

**BLANCO Y COLORADO;
OLD DAYS AMONG THE
GAUCHOS OF URUGUAY**

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Blanco y Colorado; old days among the gauchos of Uruguay by William C. Tetley

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WILLIAM C. TETLEY

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OLD DAYS AMONG THE
GAÚCHOS OF URUGUAY

BY

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PREFACE

The following pages contain the writer's personal experiences in the "Republic of Uruguay" during a revolution in what are now known as the "Old Days."

If they enable the reader to understand what life in that country really meant at that time, the object of this book will then be attained.

The Close, Wavendon,
Woburn Sands,
Bucks.

W. C. T.

July, 1919.

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BLANCO Y COLORADO.

PART I.

LAS SIERRAS DE MAL ABRIGO.

THE clock of the " Cathedral de la Matrix " was striking ten on a lovely morning in October, when our signal gun was fired, and the anchor of the ss. " Copernicus " let go to find bottom in the muddy waters of La Plata.

On the right the town of Monte Video, with its whitewashed " azotea," or flat-roofed houses, glistened in the bright sunshine; to the left the broad estuary stretched away towards the open sea; while in front of us the famous Cerro, a gently sloping hill, looked green and fresh and pleasant after our long sea voyage. The tug which brought off the Medical Officer of Health did not delay long before coming alongside, when permission was given to the passengers to land, and I soon found myself standing with my baggage on the Custom House wharf, and having duly passed it, made my way to the " Hotel Oriental."

Here I enquired when a diligence would leave for the interior, which would take me within reasonable distance of my friend's estancia, whom I had come out to visit, which I believed to be situate about thirty-three leagues, or one hundred miles, up country. I was informed that it was to leave the next morning, but that, as it started from a " fonda," or inn, outside the town at 5 a.m., it would be necessary to sleep there, otherwise I should certainly miss it.

At this time the diligence was the only public conveyance traversing the country, a railway being as yet unthought of. So I ordered some dinner at the "Hotel Oriental," and occupied the interval by having a look round the city. I was much pleased with the straight, wide streets, running at right angles, by the size and importance of the public buildings, and by many of the private houses, often opening on to a "plaza," or square, prettily planted with trees and flowering shrubs. But I was most impressed by the variety and beauty of the excellent shops, which I could hardly have expected to find in a South American town at that time, so remote from Europe. I also saw more than one of the famous "quintas," or villas, with large grounds, where semi-tropical flowers can be seen in all their beauty, and palms and magnolias everywhere flourish.

I arrived at the inn whence the diligence started at 9 p.m. The proprietor received me with courtesy, and shewed me my bedroom, which was small and not very clean; but it had a window opening on the street, so I could get plenty of air. Some natives were making a noise in the bar below, where they had doubtless been drinking, and seemed inclined to quarrel. I gave instructions to be called, and the last thing I heard as I dropped off to sleep was the cry of the "sereno," or night-watchman, whose business it was, during the night, to call the time and state of the weather every half hour. A loud rapping at my door awoke me in time to look up my baggage and drink some hot coffee, before a start was made. Dawn was fast breaking in the East as five horses and three mules were being harnessed up, four abreast, to the old wooden diligence, which carried the mails and baggage piled on its top, the passengers sitting facing each other on hard wooden seats inside. In front, beneath a wooden shelter,