

Out on the Pampas

By G. A. HENTY

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

As the party went through the town they were struck with the narrowness and straightness of the streets, and at the generally European look of everything. Once out of the town, the riding horses broke into a canter; for the road was so good that the horses in the light carriage were able to go along at full speed. As they proceeded they passed many houses of the rich merchants of the place, and all were charmed with the luxuriance and beauty of the gardens. Orange and lemon trees scented the air with their delicious perfumes; bananas, tree ferns and palms towered above them; lovely butterflies of immense size, and bright little humming birds flitted about among a countless variety of flowers. The delight of the young ones was unbounded.

Presently they left the mansions and gardens behind and drove out fairly into the country. Upon either side the plains stretched away as far as the eye could reach, in some parts under the plow, but far more generally carpeted with bright green grass and many-colored wild flowers. Everywhere could be seen droves of horses and cattle, while dotted here and there over the plain were the estancias of the proprietors.

It was a most delightful ride. Finally they drew up at their host's estancia. Here Mrs. Thompson came out to greet them. She had been a great friend of Mrs. Hardy in their young days, and great was their pleasure at again meeting after so long a separation. Mr. Thompson's estancia was a large and picturesque building. It was entirely surrounded by a wide veranda, so that at all hours of the day relief could be obtained from the glare of the sun. In front was an extensive garden. At a short distance behind the house were the houses of the men, and the corrals, or inclosures, for the cattle.

The interior was handsomely furnished in the European style, except that the floors were uncarpeted, and were composed of polished boards. Everywhere were signs that the proprietor was a prosperous and wealthy man. Mr. Thompson had only one son, a lad of about the same age as Charles Hardy. To his care Mrs. Thompson now assigned the boys, while she conducted Mrs. Hardy and her daughters to their rooms.

In half an hour the party reassembled at dinner, to which they all did ample justice. The conversation of Mr. Hardy and his friend turned upon the country, its position and prospects, and upon the advantage which the various districts offered to newcomers. Presently the dusk came on, followed rapidly by darkness, and in half an hour Ethel came to summon them to tea. The boys were full of delight at the immense herds of cattle they had seen. As they sat down to the tea table covered with delicate English china, with a kettle over a spirit lamp in the center, and lit with the subdued light of two shaded moderator lamps, Maud said, "It is not one bit like what I expected, papa, after all you have told us about hardships and working."

"Do not be afraid, Maud," her father said, laughing; "you won't be cheated out of your hardihood and your work, I promise you. Mrs. Thompson will tell you that it was a very different sort of place when she first came here."

"Yes, indeed," Mrs. Thompson said, smiling; "this was considered a very lonely place when we first settled here. We had a little hut with two rooms, and it was more than six months before I could get a woman servant to come out. In time the country became more settled, and there are stations now sixty or seventy miles beyond us."

The next week was spent in riding over the estate, which consisted of four square leagues—that is to say, six miles each way—and in examining the arrangements of the inclosures for the cattle. At the end of that time Mr. Hardy started on a tour of inspection through the provinces most likely to suit, provided with numerous letters of introduction from his host. While he was away the boys were to assist upon the estate, and to accustom themselves to the work and duties of the life they were to lead. Into this they entered with the greatest zest, and were in the saddle from morning till night, until, as Mr. Thompson told them, they looked like two young gauchos. The gauchos are the natives of the country. They are fine-looking men, with Spanish faces. Their dress is very picturesque. They wear loose trousers, worked and fringed round the bottom. Above this is a sort of shawl of bright colors, woven in stripes, and sometimes of black cloth edged with scarlet. Above a colored flannel shirt is worn. The boots are long and are made of undressed leather. They wear a broad leather belt, with pockets in it; in this a knife, too, is always stuck. After an absence of a month Mr. Hardy returned with the welcome news that he had made his choice, and had bought at the public auction a tract of four square leagues, upon a river some twenty miles to the south of the town of Rosario, and consequently only a few days' journey from Buenos Ayres. Mr. Thompson looked a little grave when he heard the location of the property, but he only said that he was very glad that his friend had fixed upon a spot which would make it easy for the families to see something of each other.

