

ON THE WAY TO THE ANDES AN OLD UNIVERSITY CITY; AT THE FOOT OF THE ANDES

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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WHEN we reached the Province of Córdoba, at first we passed through a rather barren ranch country that reminded one of western Texas, with trees looking somewhat like the mesquite and palo verde, and hedges of cactus with brilliant flowers. Then the country grew more fertile, and finally we came to the flourishing city of Córdoba. This is a very ancient city, older than any city in the United States. One of our companions who guided us around the city was a man descended from one of the first settlers, whose people had been in Córdoba for over three hundred years. He was a prosperous, thriving citizen. His business

was buying and selling ranches, cattle, and city real estate, while his brother was a prominent lawyer. During the last twenty years Córdoba has taken great strides forward, and it is now a thriving modern city, with its trolley lines, water-works, street-cleaning department, and the rest, just like a city in the United States of the same size.

We visited the University. Next year it will celebrate its three hundredth anniversary, for it is much older than any university in the United States. This must not be understood, however, as meaning more than it actually does. These old universities of Latin America during the Colonial and Span-

ish period were merely survivals of the mediæval university system, survivals which had, if anything, retrograded from a not very advanced original type, just as the ordinary Mohammedan university of the present day has retrograded from the standard of the old Mohammedan university that flourished under the caliphate of Córdoba. Nevertheless, where ignorance was so well-nigh universal and so altogether profound, it was well that there existed here and there even a feeble and flickering light. Nowadays there are in Latin America many fine universities, many fine schools of learning, advanced in type and abreast of the knowledge and the needs of the modern world.

While in Córdoba I visited two of the modern institutions, one a normal school for girls, in which over a thousand girls are being trained to be teachers, and the other an agricultural college. These agricultural colleges are scattered throughout the country. They are of admirable type; and, by the way, they are always placed in beautiful grounds. I had been told that the same difficulty obtained among the students in Argentina as has obtained among many of the students in our own agricultural colleges; that is, that the students were taken from the ranches, given a training, and that then, instead of going back to the ranches, they either went into the Government Service or took up their abode in the cities. Of course the investigations I made were not such as to enable me to pass final judgment in this matter. But I did make certain investigations, and these investigations told against the statements in question. In this particular college, for instance, getting the students together, I picked out a dozen or fifteen of them at random, and cross-examined each as to his ancestry, the occupation of his father, and what he intended himself to do when he left college. Most of them were the sons of Argentines, one was the son of an Englishman, one of a Frenchman, and two of Italians. Most of them were the sons of ranchmen, two or three were the sons of townsmen. One intended to become a veterinarian, one intended to go into Government Service, and all the others were going out into the country to be ranchmen; several of them on the ranches of their fathers, the others with the intention of getting ranches for themselves as soon as they were able to. My queries in the various other agricultural colleges evoked similar information. As regards the men I person-

ally examined, these colleges were fulfilling the purposes of their being.

In Córdoba there is a beautiful park system. It is an attractive city in every way. I was interested by the incidental discovery of a matter worthy of the attention of our own students of social betterment. The municipality has recently gone into the business of providing homes for the workingmen who desire to get them. The municipality buys land and constructs the home. It then sells it to the householder on terms that include the repayment by the latter of eight per cent a year on the purchase price. In fifteen years the house and land become absolutely the man's own. An effort is being made to apply the same system to agricultural lands for the purpose of encouraging immigrants to settle down and become owners and tillers of the soil. The proposal is that in each parish the Government shall purchase some five thousand acres and sell the land in small lots on terms somewhat similar to those mentioned above to actual settlers who live on and till the soil.

