SOUTH AMERICA

OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

BY

JAMES BRYCE

AUTHOR OF "THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE"
"THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH," ETC.

WITH MAPS

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1912

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TO MY FRIENDS OF THE
ENGLISH ALPINE CLUB

PREFACE

THIS book records observations made and impressions formed during a journey through western and southern South America from Panama to Argentina and Brazil *via* the Straits of Magellan. The nature of its contents is briefly outlined in the Introduction which follows, so all that I have to do here is to acknowledge gratefully the many kindnesses I received in every part of South America which I visited, and in particular from the following persons: Colonel Goethals, Chief Engineer of the Panama Canal, and other officers of the United States engineers stationed there, and Colonel Gorgas, head of the medical staff; the officials of the Peruvian Corporation in Lima and of the Peruvian Southern Railways in Mollendo, Arequipa, and La Paz; the officials of the Antofagasta and Bolivia Railroad Company; those of the Transandine Railway Company in Chile and those of the Buenos Aires and Pacific and Argentine Great Western Railways Companies in Mendoza and Buenos Aires, and also those of the Leopoldina Railway in Brazil. Nor must I fail to express my obligations to the heads in New York of the firm of Messrs. W. R. Grace Co., who advised me regarding my journey, and to my friend Professor Bingham of Yale University, who, familiar with South

America from his own travels and studies, has given me valuable help in many ways.

I have also to return my respectful thanks to the Governments of Chile and Brazil, who were good enough to extend to me facilities for travel on their railways, and to the Governments of Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Uruguay for other courtesies. To many statesmen and scholars in these six republics, too numerous to mention by name, as also to not a few of my own fellow-countrymen from Britain and Canada who are there settled, I am indebted for hospitality, for private acts of kindness, and for valuable information.

JAMES BRYCE.

JUNE 27, 1912.

INTRODUCTION

WHOEVER read as a boy the books of old travellers in the Andes, such as Humboldt's *Aspects of Nature*, or pored over such accounts of the primitive American peoples as are given in Prescott's *Conquest of Peru* must have longed to visit some day the countries that fired his imagination. These had been my experiences, and to them there was subsequently added a curiosity to learn the causes which produced so many revolutions and civil wars in Spanish America, and, still later, a sense that these countries, some of them issuing from a long period of turbulence, were becoming potent economic factors in the modern world. So when after many years the opportunity of having four clear months for a journey to South America presented itself, I spent those months in seeing as much as I could within the time, and was able to make some observations and form certain impressions regarding the seven republics I visited. These observations and impressions are contained in the following pages. They are, of course, merely first impressions, but the impressions which travel makes on a fresh mind have their value if they are tested by subsequent study and by being submitted to persons who know the country thoroughly. I have tried so to test these impressions of mine, and hope they may be of service to those who desire to learn something about South America, but

have not time to peruse the many books of travel that have been written about each of its countries.

The chief points of interest which these countries have for Europeans and North Americans may be summed up as follows: —

1. The aspects of nature.
2. The inhabitants, the white part of whom are of Spanish origin, except the Brazilians, who come from Portugal.
3. The economic resources of the several countries.
4. The prospects for the development of industry and commerce.
5. The relics of prehistoric civilization.
6. The native Indian population.
7. The conditions of political life in the several republics.

It may be convenient that I should explain how far and in what order each of these topics is dealt with.

The first eleven chapters of the book contain a description of what I saw of scenery and of social and economic phenomena in the seven republics of Panama, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, and in these chapters the first three of the above-mentioned subjects are dealt with when and as each country is described. It is Nature that chiefly engages the traveller's mind in Peru and Bolivia, as it is economic development which interests him in Argentina and Uruguay. In Chile and Brazil he must be always thinking of both. The fourth topic has been treated so fully by many writers who have brought special knowl-

edge to it and have written professedly for the information of business men, that I have not thought it necessary to fill this book with statistical tables or, indeed, to do more than indicate the possibilities for commercial development or agricultural immigration which the natural resources of each country seem to promise.

It is only in Peru and Bolivia that any prehistoric monuments exist. Some of the most important and interesting of these I saw, and in describing them I have endeavoured to convey an idea of the character of the ancient Peruvian civilization (if that name can properly be applied to it) and of the people who produced it. This is done in Chapters III, IV, and V.

Only in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile did I have opportunities of seeing the native Indians. In the two former states they constitute a part of the total population far larger than in any other state (except Paraguay): they are nominally Christians, and they lead a settled agricultural life. In Chile there is only one considerable Indian tribe remaining, the famous Araucanians. Of these warriors, of the Quichuas in Peru and of the Aymarás in Bolivia, some account will be found in Chapters III to VI.

