

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.
The People of that Land and Their Characteristics.

In a special letter to the Grangeville Free Press, D. C. Lester says: I left Puget Sound January 23d, on board a sailing vessel, bound for the coast of Chili. She was lumber laden and the captain kindly took me along so as to have some one to listen to his yarns. We had a very tedious trip, being eighty days on the way, and were twice becalmed. But I presume it was a profitable trip, as I nearly read the bible through, and found out that Adam was not of the first creation; also that they knew nothing of the devil until he afflicted Job, and sundry other interesting items of information not generally known.

In passing under the equator it was not unpleasantly warm—and let me say right here that if you are thinking of coming to South America, and have some friend who ply in Idaho's cold climate, and think of making him a present of your overcoat, do not do so, my friend. Better by far buy yourself an extra one, as the ocean breezes are very cold. The northern coast of Chili is very mountainous, barren and drear, and reminds one of the little lamb that wandered down a steep place to the water's edge. There is not a sign of brush or verdure or vegetation of any kind to be seen.

The chief industry of the country is copper mining and as the price of copper is very low, times are very hard, wages very low and provisions high, but the climate is heavenly and serene, although the earthquake's rumble can often be heard. One day at Toobellia I was about to take an outdoor group, when the earth commenced to shake, and off they scampered like a bunch of Idaho's cayuses when you are after them with a lariat on the open range. The buildings are from palaces to hovels, and the latter are worse than Idaho pig pens. The inhabitants range from the most refined and educated to ten degrees below North American Indians. The lowly class are as much in majority as bachelors in Idaho.

I stopped in Valparaiso seven days—the most delightful of all climates—the name itself being Spanish for "Valley of Paradise." Here the evergreen flourishes and flowers never cease to bloom. The beautiful parks and flower gardens rival description, but it was raining while I was there and I had to stay in bed five out of the seven days to keep from chilling to death. There is not a fire to warm or dry one's self by in the place. It is a lively city of 250,000 inhabitants and the people and houses and horses are of all descriptions. The thermometer does not rise higher than 80 nor sink lower than 40 degrees above zero, and it certainly is delightful, only they should provide fires.

I was in the interior some. The country is very beautiful and they raise all kinds of fruits, grain, vegetables and tame grass. There is plenty of timber, but no fires. They are like the people of Idaho about starving their horses on the range. They say it is not healthy to sit by fires so they hover down in a corner with a blanket and shiver. It is a very fine country, but it has two drawbacks; one is, that it rains in Southern Chili fourteen months out of the year; the other is that if you have two coats you must wear them both, or else you will be sure to find them on some dog's back.

As near as I could learn life and property are very unsafe. They stole my valise and box of chemicals for under my head on one of the river boats, and I was well satisfied that they left my head.

Wages are very low. A girl only gets \$4 a month. They are plentiful enough—about three to every man—and many of them are very handsome. When I told them to go to Idaho and make some of the bachelors there happy, they would say "No, intends." I must say that the young ladies are more handsome than our North American ladies. As to the men, I did not look at them. How could I when I had only two eyes—and there were so many young ladies.

Let me warn all who want to go to any part of South America east of the Andes mountains not to go by the way of San Francisco and the west coast. A passage from Frisco to Valparaiso costs \$279 and from there to Buenos Ayres \$200, or \$150 second class. As to crossing the mountains, they can only be crossed for a short time at Christmas, and the railroad will not be finished for years. The best and quickest way is to go direct to England, and from there you can get to Buenos Ayres for \$100 first class, or \$40 or \$50 for second and third class.

The English steamers have very good accommodations, even in the steerage. The bill of fare consists of good soft bread, beefsteak, salt fish, tea, coffee, potatoes and soup, and wine twice a day, even in the steerage. The staterooms are furnished with mattresses and blankets, and, in fact, when not overcrowded, better than Idaho bachelors are used to. To make it plain, you are as far in dollars and cents when you are in Valparaiso, as you are when at home, and while they make the run from England in twenty and twenty-five days, it takes over forty from Frisco to Valparaiso, as on the latter route they stop at every dog-kennel on the way, and if you take third or second class, they will have plenty of parched corn along—and you may be Lord have mercy on your soul and body. From England many steamers are plying all the time.

