



LETTERS

CONCERNING THE COUNTRY OF

THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

(SOUTH AMERICA)

BEING SUITABLE FOR EMIGRANTS AND CAPITALISTS TO
SETTLE IN.

1869.

SECOND ISSUE.

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NOTICE.

The SECRETARY of the CENTRAL ARGENTINE RAILWAY COMPANY will be happy to forward copies of this pamphlet on application, or to send them to any address furnished to him, and to give every information in his power respecting the LANDS ceded to the COMPANY on each side of their RAILWAY in the provinces of SANTA FÉ and CORDOVA.

The map of the lands referred to, also "Observations on the country of the Argentine Republic, and on the proposed plan for settling a portion of the lands belonging to the Central Argentine Railway Company," by Mr. W. Perkins, can be obtained likewise at their offices.

No. 60, GRACECHURCH STREET, LONDON, E.C.

June, 1869.

AVISO

La Secretaría de la Compañía del Ferrocarril Central Argentino tiene el gusto de compartir copias de las solicitudes y respuestas remitidas a los domicilios provistos, brindando la información que cuenta en su poder en relación a las TIERRAS cedidas a la COMPAÑIA a cada lado de su FERROCARRIL en las provincias de SANTA FE y CORDOBA.

El mapa de las referidas tierras así como las "Observaciones acerca del territorio de la República Argentina y sobre el plan propuesto para la radicación en tierras próximas a la Compañía del Ferrocarril Central Argentino" por William Perkins, pueden ser asimismo obtenidas en sus oficinas.

N°60, Gracechurch Street, London, E. C.

Junio 1869

SIR,—The obliging readiness with which, in your impression of the 8th inst., you inserted a communication of mine in relation to the country of the Argentine Republic, encourages me to address you again on that subject. I am further induced to do so from the fact of having received letters containing questions which, as indicating the precise description of information required by a certain class of emigrants, I desire to answer in their order, and give them publicity in your valuable journal.

I have also read with interest the letter of "Inquirer" that appeared in the columns of *THE FIELD* of the 22nd ult. His suggestion and remarks are plain matter-of-fact ones, and I have kept them in view in writing the present letter, although, as far as actual experience in farming is concerned, my friends Messrs. Purdie and Henly will be able to treat that part of the subject more accurately than I can. I might as well take this early opportunity of telling "Inquirer" that the Rosario said to have been taken by the Brazilians from their enemies is a small town above Asuncion, in Paraguay, ten degrees of latitude north of Rosario de Santa Fé, the starting point of the Central Argentine Railway, and the second commercial city and port in the Argentine Republic. With the exception of a short raid made by the Paraguayans into the Argentine province of Corrientes, the war has been carried on from first to last on Paraguayan territory.

1st. question. *What kind of climate is that of the River Plate, and will it agree with an European labourer?* The region bathed by the great rivers, the Plata, Parana, and Uruguay, lies between the parallels of 27 and 37 of south latitude, and is consequently in a temperate zone. The climate round Buenos Ayres and Rosario is like that of the Cape of Good Hope, and is considered one of the healthiest in the world. Up to the years 1867-8, when the cholera visited the country for the first time, an epidemic had never been known in the Argentine Republic. Diseases that often take an epidemic form in other countries are there merely sporadic. The heat in the open country in summer time rarely reaches 80 degrees in the shade, and need never interfere with outdoor labours. The winter is short and mild, the mercury sometimes falling to freezing point. Europeans, and particularly the English and Germans, enjoy the most robust health in the River Plate.

2. *What will a farming man require to take out with him, and what duties will he have to pay? What kind of clothes will he require?*—Although agricultural implements are to be had in Buenos Ayres and Rosario, it would be well for the emigrant to take out a supply of ploughs, harrows, cultivators, hoes, chains, cordage, and a box of carpenters' tools, and if he intend to work on a large scale, he should take thrashing, reaping, mowing, and other farming machines. It would not be amiss were he to provide himself with the various household utensils he is accustomed to use here; also a good supply of bedding and clothing, and boots and shoes. All the furniture, clothing, and implements of agriculture for the actual use of the immigrant, are passed through the Custom House duty free. The same clothes can be worn in the River Plate as are worn in England. Flannel shirts are worn all the year round in the country.

