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THE ARGENTINE CAPITAL.

BY THEODORE CHILD.

THE Argentines have pretensions to civilization and refinement; they boast of their capital, of its rapid progress, of the convenience and luxury of life at Buenos Ayres. This pride and self-congratulation is largely justified, but nevertheless the reality falls far below the descriptions that are current. The visitor's first experience of the hotels is his first disappointment. With the exception of the Grand Hotel, which would rank with third and even fourth class houses in Europe, all the thirty to forty hotels of Buenos Ayres occupy inadequate buildings, and they are badly furnished, badly managed, and altogether wretched, dirty, and comfortless. Nevertheless, the proprietors make good profits. They charge from two and a half to twelve gold dollars a day for each person, and their houses are always full. For men, part of the horror of the ordinary hotels can be escaped by having recourse to the large modern *casas amuebladas*, like the Deux Mondes, Internacional, Sud Americana, Louvre, L'Universelle, which are simply hotels without restaurants. Meals can then be taken in the various eating-houses and restaurants of the business quarter, of which the best are the Café de Paris, Mercer, Sportsman, Rôtisserie Française, and Criterion. There is also a good German restaurant called the Aue Keller, arranged in neo-medieval style like the Berlin Rathhauskeller. No town in South America has finer restaurants than Buenos Ayres, and, so far as concerns cuisine, the Café de Paris may be compared with the Parisian restaurants of the third category. These restaurants, however, are mainly frequented by foreigners, and almost exclusively by men. It is a rare thing to see a lady dining in a restaurant, and if you do see one, you may be sure

that she is a foreigner. The Argentines go to the hotels, and either live at the table d'hôte, or more generally have their meals served in their rooms, and as you go along the passages, reeking with strong perfumery, you catch a glimpse through half-opened doors of large women, wearing rich clothes and sparkling jewelry, sucking *maté* and eating primitive food, very much after the manner of the Indians of the Gran Chaco. So much luxury and so little real comfort, such is the remark that one is constantly making at Buenos Ayres, and the only explanation of the phenomenon is that the Argentines do not need comfort. Hotels and restaurants are good indicators of the degree of refinement of a community. The fact that the hotels of Buenos Ayres are miserable and dirty, the food horrible, and the service execrable, simply implies that the public neither criticises nor protests, that it wants nothing better, deserves nothing better, and gets what it merits.

Thanks to the opening of the new Darsena, the stranger who arrives at Buenos Ayres is no longer subjected to the torture of landing in small boats or even carts, and of paying ransom to boatmen and porters, whose extortions were curbed by no tariff. Now the river steamers and tug-boats land passengers directly on the quay at about half an hour's ride from the centre of the town, and the only ransom absolutely obligatory is that exacted by the coachmen. The process of landing is rough still, and good police regulations are needed. When once within the town proper the stranger is struck by the narrowness of the streets, which are only forty feet wide, the lowness of the buildings, many of which have only one story, the activity of the traffic,

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the throng of carts and wagons, and the incessant passing of horse-cars, one behind the other. The noise is deafening, and consists of the rolling of wheels, the clattering of hoofs on the rough granite pavement, generally full of holes and ruts; and, above all, the squealing of the tramway horns. In front of each car, just within reach of the driver's lips, is slung a cow-horn, upon which he plays with indefatigable *virtuosité*, eliciting from it piercing notes that suggest at once the howling of a new-born babe, the shrieks of a Punch and Judy show, and the squalling of noctambulant cats. From early morning until midnight every street, from one end of the city to the other, re-echoes with this irritating din. Most of the street cars in Buenos Ayres are open American vehicles with reversible seats; they are generally shabby-looking from hard wear; the horses are small native beasts that never get groomed; they are fed on green fodder and hay alone, and smell most disagreeably; the conductors are seedy fellows of all nationalities, without uniform, and the drivers belong to the lowest category of degraded and cruel human brutes. The street traffic of Buenos Ayres is fertile in instances of the most revolting cruelty to animals, and whether in the cars or in a coach circulation is equally disagreeable and alarming. The pavement being very bad in most of the streets, the carriages shake you up even more than the cars, which dance and jolt along the uneven rails, swing round curves with a wrench and a crash, and from time to time run off the track. There is no limit to the number of passengers in a car. "Hanging on by a strap" and clinging to the foot-board are practised as in North America. The blocking of the streets is frequent, and in the centre you will see twenty times a day a score of tram cars in a string, and a hundred carts and carriages at a stand-still, crowded in a confusion that remains inextricable for twenty minutes or half an hour. In wet weather the roadway is converted into a sort of marsh: the water remains in the holes and ruts and along the tram lines; the wheels cut through the liquid mud, splashing and bespattering the sidewalks and the shop windows, and the only efficacious protection is that of big boots and mackintoshes. Umbrellas are of no use, the sidewalks being so narrow that two

persons walking abreast occupy the whole width. The streets, in short, are inadequate for the traffic of the modern town.

Buenos Ayres is laid out in squares, or *cuadras*, of uniform dimensions, in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Leyes de Indias*, dictated from the Escorial in the sixteenth century. Each *cuadra* measures 142 yards by 142 yards, thus covering an extent of some $4\frac{1}{4}$ acres, and the whole town covers a superficies of 18,000 hectares, or, say, 45,000 acres. The longitudinal streets run from the river more or less from east to west, and the cross-streets at right angles north and south. The central longitudinal street, Calle Rivadavia, running from the river to the suburb of Almagro, divides the town into two parts, and on crossing it the transverse streets change their names. Thus Calle Florida, when it crosses Rivadavia and continues southward, assumes the name of Peru, and so with all the others. The *façades* of each *cuadra*, taken two by two, one on each side of a street, comprise one hundred numbers, fifty on each side; thus, the first *cuadra* contains numbers 1-100, the second, 101-200; the third, 201-300, and so on. It is thus easy to calculate the distance to a given spot. Number 3091, for instance, must be in the thirty-first *cuadra*. Nothing can be imagined more monotonous than to walk through these narrow, straight, interminable streets, which, for the most part, present the same uninteresting perspective and the same stupid *façades* from No. 1 to No. 4000, where the eye at last descries the leprous and arid landscape of the gray suburban plains.

In the new parts of the town only, toward the north, have the dimensions of the streets been changed, and while the rectangular system of *cuadras* has been maintained, the width of the thoroughfares has been more than doubled, and fine roads have been laid out and planted with shade trees on the model of the boulevards of Paris. Such are the *Avenidas de la Republica* and *General Alvear*, the *Calles Santa Fe*, *Rodriguez Peña*, *Belgrano*, and *Callao*, and the *Boulevard Corrientes*, where many handsome buildings have been erected of late years. In all these streets and boulevards the indispensable horse-car runs, generally up one street and down a parallel street, the narrowness not permitting a double line of rails. In 1890 the six tramway compa-

nies of Buenos Ayres were using 199,378 kilometres of track, 342 coaches, and 5882 horses. The journeys of the first three

calves, with leather muzzles over their noses, halting in front of a house while one of them is being milked. There are also many *tambos*, or dairies, all over the town, for the most part dirty and alarmingly unhygienic. The *mozos de cordel*, *changadores*, or street porters, Basques to a large extent, also form characteristic figure subjects as they stand at the street corners, with their red or blue caps, their sacks, and their length of rope, waiting for customers, and ready to vie with the *ka-*



LECHEROS.

months of the year amounted to 374,355, and the passengers carried to 10,177,078.

The traffic of the streets of Buenos Ayres does not present many picturesque elements. Amongst the most characteristic types are the *lecheros*, or milkmen, generally Basques, who ride in from the suburbs on the top of their milk cans, after the common South-American style. Morning and evening may be remarked, even in the crowded streets of the centre, groups of milch kine, followed by their

mals of Constantinople in carrying enormous weights on their shoulders. In the morning, too, may still be seen in the vicinity of the markets huge bullock carts, or *carretas*, drawn by two or three yokes of oxen. The remaining street types are

fish-sellers, who carry their merchandise slung on a pole, itinerant vendors of provisions of various kinds, dirty little urchins who black shoes, still dirtier and noisier boys who sell newspapers, organ-grinders, a few ambulant musicians, and a certain number of deformed, decrepit, or able-bodied beggars. The rest of the passers-by are of cosmopolitan type, the predominant features being Italian and Spanish, and the costume as uniform and uninteresting as imported ready-made clothing can render it.

The rapidity of the growth of Buenos Ayres is one of the most remarkable phenomena that the statisticians of the century have observed; it is pronounced to be marvellous and without parallel. The effective population, including visitors, at the time of the last census (September, 1887), was 433,375. The population actually domiciled in the city and the annexed suburbs of Flores and Belgrano at the moment of the census was 423,996. The legal population, that is to say, the population born on the spot, was only 75,062. The balance between the legal and the effective population, 358,313 persons, consisted of 129,672 born in various parts of the republic, and 228,641 foreigners. At the time of the previous census, taken in 1869, the population of the actual city and suburbs amounted to 187,126, so that the increase in eighteen years was 246,249 souls. The statisticians furthermore demonstrate that the annual increase of Buenos Ayres is greater than that of Chicago or any other North-American city. The proportion of foreigners in 1887 was 112 to every 100 Argentines. Argentines figure for 47.2 per cent. in the total population; Italians, 31.1 per cent.; Spaniards, 9 per cent.; French, 4.6 per cent.; and all the foreigners together, 52.8 per cent. of the total population. In the census of 1887 the Germans and the English numbered each about 4000, and the North-Americans less than 600.

As regards religion, the immense majority of the population, 97.8 per cent., professedly belongs to the Roman Catholic faith; 1.8 per cent. includes Protestants of all sects, mostly English and Germans; Israelites of both sexes number 366; and free-thinkers, 868. Such at least are the figures of the census of 1887, and there is no reason to believe that the proportions have materially changed since that date.

In the years 1888 and 1889 immigration

continued on a large scale, and the total population of the city is supposed to have increased to half a million. In the beginning of 1890, however, the current of immigration slackened,* and entirely ceased by the time the revolution of July broke out, while at the same time, owing to the monetary crisis, the cessation of building operations, and the increased cost of living, a counter-current of emigration set in, and took away many thousand masons, carpenters, and artisans, to say nothing of people engaged in commerce; so that, although it is currently stated that Buenos Ayres has an actual population of half a million, it would be nearer the truth to fix the figure at 475,000, or even less.

