

# OUR ENTENTE WITH SOUTH AMERICA

BY THOMAS WALSH

How shall we promote the *entente cordiale* with Central and South America? has long been the question of thinkers in the North; and now when the wars of Europe have shut us from our overseas markets and centres of culture, now when war itself confronts the United States—self-constituted protector of the New Hemisphere—the question assumes acute interest and grave importance.

Back of the Monroe Doctrine there was always, primarily, the selfish consideration of our own safety, in shutting out the greater acquisition of American territory by the Powers of Europe. True, we remembered also our position as elder brother to the republics of the south and we were for many other reasons interested in their establishment and progress. We have seen them grow to maturity and in some cases to a stability that ought to be gratifying to our faith in human nature, but we have been too long in the rôle of protector and have neglected the more friendly intercourse of matured brethren of the same household. Have we not in the troublous days of southern revolutions learned too well the use of the index-finger and neglected the cordial hand-clasp of equal independence?

Our own dependence on Europe for the arts of life, the luxury and finish of civilisation, has been an example of which the south has only taken an exaggerated pattern. The cities of Buenos-Aires and Rio Janeiro are replicas of French cities in hardly more definite manner than we are imitations of London and Paris. We can hardly expect the South American countries to be less alert to the great centres than we are ourselves. If within the last few decades we have established autonomy in our civil and national institutions, if to be a North American sig-

nifies more than to be an imitation of a Northern European, how are our friends and neighbours in the south to discover this with their wires of communication and lines of traffic practically all established with European centres, their newspapers indifferent to our development and subject only to a more or less hostile breath of criticism from foreign agencies of trade and politics?

Those who have gone deepest into the relation of trade bear witness that the greatest difficulty in the development of North American industrial products in the south is the shortness of credit—the lack of trust, in so many words—extended to the southern dealers and consumers. Our healthful business on a more or less cash basis seems to make slow progress south of the equator, and we are found to be less patient creditors than are the Europeans in general. Is it that we are too independent to await payment, too careless to pack our exports in a safe and portable manner, too lazy to study the wants and desires of a people who refuse to be reconstructed and remodelled by the wholesale on our North American plan? Surely, with such a market, some compromise must be arrived at. If it is good business for European traders to adapt their credits to the customs of South American trade it should be good, and even better, business for the United States to do the same.

It may be accepted as a universal axiom that no foreigner loves the Englishman, and as the foreigner is likely to find it difficult to distinguish between the different kinds of British, many of our own English-speaking fellow-citizens are more or less likely to share in this racial dislike. This Anglo-Saxonism, based, as it is, on a more or less

conscious display of superiority in points of view and social practices, loses nothing of its offence when seen in its chaotic and ridiculous aspects along our own southern frontiers. The Latin race is proud of its traditions and secretly somewhat scornful of the "Barbarians" of the North. They can afford to overlook the financial and trade successes, the powerful organisations of modern industries and the economic triumphs upon which we plume ourselves. They are residents of a milder climate where poverty has fewer horrors and riches smaller attractions than with us. Their development is more in the individual than in the community. They are conscious of the possession of an almost perfect code of laws from Justinian and Napoleon, but if the enforcement of it is not all that we would desire, if the sense of personal liberty is still rather exaggerated—their pride in such a code is not altogether empty.

If education is not so widespread in the south there are, nevertheless, great scholarship and culture in certain classes in every country. Foreign universities and foreign tutors are employed to constitute a ruling intellectual clique in a sense that would be impossible among us, with whom the poorest labourer is able at least to read and write and form his own opinions—such as they are. Their connections with the past have made South American scholars more cautious than are the North American; recently King Alfonso of Spain is said to have declared: "We belong to a country in which everything has been tried." The South American has something of this spirit; we are apt to forget that he has partially solved a great question—the fate of the aboriginal races of his lands—which we have left to be settled by the guns and poisons of our civilisation. Tribal questions are at the background of the international relations of many of these countries besides Mexico, where a benevolent dictatorship must continue to preserve peace and promote prosperity for some time to come.

The Latin American is a member of a race at once literary and artistic; whatever his status, either in finance or politics, he is usually found to be a poet or a novelist. We who in North America have only recently learned to appreciate letters and art at their true value, and are still in some doubt as to the social value of their professors, must learn to value the South American as the brother of Rubén Darío, Guillermo Valencia, Santos Chocano, Antonio Gomez Restrepo and Olavo Bilac and the children of the great Andrés Bello, Rafael Pombo, and the Mexican Gutiérrez Nájera.

A survey of this literature in the pages of such a work as Menéndez y Pelayo's *Historia de la Poesia Hispano-Americana* (Madrid, 1913) or better still in the more comprehensive *Literary History of Spanish America* (New York, 1916) of Alfred Coester, will surprise many a North American reader with the discovery that in many of the capitals of our southern hemisphere there exist, and have flourished for years, literary schools more cultured and better organised than anything similar in our own country; in these schools traditions of native birth are treasured and cultivated with knowledge and taste refined at the best critical forges of Paris and Madrid. South America, it will be discovered, is intimately acquainted with our Longfellow, Bryant and Edgar Allan Poe; how do we reciprocate this attention? With a vague half-hearsay knowledge of Heredia the Elder, of Isaac's novel *Maria* and a few of the poems of Rubén Darío. Many Central and South American authors have visited and written appreciatively of our country; how many of our literary men have concerned themselves with them?