3. *Are the soil and climate favourable to agriculture on a large scale? Where are the best lands situated, and what is their value? Can foreigners purchase and hold landed property, and get good and secure titles? Are there register offices?*—In answer to the first question, I will refer to the opinion of a gentleman who has already written some valuable letters to THE FIELD under the *nom de plume* of "Holderness." He examined most carefully the lands of the River Plate from Santa Fé as far south as Patagonia, and afterwards explored the prairies of the Western States of America. He purchased a large estate in the province of Santa Fé. He writes to me saying that he considers the region of the River Plate, as a field for agriculture, equal in every respect to the Western Prairies, and superior in climate. It is really difficult to say where the best lands lie where all is more or less a virgin soil of excellent quality. I think we might affirm that the best are those in the provinces whose climate offers fewer vicissitudes in the temperature and the weather—Buenos Ayres, Santa Fé, and Entre Rios. The price of land varies of course, and where the population is so sparse it must vary a great deal; while in the vicinity of the large coast towns it may be worth from £2 to £5 the acre; land equally as good near the frontiers may be had for 2s. and even less. In Santa Fé the lands within a radius of five leagues around Rosario are worth from 17s. 6d. to 20s.; fifteen leagues off they are to be had for from 5s. to 8s. Everything depends, not on the quality of the soil, but the quality of the grass, and the situation in reference to centres of population. The lands adjoining the Great Southern Railway in Buenos Ayres advanced in price five-fold from the simple fact of the railway passing through them. In a like manner the Central Argentine Railway has enhanced the price of lands adjacent to it. At the same time, fine lands in the northern part of the province of Santa Fé, in Indian territory, can be bought for 6d. the acre. Foreigners enjoy all kinds of civil immunities on a par with the natives, except voting and holding political offices. There are offices in every town, where any transaction in transfer of landed property is registered, with this difference between the system there and here: there the original deed remains archived, and a copy only is given to the parties interested. Titles can be examined in these offices.

4. *What kind of lands are those in possession of the Central Argentine Railway Company? Are they pastoral or agricultural? Are they now available to the emigrant?*—These lands are situated between the 31st and 33rd degrees of south latitude, and commence twelve miles from Rosario, ending twelve miles from Cordoba. The upper portion is partially wooded, but the lower portion is pampa or prairie land. There is only a small portion of it “soft grass” pasture—that is, grass fit for the finer class of sheep. The coarse grass will have to be eaten down by cattle, or ploughed up to make it what the sheep farmers call refined land. But for agricultural purposes there is no finer land in the Republic; and the zone in which the tract lies is the most temperate in the region of the River Plate. I understand that a scheme for the colonisation of these lands, about a million of acres, is now under the consideration of the Board of Directors.

5. *What are the productions best suited to the climate and soil, and what markets are there for their sale?*—Wheat, maize or Indian corn, potatoes, all kind of vegetables that grow in England, flax, hemp, barley, the sugar beet, and the sorghum or Chinese sugar cane, all grow well in Buenos Ayres, Entre Rios, Santa Fé, and Cordoba; also fruits, such as apples, pears, cherries, peaches, apricots, nectarines, plums, and grapes. In Cordoba and the northern part of Santa Fé, tobacco and the orange and pomegranate of a good quality are grown. Everything that can be produced meets with a ready sale in Rosario and Buenos Ayres, and in ready money.

