composed of about twenty girls, practising an anthem for the service of the following day (Whit-Sunday); their

voices were fresh and tuneful, and their singing was the only bright and cheerful thing which came under my observation in Payta.

The coast here is absolutely devoid of vegetation, but inland is a fertile district where cotton and sugar are grown in large quantities, and this also had suffered severely from the heavy rains; but the merchants and others interested in the products of the district took the matter very philosophically, for although the crops were ruined for this season, the rain which falls about once in every seven years makes subsequent harvests so abundant, that the one year of famine is compensated for by the six years of plenty.

Payta has, under ordinary circumstances, no water of any description, except the sea, and is entirely dependent for its supply for domestic and drinking purposes upon the railway company, who, for a monthly payment of 3,000 soles, bring it down from the interior; but the line having been damaged by the heavy rains this supply had been cut off, and the place was at the time in great straits in this respect. An officer came off to the "Santiago" with four large tanks on rafts to purchase some, but the captain could not spare any, and after long negotiations and lying off for some time in the hope that he would change his decision, the officer, or rather the rafts, had to go empty away.

On the mountains at the back of Payta, I noticed three crosses, evidently a representation of Calvary, and was informed that these were frequently to be met with in Peru, where the Roman Catholic religion has a very firm hold upon the people.

In the bay too, I noticed for the first time the rough dug-out canoes used by the natives, and also the Balsas or heavy rafts upon which they convey merchandise for great distances along the coast; these latter are constructed of heavy timbers, carry one sail, and are steered by several men with long oars.

Off the mouth of the river which runs inland seven miles to Tumbes, we took on board the pilot who was to take us up to Guayaquil, and about five o'clock the same evening we passed Shrouded Corpse Island and entered the Gulf of Guayaquil, up which we steamed for three hours until we reached Puña, where we anchored until three o'clock in the morning waiting for the tide to carry us up to the city, a further run of about three hours. The scenery had now entirely changed, the banks were covered with thick tropical vegetation, and the temperature had risen considerably, the stream was rapid and turbid; and large quantities of reeds and small floating islands covered with vegetation, and an occasional alligator, drifted past us.

At six o'clock in the morning we anchored off Guayaquil, the port of Ecuador, and the view of the city was most picturesque; but no time was lost by

those who intended to go ashore, as during the day the heat is intense, and notwithstanding the linen awnings with which the boats are provided, a row of a mile under the midday glare of a tropical sun is a thing to be avoided, especially at a place where fever is always more or less prevalent. As soon as breakfast was over, we accordingly made for the shore, and were amply rewarded, for, if the town looked picturesque at a distance it looked still more so on a nearer inspection; all the buildings are of wood, and the upper floors project over the entire pathway, thus forming covered arcades in front of the shops, a very necessary and desirable arrangement in a place where it rains for seven months out of the twelve, and where during the remaining five the sun has such power that headache, sickness and fever would inevitably follow any prolonged exposure of its rays. Indeed were it not for these arcades, shopping would be practically impossible; but thus protected, the inhabitants are able to get about at all seasons, only being exposed to the sun or rain when crossing the broad roadways between the blocks. The pathways have wooden floorings, and the shops along the river front appear to do a brisk trade. A very large proportion of the shopkeepers are Chinese, and I was much struck by the order and cleanliness which prevailed in their establishments.

But it is only on the river front, or "Malecon" as it is called, and in the Calle de Comercio which runs

parallel with it, that shops or stores of any importance are to be found, and the remaining streets appeared to be principally remarkable for the thickness of the mud and their general unsavouriness. Not only the shops and dwelling-houses are constructed of wood, but the churches also, and in one of these latter, I noticed that the columns were covered with oilcloth to represent marble.

Beyond the shop district immediately adjacent to the landing place, are the extensive stores and yards of the cocoa merchants, and to several of the most important of these I paid visits. The cocoa crop had just been gathered and brought in, and the savoury bean was spread out in the yards, where it is sorted by hand, and put into sacks, which are stored in the adjoining warehouses awaiting shipment. No vessel had arrived for some days, and the stock on hand was very large, no less than 8,000 sacks being shipped on the "Santiago," which was as much as she could find room for. The bulk of this was destined for the Continent of Europe, but large quantities are also supplied to our English cocoa and chocolate manufacturers.

Another article of exportation is vegetable ivory, for which the principal market is Sheffield where it is converted into buttons and other useful articles; the pod, if I may so call it, greatly resembles in shape and size a small fig, and considering its hard and durable character it seemed to me wonderfully light.

Guayaquil is not behind other cities in its system of tramways, and a constant succession of these useful vehicles passed up the Malecon and back through the Calle de Comercio, drawn by mules which appeared to have been rolling in the mud preparatory to being attached to the cars. Taking one of these I went to the extremity of the city, where a beautiful view is to be obtained of Chimborazo, but Chimborazo like many other celebrities is not always on view, and on this occasion it was not visible.

Guayaquil is the port of Quito, the capital of Ecuador, the route thither being partly by river in one of the quaint top-heavy river steamers which look particularly unsafe and dilapidated, and afterwards by railway and on mule back—or the whole journey can be performed on mule back, a tiring and monotonous undertaking which, I believe, consumes the greater part of a week. I was introduced to a United States major who was on his way there as a delegate from Chicago in connection with the approaching World's Fair in that progressive city; he had been detained in Guayaquil by an attack of fever, but nothing daunted he was about to continue his journey, a typical specimen of the travelled, educated and intelligent American who, when he has an object in view, is not to be balked in its accomplishment.

