



A GAUCHO OF ARGENTINA.

There are two telephone companies, and the number of instruments in use is larger in proportion to the population than in any other city in the world.

Buenos Ayres has its parks, boulevards and race-courses like other modern cities. Everybody keeps a carriage and nearly everybody rides. Nowhere are horses so cheap. A good pair of carriage horses can be had for about one hundred and fifty dollars. Saddle horses, equal to any in the world, can be purchased for thirty or forty dollars each.

The two Argentine Universities, under the control of the government, are among the best on the continent—will hold their own against Harvard and Yale. The public school system is under a compulsory education law, and includes all grades from the Kindergarten to the normal school. The Argentinians have made as rapid advancement in the way of charity and philanthropy as in education, and one finds there many benevolent institutions.

The post-office handled 20,000,000 packages in 1885—pretty good for a city of 434,000 inhabitants. Now its population is considerably over half a million, and about 40,000,000 pieces annually pass through the office. There is a mail leaving for and arriving from Europe or the United States nearly every day.

There are two gas companies, lighting somewhere about 30,000 houses and stores. The public buildings and parks are lit by electricity. The police are admirably organized. There are near fifty miles of paved streets. The sanitary condition of the city generally is good; there are over sixty miles of sewers—some of them large enough for a railway train to pass through. Notwithstanding the number of private carriages and licensed hacks, the five street railway companies, with their hundred miles of track, carry in the neighborhood of 2,500,000 passengers monthly.

Surrounded by wide stretches of fertile lands, with water communication spreading over thousands of miles right up to the foot of the lofty Andes, the city of Buenos Ayres, now growing as fast as any city on this continent,

promises to be in the near future the queen city of South America.

During the last twenty-five years the population of the Argentine Republic has increased one hundred and fifty-four per cent, while in the United States—which stands next for rapid growth—the increase has been seventy-nine per cent.

The pampas in spring present a beautiful aspect of verdure, and as summer approaches the thistles, which before looked like a crop of turnips, grow up to 10 or 12 feet in height, armed with strong prickles, forming dense jungles, impenetrable to man or beast. About Christmas (midsummer) the thistles are in full bloom and soon afterwards they droop and die, and the earth resumes its verdant aspect in

winter. These pampas already produce wheat sufficient to be an important factor in the world's food supply. The area under cultivation has grown by leaps and bounds. In 1884 the exports were 2,000,000 bushels. In 1898 they reached 38,000,000 bushels. The expectation is that next year, 1899, there will be at least 55,000,000 bushels available for exports. About 45 lbs. of seed are sown per acre, as against about 90 lbs. in Canada. The increase is about ten fold. Much higher than in the United States; nearly as high as in Canada.

There is not another country with such brilliant possibilities before it—with such rich stores of latent wealth waiting to be developed. In its resources, as well as in the character of its people, it somewhat resembles the United States. There are found pampas like the prairies, rich and fertile in the lowlands, and forming fine cattle ranges and sheep pastures as they rise in mighty terraces from the Atlantic to the snow-clad Andes. In the foothills of the mountains are deposits of gold and silver, similar to those of British Columbia. In the north is a soil that will produce cotton, rice, and sugar; then come the tobacco lands; then, as the temperature grows colder towards the south, are the wheat and corn lands. This vast area is furnished with natural highways more tempting to commerce—easier to navigate—than our St. Lawrence and the upper lakes. These mighty rivers, running through numberless lakes, are navigable almost to their sources in the extensive forests on the slopes of the Andes.

About 100,000,000 sheep—more than are owned by any country in the world—are grazing on the ranges, and producing 200,000,000 pounds of wool for export.

Where rivers do not run, railways are being built, and in a few years they will have a railway system equal to any country. The immigration is large and steadily increasing; in 1887 it reached 138,000. The greater portion of the immigrants are Italian, who have been very successful as agriculturists. The climate, so balmy and enjoyable, is too enervating for the

active, bustling energy of the Anglo-Saxon. Hence, the English speaking immigrants have not, as a rule, been successful. It is not an inviting country for people of northern climes.

The colonization plan is very popular, and thus far successful. Within the last five years, 1,126,000 acres of land have been taken up by colonies representing a population of 82,000 persons.

The Argentinians are beginning to ship large quantities of fresh beef to Europe in refrigerator ships, one or more leaving Buenos Ayres every week. They do not use ice, but have a cooling process similar to that adopted on transatlantic steamers. They cannot yet compete with us in quality—and probably never will—but their cattle are much cheaper, and are being graded up by the introduction of improved stock from England. The cattle are sold by the head, prime steers bringing fourteen to fifteen dollars. Within a radius of fifty miles from Buenos Ayres are ranches larger than any on this continent, and cattle can be driven almost on the steamers, so the cost of transportation and shrinkage is merely nominal. The cost of transportation to England is often less than from Winnipeg to Quebec.

Sheep also are killed and frozen for exportation to Europe, one slaughter house at Campana, fifty miles from Buenos Ayres, shipping five hundred carcasses daily. Live sheep in condition for killing are worth from three to four dollars each for the best quality.

The gaucho (*gowcho*) of South America are the most interesting characters on the continent, and would afford to the writers of tales of adventure as stirring and exciting material as the Crusader of the Middle Ages or the North American Indian. They are the descendants of Spaniards and Indian women. They are the most indolent and most active of human beings, for when they are not in the saddle, devouring space on the back of a tireless broncho, they are sleeping in apathetic indolence or gambling with their fellows, for they are inveterate gamblers.

Half savage and half courtier, the gaucho is as polite as he is cruel, and will make a bow like a dancing master with the same nonchalance as he will murder a fellow being or slaughter a steer. He recognizes no law but his own will and the unwritten code of the cattle range. Whoever offends him must fight or fly. He never shoots or strikes with his fist; his only weapons are the short knife and the lasso.

He is peaceable when sober, when drunk he is a fiend incarnate. As brave as a lion, as active as a panther, with endurance equal to any test, faithful to his friends, he has exercised a powerful influence upon the Argentine Republic, and kept that nation back in civilization until his influence was overcome by immigration from Southern Europe. The gaucho has never taken any active part in politics, except as a soldier, and as such he is without an equal in either civilized or savage fighting.

The gaucho always carries tobacco, cigarette paper, flint and steel. He is an inveterate smoker, but confines himself to cigarettes which he rolls while at full gallop. He does everything on horseback, when he chooses—eats and sleeps, catches fish, carries water from the well in a pitcher on his head.

A gaucho child is put into the saddle at an early age. When he is eight or ten years old