6. *What is the yield of wheat, maize, potatoes, &c.?*—Although this question is easily answered, from data in my possession of the actual yield of various cereals, yet, from the very imperfect system of cultivation prevalent in all parts of South America, we cannot arrive at any accurate conclusion as to what *might* be the result with a more perfected system of agriculture. In the Andine provinces of Mendoza and San Juan, where cultivation is aided by irrigation, the yield is sometimes a hundred-fold. In the lower provinces it varies from 20 to 25 for wheat, and 40 to 50 for Indian corn. The latter is an evidence of bad culture, for a bushel of seed planted ought to give a return of at least a hundred. I have known 35 bushels of potatoes produced from one planted in Santa Fé, and yet people seem satisfied with half that yield. My data of the yield of wheat in the San Carlos colony, situated thirty leagues above Rosario, and where the lands are moderately well cultivated, are as follows: 40 Swiss *poses* or *journeaux*, equivalent to 46 acres, are sown with 22 bushels of grain, equal to 29 lb. to the acre. The product varies from 95 to 105 *fanigas* of 375 lb. each, or say 625 bushels, which is a fraction over 28 for one. But on the best cultivated lands of the colony the yield is seldom less than 18 to 20 bushels to the acre. Even the lesser yield, considering the comparatively low price of the land, is a very fair return. A great deal depends on the good or bad cultivation of the soil.

7. *What capital will a farmer require to work a farm of say, two hundred and fifty acres? the cost of his house, the expense of hired labour, the price of oxen, horses, and cows?* — As any practical farmer must know better than I do the general expense attending the cultivation of a farm according to the means at his disposition, I think I have only to specify certain items, the knowledge of which is not so generalised. Some farmers spend more than others; some work more, personally, and spend less in hired labour, than others. As an instance of what one man can do, I will mention the case of a settler on a farm in the colony of San Carlos, and it is one of many similar cases in the colony. A Swiss arrived alone in January. He commenced ploughing his virgin land, and, single-handed, got in thirty-seven acres of wheat, which produced a little over 600 bushels, and which he sold for 900 dols. (£187. 10s. sterling). He also built himself a house. His whole expenditure, for the house and all, until he harvested his crop, he told me, was 225 dols. Lands can be rented at a reasonable distance from the principal towns for from one to three shillings the acre, and purchased for from twelve to twenty-five. A good adobe (sundried brick) house of three rooms, an outside kitchen, enclosures, and well of water need not cost more than fifty pounds. Some settlers would put up more expensive houses than others. To cultivate a farm of 250 acres ten or more yoke of oxen will be required. They are worth from 40 to 60 dollars the yoke; but a great saving can be made by breaking in steers, that can be bought for forty shillings. Mares are to be bought for one pound, horses for two pounds upwards, cows from one to three pounds. The farmer will require, say, fifty sheep to furnish him his meat. They can be bought for 3s. 6d. to 4s. Good agricultural implements are to be bought out there; but such things as reapers, threshing machines, &c., had better be taken out by the emigrant; he will not have to pay any duty if they are for his own use. Hired labour can be put down at two pounds ten shillings to four pounds per month. During the harvest season labour is very scarce; in fact it is not plentiful at any season. Flour is worth from £1 to £1 5s. the 100 pounds, farina still less; beef 1½d. to 2d. the pound. Clothing and boots and shoes had better be taken out by the emigrant. As I have already said, the clothing worn in England will suit the River Plate.

8. *Are guns and revolvers necessary?* No; unless the emigrant settle on the frontier. It is, however, as well to have a gun in the house, if for no other purpose than to shoot partridges and other game; and a man of course feels more comfortable and secure in any part of the world with a loaded fire-arm on his premises.

I have received letters containing questions relative to sheep-farming, which I should like to answer on another occasion.

W. PERKINS.

Sec. National Com. of Immigration,
Argentine Republic.

11, Hinde-street, Manchester-square, May 27.



Investigación:

www.capillasytemplos.com.ar

Fuente de consulta:

Perkins, William: "*Letters, concerning the country of the Argentine Republic (South America) - Being suitable for emigrants and capitalists to settle in*" - Waterlow and Sons Printers - Londres, 1869.