It will be noticed from the above that the Argentines are thoroughly awake to the need of having small landowners, and also that they have no faith whatsoever in any of the theories that would abolish ownership in property, or even ownership in land. This may be due to the fact that part of the business of the nation in its northern country is even yet that of civilizing the Indian; and almost the worst obstruction to civilizing the Indian is the fact that the Indian actually practices the theories of certain advanced Socialists. The Indians of the Chaco, in practice, have no personal property. The result is that they are all kept permanently at the level of the shiftless, the idle, and the incompetent. In practice it proves to be impossible to elevate them until they are given the chance to have personal property which is not to be shared with the shiftless and idle. Among these Indians applied Socialism has simply meant that any property acquired by anybody is shared with the worthless members of the tribe. The result has been the positive refusal of the thrifty and far-sighted to go into the business of accumulating goods for their less worthy brothers, so that the entire social life is stagnant. In the Argentine at present, and during the immediate past, it has been proved by actual experience that the only way to get a betterment of social and industrial conditions is to give the average man the chance to

get property for himself if he possesses the necessary energy, industry, and thrift; and this means that not only must he be protected against the big man who would exploit him, but that he must also be protected against the small man who is lazy or thriftless or vicious. In practice the possession of property, and the chance to possess property as a result of honest and intelligent toil, offer the chief incentives for the growth of well-being and of civilization. Human rights must be recognized as standing above property rights, which represent a means and not an end; but it must also be recognized that property rights, if properly handled, represent one of the indispensable means of securing the human rights.

On our journey through St. Luiz to Mendoza we passed at first through a landscape that might have been anywhere in the semi-arid West; the trees looked like mesquite, and there were cactus and greasewood. After a while the land became better. The town of St. Luiz is in a province in which there is much alfalfa grown and some wheat, and where there is much stock-raising. As we began to approach Mendoza the soil became rich, fertile, well cultivated, and thickly peopled.

Mendoza is a strikingly picturesque city of some eighty-five thousand inhabitants. The houses are low, usually of one story, for there have been very severe earthquakes. As with the other cities of the class which we visited, we were struck both by the picturesqueness of the place, and also by the evidences of energy and progress on every hand. The trolley lines, the electric lighting, the street-cleaning, were all as modern as in the United States. As with most of these cities, there is a beautiful park system. In Mendoza the park includes a high hill, on which stands the colossal figure of San Martín, with bas-reliefs round about to illustrate features of his great career. At sunset we drove through this park. There were literally hundreds of carriages and automobiles, the center of attraction being some spiral circular drives around the band-stand. The whole scene was attractive, and gave one a good idea of the social life of one of these thriving provincial capitals. There is evidently a strong infusion of Indian blood in the people, not only in the lower classes but in many, or perhaps most, of those of higher social position and leadership. In my judgment, this is good blood. I am certain that

both in the United States and elsewhere in America the men with a strain of Indian blood in them have furnished at least their proportion of efficiency and leadership. Some of the best men I have known in the United States have had Indian blood in them.

Mendoza was an old colonial town, and, like Córdoba, had a distinct and characteristic life of its own in the days when each province and provincial city developed by itself out of touch with its neighbors. It was here that San Martín raised the army with which he crossed the Andes and marched northward as far as Chimborazo, clearing the Pacific provinces of the Spaniards. It is difficult to realize how poverty-struck Argentina was in those days. San Martín had no money, no cannon, nothing. Under the lead of a priest cannon were cast. The gauchos rallied round the new standard and were made into the famous horse grenadiers of San Martín. The very poor contributed even out of their poverty. Mules were furnished by the thousand for transport, and the young girls of Mendoza wove the first Argentine national flag. This national flag is preserved, as it ought to be, at the Executive Mansion; and I saluted it with all the real respect I felt.

We motored through the surrounding country. It is a very rich country, covered with vineyards, for the chief industry is wine-growing. There are long lines of Lombardy poplars, and now and then a palm, a willow, or a Spanish walnut. The climate is dry, and the rainfall insufficient for agriculture. But the foothills of the Andes are not far off, the snowy peaks of the main range rising in austere beauty back of them. From the mountains there is an abundance of water for irrigation, and all the region round about is a veritable garden. The wine casks were carried in big two-wheeled carts, drawn by three, by four, or by five mules. We visited two great wine-making establishments. One was owned by Italian brothers, who had come here only a quarter of a century ago as penniless laborers. The other was also owned by brothers, but these brothers were Argentines of the old stock who were making a success as thriving business men of the best type. They told me much about the character of the laborers and the general conditions of labor. The native Argentines are intelligent and do their work in capital shape, but they are apt to waste their money and to be improvident. As a consequence they are employed in greater proportion within doors