I came from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres via the straits of Magellan on a fine English steamer homeward bound. She made the run to Montevideo in fourteen days and transferred us to one of the Rio Platte boats, where we arrived during the night. And here I noticed, by the way the valises and trunks were strewn about, that the people are either more honest or lazy, as Chili's enterprising citizens would at least have examined the contents thereof.

some of the finest residences I have ever seen and even stables, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, and beautiful walks with evergreen trees and flowers blooming in midwinter. There is a fine zoological garden with animals peculiar to South America and other climes. On their race course can be seen Prince Wilkes, purchased in California for \$30,000, with a record of 2:16. Many of England's best thoroughbreds may be seen galloping on Argentine soil, which, by the way, seems to be a black mulch, so deep that horses and wagons cannot reach the bottom though they go many feet down hunting for it, as they pass along the unpaved suburbs of the country. The land is flat and wet, so that draining is necessary, but little of it has been done. I have only been 250 miles out in the country, so of course I know nothing of its merits or demerits. The railroad runs on a straight line without crook or turn; no rocks, no trees, only evergreen shrubs in the groves around the farm houses, which are various distances apart, as in some localities many miles square are owned by the same man, and all fenced with smooth wire, about five in number, which turn stock as well as North American barbed-wire. There is no unfenced land, and land anywhere near the railroad is worth \$50 per acre.

Cattle are worth \$19 per head straight through, and sheep \$1. The sheep have died off so much the past few years that they are now said to be very unprofitable. I heard that chickens could be bought for 15 cents in Buenos Ayres, so my mouth watered like a preacher's for a yellow leg; but, alas, they have advanced to \$1, and as they keep the coops well barred, I had to be content with as fine beef as I had ever chewed. The hens refuse to lay when eggs drop below 30 cents.

As I was returning from the zoological gardens, a gentleman driving a span of fine mares, weighing about 1000 each, and capable of trotting in four minutes, came along and as he did so one klicked over the traces. I helped him out of his difficulty, for which he quickly offered me a dollar, which I as quickly declined, telling him I was an American, and we always aimed to help each other, either into or out of life's difficulties. I rode to town with him and he informed me that his team had been shipped from England and they cost him laid down \$4000.

What do you think of that, you men who want to buy horses at \$100 apiece? They were very stylish. Such a team as Orient or Billy Baker would make would fetch \$6000.

I met a man on the boat who was bringing horses from Ohio here. Even the scrub horses are as high as they are in Idaho, and twice as ugly and mean. Wages are better here than in Chili, but not so good as at home, unless one can speak both languages and has a good education. The ladies are twice as handsome, though not so plenty as in Chili. The Italians are the most numerous of the foreign population, but they are of a higher grade than the negroes of the United States. Clothing is very cheap here and all kinds of provisions low. I have been here now four weeks and have seen no disposition to quarrel.

The government and people glide along smoothly. Tame grasses and all crops do well, except potatoes, which do not attain a large growth and are of inferior quality besides, and sell for \$2 a bushel. The peach trees are just blooming for spring. The mercury ranges from 85 to 40 deg. above zero. The mud and wind are about equal to the paradise of Canaan's prairie. It is winter with green grass, but an overcoat is a good friend.

The great drawback is not knowing the language, and one feels as lonesome as a lone drink of whiskey. There are many English people here and in the country in places are many of the Emerald Isle's sons and daughters, most all rich. Most Americans dislike this country, and say there is no place like the United States. One great trouble with this country is that whenever they want money they just get their stamps and make money, like you make newspapers. The paper money is now about half value, and while money has gone down, wages have gone up. When I have spoken of the price of things I mean the price in gold. Gold, you do not seem to hear only in the money broker's office.

