

roaring could be heard for miles, and whose foam boiled as if by fire of the gods! The Devil's Staircase, the Devil's Ladder, the Devil's Punch Bowl, the Demon's Drop, the Devil's Dripping Pan, are self-explanatory of the landscapes in which they figure. Disguises, beautiful fiends who murmur "*Ciel!*" or scream "*Tout les diables!*" the old

midwife, the changed children or the stolen darling, the real infant heir to Chateau Dubarry, the faithful negro slaves, and the outlawed band—all these abound, together with jealousies, impassioned love, counterplots, and delicacy, without which latter aid to life and love the still-enduring fame of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth could not be.

## TWO BOOK HUNTERS IN SOUTH AMERICA

BY BELLE AND KERMIT ROOSEVELT

THE true bibliophile will always find time to exercise his calling no matter where he happens to be, or in what manner he is engaged in making his daily bread. In some South American cities, more particularly in Buenos Ayres, there is so little to do outside of one's office that were there more old bookstores it would be what Eugene Field would have called a bibliomaniac's paradise. To us wanderers on the face of the earth serendipity in its more direct application to book collecting is a most satisfactory pursuit; for it requires but little capital, and in our annual flittings to "somewhere else" our purchases necessitate but the minimum of travelling space. There are two classes of bibliophiles—those to whom the financial side is of little or no consequence, and those who, like the clerk of the East India House, must count their pennies, and save, and go without other things to counterbalance an extravagance in the purchase of a coveted edition. To the former class these notes may seem over worldly in their frequent allusion to prices; but to its authors the financial side must assume its relative importance.

### BRAZIL'S NATIVE LITERATURE

Among the South American Republics, Brazil undeniably takes precedence from a literary standpoint. Most Brazilians, from Lauro Muller, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the postmaster

of the little frontier town, have at some period in their lives published, or at all events written, a volume of prose or verse. It comes to them from their natural surroundings, and by inheritance, for once you except Cervantes, the Portuguese have a greater literature than the Spaniards. There is therefore in Brazil an excellent and widely read native literature, and in almost every home there are to be found the works of such poets as Goncalves Diaz and Castro Alves, and historians, novelists, and essayists like Taunay, Couto de Magalhaens, Alencar, and Coelho Netto. Taunay's most famous novel, *Innocencia*, a tale of life in frontier state of Matto Grosso,—“the great wilderness,” has been translated into seven languages, including the Japanese and Polish. The literature of the mother country is also generally known; Camões is read in the schools, and a quotation from the *Lusiads* is readily capped by a casual acquaintance in the remotest wilderness town. Portuguese poets and playwrights like Almeda Garret, Bocage, Quental and Guerra Junquera; and historians and novelists such as Herculano, Eça de Queiroz or Castello Branco are widely read.

In Brazil, as throughout South America, French is almost universally read; cheap editions of the classics are found in most homes, and bookstores are filled with modern French writers of prose or

verse;—sometimes in translation, and as frequently in the original. Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo abound in old bookstores, which are to be found in fewer numbers in other of the larger towns, such as Manaus, Para, Pernambuco, Bahia, Curytiba, or Porto Alegre. In the smaller towns of the interior one runs across only new books, although occasionally those who possess the “flaire” may chance upon some battered treasure.

#### TALES OF THE TRAIL BLAZERS

The line which is of most interest, and in South America presents the greatest latitude, is undoubtedly that of early voyages and discoveries. Probably it was because they were in a greater or less degree voyages or explorers themselves, that the Americans and English who came to South America seventy or eighty years ago brought with them books of exploration and travel, both contemporary and ancient. Many of these volumes, now rare in the mother country, are to be picked up for a song in the old bookstores of the New World.