The city itself has naturally increased with the growth of the population. The census of 1869 gave a total of 20,858 houses for the city and the suburbs of Flores and Belgrano, out of which 1300 were mere ranchos or huts, with thatched roofs, and 1558 modern structures. This total, however, is misleading, because apartments and flats are in many cases counted as houses. The census of 1887, more accurate and trustworthy, gives a total for the city and suburbs of 33,804 houses, of which the vast majority, 28,353, have only one story, 4979 two stories, 436 three stories, and 36 four stories. The census of 1869 mentions no houses having four stories. Furthermore, it may be noted that in the census of 1887 the thatched ranchos have entirely disappeared. The great increase in building began in 1880, and came to a halt in 1890, when the emigration current and the crisis caused a decrease in the population of the city, and therefore in the demand for lodging.

The history of domestic architecture in Buenos Ayres may be divided into four periods. The first is that of the thatched rancho. The second is that of cane roofs, thick walls of adobe or brick, doors studded with big nails, few and small windows protected by heavy iron gratings, large rooms, and court-yards after the

* The following figures show the number of immigrants who arrived at Buenos Ayres during the first five months of 1889 and 1890:

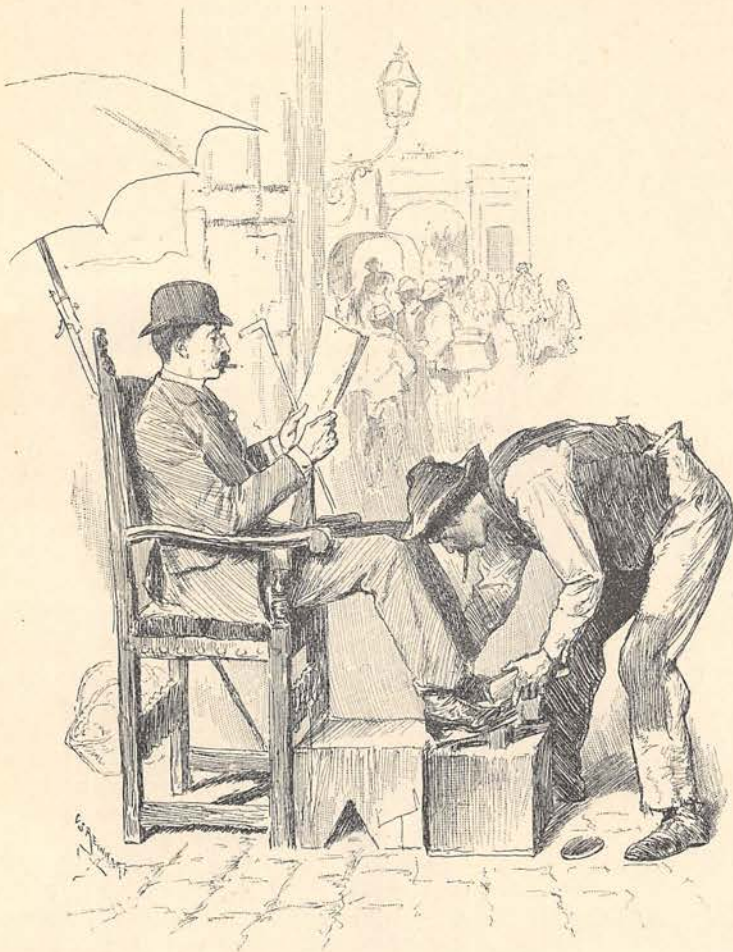
	1889.	1890.
January	22,100	15,531
February	23,595	12,307
March	18,965	11,259
April	20,479	10,480
May	20,889	9,724
Total	106,028	59,301

Andalusian style. The builders of these spacious houses were Spanish masons called *alari-fes*. Several of the old-fashioned houses still exist in Buenos Ayres, and are inhabited by conservative creole families. In the old provincial towns, like Cordoba and Corrientes, they are numerous. The houses of the third period have tile roofs, parapets, and balustrades to crown the façade, exterior walls coated with stucco or Roman cement, and painted rose, blue, and other colors, ornamental wrought or cast iron gratings or *rejas* over the windows, marble pavements, and often marble panels on the walls. Houses of this description, generally only one story high, and built for the most part by Italian masons, form eighty per cent. of the total of the capital. They are small, inconvenient, unhygienic, and entirely without modern comforts. Their exterior aspect reveals no particular style of architecture; most of them are plain and devoid of any ornamentation except the iron gratings over the windows; others are overloaded with capitals, cornices, columns, caryatides, and fleurons, all modelled in cement, and very limited in design. You see the same patterns repeated on a hundred houses. Similar want of variety and want of taste is displayed in the painting and interior adornment of the rooms. The current ideal of domestic architecture seems to consist in the greatest possible quantity of ornamentation on the façade and in the court-yard, or *patio*, which must further be decorated with plaster statues and some palm-trees and plants in pots. Then



STREET PORTERS.

the whole is pronounced to be very pretty (*muy lindo*). The fourth and present period is one of complete transformation. The materials of construction are exclusively iron for columns, girders, and rafters, which are mostly manufactured in Belgium, and brick and cement for the walls and ornaments. The buildings, whether business blocks or dwelling-houses, have basement floors and three or four stories, and all the conveniences that hygienic engineering has devised. Some



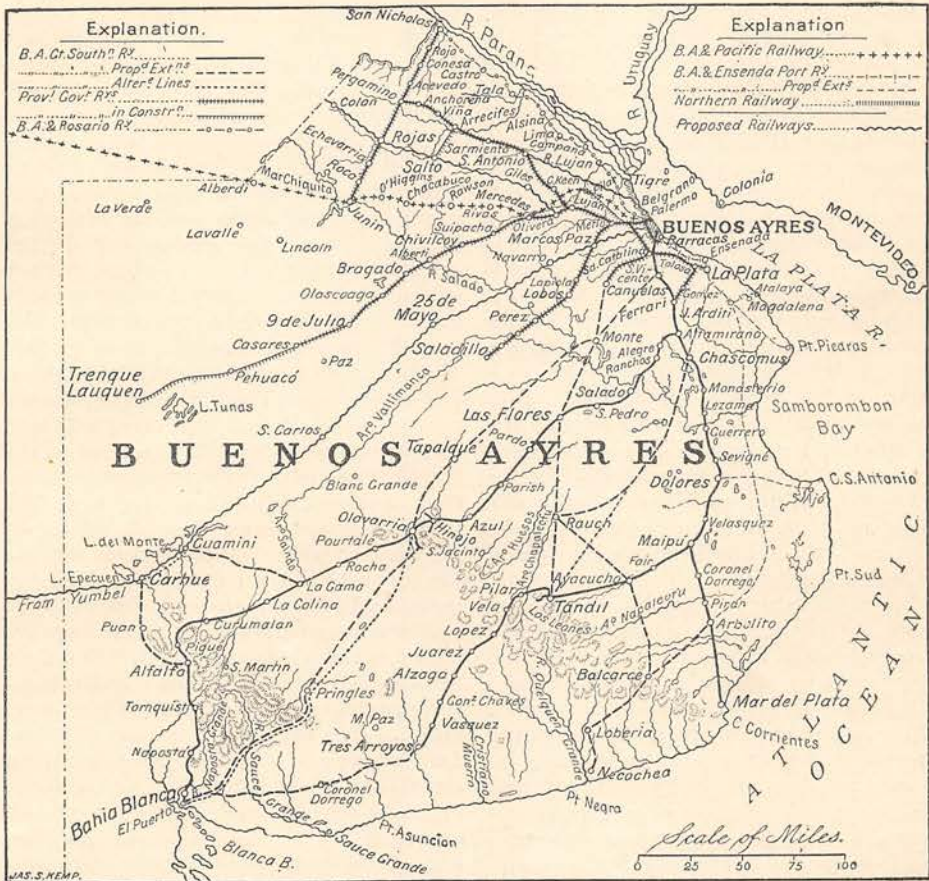
SHOEBLACKS.

of the modern business blocks, for instance, those of Tornquist and Company, Staudt and Company, and several blocks in the Calle Florida, including the vast edifice of the Bon Marché, still in course of construction, the building of the Municipality, and several of the new school-houses, are very handsome, the dominant style being so-called modern German, or, in other words, an adaptation of Renaissance elements to modern requirements. The tendency of this new movement in Argentine architecture is to give to the capital a markedly European aspect. In the domestic architecture, on the other hand, especially in the new houses to be seen in the north of the city, the favorite styles seem to be French and Ital-

ian Renaissance, with high peaked roofs, jutting turrets, and oriel-windows. All this seems strange when one reflects upon the fitness of things in general and the conditions of architecture in particular. In Buenos Ayres there is no building stone of any kind, much less a stone susceptible of receiving the delicate carving that contributes to the essential charm of Renaissance architecture. The sources of inspiration that are naturally and historically indicated to the modern Argentine architects are not those of the Renaissance, whether French, Italian, Belgian, or modern German, but those of the Moorish monuments of

Andalusia and of the East. The architectonic distribution of the Moorish house is the one that has hitherto prevailed in Spanish America; the constructive materials of Moorish architecture are those which the resources of the country offer; the methods and kinds of ornamentation employed by the Moors are alone reasonable and appropriate where the natural and available elements are clay, lime, sand, and their derivatives, together with wood and marble.