Returning on board after the heat of the day, my attention was drawn to a small ant-eater, which had

been brought off by one of the natives for sale, his price being five sucres,* although he ultimately sold it to one of the engineers for one. It was a pretty and bright looking creature, of a rich brown colour with black stripes over its shoulders resembling braces, and a black back; and its habitat is the forest, where it climbs into the trees and hanging by its sloth-like claws or strong prehensile tail, lies in wait for the ants which it quietly licks up with its long glutinous tongue. This animal is common in the district, as is also a bright grey squirrel which plays sad havoc with the fruit, and is freely hunted and killed in consequence. While on the subject of zoology, I must not forget to mention the hairless dogs which I saw in various parts of South America, and especially in Guayaquil—they are in appearance somewhat like the small Italian greyhound, are reddish or grey in colour, and are absolutely devoid of hair; one little fellow ran out of the house of some natives as we passed, barking at us with considerable energy, and the inmates who were squatting in the doorway were evidently highly amused when we stopped and spoke to him in a strange tongue, although whether they thought we were afraid of this most inoffensive canine specimen, or scented a remunerative bargain with the passing foreigner, I did not stop to enquire.

* The "sucre" is a silver piece of the same value as the Peruvian and Chilian Sole, the name being taken from that of a former President of the Republic.

Before we sailed we had a very important addition to our list of passengers, in the person of Don Nicolas de Pierola, the Peruvian agitator, who had recently fled from that country and taken up his residence at Guayaquil, whence, on the requisition of the Peruvian Government, he was ordered to remove by the authorities. The *Peruvian Mail* of the 6th May wrote of him as follows :—

With regard to Don Nicolas de Pierola's flight, different opinions are expressed here among the public, and, as usual, they run to the two extremes. He is either lauded to the skies by his friends, or consigned to the lower regions by his enemies; the former considering him the political saviour of his ruined country, and the latter as a sort of bugbear threatening at every moment to obstruct its future progress towards reorganization and prosperity. However, he is away at last. We presume he is not very comfortable in the sweltering heat of Guayaquil, and earnestly hope that he won't try to make it hot for us here.

If the writer of this paragraph had been on board the "Santiago" he would have found that Don Nicolas had many friends in Guayaquil; and if he had heard the parting speech delivered by him to his adherents (in which he maintained that Peru did not want a President but a Dictator, and informed the crowd who had come on board to see him off that if he were elected as Head of the Republic he would show them how things should be managed), he would have come to the conclusion that the "hot" time which he deprecated might not be so very far distant.

Peru like the rest of the South American Republics is a hotbed of intrigue—and I should not

be surprised if before long the present bad state of things may become worse, and its progress already arrested, be still further retarded by a revolution.

As the evening closed around us the ship presented a very pretty spectacle, for innumerable fire-flies darted hither and thither like electric sparks, settling upon the rigging and awnings, and constituting quite a miniature illumination. I caught one of these insects, and found it to be a small, hard beetle of a light-brown colour, with a prominent round head; but I could not arrive at the cause of its brilliancy, which appeared to come and go quite independent of any physical effort on the part of the insect. I was told that young ladies frequently adorn themselves in the evening with these sparkling creatures, sewing them on to their dresses, and the effect in the open air must be as charming to them and their admirers as inconvenient and unpleasant to the tiny objects of their attentions.

Towards midnight we steamed away from Guayaquil, and the next morning were again well out at sea. We passed Manta, where the so-called Panama hats are manufactured and where turtles abound, and at seven in the evening again crossed the Equator. The sea here was somewhat rough; and, compared with the temperature we had recently experienced, the weather was cool, while frequent showers occurred; for we were nearing Panama, and the wet season there was just setting in.

In the afternoon of the third day we entered the Bay of Panama, studded with lofty islands, beautifully wooded, and presenting a charming scene. But, unfortunately, the majority of the passengers were too much engrossed in another consideration to give the scene the attention it deserved; and that consideration was whether or not they would succeed in making the desired connection with the Pacific Mail Steamer to San Francisco or across the Isthmus with the French Mail Steamer for Europe. The "Santiago" should have reached Panama on Tuesday, in which case the connection would have been secured; but, true to what appear to be the traditions of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company on this coast, we were already two days late, and although Captain Hooker had done his best since leaving Guayaquil to make up for lost time, the vessel could not keep up a speed of fourteen knots; and there was considerable doubt upon the point.

We arrived off Panama at three o'clock, and the San Francisco passengers were pleased to see that their vessel had awaited their arrival; but those whose destination was Europe were not so happy, for they and their luggage had to be transferred to a tender, which could not reach the shore in time to catch the last train for Colon, which was timed to leave at 3.45; and their worst anticipations were realised, for upon arrival they found that the train had gone, and that they were doomed to spend ten days in this most un-

savoury of cities, instead of having, as they expected, a day in which to see the place, and then proceeding comfortably on their journey. But there were among them those who had already had a similar experience, and these at once suggested engaging a special train, which course was heartily approved by the rest, who had no desire for a prolonged stay on the Pacific side. It took, however, some little time to make the necessary preparations, and we consequently had time for a look round the town, which is undoubtedly worth seeing, even though it is not a desirable place for a lengthened stay to those who are not acclimatised, and more particularly at a time when yellow fever was becoming prevalent.

Seen from the sea, Panama does not look unattractive, and the life and excitement upon its covered wharf are sufficient evidence of the importance of its transit trade. Thousands of bags of coffee from Guatemala and Salvador were lying piled upon the wharf waiting to be transported to Colon for shipment, and the perspiring and chattering negro porters were loading the waggons with all possible despatch and no small amount of unnecessary noise.

Outside the wharf the roadway was literally packed with small covered carriages, and the importunities of the negro drivers added to the confusion; but, jumping into one of them, we soon got clear of the crowd, and at once plunged into some of the most evil smelling lanes that can possibly be imagined, and

how the inhabitants can possibly live under such conditions is astonishing. In the doorways of the houses of these lanes and on the edges of the sidewalks were negroes of every possible shade and type, dressed in every conceivable variety of costume; but the surroundings generally were repulsive, and it was a relief to get through these streets into the better occupied thoroughfares beyond. Most of these, however, were narrow, dirty and ill-paved, and the projecting balconies seemed in many cases to keep off the air and light which to us seemed essentials to such a place. Taken altogether, we were not much impressed with Panama, although our inspection was necessarily a hurried one, and we were glad to retrace our steps and take our seats in the special train which was to convey us across the Isthmus.