The accounts of the Conquistadores and early explorers, now in the main inaccessible except in great private collections or museums, have frequently been reprinted, and if written in a foreign tongue, translated, in the country which they describe. Thus the account of Père Yveux was translated and printed in Moranhão in 1878, and this translation is now itself rare. We picked up a copy for fifty cents in a junk store in Bahia; but in São Paulo had to pay the market price for the less rare translation of Hans Stade's captivity. Ulrich Schmidel's entertaining account of the twenty years of his life spent in the first half of the sixteenth century in what is now Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, has been excellently translated into Spanish by an Argentine of French descent, Lafoyne Quevedo, the head of the La Plata museum. We had never seen the book until one day at the judicial auction held by the heirs of a prominent

Argentine lawyer. Books published in Buenos Ayres are as a whole abominably printed, but this was really beautiful, so we determined to get it. The books were being sold in ill-assorted lots, and this one was with three other volumes; one was an odd volume of Italian poetry, one a religious treatise, and the third a medical book. Bidding had been low, and save for standard legal books, the lots had been going at two or three dollars apiece. Our lot quickly went to five dollars. There was soon only one man bidding against us. We could not understand what he wanted, but thought that perhaps the Schmidel was worth more than we had imagined. Our blood was up and we began trying to frighten our opponent by substantial raises; at fourteen he dropped out. The dealers in common with everyone else were much intrigued at the high bidding; and clearly felt that something had escaped them. The mystery was solved when our opponent hurried over to ask what we wanted for the odd volume of Italian verse;—it belonged to him and he had loaned it to the defunct lawyer shortly before his death. We halved the expenses and the lot; and as a curious sequel, later found that the medical book which had quite accidentally fallen to our share was worth between fifteen and twenty dollars.

#### COMPARATIVE PRICES

Prices in Brazil seemed very high in comparison with those of Portugal and Spain; but low when compared with Argentina. On the west coast we found books slightly less expensive than in Brazil, where, however, the prices have remained the same as before the war, though the drop in exchange has given the foreigner the benefit of a twenty-five per cent. reduction. There are a fair number of auctions, and old books are also sold through priced lists, published in the daily papers. We obtained our best results by search in the bookshops. It was in this way that we got for three dollars the first edition of Castelleux's *Voyage dans la Partie Sep-*

*tentrionale de l'Amerique*, in perfect condition, and for one dollar Jordan's *Guerra do Paraguay*, for which a bookseller in Buenos Ayres had asked, as a tremendous bargain, twelve dollars.

In São Paulo after much searching we found Santos Saraiva's paraphrase of the Psalms, a famous translation quite as beautiful as our own English version. The translator was born in Lisbon. His father was a Jewish rabbi, but he entered the Catholic Church, became a priest, and went to an inland parish in Southern Brazil. After some years he left the Church and settled down with a Brazilian woman in a small out-of-the-way fazenda, where he translated the Psalms, and also composed a Greek lexicon that is regarded as a masterpiece. He later became instructor in Greek in Mackenzie College in São Paulo, confining his versatile powers to that institution until he died.

#### TREASURE HUNTING IN BUENOS AYRES

The dearth of native literature in Buenos Ayres is not surprising, for nature has done little to stimulate it, and in its fertility much to create the commercialism that reigns supreme. The country is in large part rolling prairie land, and although there is an attraction about it in its wild state, which has called forth a gaucho literature that chiefly takes form in long and crude ballads, the magic of the prairie land is soon destroyed by houses, factories, dump-heaps and tin cans. At first sight it would appear hopeless ground for a bibliophile, but with time and patience we found a fair number of old bookstores; and there rarely passes a week without a book auction, or at any rate an auction where some books are put up.

Among the pleasantest memories of our life in Buenos Ayres are those of motoring in to a sale, from our house in Belgrano along the famous Avenida Alvear on starlit nights, with the Southern Cross high and brilliant. Occasionally when the books we were interested in were far between, we would slip out of the smoke-laden room for a cup of un-

rivalled coffee at the Café Paulista, or to watch Charlie Chaplin as "Carlitos" amuse the Argentine public.