While the narrow streets of Buenos Ayres are inadequate for the actual traffic, the houses are insufficient to lodge the population in conditions of decency. The working classes especially are most miserably quartered in tenement-houses con-



structed without regard to hygiene. Considering its vast extent—18,000 hectares—the city is thinly populated, the explanation being the prevalence of houses of one story occupying a superficies which, in a city like Paris or Berlin, would be covered by a house of five or six stories, giving accommodation to twenty or thirty families. Even in the centre of the city—for instance, in the Calle Florida, the Bond Street, and the Boulevard des Italiens of Buenos Ayres—there are many houses of one story, and still more of two only. Why, one asks, do not the owners build new and lofty blocks? Surely it would be a good investment, given the dearness of rents. Yes, this reasoning is excellent; but the proprietors remain imperturbable, either through creole apathy, or because they have hitherto preferred to employ their money in the more rapidly and more handsomely remunerative business of speculation in land, stocks, and gold. At any rate, the

fact remains that 80 per cent. of the houses of the Argentine capital have only one story, that rents are enormously high, and that the population is distributed over a superficies so great that a large portion of the lives of the citizens is uselessly spent in the disagreeable and stultifying process of travelling in the horse-cars.*

As for the poorer classes, who cannot afford to lose time and money in locomotion, they are crowded in the centre of the town, in the so-called *conventillos*, those

* The reconstruction of modern Buenos Ayres is subject to certain municipal regulations which leave complete latitude to the architect as far as style and decoration are concerned, but require certain conditions of solidity and impose certain limits of height. Thus, in the streets that are less than 10 metres wide, the façade of a building, measured from the sidewalk to the cornice, must not exceed 16 metres. In the wider streets the façades may be higher, but must never exceed 20 metres. Public buildings, theatres, churches, and special edifices are exempt from these rules.

fearful sheds with zinc and iron roofs that are to be seen near the river between the central station and the suburb of La Boca. The census of 1887 shows that there were at that date 2835 conventillos in the city, inhabited by 116,167 persons, who live a dozen or more in a room, in conditions that render morality, decency, or cleanliness impossible.* Recently a few new tenement-houses have been built in hygienic conditions and according to the new regulations of the police; but in order to accommodate the poorer classes of Buenos Ayres in a more or less humane manner, at least 6000 such houses, each with a capacity of 200 persons, are needed. It is needless to add that this number will not be attained for years to come at the present rate of progression. Meanwhile the old system of unhealthy and abominable sheds remains, and the poorer workingmen and their families live in bestial promiscuity.

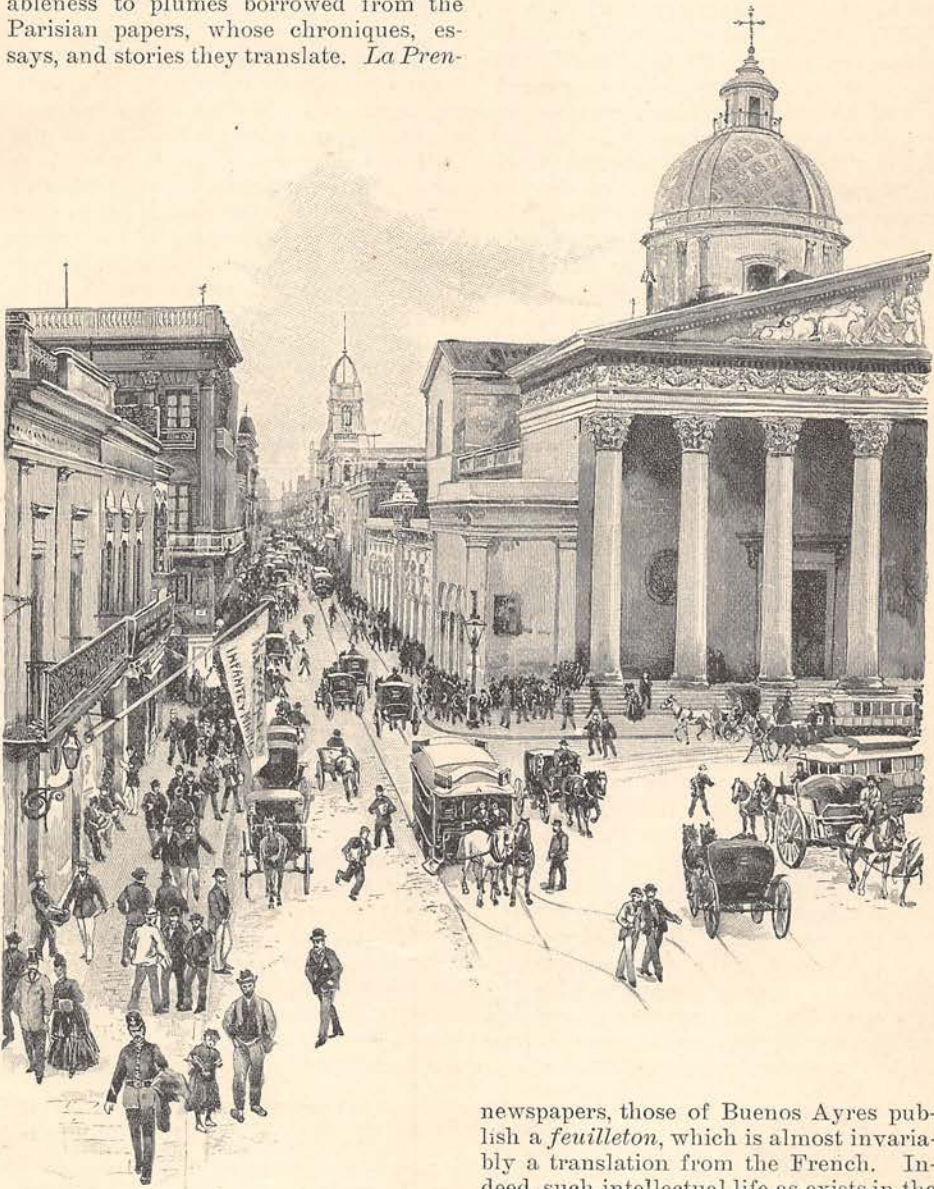
The apparatus of public instruction seems to occupy the attention of the government in a becoming manner, and doubtless in course of time the citizens will be fairly well educated. At present, as far as my experience goes, the young Argentines are as ignorant and badly informed as they are badly behaved, and that too not from want of intelligence—they are even precociously intelligent—but from lack of severe and logical training. One is tempted to conclude that there is a want of discipline and of good pedagogic methods in the schools and colleges, and one cannot believe that the extreme license allowed to boys of ten and twelve years of age, such as liberty to smoke, and to contract premature habits of vice and immorality, is compatible with good intellectual training. A more corrupt, rude, unlicked, and irrepressible creature than the average Argentine boy it would be difficult to find in any other civilized country. The girls, too, have an air of effrontery and a liberty of language to which the older civilizations of the world have not accustomed us. The educational statistics are, however, satisfactory, so far as mere registered results are concerned. There are two universities,

* The census of 1887 shows that the total number of houses in the city contain 261,456 rooms. The average of rooms in the Buenos Ayres houses is, therefore, less than 8. More than 35 per cent. of the houses contain from 3 to 5 rooms. The majority of these houses naturally occupy ground on which houses of 10, 20, 30, or more rooms could be built.

one at Buenos Ayres and one at Cordoba, which together counted 993 students in 1889, and delivered 234 diplomas, including 81 doctors of law, 85 doctors of medicine, and 11 civil engineers. In the whole republic there are 16 national colleges, with a teaching corps of 464 professors, and an attendance, in 1889, of 2599 pupils. In the capital and the provinces there are 35 normal schools, with 12,024 pupils of both sexes, who become professors and teachers, chiefly for the primary schools. In Buenos Ayres in 1889 there were 285 primary schools, directed by 1571 teachers, and attended by 54,509 children. In the provinces there were 2719 primary schools, with a teaching staff of 4532, and an attendance of 205,186. To resume, the results obtained were 3042 primary schools, 6103 teachers, 259,695 pupils, and 2373 primary school houses in the whole republic. Of these school-houses 485 are the property of the nation or of the provinces, and 1888 private property.

About 100 periodical publications are issued in the Argentine capital, but only a few have any real importance, either from their contents or the extent of their circulation. The chief are the daily papers—*La Prensa* and *La Nacion*, each with a circulation of about 20,000; *Le Courier de la Plata*, with less than 5000; *The Standard*, about 3000; *The Buenos Ayres Herald*, about 1500; *La Patria Italiana*, 12,000; *L'Operaio Italiano*, 6000; *El Correo Español*, 4000; *Sud America*, 6000; the evening journals *El Nacional* and *El Diario*, the latter with a circulation of about 13,000; the weekly satirical journal *Don Quijote*, and the *Sud Americano ilustrado*, which aspires to become the *Harper's Weekly* or the *Graphic* of South America. The principal daily journals are large four-page blanket sheets printed on poor paper, of slovenly typographical aspect, and of inconvenient proportions. As regards commerce and financial matters, they are excellently informed; their foreign news is as good as can be obtained from the telegraphic agencies; their political articles are generally well written and full of good sense, except in certain journals like *Le Courier de la Plata* and *Sud America*, which have sold their independence for government subventions; the local news is collected by reporters whose zeal seems to be exemplary. As for the rest of the paper—the social article, the musical, dramatic, and literary

criticism—it is “amateurish,” to say the best. Apart from the good features noted above, the newspapers of the Argentine capital owe all their excellence and readability to plumes borrowed from the Parisian papers, whose chroniques, essays, and stories they translate. *La Pren-*



PLAZA SAN MARTIN.

sa and *La Nacion* also have special correspondence from Paris, written by Jules Simon, Jules Clarétie, and Paul Foucher, and letters from Madrid by Castelar and Perez Galdos, the novelist. Like all Latin

newspapers, those of Buenos Ayres publish a *feuilleton*, which is almost invariably a translation from the French. Indeed, such intellectual life as exists in the Argentine is a distant reflection of that of Paris; there is no native literary production worthy of the name, except in the departments of history and of versification. Thus it happens that the signatures you find in the newspapers of Buenos Ayres are the same as those of the Parisian journals: Zola, Daudet, Goncourt Feuillet,

Guy de Maupassant, Georges Ohnet, Jules Mary, Xavier de Montépin, etc. The intellectual influence of France in the Argentine Republic is too noticeable not to be particularly dwelt upon. Indeed, in all that concerns civilization, the Argentines look up to the French, and imitate them when they get rich enough and sufficiently cultivated, just as the preceding generations in political matters looked up to and tried to imitate the United States. Nowadays, however, there is reason to believe that the prestige of the United States is not what it used to be in the Argentine mind, a fact for which the inadequate diplomatic representation of the great Northern sister is largely responsible, combined, of course, with the limited commercial intercourse existing between the two republics. On this point Dr. Roque Saenz Peña expressed the real sentiments of the country when, at the congress of Washington, he said, in terms that were scarcely softened in their intensity by a veil of courtesy: "I am not wanting in affection and love for America. I am rather wanting in distrust and ingratitude toward Europe. I do not forget that there is Spain, our mother, contemplating with unfeigned joy the development of her old dominions under the action of noble and virile peoples that have inherited her blood; that there is Italy, our friend; there France, our sister . . . Europe that sends us laborers and completes our economical life, after having sent us her civilization and her culture, her science, her arts, industries, and customs, which have completed our sociological evolution."

