Among the Argentines.

Strange Customs of Life and Death in the Land of the River Plata

A Look at a Great Seaside Resort—How Spaniards Give Presents—The Strange Experiences of an American Girl and One of Our Naval Officers—Fashionable Funerals and How They Are Managed—A Visit to the Resolita Cemetery—Something About the Markets of Buenos Ayres—The Argentines Are the Greatest Eaters of the World and They Are Fond of Curious Things—How Chickens Are Sold—Something About the Street Peddlers and About Milkmen Who Cannot Water Their Milk.

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MAR DEL PLATA, December 26, 1898.—It is now midsummer in the United States. It is midsummer in the Argentine Republic. Our people are going to Florida to keep warm. The fashionable Argentines are rushing to the seaside to keep cool. The most popular watering resort of the Argentines is Mar del Plata. It is the Long Branch, the Newport, the Saratoga of the Argentine Republic. Situated 200 miles south of Buenos Ayres, on the coast of the Atlantic, it has a splendid bathing beach to which just now thousands of people from all over the country are taking the annual pilgrimage of summer. There are at least 20,000 strangers at this resort. There are 1,000 hotels filled with the fashionables of the rich of the Argentine and Europe. There are numerous seaside cottages, and there are gambling houses and the roads are alive with the wheels of carriages and all night long. Thousands of people are now and for six weeks to come, for the people come at Mar del Plata quite as desperately as they do at Monte Carlo. The scenes on the beach are different from those of our resorts. The bath houses do not stand back from the edge of the water as at Atlantic City or Asbury Park. The most dressing is done in bathing boxes about six feet square and not over six feet high. These are on the edge of the surf. You can hire one for 10 cents a time and a suit of bathing clothes goes with every box. You enter your box, change your clothes and step right out into the water. Both sexes bathe together, and you see a mixture of bright blue bathing suits, some with skirts on and some without, moving about through the water. Outside of the skirts it is hard to distinguish the sexes, for bright colors are not worn by the women in bathing. I should think the summer girl makes all her costumes outside the water. Cameras are not taken into the bath, and the man who attempts to take a snap shot will surely be arrested.

PRESENTS WITH STRINGS.

Many of the rich Argentines have smaller homes at Mar del Plata. Not a few keep up three different establishments. One is a house in town, another a house in the country and a third a cottage at the seaside. Such people live well. They are very hospitable, and during the days they will place everything at your disposition. In fact if you admire anything belonging to a Spanish gentleman he intimates that it is at once offered to you. This is so in all Spanish-American countries. At Santiago I dined one day with Mr. Edwards McClure, a millionaire friend of the president of Chile, and a gentleman of high education and standing. The dinner was given at his magnificent house in the suburbs of Santiago. It was a dinner which I considered one of the finest of my stay in South America. The house was a palace, and as I walked through it with its owner I could not help admiring it. He at once offered it to me, and that in such a cordial manner that I found for a moment he might be in earnest. When I reflected, however, that the property could hardly be worth less than $100,000 I felt there might be a mistake and refused it with thanks.

This habit sometimes causes the giver trouble when he comes into contact with a foreigner who does not understand him. Not long ago a Spanish duke was traveling down the west coast of South America upon a steamer with a American young girl as the only fellow passenger. The duke was married, but the young lady was beautiful, and when she admired a pretty ring he was carrying with him, he at once placed it at her disposal and gracefully insisted that she should take it. He expected that she would thank him and refuse. But to his surprise she thought his act sweet. Now the duke was to be jealous as Spanish girls usually are. He had received orders to bring a beautiful wood home for his wife, and he was going to be the same way. He knew that serious complications would arise if the girl accepted the ring. Before he left the ship he was compelled to ask one of his friends to explain to the young lady that his offer was not intended to be taken in earnest, and that he hoped she would send back the puzzle as it belonged to his wife.

There are many similar cases of the failure to catch point in the Spanish gallantry. One of which I heard related to a young navy lieutenant who has since risen to be one of the chief officers of the Argentine navy. At the time of the war with Chile he was in the employ of the Argentine government. The war was over and the lieutenant was ordered home. He was at Buenos Ayres, on the coast of the Atlantic, if not a splendid bathing beach in which just now thousands of people from all over the country are taking the annual pilgrimage of summer. There are at least 20,000 strangers at this resort. There are 1,000 hotels filled with the fashionables