The great percentage of the books one sees at auctions or in bookstores are strictly utilitarian; generally either on law or medicine. In the old bookstores there are, as in Boston, rows of religious books, on which the dust lies undisturbed. In Argentine literature there are two or three famous novels; most famous of these is probably Marmol's *Amalia*, a bloodthirsty and badly written story of the reign of Rosas—the gaucho Nero. Bunge's *Novela de la Sangre* is an excellently given but equally lurid account of the same period. *La Gloria de Don Ramiro*, by Rodriguez Larreta, is a well-written tale of the days of Philip the Second. The author, the present Argentine minister in Paris, spent some two years in Spain studying the local setting of his romance. Most Argentines, if they have not read these novels at least know the general plots and the more important characters. The literature of the mother country is little read and as a rule looked down upon by the Argentines, who are more apt to read French or even English. *La Nacion*, which is one of the two great morning papers, and owned by a son of Bartholome Mitre, publishes a cheap uniform edition, which is formed of some Argentine reprints and originals, but chiefly of French and English translations. The latest publication is advertised on the front page of the newspaper, and one often runs across "old friends" whose "new faces" cause a momentary check to the memory; such as *La FERIA de Vanidades*, the identity of which is clear when one reads that the author is Thackeray. This "Biblioteca de la Nacion" is poorly got up and printed on wretched paper, but seems fairly widely read and will doubtless stimulate the scarcely existent literary side of the Argentine, and in due time bear fruit. Translations of Nick Carter and the "penny dreadfuls" are rife, but a native writer, Gutierrez, who wrote in the seventies and eighties, created a national

hero, Juan Moreira, who was a benevolent Billy the Kid, Gutierrez wrote many "dramas policiales," which are well worth reading for the light they throw in their side touches on "gaucho" life of those days.

#### THE LIBRARY IN ARGENTINA

Argentines are justifiably proud of Bartholome Mitre, their historian soldier, who was twice president; and of Sarmiento, essayist and orator, who was also president, and who introduced the educational reforms whose application he had studied in the United States. Mitre first published his history of General Belgrano, of revolutionary fame, in two volumes in 1859. It has run through many editions; the much enlarged one in four volumes is probably more universally seen in private houses than any other Argentine book. The first edition is now very rare and worth between forty and fifty dollars; but in a cheap Italian stationery store we found a copy in excellent condition, and paid for it only four dollars and fifty cents. The edition of 1887 brings anywhere from twenty to thirty dollars. Many copies were offered at sales, but we delayed in hopes of a better bargain, and one night our patience was rewarded. It was at the fag end of a private auction of endless rooms of cheap and tawdry furniture that the voluble auctioneer at length reached the contents of the solitary bookcase. Our coveted copy was knocked down to us at eight dollars.

In native houses one very rarely finds what we would even dignify by the name of library. Generally a fair-sized bookcase of ill-assorted volumes is regarded as such. There are, however, excellent legal and medical collections to be seen, and Dr. Moreno's colonial quinta, with its well-filled shelves, chiefly volumes of South American exploration and development from the earliest times, forms a marked exception—an oasis in the desert. We once went to stay in the country with some Argentines, who seeing us arrive with books in our hands, proudly offered the use of their library,

to which we had often heard their friends make reference. For some time we were greatly puzzled as to the location of this much talked of collection, and were fairly staggered on having a medium-sized bookcase, half of which was taken up by a set of excerpts from the "world's great thinkers and speakers," in French, pointed out as "the library."

As a rule the first thing a family will part with is its books. There are two sorts of auctions,—judicial and book-sellers'. The latter class are held by dealers who are having bad times and hope to liquidate some of their stock, but there are always cappers in the crowd who keep bidding until a book is as high, and often higher than its market price. The majority of the books are generally legal or medical; and there is always a good number of young students who hope to get reference books cheaply. Most of the books are in Spanish, but there is a good sprinkling of French, and often a number of English, German, and Portuguese, though these last are no more common in Argentina than are Spanish books in Brazil. At one auction there were a number of Portuguese lots which went for far more than they would have brought in Rio or São Paulo. Translations from the Portuguese are infrequent; the only ones we can recall were of Camões and Eça de Queiroz. In Brazil the only translation from Spanish we met with was of Don Quixote.

#### THE DEMAND FOR ENGLISH BOOKS

English books generally go reasonably at auctions. We got a copy of Page's *Paraguay and the River Plate* for twenty-five cents, but on another occasion had some very sharp bidding for Wilcox's *History of Our Colony in the River Plate*, London, 1807, written during the brief period when Buenos Ayres was an English possession. It was finally knocked down to us at twelve dollars; and after the auction our opponent offered us twice what he had let us have it for; we don't yet know what it is

worth. The question of values is a difficult one, for there is little or no data to go upon; in consequence the element of chance is very considerable. From several sources in the book world, we heard a wild and most improbable tale of how Quaritch and several other London houses had many years ago sent a consignment of books to be auctioned in the Argentine; and that the night of the auction was so cold and disagreeable that the exceedingly problematical buyers were still further reduced. The auction was held in spite of conditions and incanabula are reported to have gone at a dollar apiece.