"It is six miles square," said Mr. Hardy, "that is, about 25,000 acres. There is a good-sized stream running through it; there are a good many trees, considering that it is out on the Pampas; there are several elevations which give a fine view over the plain, and upon one of these our future home will stand. A small stream falls into the larger one, and will, I think, be useful. There is an abundance of game; ducks, geese and swans swarm upon the river. I saw a good many ostriches out on the plains. And, lastly, the soil appears to be excellent. A great point is, that it is only distant twenty miles from Rosario, a most rising town; so that the value of the land is sure to increase yearly, as new settlers come around us."

"That is a most important point," Mr. Thompson said.

"Are there any settlements near,

Frank?" Mrs. Hardy asked.

"The next plot to ours belongs to three young Englishmen, and the ground between us and Rosario is also principally occupied by English; so that we shall have neighbors near, and I do not suppose that it will be long before we have them all around us."

"If the advantages of the place are so great, Frank, how is it that you have got it so very cheaply? I understood from Mr. Thompson that land in a rising neighborhood, and that was likely to increase in value, was worth two or three shillings, or even more, an acre."

Mr. Hardy hesitated. "Well, Clara, the land is at present upon the extreme verge of the settlements, and the Indians are apt sometimes to be a little troublesome, and to drive off a few horses or cattle. No doubt, the thing has been exaggerated; still, there is something in it, and the consequence is people are rather afraid to bid, and I have got this splendid tract of land for about twenty-five hundred dollars; and, not improbably, in ten years it may be worth ten times as much."

"A great proportion of these Indian tales are built upon very small foundations," Mr. Thompson said, cheerfully.

In another two days Mr. Hardy and the boys, accompanied by Mr. Thompson, went down to Buenos Ayres and took up their quarters at the hotel for a night. At parting, Mr. Thompson presented them with a couple of fine mastiffs. Mr. Hardy had brought a brace of retrievers with him. Then, with a hearty adieu and much hand-shaking, they said "Good-by" as the steamer moved off from the shore. The heavy luggage was to follow in a sailing vessel upon the following day.

CHAPTER III.

The voyage up the river Parana was marked by no particular incident. The distance to Rosario from Buenos Ayres is about two hundred and fifty miles, which was performed by the steamer in about a day and a half. The river is nearly twenty miles in breadth, and is completely studded by islands. The boys were disappointed at the aspect of Rosario, which, although a rising place, contained under a thousand inhabitants, and looked miserably poor and squalid after Buenos Ayres. Here they were met by a gentleman to whom Mr. Thompson had introduced Mr. Hardy, and with whom he had stayed on his first visit to Rosario. He had brought horses for themselves and bullock carts for their luggage.

"What! are these your boys, Mr. Hardy?" I had not expected to have seen such big fellows. Why, they will be men in no time."

Charley and Hubert deserved Mr. Percy's commendation. They were now sixteen and fifteen years old, respectively, and were remarkably strong, well-grown lads. In a few minutes the luggage was packed in two bullock carts, and they were on their way out to Mr. Percy's station, which was about half way to the camp of Mr. Hardy. The word camp in the pampas means station or property; it is a corruption of the Spanish word *casas*, literally plains or meadows.

Here they found that Mr. Percy had most satisfactorily performed the commission with which Mr. Hardy had entrusted him. He had bought a couple of the rough country bullock carts, three pairs of oxen accustomed to the yoke, half a dozen riding horses, two milk cows, and a score of sheep and cattle to supply the larder. He had hired four men—a stock keeper named Lopez, who was called the capataz or head man, a tall, swarthy fellow, whose father was a Spaniard and his mother a native woman; two laborers, the one a German, called Hans, who had been some time in the colony, the other an Irishman, Terence Kelly, whose face the boys remembered at once as having come out in the same ship with themselves. The last man was an American, one of those wandering fellows who are never contented to remain anywhere, but are always pushing on, as if they thought that the further they went the better they should fare. He was engaged as carpenter and useful man, and there were few things to which he could not turn his hand.

