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BUENOS AYRES.

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Buenos Ayres, Nov. 25, 1898.—Buenos Ayres is the London, the New York, the Paris of the Argentine Republic. It is even more. It might almost be called the Argentine itself. It controls this country as no capital of the world does the land it is supposed to dominate. It is an old saying that Paris is France. She is not so to the extent that Buenos Ayres is the Argentine. There are a half dozen different cities in France which are independent commercial centers. Paris is by no means all France industrially. She is so artistically, socially, and perhaps intellectually. Buenos Ayres is the political capital of the Argentine. It is its commercial capital, its industrial capital, its financial, social and intellectual capital. Politically the most of the Argentine congressmen are Buenos Ayres citizens. Many of them who represent far-away districts practice law here. They live in the city the year round, although they may now and then go to see their constituents. The republic is composed of rotten boroughs supplied by Buenos Ayres men. The result is that when Buenos Ayres takes snuff the whole Argentine sneezes.

Industrially, Buenos Ayres has 95 per cent of the factories of the republic. It has more than 300, employing over 12,000 hands. The great volume of foreign trade, now amounting to more than two hundred million dollars a year, passes through it. Its wholesale houses supply the republic with goods. There are, in fact, only two places in the Argentine—Buenos Ayres and the Camp. Buenos Ayres is Buenos Ayres. The Camp is all of the Argentine outside of Buenos Ayres.

Commercially and financially Buenos Ayres is the Argentine. It has the banks which supply the republic with money; big banks, with fine buildings; banks with deposits of from 80,000,000 silver dollars down. It had one with a capital of \$50,000,000, but this was closed by the failures which startled the financial world and made the Baring Brothers tremble, its depositors losing \$70,000,000 by its breaking. Buenos Ayres has its stock exchange, where "The Argentine" is bought and sold in parcels, and where stocks and bonds rise and fall as Buenos Ayres thinks them good or bad. On this exchange more than half a billion gold dollars' worth of stock was floated during the ten years ending in 1889. When the panic came 90 per cent of the companies failed, and most of the shares are now not worth 1 cent of their face value. Nevertheless, both city and country are in a good financial condition.

As a social center Buenos Ayres is the Argentine. The most of the money made in the Camp is spent here. The city has scores of millionaires, nabobs who each own their half million acres of land and who count their cattle and sheep in herds of thousands. They may go to their farms in the summer, but their winters are spent in their palaces here,

where they give royal entertainments and pay a thousand dollars for a season box at the opera house.

The Argentine is growing fast in population. It has on its seven league boots compared with the United States. It trebles its population every thirty years, and it now has more than four million people. Buenos Ayres grows even faster than the rest of the country. It is jumping upward at the rate of a hundred thousand a year. It has now 800,000 people, and by the end of the century its people claim that it will number more than a million. One-fifth of all the people in this country live in Buenos Ayres.

The city grows like a green bay tree. It increases more rapidly than any city in the United States. Long ago it began to take in all the adjoining territory. When it had its great boom on the edge of the panic all outdoors was platted out in lots, and within five years the real estate transactions amounted to about \$400,000,000. Still enough land has been built upon to make a vast city, and that a most solid one. The houses are not detached as ours. They are built in blocks of four acres, each surrounded by narrow streets. Some of the sections are so crowded that the people swarm in them like bees. In others there are wide stretches of bare fields. The city as it is laid out is eleven miles from end to end, and a ride around it is as long as from Washington to Baltimore. Within its boundaries there is twice as much ground as in Paris, and it has a greater number of stores and business places in proportion to its population than any town in the United States. You find stores everywhere. There are miles of them. The reason is that there are few stores outside. It has not the great suburban population of our cities whose wants are supplied by their home towns, but who come into the city for business.

Buenos Ayres is a Spanish city. It is the biggest Spanish-speaking city of the world. It is almost twice as big as Madrid and three times as big as Barcelona. Its Spanish character, however, belongs to the past, and it is fast developing a municipal individuality of its own. It will always have the Spanish language, but the population will be a mixture drawn from the four quarters of the earth. Today more than half of the population is foreign and the city itself is fast losing its Spanish character. The houses on the new avenues, which have been recently made, are more like those of Paris than Madrid. The Avenue de Mayo is a wide boulevard, with an asphalt pavement. The buildings upon it make you think of those of the Champs Elysee, and there is a total absence of the flat, low, one-story structures of old Spain. It is the same with some of the business blocks which have been erected since Buenos Ayres began its rapid growth.

The most of the buildings, however, are low. For a century or so there was not a two-story house in the city. The

town was laid out in the Spanish style in rectangular blocks along narrow streets. It was founded away back in 1535 by a Spanish freebooter, Pedro de Mendoza. He named it Buenos Ayres. The words mean "good air," but Mendoza did not name it thus because air here is especially good. It is not. Its death rate is high. More than a thousand people died here last month, and the average is over 33 per cent. Just now the fog over the city is as thick as that of London. For a long time the air was so bad that lockjaw was almost epidemic. It takes a boy's bare foot and a rusty nail to produce lockjaw in the United States. Until recently you could get it here by simply opening your mouth. No, Buenos Ayres did not get its name from its superfluous ozone. Mendoza, like Cortez, Pizarro and the other adventurous Spanish cut throats of his time, had a deep regard for the Saints, he had named the city after the Virgin Maria de Buenos Aires, whose aid he had invoked for his expedition before leaving Spain.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Asuncion, Paraguay and Cordoba, a day's ride by train west of here were far better places than Buenos Ayres. The town long remained a settlement of mud huts, although lots 350 yards front and three miles deep could be bought for a suit of old clothes. In the seventeenth century some of the central blocks of the city were sold for a white horse and a guitar. Today the average value of the land per square yard is over \$20, and the house property is said to be worth over \$300,000,000 in gold.

When our Declaration of Independence was signed there were only 37,000 people in this region and only 3,000 in Buenos Ayres. The colony, however, begun to make money out of negroes and chiefly out of negro slaves. The best families then lived in thatched huts, but they ate their meals from dishes of solid silver, being waited upon by their own negroes. When John Quincy Adams was President Buenos Ayres had 22,000 people. During Gen. Grant's first term in the White House it had less than 178,000, and when Cleveland began his second administration six years ago, its citizens numbered 535,000. Its great growth has thus been within the past thirty years.

Buenos Ayres is a queer city. A city made up of shreds and patches both as to architecture and man. As to man, it has people of nearly every race. Three hundred thousand of its residents are Italians, 90,000 are Spanish, about 30,000 French and the remainder Germans, English and Argentines. The Argentines proper do not probably number over 150,000, and they are the only real citizens in the sense that they vote and take part in the government. The rest prefer to keep out of politics and the army, for the foreign resident here has every property right of the citizen, with none of his military obligations.

Most of the foreigners stick to their old nationalities, although some of them would not dare go home to vote. The Argentine is one of the few countries