The ordinary fare is £2. 1s. 8d. for a ride of less than fifty miles, and for a special train this was doubled; but we were not sorry to get away even at that price. Leaving the station we passed innumerable negro huts on both sides of the line, clean when compared with the houses we had recently seen; and their occupants, who appeared to perform most of their domestic duties in the open air, also looked cleaner and brighter than their brethren in the town—although this effect may have been, and probably was, due to their more pleasing surroundings. The wind blew almost a gale, and as the train rushed onwards at a good speed, the dust and draught coming through

the open windows interfered materially with the comfort of the journey. On we sped, however, past rows and groups of dwellings, stores and bars, all occupied by negroes or Chinamen, until we had got well away from the town; and at the various stations the same scenes were repeated—bars, saloons, cookshops, *cafés*, *estaminets*, *fondas*, *posadas*, and hotels (so called) without end, all close to the line of railway, all tenanted by the same types and classes—while in the background upon the numerous hills were the houses built for and formerly occupied by the European overseers, engineers and other officials who had been connected with that gigantic undertaking and magnificent disaster, the celebrated Panama Canal.

We passed numerous small stations, consisting of a covered platform, a booking office and a signal box, and in the neighbourhood of all of them, and indeed I might almost say along the entire line, were rows of wooden buildings all of the same style, occupied in the same manner, or unoccupied and going to decay.

But where was the Canal? For a long time we saw nothing of the works which had for so many years engaged public attention in Europe and had absorbed so many millions of money, and when we did see some embankments and cuttings they were so comparatively insignificant in extent and proportions that we were struck with astonishment.

The Canal which was to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was, I believe, originally suggested by two French Naval Officers, but it was not until it was taken up by Ferdinand de Lesseps, of Suez Canal fame, that the undertaking assumed any definite form. It was then, after careful survey and long consideration, decided to follow as nearly as possible the line of railway (except at a short distance from Colon, where a detour was to be made), and to divert the course of the River Chagres, a torrential stream supplied by numerous affluents, which flows into the Atlantic a few miles below Limon Bay.

The route was divided into three parts; the valley of the Chagres on the Atlantic side, that of the Rio Grande on the Pacific side, and between the two the mountainous district to which was given the name of La Grande Tranchée; the two first mentioned being tolerably level it was assumed that no great obstacles would be encountered, beyond those presented by the River Chagres, which had to be crossed several times, and the general swampy nature of the country; engineering difficulties being expected only in the central portion where some of the mountains rise to a height of nearly a thousand feet.

The course was marked out and cleared, and operations were apparently commenced at numerous points, but nowhere is there anything which approaches to a completed section; here there is a cutting, there is a short embankment, yonder a

clearing, and in the distance heaps of soil, while at intervals are row of trucks with tropical vegetation growing up around their wheels, immense cranes, digging machines and lines of locomotives unprotected from the weather even by a tarpaulin, and in the river lie numerous tugs, dredges and lighters ; but one and all of the machines and appliances are out of use and rapidly deteriorating, for work has long since ceased, the European managers, superintendents, engineers and clerks have either *been carried off by fever or have returned to their native lands with their pockets more or less well filled ; and all that remains of the celebrated undertaking are the unoccupied dwellings, the uncompleted works, and such of the negro labourers as have survived the attacks of fever (which have converted the Isthmus into a huge cemetery) and have not yet been able to find employment elsewhere ; together with the European and Chinese traders who cater for their wants.

Apart from the immense sums of money, amounting to some fifty or sixty millions sterling, which have been sunk in this disastrous undertaking, bringing ruin upon the unfortunate shareholders, the loss of life has been something enormous, many thousands of the European employés and negro workmen having succumbed to yellow fever and the pestilential atmosphere of the Isthmus ; and for what has all this been done ? To gratify the self-conceit of an individual and to fill the pockets of rascally officials to whose

overreaching rapacity there has practically been no limit.

To finish the canal would cost many more millions, and it would probably consume the time of two or three generations ; and it seems to me doubtful what useful purpose it would serve even when finished. In all probability, however, the scheme will not be revived, and the uncompleted works will, in a short time, become covered with tropical vegetation until not a sign of them remains, while the disused and neglected machinery, if not removed, will gradually rust and rot, and such portions as are not stolen or broken up will stand for years as memorials of one of the most glaring financial disasters which has occurred in modern times.

It was getting dark as we approached Colon, and the swamps through which we passed sent up their pestilential vapours to remind the travellers of their existence, while the fire-flies darted hither and thither among the trees and bushes like electric sparks, giving the scene an air of enchantment which sadly belied its true character.

At last the train entered the town, passing long lines of houses built upon piles literally in the swamps, and before long the single passenger car of the special train was invaded by a lot of negroes who seized upon bags, rugs and other impedimenta in the most barefaced manner. They swarmed through the doors and windows, the officials being quite unable to repel

them, and it was only by the most determined action and the use of the strongest language that the travellers were able to protect their belongings. On went the train through the main street of the town, past the ruins of the houses destroyed in a recent conflagration, until at last it drew up at the freight-shed outside which the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique's Steamer "Labrador" was loading; and glad we were to get on board and escape the importunities of the rascals who had marked us as their prey.

The day had been a tiring and an exciting one, and we retired early to our cabins, little dreaming that at that moment "Yellow Jack" was on board the "Labrador," and that our homeward journey would consequently be fraught with anxieties, and attended by inconveniences and delays, such as during all our wanderings we had not yet experienced.





CHAPTER XVIII.

A BAD FINISH.

ALTHOUGH we had hastened across the Isthmus to make sure of the "Labrador," which we had been informed was to sail at six o'clock the next morning, we need not have done so, for 20,000 bags of coffee had to be taken on board, and the shipment was not completed until the afternoon, so that it was three o'clock before we left the quay. This, however, gave those who desired it time to look round Colon (or Aspinwall as it is also called), although, beyond the ruins of the recent conflagration which had laid in ashes the business part of the town, there was very little of interest to be seen. On the side on which the town

is approached from Panama, are long lines of wooden houses, built upon piles in the swamps, over which they are approached by plank bridges; and with dwellings thus located it is not surprising that the place always suffers more or less, from fever, more particularly as drainage or sanitary arrangements of any kind are altogether unknown. The inhabitants are apparently drawn from various races both of the Old and New World, but the negro predominates; and from what I was told I should say that, taken altogether, Colon contains within its limited area a larger assortment of rogues and vagabonds than any other town of its size on the globe. Anyhow it is a dirty and unhealthy place, in which a stay of a few hours was quite sufficient for us.