In the commerce of Buenos Ayres the banking, import, and export business predominate, and these, together with the derivative branches, maritime agencies, commission houses, custom-house-clearers, or *despachantes de aduana*,* money-

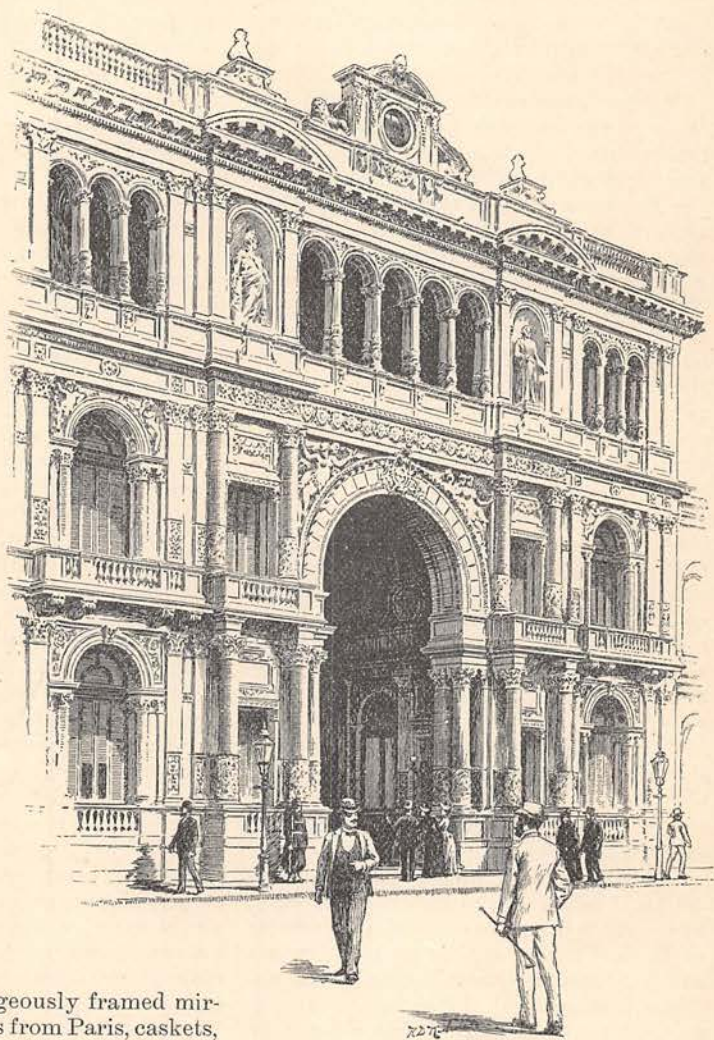
* The *despachante de aduana* is an indispensable person in the ports of Buenos Ayres and of Montevideo. In the Argentine and in Uruguay the customs regulations require so many complicated operations for the landing and clearing of imported merchandise that much practice and special knowledge are necessary in order to get the goods out without harm and without too great loss of time. Thus the men who know the ins and outs and all the processes of the custom-house possess a very lucrative profession, and even the largest importing houses find it preferable to employ these specialists rather than to intrust the delicate work of clearing to an employé of their own. The custom-house of Buenos Ayres is generally reported to be a hot-bed

of thievery and corruption, and several of the superior employés with whom I talked confirmed the rumors that I had heard from tradesmen. It is impossible to get anything out of the custom-house in less than one month after its arrival; if you get your goods cleared within two months you are lucky. The European exporters give the Argentines six months' credit from the date of shipment of goods. Supposing the goods go out in a sailing ship, we may reckon ninety days for the journey, and sixty to seventy days for the custom-house formalities, and so the importer really has no credit at all. A whole chapter might be written on the tyranny, abuses, and obstructive regulations of the Argentine custom-houses.

changers, and auctioneers, all operate on an enormous scale. The movement and activity of the port, the warehouses, the Bourse, and the business streets of the Argentine capital is truly marvellous, and to be compared only with that of the great commercial ports of Europe. To enter into details concerning all these businesses would require many pages of technical considerations that would not interest the general reader, and which the specialist will find ready at hand in published treatises, at least so far as concerns the financial history of the republic up to the last crisis. It may, however, be of general interest to make a few remarks about certain special branches that are peculiarly characteristic of the Argentine, such, for instance, as the stores for the sale of building materials, *corralones de madera* and *ferreterias*. The principal articles sold by the former are, besides timber, the iron columns, girders, and rafters, columns and trusses, now exclusively used in all modern constructions both in town and country. Some of these *corralones* do a daily average business of \$30,000. The *ferreterias*, besides ironmongery and general hardware fittings, also sell paint, varnish, wall-paper, gilt mouldings, and window-glass. Many of these stores are immense, and luxurious in aspect.

In the retail commerce of the city the shops for the sale of articles of luxury occupy the first place, together with the bazars, the jewelry shops, and the dry-goods stores, of which one, La Ciudad de Londres, is a small rival of the Paris Magasins du Louvre. In no city perhaps, except Montevideo, are jewellers' shops more numerous in proportion to the population than in Buenos Ayres, and at least forty or fifty are fine and rich establishments, having most costly and extensive stocks of the dearest articles—brilliant,

pearls, precious stones, chronometers, and watches of the most expensive kind. The majority of the diamonds and precious stones sold in Buenos Ayres are mounted in the city, and I may say without exaggeration that the jewellers of Paris and of London do not make a more brilliant display of costly jewels than their colleagues of the Calle Florida. Most attractive displays are also found in the bazars, which make a specialty of all the fancy articles and objects of art or of luxury that London, Paris, Milan, Venice, and Vienna produce—bronzes, marble statues by facile Italian chisels, terra-cotta figures, Italian oil-paintings and fac-simile water-colors, French photo-gravures, Italian carved furniture, gorgeously framed mirrors, lacquered articles from Paris, caskets, glove boxes, fans, dressing-cases, Japanese porcelain, gaudy albums, rich table services, and silver toilet sets of prodigious size and splendor. One of the first things that struck me as I strolled along the Calle Florida, after the glittering and innumerable diamonds, was the size and quantity of silver toilet jugs and basins—objects rarely seen in Europe except in the houses of crowned heads and *cocottes*. Some of these bazars do business only by auction; there are sales two or three nights a week, and exhibitions of objects, with a free piano recital, on the other nights. At these auctions the more showy and useless the article, the higher the price it fetches; and as regards pictures, oleographs, engravings, and bronzes, whether



ENTRANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

real bronze or *zinc d'art*, as the French term is, my observations tended to show that the larger the size, and the more complete the nudity of the subject represented, the higher the price paid. The majority of the objects sold at these auctions are imported from Italy. While speaking of the immense demand for rich fancy articles and *objets de luxe* which has existed at Buenos Ayres during the ten years of prosperity between 1880 and 1890, it is curious to note how easily the market has been worked, and what poor, vul-

gar, and commonplace articles the Argentines have received in exchange for their dollars. Both in the houses and in the shops of Buenos Ayres objects of real artistic merit are extremely rare, and bad taste reigns supreme in the accessories, ornaments, and bibelots, as well as in the furniture and hangings. The culture of the Argentines is still too limited to entitle us to ask of them evidences of delicate taste. Their love of showiness is an instinct, and not to be lightly condemned. They are typical *rastacouères*, and their natural tendency is to buy what is rich and expensive. Given these conditions, the modern North-American art industries—the gold and silver smith's art, the weaving of rich stuffs, the making of fine furniture and glass-ware, and the various minor industries which produce fancy articles, often far from commendable it is true, but nevertheless always having a *cachet* of their own when placed side by side with the old-fashioned routine goods of Europe—have been neglecting an excellent and willing market. Hitherto these finer North-American manufactures are quite unknown in the southern republics.

The auctioneer, *martillero* or *rematador*, is a great personage in the Argentine, and an indispensable factor in the commerce of the country. An auction, or *remate*, is the beginning, the end, and the intermediary period of almost every transaction. In no city in the world is there anything to be compared with the *remates* of Buenos Ayres, and in no country has sale by auction become the universal national institution that it is in the Argentine. The moment the visitor lands he sees immense advertisements, *remate de terrenos*, a fine corner lot here, so many leagues there; the fourth page of the huge blanket-sheet newspapers is filled with advertisements of sales of land and houses; the streets are hung with flags, banners, and scarlet cloths, with white letters announcing *gran remate* of this and that; along the Paseo de Julio the cheap-jack shops have their auctioneer perched on the counter, and other *rematadores* are there under the colonnade ready to sell leagues of land to the newly arrived immigrants. Cargoes of imported merchandise, ships, land, houses, crops, wool, the products and fruits of the country, cattle, blood stock, furniture, jewelry, things new and things old, all

pass under the hammer, and the auctioneer takes his percentage, varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 per cent., and becomes richer and richer as his voice grows hoarser and hoarser.

In the newspapers, in advertisements, and in official reports there is much self-congratulation on the subject of the progress of manufacturing industry in the republic. The moment there is question of creating an "industria nacional" the government is ever ready to impose protective customs tariffs on the article concerned, the only result being, in nine cases out of ten to put a heavier tax on the consumer, who is still obliged to have recourse to the foreign producer. In reality Argentine national manufacturing industry is at present, with certain exceptions, a small and often factitious affair. Statistics, however, would make it out to be very important. Thus the official census of 1887 mentions more than 6000 industrial establishments in the city of Buenos Ayres, giving employment to more than 40,000 persons; but in order to make up this total the census includes 700 shoemakers, of whom some are mere street-corner cobblers, 466 tailors, 243 bakers, 651 carpenters, 400 barbers, 114 confectioners, 279 modistes, and so forth. There are certainly manufacturing industries, but not precisely such as to entitle a country to great industrial renown. There are, however, certain national industries in course of development which are worthy of note. Such are the oil manufactories of Buenos Ayres, producing good table oil from the pea-nut, or *mani*, which grows in abundance in Santa Fe, Entre Rios, Corrientes, and the Chaco, and also common oils from other oleaginous seeds. Cart, carriage, and harness making are likewise truly national and flourishing industries, as well as brewing, milling, and distilling, canning and preserving meat, fruit, and vegetables, and the manufacture of macaroni and alimentary pastes, cigars, wax matches, and furniture. There are some 50 macaroni manufactories in Buenos Ayres, and about 120 cigar and cigarette manufactories, where only inferior cigars are produced, but where cigarettes are made by millions with imported tobacco, chiefly Havana picadura. The home-made cigarette monopolizes the immense Argentine market; the marks are very numerous, each being popularized by artistic chro-



C. S. REINHARDT. 70

THE CATHEDRAL AFTER SERVICE.

mo-lithographic wrappers and catching names, such as Excelsior, Tip-Top, Clic-Clac, etc.; and the competition between those engaged in this profitable industry, combined with the Argentine love of showy novelties, necessitates the continual

creation of new designs. At the time of my visit I counted nearly a hundred varieties of cigarettes in the shops of the capital. The native wax matches, put up in dainty boxes after the French and Italian fashion, have monopolized the market

since 1880, having driven out the Italian matches that held the monopoly from 1870, up to which latter date the French were the exclusive purveyors of this article. In no city in the world, in proportion to the population, are more wax matches used than in the Argentine metropolis, where every man and every boy above ten years of age smokes cigarettes from morning until night. The cigarette is tolerated everywhere, in the tramways and trains, in-doors and out-of-doors, in the ministries and public offices, in the warehouses and offices; even the clerks in the banks smoke their cigarettes and puff smoke in your face as they hand you your count of paper dollars, or *oro sellado*, and the ordinary commercial employé may generally be found with a cigarette behind one ear and a wooden toothpick behind the other, always ready to take advantage of a moment's leisure.