They waited the next day at Mr. Percy's station, and started the next morning before daylight, as they had still ten miles to travel, and were desirous of getting as early to the ground as possible.

The boys were in the highest spirits at being at last really out upon the pampas. There was no road or track of any kind, and consequently the party struggled along in a confused body. First came the animals—the sheep, bullocks and cows. Behind these rode Lopez, in his gaucho dress and a long whip in his hand, which he cracked from time to time, with a report like that of a pistol. The first bullock cart was driven by Hans, who sat upon the top of a heap of baggage, his head covered with a very old and battered Panama hat, through several broad holes in which his red hair bristled out in a most comical fashion, and over his blue flannel shirt a large red beard flowed almost to his waist. Terence was walking by the side of the second cart in corduroy breeches and gaiters and blue coat, with a high black hat, battered and bruised out of all shape, on his head. In his hand he held a favorite shillalah, which he had brought with him from his native land, and with the end of which he occasionally poked the ribs of the oxen. The Yankee rode sometimes near one, sometimes by another, seldom exchanging a word with any one. He wore a fur cap made of fox's skin; a faded blanket, with a hole cut in the middle for the head to go through, fell from his shoulders to his knees. The mastiffs trotted along by the horses, and the two fine retrievers, Dash and Flirt, galloped about over the plains. Lopez acted as guide, and after three hours' riding pointed to a clump of trees in the distance, and said: "That is the camp."

"Hurrah," shouted the boys. "May we ride on, papa?"

"Yes, boys, I will ride on with you. Mind how you gallop, the ground is honeycombed with armadillo holes, and if your horse treads in one you will go over his head."

"I don't think that I should do that," Charley said; "I can stick on pretty tightly, and—" he had not time to finish his sentence, for his horse suddenly seemed to go down on his head, and Charley was sent flying two or three yards through the air.

They soon crossed a little stream, running east to fall into the main stream, which formed the boundary of the property upon that side; and Mr. Hardy told the boys that they were now upon their own land. There was another burrah, and then, regardless of the risks of falls, they dashed up to the little clump of trees which stood upon slightly rising ground. Here they drew rein and looked round upon the country which was to be their home. As far as the eye could reach a flat plain, with a few slight elevations and some half-dozen trees, extended. The grass was a brilliant green. Objects could be seen moving in the distance, and a short examination enabled Mr. Hardy to decide that they were ostriches, to the delight of the boys, who promised themselves an early hunt.

"Where have you fixed for the house, papa?" Hubert asked.

"There where those three trees are growing upon the highest swell you can see, about a mile and a half further. We will go on at once; the others will see us."

Another ten minutes took them to the place Mr. Hardy had pointed out, and the boys both agreed that nothing could be better.

They now took off the saddles and bridles from their horses, and allowed them to range as they pleased, knowing that the native horses were accustomed to be let free, and that there was no fear of their straying away. "Now, boys," Mr. Hardy said, "let us begin by getting our first dinner. You go straight down to the water; I will keep to the right. You 'ake Dash, I will take Flirt."

In another ten minutes the reports of the guns followed close upon each other, and the boys had the satisfaction of knocking down two geese and eight ducks, which Dash brought ashore, besides others which escaped. In five minutes more they heard a shout from their father, who had bagged two more geese and three ducks. "That will do, boys; we have plenty for the next day or two, and we must not alarm them by too much slaughter."

"Four geese and eleven ducks, papa, in five minutes," the boys said, when they joined Mr. Hardy; "that is not bad shooting to begin with."

"Not at all, boys. What with wild fowl and armadillos, I think that at a pinch we could live for some time upon the produce of the estate."

"You don't mean to say, papa, that they eat the armadillos?" Hubert said with a look of suspicion.