Hitherto on this occasion our experience had been of British vessels only, and although we had previously made short voyages in French steamers in the Mediterranean we were in some doubt as to how far we should be comfortable in one during a voyage of twenty-four days, which was to be the duration of the run from Colon to Bordeaux. Our first experiences were not of the most encouraging, for during the night that we lay at Colon we were literally devoured by mosquitos, and for several days afterwards and at intervals later on, when the hatchways were opened to ventilate the hold, we suffered severely from the bites of these venomous insects; but the ship was scarcely to be blamed for this, and

our bedroom steward did his best, and displayed considerable skill in the fixing up of our mosquito net to protect us from their attacks.

Throughout the voyage we had every reason to be satisfied with the attendance, while the food was excellent and well cooked, although we should have preferred more than two meals a day, especially as the second of these was served at five o'clock in the evening, and we consequently frequently found ourselves hungry again long before bedtime. It was against the rules to supply any other than the regulation meals, but the purser and the maitre d'hotel were obliging enough to take our case into special consideration, and to make some small exceptions in our favour; and in this, as in other matters, we received great courtesy from such of the officers as we came into contact with, and most especially from the commander, Captain Rupé. Although very few English-speaking people travel by this route, I was surprised to find that the captain spoke English very well, and I was told that in all probability he will be transferred to the new steamer "Tourraine," which runs between Havre and New York, where his knowledge of this language will not only be useful to him but an advantage to his passengers also.

We had many friendly chats with him, and found him not only a highly educated and intelligent man, but also a perfect type of a French gentleman, as might however be expected, for the Compagnie

Générale Transatlantique is not only heavily subsidised by the Government and represents to all intents and purposes a Government service, but the commanders of many of the vessels have been officers in the French navy, as was the case with Captain Rupé.

Coming back, however, to the cuisine of the "Labrador" I must in justice say that it was better and more appetising than that of any other vessel by which we had travelled, while the wine, which was put on the table without extra charge, was of good quality; and with the trifling exception which I have mentioned no possible complaint could be made in this direction.

The ship too, if not new and with the latest improvements, was at any rate a seaworthy one, and the crew a fine and active body of men; but unfortunately there are drawbacks in connection with the French steamers on this route, which must always to a great extent prevent them from becoming popular with English travellers. One of these is the classification of the first-class cabins, which are divided into three categories, the prices of the three differing very considerably; but in returning to Europe, as the cabins cannot be booked beforehand, although you may pay the highest price you may get no better accommodation than those who have paid the lowest, which is not altogether satisfactory. My advice to travellers by this line would be to take

tickets for the third category, and if not satisfied with the accommodation offered, pay the difference for a cabin of a higher category *on board*. I am certain that for £40 each we obtained no better cabin accommodation than those who paid £30 only. But the greatest drawback is to be found in the habits of the passengers who patronise this line, and in the fact that the decks are not kept clean as in English vessels; and on a long voyage this is a serious matter, as so much of one's time has to be passed on deck that dirty surroundings materially affect one's comfort and enjoyment.

We left Colon, as I have said, about three o'clock in the afternoon, our departure being signalled by the firing of a cannon on board, which we found to be the practice on this vessel, and very startling it sometimes was to those who might be standing or sitting near and not quite prepared for the report. The view of Colon from the sea was very picturesque, the brightly painted houses standing in the midst of tropical foliage; and so too was the beautifully wooded coast, which was in sight for some time until we struck out from the land across the Gulf of Darien. The heat however was severe, and the mosquitos gave us another sleepless night.

In the afternoon of the next day we arrived at Savanilla, the only place at which we touched in the United States of Colombia. It can scarcely be called a town and, many of the buildings being thatched, it

has a very rural appearance; but it is nevertheless of some importance as being the port of Barranquilla and the approach to the celebrated Magdalena River, which runs for more than a thousand miles into the heart of Colombia and forms the great highway of its commerce.

We spent nearly six hours here, the heat being almost insupportable, and on leaving, steered north-east to pass round Point Gallinas and across the entrance of the Gulf of Maracaybo on our way to Puerto Cabello, which we reached in forty hours.

Puerto Cabello, our first stopping place in Venezuela, and the port of Valencia with which it is connected by railway, is an important town, beautifully situated at the foot of lofty mountains. It is well constructed, and the fine palms and other trees with which the buildings are interspersed form an agreeable relief to the eye under such a scorching sun. On one side of the bay the sandy beach is lined with cocoanut palms whose graceful branches lend beauty to the scene, and in the town itself are fine public gardens containing many choice and luxuriant tropical plants.

From Puerto Cabello to La Guayra is only a run of a few hours, and we reached the latter before six o'clock in the morning, in time to observe the very extraordinary appearance which the place presents in the early morning light. The town proper is built in a broad ravine running up between the mountains,

but to the west of this and beyond the docks, which have been built with great difficulty to provide a refuge from the heavy seas which break upon the coast, the houses are built upon roadways and paths cut into the steep rocks which come almost up to the edge of the water, and in the morning and evening light the buildings appear as if built upon the very face of the mountain, and one wonders as one approaches how it is possible to reach those which lie some distance up the height. Most of these houses are, however, mere huts, the residences of the negro population.

The contrast between La Guayra and Puerto Cabello is remarkable. The latter, at the foot of mountains covered with tropical forest trees, and itself rich in palms and flowering plants; the former, upon the sides of mountains utterly destitute of vegetation, the only trees visible being a plantation of palm trees beyond the suburb of Maiquetia, through a portion of which the railway to Caracas passes. I should much have liked to have paid a visit to the celebrated capital, and thus have had an opportunity to see the engineering wonders of its equally celebrated railway. But although we might have caught the first train to Caracas there was some doubt as to whether we should get back again before the steamer started, and we had to abandon the idea. We were much interested, however, in watching from the vessel the trains which, after skirting the edge of

the town and being lost sight of in the palm grove of Maiquetia, emerged in a short time on the heights above, and after disappearing again and again as the line pursued its tortuous course up the mountain side, were ultimately lost to view altogether.