The furniture interest has developed within the past twenty years in a remarkable manner. Formerly only plain white-wood articles were made in the republic, while Germany supplied the rich and so-called artistic goods. At present Germany no longer sends ship-loads of furniture, because the Argentine national manufacturers have succeeded in imitating with advantage the taste and quality of all the articles formerly imported from Germany. The French furniture imported nowadays consists only of fancy pieces—chairs and *meubles de grand luxe*. English furniture is imported in small quantities, and North America and Austria supply the Argentine with thousands of dozens of bent-wood and other cheap chairs, which are seen all over the republic, in the houses of rich and poor alike. The furniture manufactories of Buenos Ayres, numbering more than 300, supply the provinces also; and although we hear much talk about the utilization of the timber riches of the Chaco, this industry is still dependent upon imported woods.*

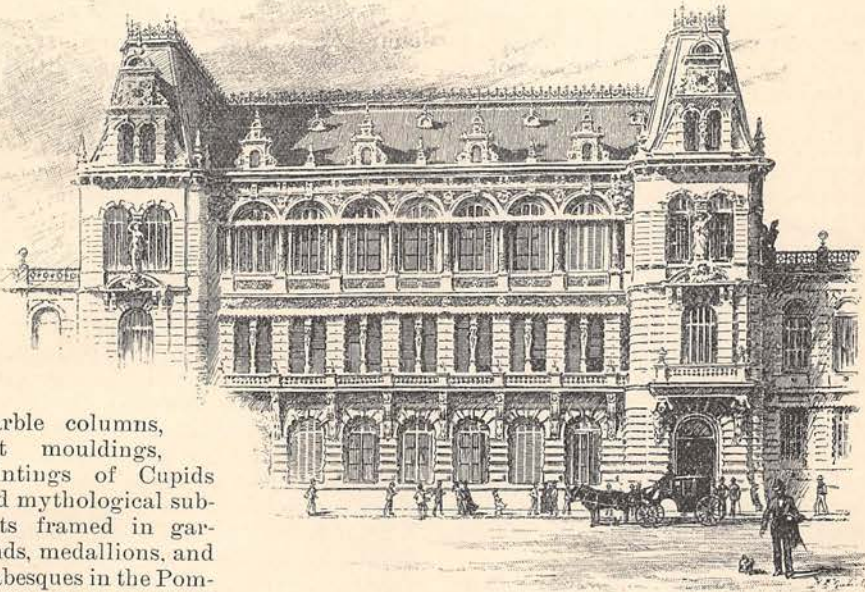
Monumental Buenos Ayres does not offer much interest from the artistic point

of view, the general impression of the town being rather one of monotony and uniform ugliness; the fine buildings there are do not impose themselves upon the view; one has to search deliberately for them, especially in the narrow streets, where the eye commands only a limited perspective. We will begin our review with the Plaza de la Victoria, which, although situated on the flank of the city, at a distance of one cuadra from the river, is nevertheless the conventional centre toward which converge not only ten important streets, but almost all the tramways. In the middle of the plaza, which is laid out in grass-plots, and bordered with a cordon of palm-trees affording no shade, is a white stucco pedestal and pyramidal column surmounted by a statue of Liberty, the whole commemorating the 25th of May, 1810—Independence Day. At the end of the plaza toward the river, and opposite the Palacio de Gobierno, is an equestrian statue of the national hero, General Belgrano. Around the plaza are the Palacio de Gobierno, the Palace of Justice, the Bolsa Comercial, the Colon Theatre, now being transformed into premises for the Banco Nacional, the Cathedral, the Archbishop's Palace, the Chamber of Congress, and various arcades and houses of mean aspect, destined to disappear in the gradual reconstruction and embellishment of the square. The finest building on the plaza is the Palacio de Gobierno, flanked by the Law Courts and the new Post-office, the latter not yet occupied for business. This block, designed by an Italian, is in the Italian Renaissance style. The façade, although not uniform and not harmonious as a whole, contains some excellent details. The end façade facing toward the Paseo de Julio is of a style approaching the composite Corinthian. In this block, called the Casa Rosada, are the apartments of the President of the republic, which have been recently restored, and present an aspect of royal rather than of republican splendor. Mosaic pavements,

* The census of 1887 gives the number of persons employed in the commercial houses of Buenos Ayres as 33,904, of whom more than 13,000 are Italians, 7000 Argentine, 7000 Spaniards, and nearly 3000 French. The Germans numbered 657; the English, 604; and the North-Americans, 62. The Argentines own the largest number of houses, whether of importation, exportation, or both combined; but the houses that do the greatest amount of business are those of the English and Germans,

the former owning about 60 establishments, and the latter 90. The French own 130 houses, and hold the third place, so far as importation is concerned, according to the statistics of 1888, and the second place next to England in combined imports and exports.

The number of *casas introductoras*, or import houses, given by the last census is 672; export houses, 55; and import and export combined, 100; in all, 827.



ESCUELA PETRONILA RODRIGUEZ.

marble columns, gilt mouldings, paintings of Cupids and mythological subjects framed in garlands, medallions, and arabesques in the Pompeian taste, colored glass, gorgeous curtains, showy furniture—all the magnificence

that money can buy, and all the profusion of ornamentation that contemporary Italian genius can invent, have been lavished on every inch of wall, floor, and ceiling. The staircase, entirely of marble, is of fine proportions and splendidly over-decorated. I may add that the Argentines venture to compare it with the staircase of the Paris Opera. The Palacio de Gobierno is built of brick faced with stucco, and all the columns, capitals, and ornaments are likewise of stucco. The Bolsa Comercial, founded in 1854, and recently installed in new premises, has an elegant and imposing façade on the plaza. The grand hall is in the Corinthian style, surrounded by a gallery. The ornamentation is simple and in good taste, and all the offices and appurtenances seem to be convenient and commodious, inasmuch as more than one thousand persons are constantly moving about at ease within the precincts of the Bolsa. Only the brokers and the members are admitted to the building, the entrances of which are guarded by footmen in livery. The Bolsa has a second entrance in the Calle Piedad, where the principal banks and financial establish-

ments are situated. From twelve to one, and again from three to four in the afternoon, the Buenos Ayres Stock Exchange presents a scene of animation and noise that few of the exchanges of Europe or North America can surpass. Transactions of all kinds, commercial, industrial, financial, and speculative, are transacted, but the chief operations are in gold.

On the same side of the plaza as the Bolsa is the cathedral, founded by Juan de Garay in 1580, rebuilt in 1752, and adorned in this century by General Rosas with a heavy classical portico of twelve columns supporting a tympanum on which is a bass-relief representing the meeting of Joseph and his brethren. The interior, spacious and lofty, with a cupola 130 feet high at the end, is divided into three naves with massive columns.*

* The dimensions are 270 by 150 feet, the area 4500 square yards, and the capacity, 18,000 persons. It is the sixth in this respect, the order of holding capacity being: St. Peter's, at Rome; St. Paul's, London; Antwerp cathedral; Saint Sofia; Notre Dame, at Paris; and then the cathedral at Buenos Ayres. Besides the cathedral, there are twenty-three Catholic churches and four Protestant churches in Buenos Ayres, but none of architectural interest.

The aspect is cold, bare, and poverty-stricken. It is to be feared that the Argentines do not attach very much importance to religion, and in this impression I was confirmed when I saw in the cathedral the ceremonies and procession of the Corpus Christi. The robes of the clergy, the candlesticks, the banners, and all the ritual accessories were of the cheapest and most paltry description, while the attendance of the public was small considering the size of the city. In Buenos Ayres you do not see the same manifestations of piety and respect that are noticeable in Chili and Peru. The Argentine ladies have entirely abandoned the use of the *manta*, which in Santiago and Lima makes all women equal before the altar. When they go to church they wear Parisian toilets, and cover their faces with rice powder and veloutine. The men rarely go beyond the church steps, where they wait to compliment or insult the ladies as they pass after service is over.

The only monument of merit and interest inside the cathedral is the tomb of General San Martin, placed in a side chapel or rotunda annexed to the building. On a pedestal of red marble stands a black marble urn, surmounted by a mantle, sword, hat, and laurel wreath in bronze, and guarded by three allegorical marble figures of the Argentine, Chili, and Peru. The inscriptions around the base mention the chief dates and events in the career of the liberator of Spanish America, and on the wall of the chapel a slab of black marble proclaims as follows in gilt letters:

JOSÉ DE SAN MARTIN.

GUERRERO DE LA INDEPENDENCIA ARGENTINA.

LIBERTADOR DE CHILE Y EL PERÚ.

NACIÓ EL 25 DE FEBRERO DE 1778 EN YAPEYÚ.

MURIÓ EL 17 DE AGOSTO DE 1850 EN

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

AQUÍ YACE.

This fine monument was subscribed by the Argentine nation in 1877-80, and designed and executed by a French sculptor, the late Carrier-Belleuse.