I have not been here long enough to give a good opinion of the country. Men who are raising fine stock, particularly fine road horses, are making fortunes, but then the stock to breed from has to be shipped from England or the United States, which requires large capital. I have not been in any part of the country on my travels where land is as cheap as in Idaho. I am told the government donates large tracts of land to settlers in new and better parts of the republic—a matter I will investigate later on. I would not advise any one to come here unless they know just where to go and could get into an English speaking community, as they will squander a small fortune and be disgusted with the country before they know anything about it unless they can talk Spanish.

bonded, but is sure to be a paying investment. One-fourth of one floor will be used by the temperance people and the other ten and three-quarters rented for business offices. It will be fire-proof, modern in every particular, and as well built as women can have it. When completed it will be remarkable, not only as a million dollar temperance temple, but as a monument to the pluck and perseverance of a bright and ambitious western woman. Mrs. Carse is a widow, fair, plump and forty, with just enough money to keep her comfortably and two grown sons. She is enthusiastic in church, temperance and philanthropic work, and can boss a kitchen, a carnival or a lazar better than any twenty women in the town, and clear as much money as she figures on raising for the foundlings, orphans or cripples. As a genteel beggar she hasn't a peer. She has been in the business so long in the interest of the W. C. T. U. that she goes about it in a systematic manner and wins every time. Her method is to make a careful toilet in the nicest of black or half mourning, hire a coupe and a "bustions" in smart attire, and roll off to a handsome firm, as soon after breakfast or luncheon as possible. Buttons runs in with her cart to the head of the firm and, bringing back an answer, ushers her into the private office. She is an easy, agreeable talker, has a commanding appearance, a pleasant manner, glowing lips and cheeks, a pair of black grey eyes that light up gloriously in a low light. Then, too, her method of shaking hands is peculiar, for, instead of a side to side movement, she pulls a body's hand down and sends a current of electricity flying up in a way that can only be described as exquisitely giddy.

This done, she throws her matchless eyes about, talks business and current events, and finally temperance temples. Then she talks subscriptions and gets nineteen out of every twenty asked for. The twentieth man she hugs to her bosom, figuratively, and sooner or later gets more from him than she does from any one of the other nineteen. In this way she calls and calls again, two or three times a year, on the business men of Chicago, and the books and the cash she has to show have made her a paragon for others to emulate.

Almost Wiped Out. A correspondent tells of the following incident which befell the United States steamer Richmond, when in 1872 she was ordered home from Valparaiso, Chili. Starting on her long voyage the vessel in due time entered Smith's straits. This is a passage often taken by vessels bound through Magellan's straits, as it is shorter than the outside passage and smooth water all the way. It extends from the gulf of Penas to Magellan straits and is formed by islands so close together that the channel is more like a river than anything else. It contains some of the grandest scenery in the world. Mountains, valleys, volcanoes and glaciers, deep canyons and beautiful lakes meet the eye as the vessel ploughs through the water. In places the channel widens out and is almost lost between hundreds of small islands. At others it flows through narrow passages between mountains whose sides, straight as the walls of a house, tower from 500 to 1,000 feet above the water. Such a place is the English Narrows, half a mile long, in no place more than 300 feet wide, and in some places not more than 100. Every sound made is echoed from side to side dozens of times and the report of a musket puts a war veteran in mind of Gettysburg. Some of the officers induced the captain to fire one of the heavy guns in the narrows, something no ship had ever done before, and I doubt if any officer present when that shot was fired will wish to try it again. By the advice of the navigator the gun was not fired until just as the ship passed out into the open water clear of the canyon. The order to fire was given just as the ship's bow swung into clear water. I was standing on the poopdeck looking back as the gun was fired, and I shall never forget what followed; rear after rear, crash after crash, as if the very mountains were being torn from their eternal resting places. Ten seconds after that gun was fired every gun in the ship could have been fired at once and a man with his eyes shut would not have known the difference. But it was not the thundering echoes that transfixed every man on deck.