"They do, indeed, Hubert, and I am told that they are not at all bad eating. Now let us go up to the rise again; our carts must be nearly up."

By the time they reached the trees they found that the rest of the cavalcade was within a quarter of a mile, and in a few minutes they came up.

The carts contained three small portmanteaus with the clothes of Mr. Hardy and the boys, and a large case containing the carbines, rifles and ammunition. There was a number of canisters with tea, coffee, sugar, salt and pepper; a sack of flour; some cooking pots and frying pans, tin plates, dishes and mugs; two sacks of coal and a quantity of firewood; shovels, carpenter's tools, a sickle, the framework of a hut with two doors and windows, three rolls of felt, a couple of dozen wooden posts, and two large coils of iron wire. While the others were busy unloading the German had cut some turf and built a rough fireplace, and had soon a bright fire blazing.

"Shall we pluck the ducks?" Charley asked.

"I reckon we can manage quicker than that," the Yankee said; and taking up one of the ducks, he cut off its head and pinions; in another minute he had roughly skinned it, and threw it to the German, who cut it up and put the pieces into the frying pan. A similar process was performed with the other ducks, a little pepper and salt shaken over them, and in a wonderfully short time the first batch was ready. All drew round and sat down on the grass; the tin plates were distributed, but were only used by Mr. Hardy and his sons, the others simply taking the joints into their hands and cutting off pieces with their knives. The result of this primitive cooking was pronounced to be excellent, and after drinking a mug of tea all felt ready for work.

(To be continued.)

Why Tolstol Turned Peasant.
The earlier reformers had regarded the Russian peasantry as so much valuable raw material, which would display all its true value when impregnated with revolutionary, moral and political ideas, says a writer in the Review of Reviews. Tolstol never had anything to do with revolution; and in morals he found a better standard among the peasants than anywhere else. He was convinced that culture had nothing to do with morality, and he became therefore a pupil rather than a master in the great peasant school.

It is plainly that which differentiates Tolstol from the hundreds of other educated Russians who devote their lives to the people and earn in return nothing better than the reputation of "characters," and the benevolent contempt of peasants who do not understand them and whom they do not understand. But Tolstol found not only his ethical but also his aesthetic doctrines realized among the people. The common life, he says, is not only the basis of all true morals, but of all true art. What cannot be understood by the simplest, he argues again and again, is not true art. Art requires no commentary; it is infective in its nature; and if it is not, it is not true art. It is a "means of communion," "a condition of human life."

The Sketching Season.
The Sheep—How blue you are, old girl!
The Cow—Yes, I've just been sketched!
The Sheep—Anybody'd think you'd been painted.—Detroit Journal.

German Interests.
Germany owns 742,000 acres in Central America, with 20,000,000 coffee trees.

OLD FAVORITES

The Clown's Baby.

It was out on the Western frontier—The miners, rugged and brown, Were gathered around the posters; The circus had come to town! The great tent shone in the darkness, Like a wonderful palace of light, And rough men crowded the entrance—Shows didn't come every night!

Not a woman's face among them; Many a face that was bad, And some that were only vacant, And some that were very sad. And behind a canvas curtain, In a corner of the place, The clown, with chalk and vermilion, Was "making up" his face.

A weary-looking woman, With a smile that still was sweet, Sewed on a little garment, With a cradle at her feet. Pantaloons stood ready and waiting; It was time for the going on; But the clown in vain searched wildly—The "property baby" was gone.

He murmured, impatiently hunting, "It's strange that I cannot find— There! I've looked in every corner; It must have been left behind!" The miners were stamping and shouting, "They were not very patient men; The clown bent over the cradle— "I must take you, little Ben!"

The mother started and shivered, But trouble and want were near; She lifted her baby gently; "You'll be very careful, dear?" "Careful? You foolish darling!" How tenderly it was said; While a smile shone through the chalk and paint— "I love each hair of his head!"

The noise rose into an uproar, Mistle for the time was king; The clown, with a foolish chuckle, Boiled into the ring. But as, with a squawk and flourish, The fiddles closed their tune, "You'll hold him as if he was made of glass!" Said the clown to pantaloons.