The remaining monument to be noticed on the Plaza de la Victoria is the Congress Hall, a miserable little place, more like a cockpit than the legislative palace of a great republic. This fact is of course admitted by the Argentines, who intend to spend three million dollars on the construction of an adequate palace for

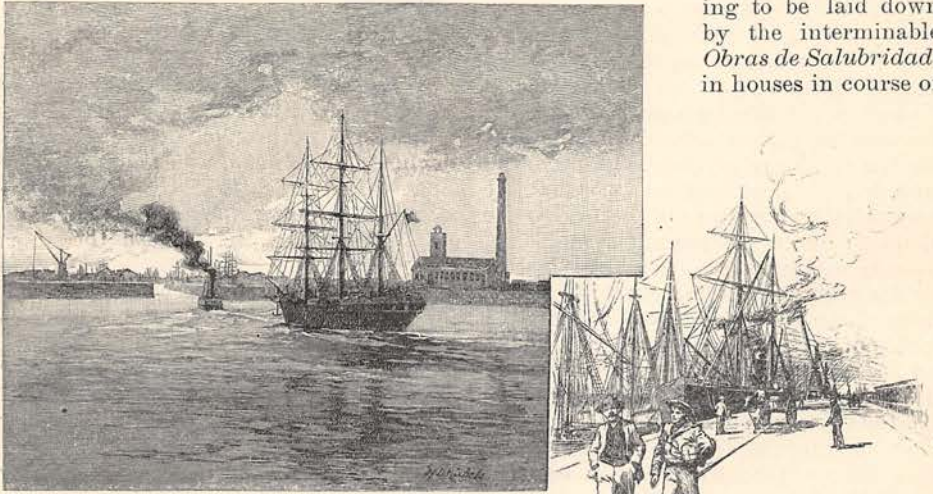
the senators and deputies as soon as the country recovers its pristine prosperity.

In the streets of the capital there are few public buildings worthy of note. The churches are simple and ordinary, and the only feature that imparts a little gaiety and picturesqueness to their monotonous stucco silhouettes is the blue, rose, and white Talavera tiles, or *azulejos*, used on the roofs of the domes and towers. The old Spanish Custom-house facing the river is noticeable for its circular form, and because it is the only monument of the early colonial days that the city possesses. The great banks are all lodged in large and imposing edifices of no special architectural merits, except, perhaps, the Banco de Carabassa, which is a good specimen of classical modern Corinthian. By far the best buildings in the city are the school-houses, some of them being veritable palaces, as, for instance, the Escuela Sarmiento, in the Calle Callao, the Normal School, in the Calle Cordoba, the Escuela Graduada de Niñas, on the Plaza General Lavalle, and, above all, the Escuela Petronila Rodriguez, occupied by a pedagogic museum and the offices of the Superior Council of Education. The interior of this building is commonplace and badly distributed, but the grand façade and the end entrance are very fine specimens of German Renaissance architecture enriched with caryatides and ornaments of the usual cement and imitation stone, which cracks and chips even in the clement climate of Buenos Ayres. The building, however, is of grand proportions and imposing aspect. The Escuela Petronila Rodriguez is the only public institution of any kind that I could discover in Buenos Ayres founded by private munificence. It was built with a legacy bequeathed by the lady whose name the establishment bears. In no city, except in some of those of North America, have more or larger fortunes been made within the past ten years than in Buenos Ayres, but while the newly enriched citizens of the northern republic endeavor to make the community profit by their wealth in the foundation and endowment of universities, museums, schools, libraries, picture-galleries, places of recreation, and works of public and permanent utility, the Argentines systematically ignore their fellow-citizens, and think only of their own material enjoyment. I say "material," because hitherto the Argentines have fig-

ured in the European markets only as purchasers of fine horses, costly jewelry, and objects of vulgar luxury; they have not yet become Venetian enough to require rare and beautiful books, or masterpieces of painting and sculpture. A marked evidence of the intellectual destitution of the Argentine capital is the dearth of libraries, reading-rooms, and intellectual resorts of any kind. There appears to be only one lending library, and that is of small avail for such a vast city.

but most of them are not kept in good order, and not much frequented by the public. The Paseo de Julio, for instance, although pleasantly laid out, is abandoned entirely to those social waifs whom the Argentines call *atorrantes*—foreigners who have missed Fortune's coach, and sunk lower and lower, until they have finally solved the problem of living without money, without a lodging, and almost without clothes. These poor and dirty creatures, numbering altogether perhaps two or three

hundred, sleep in water-pipes that are waiting to be laid down by the interminable *Obras de Salubridad*, in houses in course of



THE NEW DOCKS.

As for the National Public Library, it is frequented only by a scanty number of students, and occupies a poor and inadequate building in the Calle Peru, adjoining the equally poor building of the university.

To return to the question of public buildings, I should pronounce the Escuela Petronila Rodriguez to be one of the best buildings in Buenos Ayres, ranking with the Palacio de Gobierno, the Bolsa, and the splendid railway station of the Ferrocarril del Sur, on the Plaza de la Constitucion, which in itself is by far the finest station on the South-American continent.

Buenos Ayres, owing to the symmetrical rigidity of its plan and the narrowness of the streets, is close and insufficiently provided with open spaces and promenades, at least in the old city. There are seventeen squares, or plazas, planted with trees and provided with benches and walks,

construction, or on the benches of the public squares. The Jardin de la Recoleta, charmingly laid out, and adorned with a cascade of artificial rock-work that cost several million dollars, is visited by few except foreigners. The plazas that bear the names of San Martin and Lavalle, the latter adorned with a handsome marble column and statue of its patronymic hero, are equally deserted at all hours of the day; and as for the vast Plaza Victoria, no one would think of going there to take the air. The distant Palermo, or Parque 3 de Febrero, is really the only promenade in the city that is regularly frequented, and that, too, almost exclusively by the wealthy.

The repaving and adequate draining of the city are being slowly executed by the so-called *Obras de Salubridad*, which were

begun some years ago, and are likely to continue for many years to come. New diagonal boulevards are also being cut very slowly through the old city, with a view to relieving the traffic now so crowded; and many great and costly public works are in execution or in project, which, together with the efforts of private initiative, will contribute to make Buenos Ayres a truly wonderful and splendid city in some eight or ten years. For the moment, the city is still rough, transitional, patchy, unattractive; nevertheless, one cannot fail to be impressed by its immensity, and by the garment of splendor and luxury which it is gradually putting on.

The works of the construction of the port of Buenos Ayres, called the Puerto Madero, made rapid progress during the six months within which I had opportunities of observing them, and produced considerable modifications in what we may call the river-front of the city, by the abolition of the old passenger mole and its surrounding fleet of small boats, and by the prohibition of all washing operations along the river-bank. Up to the spring of 1890 the passenger mole and the groups of washer-women at work around the muddy pools of the river-bank from Las Catalinas to La Boca were two of the most picturesque features of the place. Now, happily for the traveller and for the population, progress has triumphed. Owing to the shallowness of the sides of the La Plata River, and the shifting sand banks which its yellow waters are perpetually forming and reforming, large ships have been hitherto unable to anchor nearer to Buenos Ayres than two or more miles. The great transatlantic steamers anchor at a distance of twelve and fourteen miles from the shore, hence the great cost, and also danger, of discharging cargo by means of launches, and hence the desire of the Bonaerenses to have a port.

The works now being carried out comprise three distinct operations:

1. The reclaiming, by means of the construction of a sea-wall, of a superficies of the river-bed more than a league long, from the mouth of the Riachuelo to beyond Catalinas, the whole width of the frontage of the city, and with a breadth of several cuadras.

2. The construction in the longitudinal axis of this superficies of four large docks, flanked at the extremities by two basins, or *arsenals*, all communicating by gates.

3. The economical part, which consists in the sale of the land thus gained.

At present Dock No. 1 and the South Darsena are open, and provided with fine hydraulic machinery, immense quays, and colossal depots; the southern channel has been dredged to a depth of twenty-one feet and over a distance of twenty kilometres across the bed of the La Plata River; and the excavation of the other docks and the operations of filling in are being actively continued. In four or five years the whole system of docks and channels will be completed, at an estimated cost of twenty million piastres, and the city will have a new artificial river façade more than five kilometres long.

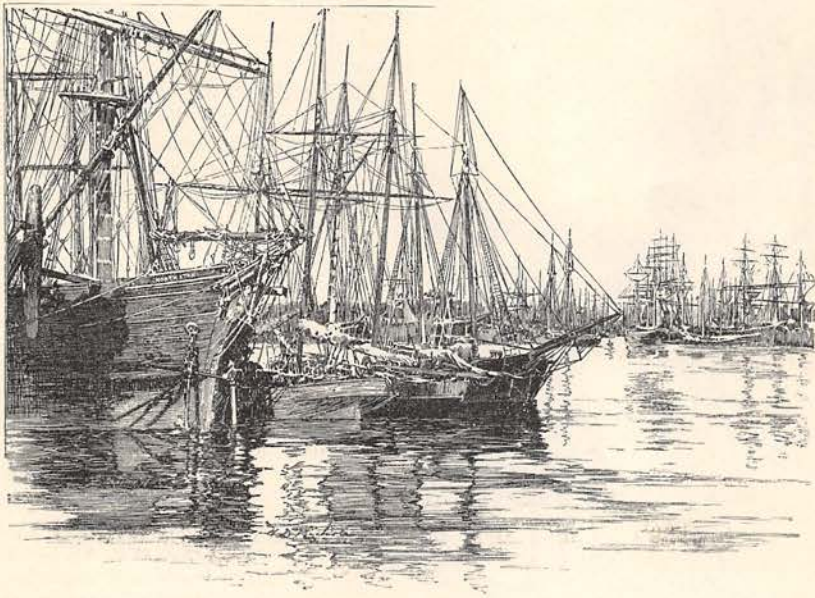
Meanwhile the Riachuelo, canalized over an extension of more than fifteen cuadras, continues to form the really busy port of Buenos Ayres, and the parts of the city along this river, called La Boca and Barracas, resemble a forest of masts and smoke-stacks, so thickly are the ships crowded together along the interminable quays, wharves, and warehouses. La Boca is inhabited by 30,000 Neapolitans and other Italians, who are extremely industrious and frugal, but also extremely regardless of comfort and cleanliness. This suburb is surrounded by marshy ground, on which the most primitive sheds and wooden huts are built in absolutely unhygienic conditions, that have hitherto made the district a nest of fever and other maladies. The new harbor works, however, have improved La Boca greatly by protecting it from inundations. The quays of La Boca, the maze of shipping, the queer houses of the boat-builders and wherry-men who live on the island, the habits and customs of the coasting and river sailors, the landing of coal, timber, iron, fruit, all help to make a most picturesque and animated scene, full of "bits" that would tempt the painter or the etcher.