There was one judicial auction that lasted for the best part of a week,—the entire stock of a large bookstore that had failed. They were mostly new books, and such old ones as were of any interest were interspersed in lots of ten or more of no value. The attendance was large and bidding was high. To get the few books we wanted we had also to buy a lot of waste material; but when we took this to a small and heretofore barren bookstore to exchange, we found a first edition of the three first volumes of *Kosmos*, for which, with a number in Portuguese and Spanish books thrown in, we made the exchange. We searched long and without success for the fourth volume, but as the volumes were published at long intervals it is probable that the former owner had only possessed the three.

#### A BYRON FIND

Our best finds were made not at auctions but in bookstores,—often in little combination book,—cigar,—and stationery shops. We happened upon one of these latter one Saturday noon on our way to lunch at a little Italian restaurant, where you watched your chicken being most deliciously roasted on a spit before you. Chickens were forgotten, and during two hours breathless hunting, we found many good things, among them a battered old copy of Byron's poems, which had long since lost its bindings. Pasted in it was the follow-

ing original letter of Byron's, which as far as we know has never before been published:

A MONSIEUR,  
MONSIEUR GALIGNANI,  
18 Rue Vivienne,  
Paris.

SIR: In various numbers of your journal I have seen mentioned a work entitled *The Vampire*, with the addition of my name as that of the author. I am not the author, and never heard of the work in question until now. In a more recent paper I perceive a formal annunciation of *The Vampire*, with the addition of an account of my "residence in the Island of Mitylane," an island which I have occasionally sailed by in the course of travelling some years ago through the Levant—and where I should have no objection to reside—but where I have never yet resided. Neither of these performances are mine—and I presume that it is neither unjust nor ungracious to request that you will favour me by contradicting the advertisement to which I allude. If the book is clever, it would be base to deprive the real writer—whoever he may be—of his honours—and if stupid I desire the responsibility of nobody's dulness but my own. You will excuse the trouble I give you—the imputation is of no great importance—and as long as it was confined to surmises and reports—I should have received it as I have received many others—in silence. But the formality of a public advertisement of a book I never wrote, and a residence where I never resided—is a little too much—particularly as I have no notion of the contents of the one—nor the incidents of the other. I have besides a personal dislike to "vampires," and the little acquaintance I have with them would by no means induce me to divulge their secrets. You did me a much less injury by your paragraphs about "my devotion" and "abandonment of society for the sake of religion"—which appeared in your *Messenger* during last Lent—all of which are not founded on fact—but you see I do not contradict them, because they are merely personal, whereas the others in some degree concern the reader. . . .

You will oblige me by complying with



my request for contradiction. I assure you that I know nothing of the work or works in question—and have the honour to be (as the correspondents to magazines say) “your constant reader” and very

obedt

humble Servt,

BYRON.

To the editor of *Galignani's Messenger*.  
Etc., etc., etc.

Venice, April 27, 1819.

Curiously enough the book itself had been published by Galignani in 1828. The cost of our total purchases, a goodly heap, amounted to but five dollars.

#### PALUMBO THE IRRITABLE

The balance in quantity if not in quality in old books is held in Buenos Ayres by three brothers named Palumbo, —Italians. The eldest is a surly old man who must be treated with severity from the very beginning. How he manages to support himself we do not know, for whenever we were in his store we were sure to hear him assail some customer most abusively. In a small subsidiary store of his, among a heap of old pamphlets, we came upon the original folios of Humboldt's account of the fauna and flora of South America. Upon asking the price the man said thirty-five apiece,—we thought he meant pesos, and our surprise was genuine when we found he meant centavos,—about fifteen cents. From him we got the first edition of Kendall's *Santa Fé Expedition*. One of his brothers was very pleasant and probably, in consequence, the most prosperous of the three. The third was reputed crazy, and certainly acted so, but after an initial encounter we became friends and got on famously. All three had a very fair idea of the value of Argentine books, but know little or nothing about English.