The jovial fellow nodded; "I've a couple myself," he said; "I know how to handle 'em, bless you! Old fellow, go ahead!" The fun grew fast and furious, And not one of all the crowd Had guessed that the baby was alive, When he suddenly laughed aloud.

Oh, that baby laugh! It was echoed From the benches with a ring, And the roughest customer there sprang up.

With, "Boys, it's the real thing!" The ring was jammed in a minute, Not a man that did not strive For "a shot at holding the baby"— The baby that was "alive!"

He was thronged by kneeling suitors In the midst of the dusty ring, And he held his court right royally— The fair little baby king— Till one of the shouting courtiers, A man with a bold, hard face, The talk, for miles of the country, And the terror of the place,

Raised the little king to his shoulder, And chuckled, "Look at that!" As the chubby fingers clutched his hair, Then, "Boys, hand round the hat!" There never was such a hatful Of silver, and gold, and notes; People are not always penniless Because they don't wear coats.

And then, "Three cheers for the baby!" I tell you, those cheers were meant, And the way in which they were given Was enough to raise the tent. And then there was sudden silence, And a gruff old miner said, "Come, boys, enough of this rumpus! It's time it was put to bed."

So, looking a little sheepish, But with faces strangely bright, The audience, somewhat lingering, Flocked out into the night. And the bold-faced leader chuckled, "He wasn't a bit afraid! He's as game as he is good-looking— Boys, that was a show that paid!" —Margaret Vandegrift.

A SLAVE OF CUSTOM.

African Servant Was So Industrious He Was Annoying.

To have a servant so industrious as to interfere with all chance of comfort was the unfortunate experience of Mr. Portman, who lived in Africa, and is the author of "Station Studies." Buttons that disappeared one day were replaced before the dawn of another in entirely inopposite spots. New flannel shirts were shrunk in unnecessary washing until they were past all service.

The trouble was, writes Mr. Portman, that nothing could stem the flow of his good intentions. I had only, for instance, to leave my lodgings for a few moments to find on my return my campbedstead carefully folded up in one corner of the room, the mattress and blankets forming a neat roll in another, and any clothes which I had happened to leave about snatched away for washing. It mattered nothing that I wished to lie down on the bed, use the mattress to encourage my siesta and change into the clothes; all this lay outside Hamlet's view of his study.

Nothing would induce him to swerve from his unvarying rule of life, nor any remonstrance gain any response but the three words, delivered with a pitiful smile at my ignorance, "It is custom."

"Custom," for example, decreed that he should sprinkle water on the veranda at daybreak to lay the dust. It mattered nothing that a flood of rain had been pouring all night and had removed all possibility of dust for hours to come; custom still had its way, and the stones were sprinkled according to rule.

Custom bade him bring me a cup of tea before I rose. I did not want it, and told him so day after day; but weeks passed before I managed to prevent his bringing it. In accordance with custom he daily seized my bed, bedding, and all the underclothing on which he could lay his hands, and spread them on the patch of grass or, worse still, on the wall surrounding it. But custom hardly ever reminded him that if rain fell they would possibly get wet; and as rain storms in Africa are likely to resemble water-spouts in volume and April showers in frequency, the chances of my having a dry bed by the evening grew to be very small.

POPE'S SPLENDID GARMENTS.

Innumerable Slippers, Gloves and Rich Vestments.

The Pope has the largest and most costly wardrobe in the whole civilized world. Three large rooms at the Vatican hardly suffice to contain the Pope's wardrobe, and a special body of servants is told off to keep it in order. Each day in the year has its appropriate garment, which varies in color, weight and value, according to the season.

The slippers alone are innumerable, all being made of velvet and embroidered, and the Pope has no excuse for not knowing his left foot from his right, for the design is different on each slipper. The gloves are, if anything, more numerous than the slippers. They are made of the finest white wool, embroidered with pearls.