When I arrived for the first time at Buenos Ayres, in high midsummer, I was not surprised to find social life and public amusements at a stand-still. The heat was excessive. The people of wealth and leisure were living in the reclusion of their country houses or enjoying sea-air and shooting at Mar del Plata, the Newport or Brighton of the Argentine capital. Even the business men were to be found at their offices only for half an hour or an hour, and that, too, not every day. The theatres

were naturally closed, with the exception of the Jardin Florida, where a second-rate French café-concert troupe was attracting scanty audiences; the Variedades, where there was a Spanish comedy company; and the Politeama, then occupied by a circus. In these establishments there was but little animation. What did the inhabitants do, I asked, when the day's work was over? How did the shopmen, the commercial employés, the working-men, the populace, pass their evenings? What distractions did the city offer? A general negative was the only answer to these questions. Buenos Ayres is without amusements. There is not even a band of music to be heard on any of the numerous plazas of the city, nor is there a single café where one can sit and take the air while enjoying the spectacle of the movement of the street or the view over the river. All the cafés are well closed and shut off from the outside world. The plazas are deserted. There is no special promenade where people go to see and to be seen; and although we are on Latin soil, we find none of those thousand nameless, idle charms which usually concur to make Latin cities so agreeable. For all these shortcomings I was ready to make allow-

ance, considering the season: summer is a bad time for studying capitals. But when I returned to Buenos Ayres, in the middle of May, the conditions were different. With the first whistlings of the pampero, society had returned to town. *Adiosito abanico!* The summer heat was over, and the cool winter weather rendered all the usual occupations of wealth and leisure at once possible and obligatory. I was therefore not a little curious to see *la elegancia porteña* in the exercise of its functions, and to acquire some notions about *el gran tono bonaerense*, *la alta sociedad* of Buenos Ayres, and also about society which is not "high," but merely ordinary.

Buenos Ayres has its Bois de Boulogne or Rotten Row in the Parque 3 de Febrero, situated to the north of the town, and close to the river. On our way to this rather distant park we have an opportunity of seeing some of the handsomest modern houses in the capital, in the vicinity of the Calle Juncal, Avenida de la Republica, and Avenida General Alvéar, the last a fine broad and long road, destined some day to vie with the Parisian Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. Few of these specimens of domestic architecture are remarkable for good taste or



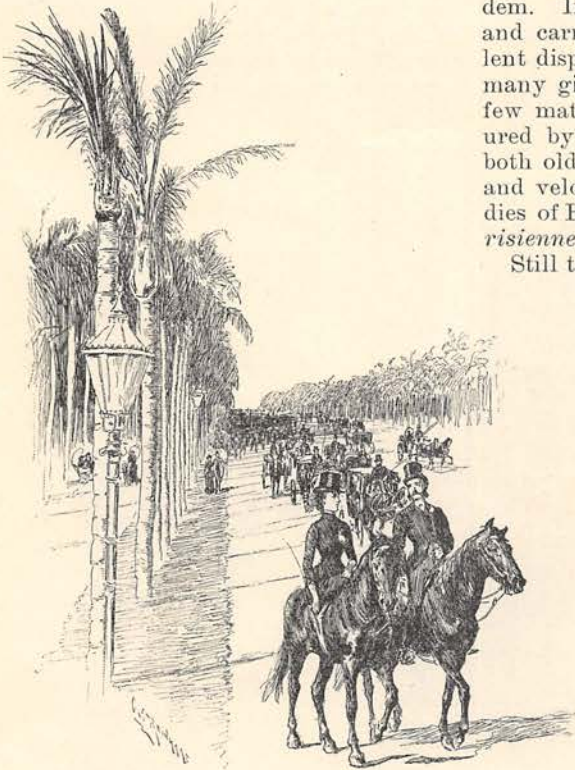
LA BOCA.

originality; the models, as we have already observed, are almost invariably borrowed from France, and adapted to Argentine needs with little discernment. One millionaire wants a small Pitti Palace built; another prefers the Château of Blois; a third requires a copy of a neat Renaissance villa that he saw in the Parc Monceaux at Paris, always with the addition of a little more ornament; and as there is no building stone in the Argentine, caryatides, capitals, pillars, balconies, cornices, and every moulding and detail, are made of stucco by ingenious Italian workmen, who build up remarkable monuments of insincerity over a simple framework of brick and iron.

The Parque 3 de Febrero, commonly known as Palermo, is prettily laid out and covered with fine trees and shrubs, but, with the exception of the two avenues—planted, the one with palm-trees, the other with firs—where the daily show of carriages takes place, the walks and roads are not kept up with all the care

that could be desired. In double file the procession of carriages moves up one side and down the other, under the superintendence of mounted police; a few horsemen canter in the intervening space between the lines of carriages; amazons are very rare; loungers and spectators on the sidewalk are also rare. There is really little to distinguish the promenade of Palermo from the usual dull staring match which all great capitals have in one form or another. Its chief characteristic is a want of animation; it is silent and funereal; the women in the carriages, mute and expressionless, seem fulfilling a doleful duty as they sit in their coupés, landaus, or victorias, often drawn by fine Trakenen, English, or French horses, imported, like the carriages, at great expense. The latest mania amongst the rich Argentines is to have imported carriage horses and handsome carriages. You even see young "bloods," marvellously clad in putty-colored or cream coats, adorned with broad seams and buttons as large as a saucer, perched on lofty English dog-carts, and trying to drive tandem. In short, so far as concerns horses and carriages, Palermo makes an excellent display. As for the ladies, you see many girls of striking beauty, but very few mature women who are not disfigured by excess of adipose deposit, and both old and young abuse *poudre de riz* and *veloutine*. The costume of the ladies of Buenos Ayres is entirely *à la Parisienne*.

Still to the north of the town—the one near Palermo and the other at Belgrano—are two pleasant race-courses, the Hippodromo Argentino and the Hippodromo Nacional, with fine and picturesquely situated tracks and tastefully designed tribunes. On one or the other course there are races on Sundays and fête-days during the winter months, under the direction of a jockey club, and with all the formalities and apparatus of the race meetings of Europe. The Argentines are becoming great buyers of European racing stock, and they already have their stud-book and important and well-stocked racing stables. As races are usually a pre-



PALERMO.

text in civilized countries for gatherings of elegance and fashion, I went to the meetings at Buenos Ayres on several occasions, but my observations were each time identical. In the tribune of the members of the Jockey Club I counted about a dozen ladies; scattered over the other tribunes and on the lawn might be seen about the same number of *cocottes*; the rest of the public was composed of men and boys. For this rough horde of human beings the only interest that the races offered was the betting, conducted in the Argentine, as in Europe, by means of the mutual pool or *pari mutuel* system. On each race the totals amounted to fifty and sixty thousand dollars, and the moment the race was over there was a roar of many feet and a stampede from the tribunes to the paying offices.

In continuation of my studies of public amusements I visited the two principal establishments, or *canchas*, where *pelota*, a sort of tennis, is played. This game was introduced into the Argentine by emigrants from the Basque provinces of Spain, where it is chiefly played, and has now become the great popular sport of the republic—the Argentine base-ball. In Buenos Ayres the *frontones*, or courts, where the game is played are immense places with lofty walls, surmounted by wire netting on two sides, and on the other two sides tiers of seats and boxes for the public. The walls have hard and smooth faces; the floor of the court is even and level, and marked into compartments by black lines. On the end wall to the right of the court is the *pizarra*, or marking board. The players at Buenos Ayres are professionals, invariably Basques, and the best of them come from Spain for the Hispano-American season, like tenors, or *toreros*, and with engagements at equally high salaries. Apart from the celebrity of the artistes, the game is always blue against red. The marking board calls the players *los azules* and *los colorados*; they wear blue Basque cloth caps and red caps; their jerseys are striped blue and white and red and white; their sashes or waistbands are blue and red respectively; their trousers and shoes are white. The *pelotares* strike the ball not with the bare hand, but with a *cesta* made of osier or wicker work, half round, sharply curved at the end, and measuring some eighteen inches long. A leather glove is sewn on this basket, scoop-like racket, and receives the fingers of the

player's right hand. The game is played with two men on each side, and requires extraordinary agility and endurance. The great players are wonderful to watch, and in the frenzy of its enthusiastic admiration the public throws into the court sovereigns, ounces, Chilian condors, and all the various kinds of gold coins that are found in the money-changers' shops in Buenos Ayres—just as the Madrid public throws cigars and purses full of money to a *torero* who has accomplished a clever *suerte* in killing the bull. Meanwhile as the game proceeds, after each point scored there is a roar of voices from the tribunes: *Veinte á cinco doy! Veinte á dos tomo! Cien á cinco doy!* It is the calling out of the odds; for, as at the races so in the tennis-courts, the chief object of the public is to gamble. The public that frequents the *frontones* is as mixed and rough as the public of the race-courses, and to a great extent the same. One notices also a similar ferocity on the part of the spectators, a hardness of expression and a brusqueness of gestures and manners that are absolutely painful.

So much for the daylight amusements—Palermo, horse-racing, and *pelota*. Now we come to the great problem of passing the evening, and during the winter season a certain number of theatres contribute toward facilitating its solution. Opera, Politeama, Nacional, San Martin, Doria, Onrubia, Variedades, Pasatiempo, Jardin Florida, are the names. The Opera, which receives a subvention from the government, is a large theatre, with its principal façade in the Calle Corrientes. The vestibule is spacious and draughty; the staircase not without pretensions to marmorean magnificence; the *foyer* a monument of bad taste and over-decoration. The suite of rooms, of fine proportions, is furnished with a profusion of plush curtains, divans, and gilt-edged chairs; the walls are decorated with stucco ornaments and panels framed with mouldings on which are juxtaposed the crudest tones of red, green, blue, and yellow that the Tuscan stencil painter knows how to mix; and the whole forms a gaudy and aggressive eyesore. The house, decorated in white and gold, with red hangings and upholstery in the boxes, is large and fairly commodious, except that there are no means of heating it, and as the winter at Buenos Ayres is becoming colder every year, both public and artistes suffer. The same in-

convenience, however, exists in the other theatres and in all the old private houses of Buenos Ayres—there are no stoves or chimneys. The representations at the Opera are as good as celebrated and expensive singers can make them; the repertory includes all the hackneyed successes of the past half-century—*Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, etc.; and the favorite piece, and the one that always attracts a full house, is *Gli Ugonotti*. The public of the Opera is perhaps a little overdressed; the display of jewelry and precious stones is rather too dazzling; the applause does not indicate delicate discrimination, inasmuch as it rewards only the high notes, prolonged screams, and stentorian shouting of the singers. The critics cannot find higher praise for Tamagno than to celebrate his brazen throat—his *garganta de cobre*. All this is somewhat crude, but it is showy and expensive, and therefore appeals to the instincts of the *rastacouère*. During the season of 1890, with gold averaging 230, the price of an orchestra stall at the Opera of Buenos Ayres was \$25 paper, and there were four performances a week.