Although the weather was fine and still exceedingly hot there was a heavy roll in the bay, and we could quite appreciate the necessity for the adjacent breakwater and docks. Sharks appeared to be very numerous in these waters, and this being the case we were somewhat astonished at the light character of the canoes used by the natives. Towards evening the temperature appeared to increase and we expected a thunderstorm, but, instead of this, we had scarcely put out to sea when the wind rose almost suddenly and we encountered a strong gale which lasted for several hours and sent the majority of the passengers to their cabins.

By the following morning the storm had abated, but the heat was still very great. In the afternoon, at half-past one o'clock, we reached Carupano, a small straggling town, apparently consisting of one street, the houses being built of *adobes* and consisting of ground floor only ; but we were not able to land here, although we made a stay of several hours, as we were not able to obtain pratique. Speculation was soon rife as to the cause of this, and it was not long before it transpired that one of the crew had that morning died of yellow fever !

From this moment commenced the troubles and anxieties which have led me to call this, my last chapter, "A bad finish." Many of our passengers had taken tickets for Trinidad, Martinique and Guadeloupe, though the majority were bound for Spain and had intended to land at Santander; and to all of them this unwelcome news meant a long period of quarantine at the port of their destination; while quite apart from this, a feeling of gloom took possession of all, for who could tell to what extent the epidemic might spread, or how many might, before the end of the voyage, be consigned to a watery grave.

Misfortunes, it is said, never come singly! Among the passengers was a Roman Catholic priest, and as my wife and myself were sitting in the saloon the same evening, we noticed that he was walking backwards and forwards in a somewhat singular and preoccupied manner. We little thought, however, that he was contemplating suicide; but such unfortunately there is every reason to suppose was the case, for the next morning he was missing, and as the most careful search did not result in his discovery, it was concluded that he had jumped overboard during the night. Whether he was afraid of yellow fever, or had other reasons for terminating his existence, it was impossible to decide; but an inventory was taken of his effects, and a *procès verbal* of the circumstances made at our next stopping place, Port of Spain, in the Island of Trinidad.

Many of us had looked forward to a visit of this most delightful town, imbedded in the most luxuriant foliage at the foot of beautiful forest-clad mountains, but the penalty was twenty-one days' quarantine, and great as was the disappointment, we had to bear it as philosophically as we could.

Several passengers came on board, and some cargo was shipped from lighters, which for the time were vacated by their crews who stood off in rowing boats while the sailors of the "Labrador" effected the shipment. The temperature was still very high, but a breeze sprang up before we left in the evening, which freshened to half a gale as we got away, increasing in strength as we passed the islands of Grenada, St. Vincent and St. Lucia on our way to Martinique, and giving us a somewhat unpleasant experience of the waters of the Carribean Sea. But the "Labrador" was well laden and a good seagoing ship, and our next port, Fort de France in the island of Martinique, was duly reached early in the afternoon of the following day.

Fort de France, like Colon, had recently suffered from a serious conflagration ; and although the houses were in course of reconstruction the town presented a somewhat forlorn appearance in consequence. But we did not remain long in view of the town proper, for rounding the fort which dominates the bay and gives its name to the place we took up our position on the opposite side for the purpose of coaling, and

here we remained for forty hours, until this necessary process was completed. Although again unable to go ashore, we were compensated by the scenery of the beautiful bay and the life upon its waters, for small steamers were plying in all directions between the various towns and villages on its banks, sailing boats glided hither and thither, and long lines of lighters laden with sugar cane and drawn by small tugs passed on their way to the neighbouring Sugar Factories, or "*Usines*" as they are here called.

From Port de France to St. Pierre, the capital of the Island, is only an hour's run, and as we approached the picturesque city surrounded by its bright green sugar plantations, our disappointment at being unable to land was renewed. But we anchored quite close to the shore, and had fine views of the quaint old-fashioned place, with its large gabled-roofed dwellings on the heights above, and its narrow streets of lofty houses along the water side. Both here and at Fort de France many boats came alongside with fruit, preserved tamarinds, specimens of coral, and shells, and a good trade was done by their negro occupants, especially in fruit; mangoes, green cocoanuts, oranges and bananas being in great demand. Other boats too came out, carrying negro boys of all sizes and shades, who had no stock-in-trade but their arms and legs which they displayed to advantage in diving for the coins which were thrown overboard to them. I did not consider them

so clever as the diving boys at St. Vincent, but they were nevertheless expert divers, and several little fellows who paddled about in small flat-bottomed canoes were evidently quite at home on the water, and altogether oblivious of the sharks which frequent it in these regions.

Passing Dominica, where we again encountered strong winds which called to our minds the cyclones* that occasionally occur among these islands, we made for our next port Basseterre, in Guadeloupe, also a picturesque town well interspersed with trees, but built on a sloping bed of lava from the now extinct volcano which rises at the back. The surrounding scenery was very beautiful, but this may be said of the Windward Islands generally, all of them rising to a considerable height above the sea and consisting of undulating hills and lofty mountains, thickly covered with foliage and vegetation, with clearings here and there; while in the fertile valleys, and on the edge of the sea, isolated farmhouses and picturesque villages with an occasional church, lend beauty to these scenes of pastoral quiet and repose.

Leaving Basseterre we made for Pointe à Pitre, the capital of Guadeloupe, our last port before striking out across the Atlantic for Europe; and here we

* We little thought that within three months Martinique would be visited by one of these dreadful hurricanes, causing a serious loss of life, and incalculable damage to property on land and the shipping in its harbours.

arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon, having first taken on board the pilot whose duty it was to steer us through the narrow channels between the prettily wooded islands and sandy shoals which mark the approach to the bay. Of the town itself little could be seen for, unlike all other places at which we had touched, Pointe à Pitre lies on a plain; but the tropical vegetation was most luxuriant, and the bay itself a picture that to some extent compensated for the unfortunate circumstances which prevented us from landing.