Another dealer who has probably a better stock than any of the Palumbos is a man named Realy Taylor. His grandmother was English, and his father spent his life dealing in books. At his death the store was closed and the son

started speculating in land with the money his father had left him. Prices soared and he bought, but when the crash came he was caught with many others. Bethinking himself of his father's books, he took them out of storage and opened a small booth. The stock was large and a good part of it has not yet been unpacked. Taylor has only a superficial knowledge of what he deals in. He shears folios, strips off original boards and old leathers to bind in new pasteboard, and raises the price five or ten dollars after the process. In this he is no different from the rest, for after a fairly comprehensive experience in Buenos Ayres we may give it as our opinion that there is not a single dealer who knows the “rules” as they are observed by scores of dealers in America and England. Taylor had only one idea, and that was that if anyone were interested in a book, that book must be of great value; he would name a ridiculous price, and it was a question of weeks and months before he would reduce it to anything within the bounds of reason. We never really got very much from him; the best things being several old French books of early voyages to South America and a first edition of Anson's *Voyage Around the World*. Just before we left he decided to auction off his stock, putting up five hundred lots a month. The first auction lasted three nights. The catalogue was amusing, giving a description of each book in bombastic fashion,—all were “unique in interest,” and about every third was the “only copy extant outside the museums.” He had put base prices on most, and for the rest had arranged with cappers. The attendance was very small and nearly everything was bid in. It was curious to see how to the last he held that any book that anyone was interested in must be of unusual worth. There was put up a French translation of Azara's *Quadrupeds of Paraguay*. The introduction was by Cuvier, but it was not of great interest to us, for a friend had given us the valuable original Spanish edition.

Taylor had asked fifteen dollars, which we had regarded as out of the question; he then took off the original binding, cut and coloured the pages and rebound it,—asking twenty dollars. At the auction we thought we would get it, if it went for very little; but when we bid Taylor got up and told the auctioneer to say that as it was a work of unique value he had put as base price fifteen dollars each for the two volumes. The auction was a failure, and as it had been widely and expensively advertised the loss must have been considerable.

#### RAMBLING ACQUISITIONS

As a whole we found the booksellers of a disagreeable temperament. In one case we almost came to blows; luckily not until we had looked over the store thoroughly and bought all we really wanted, among them a first edition of Howells's *Italian Journeys* in perfect condition, for twenty-five cents. There were, of course, agreeable exceptions, such as the old French-Italian, from whom, after many months' intermittent bargaining, we bought Le Vaillant's *Voyage en Afrique*, the first edition, with most delightful steel engravings. He at first told us he was selling it at a set price on commission, which is what we found they often said when they thought you wanted a book and wished to preclude bargaining. This old man had Amsterdam catalogues that he consulted in regard to prices when, as could not have been often the case, he found in them references to books he had in stock. We know of no Argentine old bookstore that prints a catalogue.

In the larger provincial cities of Argentina we met with singularly little success. In Cordoba the only reward of an eager search was a battered paper-covered copy of *All on the Irish Shore*, with which we were glad to renew an acquaintance that had lapsed for several years. We had had such high hopes of Cordoba, as being the old university town and early centre of learning! There was indeed one trail that seemed to promise well, and we diligently pur-

sued vague stories of a "viejo" who had trunks of old books in every language, but when we eventually found his rooms, opening off a dirty little patio, they were empty and bereft; and we learned from a grimy brood of children that he had gone to the hospital in Buenos Ayres and died there, and that his boxes had been taken away by they knew not whom.

#### IN SANTIAGO AND VALPARAISO

As in Argentina, the best known Chilean writers are historians or lawyers; and in our book hunts in Santiago we encountered more or less the same conditions that held in Buenos Ayres—shelf upon shelf of legal or medical reference books and technical treatises. The works of certain well-known historians, such as Vicuña Mackenna and Amonategui, consistently command relatively high prices; but as a whole books are far cheaper on the west side of the Andes. One long afternoon in the Calle San Diego stands out. It was a rich find, but we feel that the possibilities of that store are still unexhausted. That afternoon's trove included the first edition of Mungo Park's *Travels* with the delightful original etchings; a *History of Guatemala*, written by the Dominican missionaries, published in 1619, an old leather-bound folio, in excellent shape; a first edition of Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, and three of the eight volumes of *State Papers and Publick Documents of the United States*. In these last there was James Monroe's bookplate, and it was curious to imagine how these volumes from his library had found their way to a country where his "doctrine" has been the subject of such bitter discussion and so much misinterpretation. The value of the original covers was no more understood in Chile than in Argentina, and we got a complete set of Vicuña Mackenna's *Campana de Tacna* in the original pamphlets, as published, for but half what was currently asked for bound and mutilated copies.