In the above-mentioned eleven descriptive chapters I have endeavoured to individualize, so to speak, the chief countries of South America, so as to bring out the chief characteristics, natural and human, of each of them.

But marked as are the differences between the various republics, they have all something in common, something that belongs to South America as opposed to Europe or North America or Australia. There are

also certain general questions affecting the whole Continent which present themselves to the traveller's mind and need to be discussed upon broad and general lines. To these questions the last five chapters of the book have been devoted. One chapter endeavours to indicate the causes which have divided the vast Spanish-American dominion (including Mexico and Central America) as it stood in A.D. 1810 into the sixteen independent republics of to-day, some of which have become, others of which are becoming, true nations with marked national characteristics. Another chapter deals with the relations to the white population of the aborigines in the Spanish countries and of the negroes in Brazil, the only state in which negroes are numerous. It is a subject of study all the more interesting because these relations are altogether different from those borne by the European element to the coloured races in the British colonies, in India, and in the United States of North America, and also because the intermixture of races which is now going on in South America suggests physiological and ethnological problems of high interest.

A third chapter (Chapter XIV) briefly compares the conditions of settlement and of government which determined the course of economic and political development in North and in South America respectively and enquires how far the latter Continent is to be considered any more closely related to the former than it is to Europe. Is there, in fact, such a thing as that which the word Pan-Americanism is intended to describe, or does the expression denote an aspiration rather than a fact?

Of the political history of these republics very little is said in this book, and of their current politics nothing at all. That is a topic on which it would not be fitting for me to enter. But in travelling through the seven countries, in observing their physical features and the character of their people, and the state of knowledge and education among them, as well as in reading accounts of the kind of administration which the Spanish Crown gave them during nearly three centuries, I was struck by the influence which all these facts must have had upon the free governments which the Revolutionary leaders tried to set up when they broke away from the mother country. The history of Spanish America since 1810 cannot be understood or fairly judged, without taking these things into account. They have been the fundamental and determinative conditions of political life in these countries; and to them Chapter XV has been devoted.

In the last Chapter (XVI) I have touched upon several subjects relating to the South American lands and peoples in general for which no appropriate earlier place could be found, and have indulged in a few conjectures as to the future both of the several states and of the Continent as a whole. These are not meant as predictions, but rather as suggestions of possibilities which may serve to set others thinking.

Lest some of the views presented, especially those regarding the native races and political conditions should be deemed unduly optimistic, let me try to meet any such criticism by a few words on optimism in general.

Pessimism is easier than optimism, as it is easier to destroy than to construct. There was an old dictum in the Middle Ages, "*Omnia tendunt naturaliter in non esse*,"[1] and Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust* tells us that

Alles was entsteht
Ist werth dass es zu Grunde geht.[2]

If pessimism is easy, the more need to stand on guard against it.

The duty of a traveller, or a historian, or a philosopher is, of course, to reach and convey the exact truth, and any tendency either to lighten or to darken the picture is equally to be condemned. But where there is room for doubt, and wherever that which may be called the "temperamental equation" of the observer comes in, an optimistic attitude would seem to be the safer, that is to say, likely to be nearer to the truth. We are all prone to see faults rather than merits, and in making this remark I do not forget the so-called "log-rolling critics," because with them the question is of what the critic says, not of what he sees, which may be something quite different. If this maxim holds true, it is especially needed when a traveller is judging a foreign country, for the bias always present in us which favours our own national ways and traits makes us judge the faults of other nations more severely than we do those with which we are familiar. As this unconscious factor often tends to darken the

[1] All things tend naturally towards non-existence. So in the original statutes of Oriel College, Oxford (founded in A.D. 1327).

[2] All that comes into being deserves to perish.

picture that a traveller draws, it is safer for him, if in doubt, to throw in a little light so as to secure a just result. Moreover, we are disposed, when we deal with another country, to be unduly impressed by the defects we actually see and to forget to ask what is, after all, the really important question, whether things are getting better or worse. Is it an ebbing or a flowing tide that we see? Even in reflecting on the past of our own country, which we know better than we do that of other countries, we are apt, in noting the emergence of new dangers, to forget how many old dangers have disappeared. Much more is this kind of error likely to affect us in the case of a country whose faults are more repellent than our own national faults, and whose recuperative forces we may overlook or undervalue.

Such considerations as these have made me believe that the natural propensity of a West European or North American traveller to judge Spanish Americans by his own standards needs to be corrected not only by making allowance for differences of intellect and character, but also by a comprehension of the history of these peoples and of the difficulties, many of them due to causes outside their own control, which have encompassed and entangled them ever since their ancestors first set foot in the Western world. Whoever compares these difficulties as they stand to-day with those of a century ago will find grounds not only for more lenient judgments than most Europeans have passed, but also for brighter hopes.

Neither in this matter, however, nor anywhere in