Blanched faces and eyes filled with horror were fixed on a mass of rock twice the size of the ship, perched on the edge of the cliff. It slowly toppled over, and then with the speed of lightning seemed to fall straight down on us. I shook in every limb, unable to move, and the next moment the ship trembled as though struck by a cyclone. Tons of water rushed over the upper part of the deck, everyone aft was thrown off his feet, and the water poured down the open hatchways into the wardrobes and after cabins. The immense mass of rock struck the water and disappeared not thirty feet from the ship's stern. All around us the water seemed to boil, and the swell was as heavy as on the ocean after a storm. At this time the awful roar of those unseen guns seemed to fill every valley and ravine for ten miles around, getting fainter, and then breaking forth with increased force, to finally die away in a succession of unearthly cracks. Some of the men rushed for the boats and life rafts. Engineers and fireman ran up from below, thinking the ship had struck, and one poor fellow was carried against a gun by the water and had a leg broken.

In short time we came to anchor in a little cove about a mile below. The steam pumps were started and the water pumped out, the decks cleared up, clotheslines rigged, and soon filled with clothes and carpets and beddings. Next morning two boats were lowered, and, filled with officers and men, pulled back to see how things looked. Each boat had lead and line for soundings up to twenty fathoms, but could get no bottom. A longer line was used afterwards and reached bottom at 110 fathoms.

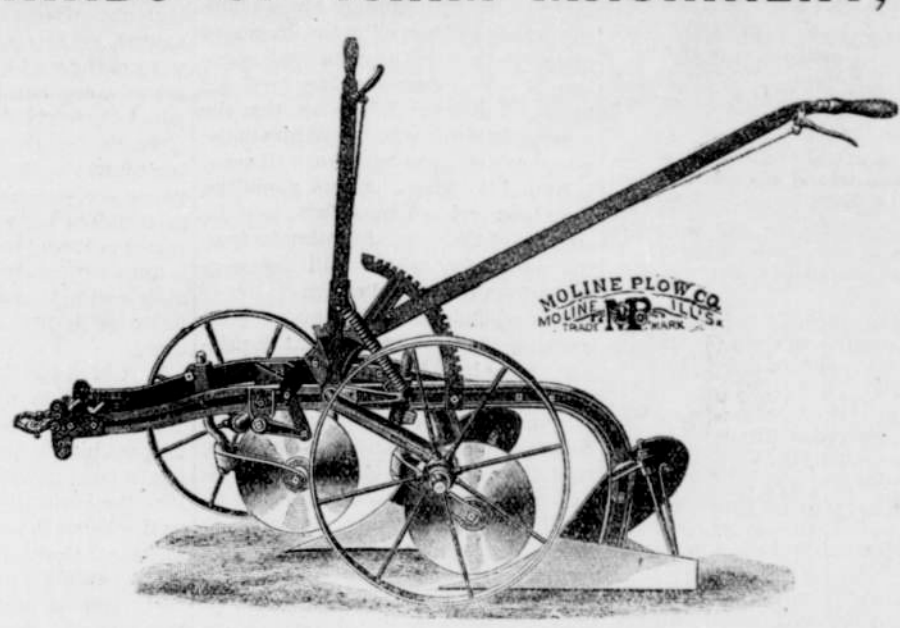
In the afternoon several officers made a trip to the top of the cliff. The bed where the mass of rock had rested was so steep no one could go on it. By actual measurement it was 400 feet long. What the height of the rock had been no one could say. Although loosened and undermined by the rains of ages, it might have stood for a hundred years more but the vast rush of air driven up the side of the canyon by the discharge of the gun started the mass with the results narrated.

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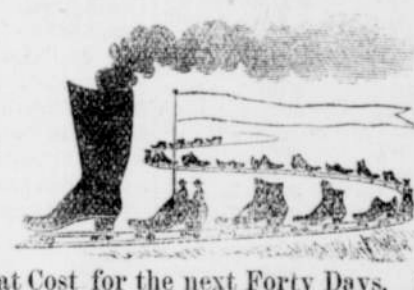
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