We lay for the night off Pointe à Pitre, and the shallow waters of the lagoons and the thick growths of the islands sent forth their crowds of mosquitos to remind us that we were still in the tropics, and sleep in consequence was almost out of the question. We were not sorry therefore when at six o'clock the next morning we weighed anchor and put to sea, although the knowledge that it would be at least ten days before we again sighted land gave rise to qualmy feelings with many of the passengers, some of whom early retired from the scene and sought the solitude of their cabins, and were not seen again for several days. For we had not long left Guadeloupe when we encountered a squall which severely tested our seafaring qualifications, and the gaps at the dinner-table were numerous, while those who did sit down had as much as they could do to keep their seats and prevent the contents of the plates and glasses from

being emptied into their laps. The weather continued rough for two days, until we lost the north-east trade winds, when it moderated somewhat; and we sighted numerous sailing vessels making under full sail for the Azores, which we ourselves passed on the seventh day after leaving Pointe à Pitre, again experiencing heavy weather with rough seas and violent storms of rain, which did not abate for three days, until we were almost within sight of Europe.

During this time the only incident of note was a combat between a sword-fish and a whale, in which the latter was getting the worst of it, but the ship passed so rapidly that few of the passengers had an opportunity of witnessing the occurrence. Our rate of speed averaged about 310 miles a day, which, taking the weather, the cargo and all things into consideration, was a very creditable record; and here I would mention what I consider to be a very consistent and interesting practice which obtains on the steamers of the Société Générale Transatlantique.

In addition to the usual notice of latitude, longitude, and distance covered during each twenty-four hours, a map, showing the ocean on Mercator's projection, is hung up in some prominent position (on the "Labrador" it was in the music-room), to which each day is affixed a little flag on a pin, showing the exact position of the vessel at midday. By this means one is able to follow the course taken, and to judge of the distance covered, and yet to be run; and from the

general interest taken in this record on the "Labrador," I feel sure that if other lines of steamers would adopt the same practice it would be much appreciated by their passengers.

On the tenth day we sighted land at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, having previously passed several steamers going southwards; and the sea having moderated and the weather being very fine, the spirits of the passengers generally rose with the temperature, and good humour prevailed. For most fortunately the yellow fever, which had caused so much apprehension and alarm, had apparently died out with the death of the one man who was consigned to the water off the coast of Venezuela; and although another case of serious illness and approaching death was reported, it was understood that this was the result of an accident, and consequently it created no anxiety, except in the minds of the sceptical.

We had had several musical evenings during the voyage, and it had been decided on this our last evening on the ocean to give a concert in the saloon, the proceeds of the collection to be handed to that most deserving of French Marine Institutions, "La Société Centrale de Sauvetage des Naufragés." The concert was a decided success, and the collection a very creditable one; but, having once embarked on an evening's amusement, the passengers showed no intention of retiring at the usual hour, and followed up the concert with a dance, and we had an oppor-

tunity of judging of several Spanish and Venezuelan dances. The captain graced the occasion in full uniform, with gold epaulets and medals; and the purser not only had very refreshing and cooling beverages served round at intervals during the performance, but afterwards provided a very nice and acceptable supper, to which both performers and audience did ample justice.

At seven o'clock the next morning we anchored off the town of Santander, Spain, and now the question arose as to what was to be the fate of those passengers who wished to be landed here. They were not kept long in suspense—twenty-one days' quarantine would be exacted, and the passengers elected to go on to Pauillac and try their luck in France rather than submit to so long a detention.

We accordingly left Santander with our numbers undiminished; and, admiring the bold and quaint formations of the rocks as we passed, we commenced our voyage across the Bay of Biscay. The evening was beautifully fine, the sea, though not exactly calm, by no means so rough as to be unpleasant, and the scenery of the Spanish coast, bold and rugged as it undoubtedly is and dangerous to a degree in bad weather, stood out grandly in the setting sun. The only drawback to the beauty and pleasure of the scene was the doubt which filled our minds as to the fate in store for us at Pauillac, and this constituted the skeleton at our feast, the last dinner which we

should take on board the "Labrador," at all events on this occasion.

The next morning all the passengers were early astir, and quite a transformation had taken place in the appearance of the majority, whose travelling costumes were replaced by suits and dresses more suitable to the gay city of Bordeaux, where they evidently anticipated they would land in the course of a few hours. At seven o'clock we anchored off Pauillac to await the health officers; but it was a long time before they arrived, and in the meanwhile the principal object of interest was the lazaretto, which, lying embedded among the trees, presented a rather formidable, though certainly not uninviting, look; for seen from the "Labrador" the establishment resembled an extensive *caserne*, the buildings, which from the distance seemed to consist of several detached rows, having a very barrack-like appearance.

After waiting at least an hour the boat conveying the important official whose arrival was so anxiously awaited put off from the landing place, and at the same time the steamer which was sent to convey the passengers and their luggage to Bordeaux (for ocean steamers do not go further up the river than Pauillac) also hove in sight, and the travellers' hopes rose accordingly. But alas! they were doomed to remain in suspense for some time longer, for the health officer, after a long parley with the captain, considered the case too important to be decided off-hand, and

returned to land to consult the *Directeur* of the Lazaretto. The general opinion was, that had the ship's doctor intervened more than he did, and taken a little trouble in the matter, a favourable decision would at once have been given ; but possibly a doctor feels himself an important man when he has had a case of yellow fever on board, and likes to make the worst of the position ; and probably also the officials of the Lazaretto were anxious for some occupation, for we learned that no one had been incarcerated there for some two years.

In any case, however, after a further interval of more than an hour, the tender was again seen to leave the little pier, and I need not say how anxiously its arrival was awaited, although by this time hopes had given way to doubts and doubts to fears, and I had noticed several ladies shedding tears as they sat waiting for the verdict in the music room and on the deck.