The wool for the gloves, and for all the garments of the Pope into which wool enters, is the product of a special flock of sheep dedicated for the purpose by a family who have had the special privilege of supplying the pontiffs with wool since the sixteenth century. The pallium, which is the symbol of sacerdotal authority, is usually woven from this wool by nuns, the lambs which supply the wool having been specially blessed by the Pope on Jan. 21 of every year.

Many of the most magnificent papal vestments, thick with gold embroidery, and jewels, have not been worn for a long time, says London Answers, since the loss of temporal power put an end to the great public ceremonies, but they remain in the "guarda roba," jealously watched by the guardians.

Vulcanized Timber.

A considerable amount of interest, says Scientific American, has been aroused by the announcement, as the result of a prolonged series of experiments, of a method of so treating timber as to secure even from soft wood a largely increased toughness and hardness. The process is described as one of vulcanizing, comparable in some respects with Bessemer's process of converting iron into steel, and is the invention of Mr. Powell, a Liverpool merchant. The treatment to which the timber is subjected is, roughly speaking, that of saturation at boiling point with a solution of sugar, the water being afterward evaporated at a high temperature. The result is to leave the pores and interstices of the wood filled in with solid matter, and the timber vulcanized, preserved and seasoned. The nature of moderately soft wood, it is claimed, is in this way changed to a tough and hard substance, without brittleness, and also without any tendency to split or crack. It is also rendered remarkably impervious to water. Hard wood similarly treated derives similar benefits. Moreover, it is claimed that the process may be completed and timber turned out ready for use in a few days.

To Him that Hath.

Philanthropy and "business" are rather curiously related in the minds of some people, as the Lewiston Journal suggests by an anecdote of a Maine farmer. He lived in Cape Elizabeth, and when he went to Portland he invariably favored certain friends with samples of his produce.

Perhaps it only "happened so," but anyway these friends were always well to do, and Mr. Lufkin never unhitched the old horse to drive home without finding, tucked away in the wagon, something in return fully as valuable as his tribute of vegetables. If not more so.

The neighbors noticed that he always left his little remembrances with people who were "well fixed." So one day, when eggs were away up in price, and he was starting to town with a lot of fresh ones for a certain friend, some one said to him curiously:

"Why don't you give those eggs to some poor family?"

"O-ho," said Mr. Lufkin, easily, "poor people can't afford to eat eggs at this time of year! Eggs is high!"

Better Off Abroad.

"He has sold out his business and is going to Europe," "Yes; he made an enormous profit from the transaction, but everybody considered it more or less crooked." "Ah, I see. The profit is without honor in his own country."—Philadelphia Press.

Favored by Royalty.

Sandringham is the favorite retreat of both the king and the queen, even in the winter months. It is nothing more or less than a fine country house, beautified and made more homelike each year.

About the most helpless thing on earth is an automobile seven miles from a country store with its gasoline tank run dry.

Any girl would gladly give up a chaperon for the privilege of calling some chap her own.

General Debility

Day in and out there is that feeling of weakness that makes a burden of life. Food does not strengthen. Sleep does not refresh. It is hard to do, hard to bear, should be easy,—vitality is on the edge of the whole system suffers. For this condition take

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Brutal Treatment of Wife.

Husband—Don't you think there are rather unreasonable to expect me to take you to a ball, stay awake at 4 o'clock and then get up at 8 to do my work?

Wife—I may be a little unreasonable, but it's perfectly brutal of you to mention it.—New York Weekly.

Cause for Alarm.

"Say, doctor," exclaimed an old man as he dashed into the pill doctor's private office, "I want you to make an examination as to my sanity."

"What reason have you for believing yourself a candidate for the 'cell'?" asked the M. D.

Well, I happened to run across a package of letters this morning that I wrote to my wife during our courtship. It was the significant reply.

Her Comment.

Softleigh -- Yaas, I always carry an umbrella, doncher know.

Miss Cutting -- I always suspect that you didn't know enough to get when it rains.

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