than in the fields; the Italians in especial outnumbering them in the fields. On an average they tend to receive rather higher wages than the Italians, but they are not so thrifty, they do not save as much. My informants told me that practically every man of foreign birth or foreign parentage who works in the vineyards or in the wine establishments, whether an Italian, a Frenchman, a German, or a Swiss, saves enough to purchase a piece of land for himself and to become a landed proprietor; and not a few of them move upward into the highest business and social positions. Among the native Argentines of the poorest class, said my informants, who were themselves Argentines, the number of men who thus rose was much smaller in proportion. But they added that the proportion was growing steadily larger, and that the effect of the schooling of the young people was already evident.

Strikes and labor disturbances are practically unknown around Mendoza. There is a genuine effort at partnership between employees and employers. The workmen get a certain proportion of the gains of the business in addition to their wages, and have a certain interest in the business. Those of them who wish to advance are practically always able to advance, to become small landowners or small partners in business, or independent tradesmen. The others who get equally good wages, but who do not save or hoard, continue with their employers practically as long as they live. There is a feeling of identity between the employer and the employee, and a disposition to share burdens and profits. When I make this statement I am, of course, aware that there must be exceptions, and I am only speaking of things as I saw them. But both the workmen and the employers with whom I spoke testified to the same condition of affairs. The enterprise, the prosperity, and the self-confidence of the men engaged in business were evident at a glance.

I visited the Agricultural College. Here at Mendoza all other industries are of little account compared with wine-making. The Agricultural College reflects the local tendency. Most of the work done consists in practically training the students how to handle in the most scientific and successful manner every branch of the wine business. The pupils I saw were busily engaged in manual labor. I happened not to be at the college when they were receiving class-room training. Almost all of those to whom I spoke were boys from

the land who intended to go back to the land and apply in practical shape to the problems of agriculture, and specially to the problems connected with vineyards, the lessons they had learned and were learning. The majority of the pupils were of old Argentine stock, but a large minority consisted of men of Italian or Spanish parentage, and there were one or two of German, French, and English parentage. One of those of Italian parentage, by the way, misled me by his looks, for I had picked him out as being a man of pure Indian blood. Another Italian was an auburn-haired Lombard. They were all of them, of course, thoroughgoing Argentines, to whom Spanish was the native tongue. The gardens of the Agricultural College were, as usual, beautiful, and I was struck by the good character of the work that was being done.

It is not only in agricultural educational work that the young are being trained in Mendoza. When I reached the city, among the crowds that met me in the streets the school-children carrying banners and throwing flowers were especially prominent. There were literally thousands of them marshaled there with their teachers, and they were led by a group of girls from the normal school. I was especially struck by the capital kindergarten. There were some two hundred and fifty children; dear little boys and girls, to whom our hearts went out just as to the small folks at home. We saw them go through their exercises and inspected their work. One of the thoroughly competent and very attractive teachers made me a little address in English; and then a particularly nice small boy repeated for my benefit four lines, in English, of Henry van Dyke's poem on "America," always a favorite in my family. The teachers, so well trained and so devoted to their work, were evidently very proud of their pupils, and of the success they had achieved. Well they might be.

This kindergarten at the foot of the Andes is surely noteworthy, and our citizens generally should understand what it means for the Argentine Republic to find here, far in the interior, at the foot of the Andes, such abounding energy and vigor in industrial life, such disinterested good citizenship, and such energetic and successful application of all the methods of advanced schooling to the needs of the generation that is growing up.