The blow had fallen ! Three days' quarantine in the Lazaretto was the decision of the sapient authorities ; and against this there was no appeal, as I soon personally experienced. For alone, among all the passengers ; I had taken tickets for Havre, partly possibly because I had an intuitive anticipation of quarantine troubles, but also for the more practical reason that in travelling I have found it advisable when a fare is the same to two places to book for the most distant, upon the ground that you never know what may happen.

I therefore asked the captain whether my wife and myself were not entitled to remain on the vessel, perform our quarantine there, under observation, and afterwards proceed with him to Havre—which we should have been only too pleased to do, even though it meant again crossing the Bay of Biscay—and as he held the same opinion as myself, that we were not bound to go ashore at Pauillac under the circumstances, we decided to remain. This soon became known to the other passengers, who naturally envied our unique position; while being relieved from further anxiety, I, equally naturally, felt that I had done a clever thing, of which I must frankly admit I was somewhat proud.

But my relief and pride were but short-lived, for the purser soon afterwards told me that the instructions were that *all* passengers had to go ashore, and although Captain Rupé even went so far as to write to the authorities and submit our case specially to them (for which act of kindness and courtesy we owe him many thanks), the laws of the Lazaretto were like those of the Medes and Persians, and we were politely but firmly told that we had to share the fate of the rest, after which, if we pleased, we were at perfect liberty to proceed to Havre.

Finding ourselves in this position there was nothing left but to make the best of it; and as there was no fear of any infection at the Lazaretto, owing to its having been unoccupied for so long a time, one great

source of anxiety was removed, and we were able to give ourselves up to such fun as was to be got out of the situation. We were informed that we should have to remain on board until five o'clock in the afternoon, as the arrangements necessary for the accommodation and feeding of some 120 persons took some time to complete, and in the meantime canvas bags were served out to all the passengers, officers and crew, into which they were instructed to put all the soiled linen they might have in their possession, for the purpose of disinfection (and after a voyage of twenty-three days, especially when as in our own case and that of many others it had been preceded by another equally long, the soiled linen bag is apt to have become pretty well filled), while all the luggage was brought on to the deck and there examined by an officer of the Lazaretto, to see that the order had been properly carried out.

While the passengers were thus engaged, the stewards were busy in bringing up all the mattresses, and the bed- and table- linen used during the voyage, which were to be taken away to be fumigated; and when I mention that quite apart from other articles the supply of table napkins on the "Labrador" for each voyage is ten thousand, some idea may be formed of the quantity of linen which had to be tied up in bundles and taken ashore for this purpose. And all this labour and trouble was incurred because *eighteen days previously* a man had died of yellow

fever, although since that time not a single other case had arisen, and the passengers and crew generally were in excellent health. Quarantine may be, and no doubt is, in many cases a necessary precaution, and a Lazaretto a very useful institution; but surely under such circumstances some discretion should be exercised by the local authorities, and some higher power be consulted before a large number of perfectly healthy persons are consigned to what is practically an imprisonment—even if it be only for three days—under conditions which, to those of nervous temperaments or delicate constitutions, might not only be seriously prejudicial, but perhaps also fatal. Fortunately, in England some discretion and judgment are exercised in such matters, and after my own experience I should strongly recommend anyone coming from South America or the West Indies not to take a passage on any other than an English vessel bound for an English port.

At five o'clock we left the "Labrador," notice having been given that passengers should not take more luggage than was absolutely necessary, *as they would have to carry it for themselves from the pier to the Lazaretto, a distance of at least half-a-mile.* This was adding insult to injury: but there was no help for it, and accordingly when we landed we had to toil through the broiling sun, carrying our portmanteaux, dressing bags, or such other impedimenta as each had brought, up to the *bureaux de reception.* Here rooms

were allotted to the passengers and keys served out, after which we crossed the wide space of open ground that separated the reception offices from the Lazaretto and passed through the entrance gates into the establishment itself beyond.

As it is not everyone who has been unfortunate enough to be confined in a place of the kind, I venture to give a short description of the "Lazarette de la Gironde" at Pauillac, in which we now found ourselves. The entrance gates, with lodges on either side, led into an enclosed yard, and through this we passed into park-like grounds, 250 yards long by 100 yards wide; at the further end of which, but separated from the grounds by a double row of palings, with a broad intervening roadway, stood the residence of the *Directeur* and his family, while on either side were gateways at intervals, opening into the various sections, separated by high brick walls; for the passengers of each vessel placed in quarantine are accommodated in a separate section, in order to prevent the spread of infection. In all, there are six such sections, and the first-class passengers of the "Labrador," who numbered eighty, were consigned to No. 1, while the thirty-nine steerage passengers were lodged in No. 5.

Section No. 1 was very extensive, and comprised two blocks of buildings, *A* containing the dining rooms, with apartments above for the accommodation of families; and *B*, which is depicted at the head

of this chapter, for that of individuals and married couples without families.

In some Lazarettos the sexes are divided, and sleep in separate dormitories, and this is the case at Pauillac with respect to steerage passengers; but it was a great relief to the many married ladies among the passengers of the "Labrador" to find that for first-class passengers separate rooms were provided, and that they would consequently not be separated from their husbands.

The room allotted to my wife and myself was on the ground floor *B.1.7.*, and like all the other rooms in the same block it was fifteen feet long by twelve feet broad, and twelve feet high. The floor was not carpeted, but a small strip was placed by the side of each of the two iron bedsteads, which, with two chairs, a washing stand, and a small looking-glass, constituted the furniture of the apartment; and as the building had not been occupied for more than two years, and had only been hurriedly prepared for the reception of eighty persons, the dust lay rather thick upon some of the articles, while on entering the room the damp smell inevitable under the circumstances was only too apparent.