We must overcome this fault due to our mistaken Anglo-Saxon sense of superiority. We must realise thoroughly that there is no superiority except, perhaps, in the way of government administration. Our views regarding racial mixtures can also stand revision.

Miss Lillian Elwyn Elliot's recent book, *Brazil To-day and To-morrow* (New York, 1917) tells a story that well illustrates our lack of proper conception of the race problems of South America. We fail to understand that our own racial mixtures may be misinterpreted abroad by people who find in the songs of our negroes and the pottery and weaving of our Indians the most characteristic products of our continent. Miss Elliot's story deals with a colony of southerners who left the United States at the close of the Civil War and settled in the slave-tolerating lands of Brazil in a colony called Santa Barbara.

The colonists grew, besides cotton, water-melons: one year just as the crop ripened, cholera broke out in S. Paulo, the sale of melons was forbidden, and the growers faced ruin. At this time President Cleveland had come into office in the United States, and had just appointed a new consul at Santos: he must, then, be a good Democrat. The settlers, who on landing in Brazil had ceremonially torn up the Constitution of the United States and offered thanks to heaven for having permitted them to reach a land where the sacred Biblical institution of slavery was still in force, remembered that they were American citizens. They wrote to the consul a letter of congratulation on his arrival and at the same time detailed their grievances with regard to watermelon sales. The consul replied cordially, suggested that he should visit them, and received post haste a warm welcome. The afternoon of his arrival at the colony found the entire population drawn up on the platform, a southern Colonel at the head of the deputation. The train rolls up, a first-class compartment door opens, a gentleman steps out with a suitcase, and walks up to the Colonel with outstretched hand. It was the consul—but a consul as black as the ace of spades.

It is said that the Colonel, rising nobly to the occasion, gasped once, shook the hand of the consul, and that he and the other southerners gave the official the time of his life; but when he departed they vowed that never, never again would they trust a Democratic administration.

Over and above all these differences in life and opinion we have in common with Central and South America that quality which is recognised by all the world as *Americanism*. This breath of freedom, this new outlook upon life and its institutions, this welcome of originality, is a common link to bind our North and South together in a mighty whole. It is upon this Americanism—not North Americanism or South Americanism—that we must base our hope of mutual reciprocity, our avoidance of neighbourly jealousy and envy, our cultivation of brotherly amity and family well-being. This quality of mind is as unmistakable in life as it is in art; it is characteristic of the belle of Argentina and Chile as of the beauty of New York or San Francisco; in Paris it is synonymous with the grand gesture, the open hand, and largeness of view; in literature we find it in the triumphant art of a Rubén Darío and soaring depth of a Chocano, as well as in the giant dreams of a Walt Whitman and the starry gaze of an Emerson.

The war has brought to our United States a swarm of visitors from South America who otherwise would have wended their ways to Paris and the Continent. They have had a chance to see in our larger cities a form of life more like their own, more agreeable than they have ever found abroad. We have amusement places more calculated to please their tastes than any European theatres can offer them; our illuminations are brighter, our hotels more gorgeous, our shops more showy in their bright profusion. In New York, especially, they have found their Spanish spoken in every establishment of standing; our schools have not been idle and even now five times as many pupils take the Spanish courses as take those of other languages. These—for the most part commerce-trained students—will read Spanish and South American books and newspapers, when the south shows energy enough to distribute them more generally among us. In New York and New Orleans we have had numerous

publications; we have had Spanish opera and Spanish Plays; we have Spanish churches and Spanish clubs; we have chairs of Spanish literature at all our great universities; we have in New York the building of The Hispanic Society of America with a rare collection of Spanish paintings and a priceless and extensive collection of Spanish and Latin-American books and manuscripts.

The grounds of our *entente cordiale* have therefore been laid out, and only, it seems, the social difficulty remains in the way of a complete union, racial and religious. This difficulty is more fearsome than actual, and is to be overcome only by mutual toleration of differences and an intelligent and considerate hos-

pitality, by trust rather than suspicion, by fairness and kindliness rather than indifference and superiority. The young South American should be welcomed in our homes as well as in our hotels; he should learn to appreciate, and not to misinterpret our social freedom of the sexes. We should study the great lessons of Spanish civilisation, philosophy and art, and acknowledge our tremendous debt to the Spanish discoverers and explorers and their hardy descendants; they should strive to see in us something more than superior money machines and trading agencies, something of the race of the great dreamers of the North who still figure vaguely in their primitive romances and who are still to be found at the bottom of our hearts.

## FAIRY SHORES

BY POWHATAN JOHNSON WOOLDRIDGE

WHILE we drift a-down life's stream  
In the mazes of our dream,  
Fairy shores on either side  
Beckon us across the tide,  
But when we heed their mystic call  
The cold grey mist enshrouds it all.

Elfin flames about us dart,  
Helplessly, we drift apart,  
Farther, farther from the shore,  
Then the mist dissolves once more  
And shows you drifting far from me,  
Drifting to a lonely sea.