In the course of driving through the country we were stopped at one village by a couple

(Continued on page following illustrations)

of hundred school-children. The four women teachers interested me from the ethnic standpoint. Not one of them was of Argentine descent. The head one was of Spanish parentage, two of the others were of French parentage, and one, as she explained it, of Yankee parentage. But they could not speak any French or English, although they all studied more French than they did Spanish, and they felt themselves purely Argentines. This reminded me of an incident of my visit to Brazil. In São Paulo was a man of German origin who spoke only Portuguese. He had come when he was very young from a German colony in Rio Grande do Sul. When, many years afterwards, he returned thither, he had forgotten his German, whereas his parents had never learned Portuguese, and he was able to communicate with them only by means of his brothers and sisters, who knew both languages.

I spoke above of the way the children greeted me at my reception. The whole population so greeted me, and in all these cities of the Argentine, and in the small towns, I was similarly greeted. I was deeply touched by the cordiality of my reception, which was obviously intended not for me personally, but for one as at the moment typifying in their eyes the United States. Moreover, the Government showed me the same kind of generous hospitality that the Governments of Brazil and Uruguay had already shown me. Of course this again was not done for me personally; it was done as an evidence of good will towards the people of the United States. I do very earnestly hope that our Governmental authorities, and our people generally, will show similar courtesy and similar generous consideration for any representatives of these South American countries who visit the United States. The people of the country from whom the man comes accept such courtesy as being shown to them, and as being a proof of good will toward their country.

We dined at the house of the Governor. He comes of an old country family which has for many centuries led the life of the great cattle-breeding ranch-owners, although his people are now turning their attention more and more to agriculture, and he is himself a successful farmer.

As everywhere among the men of leadership, and to an astounding degree among the people at large, I found my position in politics thoroughly understood. I was accepted as

a genuine democrat, a man who represented and stood for the forces of real democracy in a sane spirit. When I was cheered, my name was frequently coupled with a cheer for the "North American democracy!" for with all our shortcomings as a people, and probably largely because we recognize these shortcomings and strive to correct them, there is no question that we of the United States have come nearer to applying democratic ideals in practice than any other great nation has hitherto succeeded in coming. The Governor, I found, approached his governmental problems in precisely the spirit in which I had approached mine, and I grew to feel a strong regard and sympathy for his whole attitude.

His father was at the dinner. He had retired as a general after forty-nine years' service in the Argentine army. The fine old fellow represented what was best in the Argentine type before the days of modern industrialism. A very vigorous and manly best it was too. He wore the old Argentine uniform, which for his rank is the same as the uniform once worn by Napoleon's officers. He had served in the bloody Paraguayan War, when Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay joined to overthrow the inconceivably murderous and bloody dictatorship of Lopez, and when the Paraguayans rallied with savage valor under the banner of the dictator who tyrannized over them, but who nevertheless represented in their eyes the nation. This old general had served in many Indian wars, both in Patagonia and in the Grand Chaco, and had seen desperate fighting in civil wars. He wore medals commemorating his services in the Paraguayan and Indian campaigns, but he would not wear any medals commemorating his services in the civil wars. Yet the only time he was wounded was in one of the battles in one of these civil wars. He was then shot twice and received a bayonet thrust, and was also stabbed with a lance. If he had not possessed a constitution of iron he would never have survived. Our people in the United States often speak of these South American wars with the same ignorant lack of appreciation that used to be shown by European military men in speaking of our own Civil War and other contests. This attitude is as foolish on our part in the one case as it was foolish on the part of the European gentlemen in question in the other case. The Indian fighting was of the same hazardous character, and the

Indian campaigns were fraught with the same wearing fatigue, and marked by the same risk and wild adventure, as in the case of our own Indian campaigns. In the civil wars and in the Paraguayan War, as in the wars which the Chileans have waged, the fighting was, on the whole, rather more desperate than in any contest between the civilized nations of Europe since the close of the Napoleonic struggles. There is no more formidable fighting material in the world than is afforded by certain elements in the populations of some of these

Latin-American countries. The general of whom I am speaking was himself a most interesting example of a vanishing type. Lovers of good literature should read the sketches of old-time Argentine life which Mr. W. H. Hudson has collected in a volume under the title of "El Ombu." When they have done so, they will understand the strength and the ruthlessness which produced leaders of the stamp of the old general who in full uniform met us at dinner at the house of his son, the Governor.