Taking it altogether the accommodation might have been much worse, and even the coarse sheets, which were of the texture of sailcloth, might have been tolerated had they been aired, which they were not; the consequence being that several passengers caught

bad colds, and we feared at one time that the evident indisposition of some of them might lead to longer detention. For not only was the establishment itself watched to see that no attempt was made at escape, but the passengers individually were always under the eyes of the *Directeur* and the attendants, who narrowly scanned them in the hope, I believe, of seeing signs of the fever which was supposed to be lurking in their systems. But no such signs were apparent, and the majority of the *détenus* (this word has a pleasanter ring than its English equivalent—prisoners), made the best of the situation, and availed themselves of the limited sources of amusement at their disposal.

I mentioned that on entering the premises we found ourselves in park-like grounds, and when several sections of the Lazaretto are occupied by passengers from different ships no access is allowed to this neutral territory; but as on this occasion no other vessel was in quarantine we were able to walk in it at pleasure. It contained beautiful trees and shady walks, and in the centre stood a little chapel much frequented by the ladies of our party; reference to which brings to my mind an addition which was made to our number on the day after our arrival. Among the passengers by the "Labrador" were the officers and crew of a French gunboat, returning from the Pacific station, and on the voyage one of the seamen met with an accident from which recovery

was impossible. Day by day while on board he became worse and, although on the point of death when we reached Pauillac he was removed to the Lazaretto with the rest ; but the removal naturally affected him, and the commander, apparently a very humane and at the same time pious man, asked that a priest might be sent for to administer to the dying sailor the last sacrament of the Church. This was done, and a young priest duly arrived, but being once within the precincts he became a prisoner with the rest ; and to pass his time away he joined heartily in the games got up by some of the passengers. Additions too were made to the number of the inmates of section No. 5, for two peasants, not knowing that the Lazaretto was at the time occupied, were walking across the open ground which I have referred to as lying between the *Bureaux de reception* and the entrance gates (and which is used at ordinary times as a short cut by the inhabitants of the district) when, being espied by the attendants, they were seized and brought in, the ground in question being part of the establishment and as such held to be infected territory ; and there they remained until we were discharged.

No one who once comes into the Lazaretto while it is occupied by infected passengers can leave the premises until the period for which they have been incarcerated has expired, and the *Directeur* himself, the warders, attendants, waiters and chambermaids

are all subject to the same rule and are cut off from communication with their families ; the only officials in contact with the outer world being the cooks, for the kitchens are outside the grounds, the food being passed through openings in the walls ; and thus they are supposed to be beyond the risk of contagion.

The feelings produced by the constant watchfulness of the attendants, by the closed gates and prison-like surroundings were very singular, and reminded me of what I take to be the feelings of a sane man who is confined against his will in a lunatic asylum. The groups engaged in simple amusements, the individuals pacing backwards and forwards over the gravel walks or sitting moodily apart under the trees, and the *Directeur* walking among them or sitting down apparently reading a newspaper but really looking furtively over the top of it at the passers by ; all these points helped to produce the effect, and I can readily believe that a lengthened stay in such a place might be very prejudicial to certain temperaments, especially if an epidemic really existed and the fear of infection and death were added to the already trying circumstances of the case.

But as it would have been folly (when it was felt by all that the detention was most vexatious and uncalled for, and that no fear of an outbreak of fever existed) to have allowed a feeling of depression to arise, the majority of the passengers made themselves merry as best as they could ; and for our own part,

my wife and I found ourselves members of a gay and select party who had managed to secure a separate dining-room, where we had good fun over the dishes provided, and at the expense of the waiter, a well-meaning and harmless countryman, who at first assumed an air of considerable superiority, but, finding us more than a match for him, calmed down into quite an ordinary and obliging attendant and ultimately joined in the laughter created at his own expense.

The weather was fortunately very fine and we were thus able to spend the whole day out of doors, while in the evening we generally managed to get up a quiet rubber of whist; and thus the time slipped by until on the third day we were informed that the bags of soiled linen, which had in the meantime been fumigated, would be delivered to passengers at the entrance lodge at mid-day, and that at one o'clock in the afternoon we should be discharged, and a steamer would be in attendance to take us to Bordeaux. It was an amusing scene to see the passengers claiming their bundles of linen, and the circumstances generally were sadly lowering to the dignity of many who had to submit to them. Among our party were commanders, lieutenants and other officers of the French navy, wealthy merchants and ship-owners, a German consul, a doctor of medicine well known in Venezuela, and others who were little accustomed to such surroundings and restraints; and to see such men

awaiting their turn for a bag of soiled linen and marching off with it when received, was enough to upset the gravity of the most sedate.

But our detention was nearly at an end, and good humour reigned supreme, for all that remained to be done was to settle up our accounts and await the opening of the gates. For let it not be assumed that because the authorities had thus incarcerated us against our will, they did so free of charge. On the contrary everyone had to pay for his accommodation and food (the charges amounted to about ten francs per day for each person exclusive of wines and service), and no one could pass out of the place without a voucher to show that this had been done. These vouchers consisted of red and green cards of which the following is a copy :—



FRONT.



BACK.

and much fun was made out of them as the passengers defiled through the grounds towards the gates, which at the hour named were thrown open to allow us to depart and to admit such of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood as cared to see the

sight, or to earn an honest franc by carrying the passengers' luggage down to the steamer.

For we were now not only at liberty, but were considered free of the taint of Yellow Jack, and fit to associate with our fellow mortals.

Of our voyage up the river to Bordeaux and our journey thence to Old England it is unnecessary to speak ; suffice it to say, that as the steamer left the little pier at Pauillac the quarantine of the " Labrador " was at the same time raised, her yellow flag hauled down, and her gun rang out a parting salute, which as we passed under her bows was responded to by the hearty cheers of her late passengers, in turn heartily reciprocated by the officers and crew of the vessel, all of whom were on deck to wish us farewell.

And thus our travels were brought to a close. They had their full share of discomforts and anxieties, but they also had their pleasures ; the former to be forgotten as soon as possible, the latter to be remembered in connection with the many friendships formed on the way. Should any of our late fellow-travellers, or the friends we met in various places, perchance peruse these pages and call to mind the writer and his companion, he begs them to accept their hearty greetings, and the assurance that the many agreeable hours spent in their company will long remain to them a pleasing reminiscence of their journeyings in South America.

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