The Politeama, also in the Calle Corrientes, is still larger than the Opera. It is a spacious and comfortable house, without any architectural pretensions whatever. In the vestibule are three white marble slabs with gilt inscriptions recording the visits and triumphs of Rossi, Adelina Patti, and Coquelin. During my stay in the Argentine capital Coquelin made his second visit, accompanied by Mesdames Judic, Barety, Lender, and an excellent company, and on several occasions I had the pleasure of applauding these admirable artistes, who were playing to half-empty benches. Doubtless the financial crisis accounted to some extent for this neglect; but the chief reason, I am afraid, was that the pieces and the actors were too good for the public. The literary culture of Buenos Ayres is not yet sufficiently developed to appreciate the delicacy of Feuillet, the exquisite refinement of Marivaux, or even the quintessential Parisianism of *La Femme à Papa*. It may be added that the price for a stall for these performances was \$10 paper.

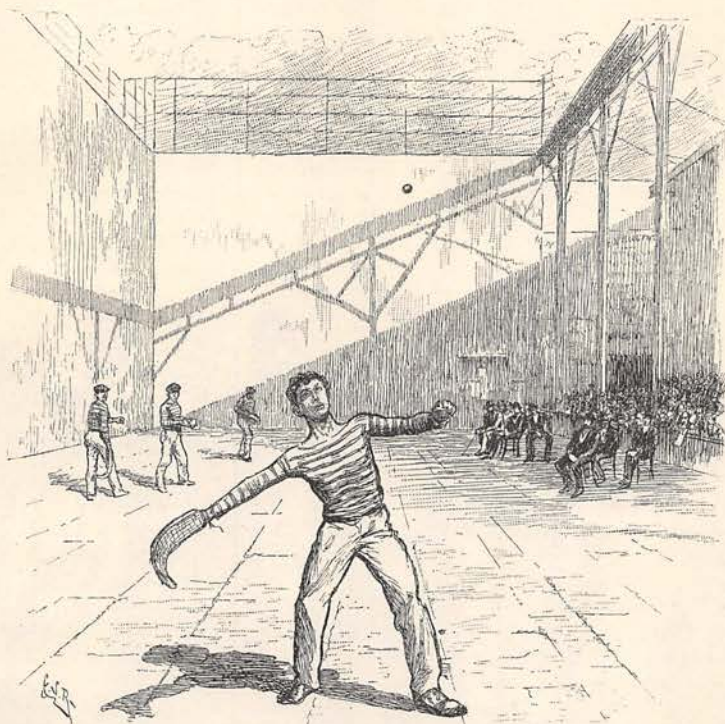
Now let us come to the great and constant distraction of the young men, the dandies, the *zambullidores*, of the Argentine capital, their daily occupation year after year between the hours of five and

ten P.M., namely, standing on the sidewalk of the Calle Florida and making remarks on the women that pass. The Calle Florida is the most fashionable street in Buenos Ayres. Here are the finest shops for the sale of objects of luxury; the swell jewellers, milliners, dress-makers, tailors, hatters, shoemakers; the fashionable restaurants, Mercer, *Rôtisserie Française*, Sportsman; and, above all, the *crack* Confiteria del Aguila. A confiteria, it must be explained, is a shop for the sale of bonbons, confectionery, sweetmeats, and refreshments, and at the same time a sort of café and bar-room where all kinds of drinks and liqueurs may be obtained; it is the Argentine equivalent of the French café. Such shops abound in Buenos Ayres; there is hardly a block in the city that has not its confiteria. The one in the Calle Florida bearing the name of del Aguila has a façade of white marble, surmounted by an eagle and two allegorical figures, and its windows form recesses along the sidewalk capable of accommodating each half a dozen dandies. The doorways of the confiteria can also accommodate a considerable number, and those who find no room at the Aguila, straggle along the street and seek shelter in other door-steps, for it must be added that the Calle Florida is an old-fashioned narrow street, and that the sidewalk will permit only two persons to walk abreast; hence the necessity for the dandies of finding recesses where they can stand without impeding the circulation and incurring the wrath of the police. And so here they congregate, the rich young creoles who pass their days gambling at the Club del Progreso, and the hard-worked counter-jumper, the dude who has dined at the Café de Paris, and the dude who has dined at a tenth-rate Italian "hash mill"; both are armed with cigarettes and toothpicks, both wear stupendous light-colored cravats and enormous diamond pins, and both are well dressed and prodigal of immaculate shirt fronts. They stand and they smoke; they address each other with the word *ché*, of universal use throughout the Argentine in the signification of "man"; they converse in husky or guttural tones, pronouncing the words with monotonous precipitation; and whenever a woman passes they look at her and say: "*Hermosa rubia*" (Beautiful blonde); "*Que cabecita tan linda!*" (What a pretty little head!); "*Que boca tan adorable!*"

(What a lovely mouth!); and other insipid or indecent words. That is all. They stand; they smoke; they make their silly observations; and at ten o'clock they disperse, and Florida, like the other streets of Buenos Ayres, remains empty until midnight, when the people returning from the theatre give it a momentary

river. Such is sidewalk life in Buenos Ayres, or, as it may be called in Spanish, sidewalk and candy-shop life—*la vida de confiteria y de vereda*.

The Club del Progreso was mentioned above as the fashionable resort of the rich dandies. It is, indeed, the chief native club in Buenos Ayres, and has more than



PELOTA PLAYERS.

supplement of animation. There is a rush for the last horse-cars, a clattering of the hoofs of Russian trotters, a banging of the doors of elegant coupés, and then once more all is silent and deserted; the bright polished tramway rails glisten and vanish in the long prospective of the dark and narrow streets; and with the moonlight silvering the blue and white glazed tiles of the church domes and towers, and forming strong contrasts of sheen and shadow amongst the irregular masses of the houses and shops, Buenos Ayres becomes for the moment clothed in mystery and charm, and resumes that tinge of Orientalism which suggests itself in the distant views of the town from the

1200 members. Other Argentine clubs are the Club del Plata, Union Argentina, Oriental, and the Jockey. The foreigners have a general Club de los Residentes Estrangeros, founded in 1841, whose 600 members occupy commodious and almost handsome rooms in the Calle Rivadavia. The members are foreign residents of all nationalities. There are also French, Spanish, German, and Italian social clubs, and important and rich philanthropic and mutual aid societies connected with each nationality. The English-speaking residents have their own Kosmos Club in the Calle Cangallo, in rather cold and bare rooms. The English also have a literary society, and they are the founders and



AT THE CONFITERIA DEL AGUILA.

almost exclusive members of the Buenos Ayres Rowing Club, which has a fine boat-house on the river in the charming suburb of Tigre. The Argentine clubs are all used for interminable gambling operations that go on day and night, while their social function is fulfilled by the organizing of splendid balls, which from time to time awaken the aristocratic creole society from its habitual torpor.

There are no amenities of life in Buenos Ayres, no society, no amusements except the theatre, which is expensive, and no distractions except gross and shameless debauchery that thrives flauntingly in most parts of the city. There is no society, because the rivalry of luxury will not allow families to arrange fêtes unless they can do so on a princely scale, to give a dinner party that is not a gorgeous banquet, or to receive of an evening without the accompaniment of a ball or grand orchestra. The old creole families live entirely among themselves, after the

usual Spanish style, hating and despising the *gringo*, or foreigner, who works and grows rich. There are no social leaders, no leaders of opinion even, no eminent citizens whose influence and efforts might create centres and elements of decent and healthy distraction. At Buenos Ayres each one looks out for himself, from the President of the republic down to the howling urchin who sells newspapers and tries to defraud the buyer of his change. The impression that the city and its sociological phenomena make upon one is wholly and repeatedly that of coarse and brutal materialism. There seems to be no poetry, no sentiment, no generosity in the life of its citizens; there is nothing amiable, witty, or attractive in the exterior aspect of men and of things. On the one hand you see the race for wealth in all the crudity of unscrupulous speculation and cynical malversation of public funds; and on the other hand, the ostentatious display of wealth in the grossest manifestations of vulgar luxury.

THE CHINESE LEAK.

BY JULIAN RALPH.

THE Philadelphia lawyer, who was long referred to generically as the most difficult personage to confuse or to hood-wink, has surrendered the palm to the modern journalist, whose shrewdness, persistence, and ingenuity now render him invincible in the pursuit of information. Yet the dethroned attorney and his successor would both have been halted and puzzled a great many times if they had joined me recently in an endeavor to learn the truth about the smuggling of Chinese into our country across the Canadian border.

A complete presentment of the case is unattainable, and must ever remain so. This is not alone due to the natural failure of the smugglers to preserve records of their operations; it is not wholly accountable to the impenetrability of the Chinese themselves with regard to all matters which they with common accord determine to keep from the official or public knowledge of Americans; these would be serious hinderances by themselves; but added to them is a worse obstacle still, a perfect *chevaux-de-frise* of falsehood, which starts up at every ques-

tion that is put to the average American or Canadian who is presumably in a position to know the facts in the matter, at least in a general way.

This was to have been expected, but it produced the unintended result of convincing me that where there was such a general reluctance to tell anything (and such a far greater reluctance to tell the truth), there must certainly be something worth while hiding—worth the while of the companies whose vessels carry Mongolian passengers, worth the while of the Canadian officials who gather taxes from all incoming Chinamen, worth the while of all the rest who wink at offences against the laws of this, to them, foreign country, and who, as individuals or as members of a community, benefit more or less directly by what goes on.

Yet whenever a casual question was put to a Canadian who did not suspect my especial interest in the subject, the full truth always came out. "The Chinese come here mainly to smuggle themselves across the American border," was a statement that was made to me and to my companions by at least twoscore men in