Valparaiso proved a barren field, and

although one of the chief delights in bookhunting lies in the fact that you can never feel that you have completely exhausted the possibilities of a place, we came nearer to feeling that way about Valparaiso than we ever had about a town before. We found but one store that gave any promise, and from it all we got were the first seven volumes of Dickens's *Household Words* in perfect condition, and the *Campaign of the Rapidan*.

The little coast towns of Chile and Peru are almost as barren as the desert rocks and sand hills that surround them; but even here we had occasional surprises, as when we picked up for fifty cents, at Antofogast, a desolate, thriving little mining port in the north of Chile, Vicuña Mackenna's *Life of O'Higgins*, for which the current price is from ten to fifteen dollars. Another time, in Coquimbo, we saw a man passing alone the street with a hammered copper bowl that we coveted; and following, we found him the owner of a junk shop filled with a heterogeneous collection of old clothes, broken and battered furniture, horse trappings, and a hundred and one odds and ends, among which were scattered some fifty or sixty books. One of these was a first edition of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* in the familiar old brown boards of Ticknor and Company.

#### THE PILGRIMS IN PERU

Our South American bookhunting ended in Lima, the entrancing old city of the Kings, once the capital of the New World, and not yet robbed by this commercial age of all its glamour and backwardness. We expected much, knowing that when the Chilians occupied the city in 1880 they sacked the national library of fifty thousand volumes that their own liberator, San Martín, had founded in 1822, and although many of the books were carried off to Chile, the greater part was scattered around Lima or sold by weight on the streets. We shall always feel that with more time, much patience, and good luck

we could have unearthed many treasures; although at first sight the field is not a promising one, and as elsewhere one's acquaintances assure one that there is nothing to be found. In spite of this, however, we came upon a store that appeared teeming with possibilities. Without the "flaire" or much luck it might be passed by many times without exciting interest. Over the dingy grated window of a dilapidated colonial house is the legend "Encuadernacion y Imprenta" — "Binding and Printing." Through the grimy window panes may be seen a row of dull law books; but if you open the big gate and cross the patio, with its ancient hand-well in the centre, on the opposite side are four or five rooms with shelves of books along the walls, and tottering and fallen piles of books scattered over the floor. Here we picked up among others an amusing little old vellum-covered edition of Horace, printed in England in 1606, which must have early found its way to South America, to judge from the Spanish scrawls on the title page. We also got many of the works of Ricardo Palma, Peru's most famous writer, who built up the ruined national library, which now possesses some sixty thousand volumes, of which a twelfth part were donated by our own Smithsonian Institution. One of the volumes we bought had been given by Palma to a friend, and had an autograph dedication which in other countries would have greatly enhanced its value, but which, curiously enough, seems to make no difference in South America. In Buenos Ayres we got a copy of the *Letters from Europe* of Campos Salles, Brazil's greatest president, which had been inscribed by him to the Argentine translator. Once in São Paulo we picked up an autographed copy of Gomes de Amorim, and in neither case did the autograph enter into the question of determining the price.

We had heard rumours of possibilities in store for us in Ecuador, Columbia, and Venezuela, but Lima was our "farthest north," for there our ramblings in South America were reluctantly brought





FOLLOWING THE TRAIL IN LIMA

to a close. We feel, however, that such as they were, and in spite of the fact that the names of many of the authors and places will be strange to our brethren who have confined their explorations

to the northern hemisphere, these notes may awaken interest in a little known field, which, if small in comparison with America or the Old World, offers at times unsuspected prizes and rewards.

# GREAT HOUSES OF LETTERS

## I. WHERE THACKERAY WROTE "THE NEWCOMES"



NO. 36 ONSLOW SQUARE, LONDON, WHERE THACKERAY LIVED FROM 1853 TO 1862, AND WROTE "THE NEWCOMES" AND "THE VIRGINIANS"