The pastoral wealth of Uruguay as of the neighbouring Argen­tine Republic is due to the fertilizing constituents of “pampa mud,” geologically associated with gigantic antediluvian animals, whose fossil remains are found abundantly in those regions. The country is rich in hard woods, suitable for cabinet work and certain building purposes. The principal trees are the alder, aloe, palm, poplar, acacia, willow, and eucalyptus (recently introduced). The “montes,” by which are understood plantations as well as native thickets, produce amongst other woods the algarrobo, a poor imita­tion of oak ; the guayabo, a substitute for boxwood ; the quebracho, of which the red kind is compared to sandalwood ; and the urunday, black and white, not unlike rosewood. Indigenous palms grow in the valleys of the Sierra José Ignacio, also to some extent in the departments of Minas, Maldonado, and Paysandú. The myrtle, rosemary, mimosa, and the scarlet-flowered ceibo are amongst the plants commonly seen. The valleys within the hill ranges are fragrant with aromatic shrubs. In the plains below the swards are gay with the scarlet and white verbena and other wild flowers of brilliant hues. The country abounds in medicinal plants. The sarsaparilla even colours the water of the Rio Negro and gives to it its name—the “black river.”

Amongst the wild animals the tiger or ounce—called in the Guarani language the “ja-gua” or “big dog”—and the puma are found on the frontier of Brazil and on the wooded islets and banks of the larger rivers. The tapir, fox, deer, wild cat, wild dog, carpincho or water hog, and a few small rodents nearly complete the list of quadrupeds. A little armadillo, the mulita, must be mentioned as the living representative of the antediluvian giants, the mylodon, mastodon, megatherium, &c. The ostrich—*Rhea americana—*roams everywhere in the plains ; and there are a few specimens of the vulture tribe, a native crow (lean, tall, and ruffed), partridges, and quails. Parakeets are plentiful in the “montes,” and the lagoons swarm with waterfowl of all descriptions. The most esteemed is the “pato real,” a large duck. Of the birds of bright plumage the humming bird and the cardinal—the scarlet, the yellow, and the white—are the most attractive. The fish of the lagoons and streams are coarse, and some of them primitive in type ; but two or three kinds, found generally in the large rivers, are much prized. The varieties of fish on the sea coast are many and excellent ; 130 species are known. More than 2000 species of insects have been classified. The scorpion is rarely seen ; but large and venomous spiders are common. The principal reptiles are a lizard, a tortoise, the “vivora de la cruz,” a dangerous viper, so called from marks like a cross on its head, and the rattlesnake, this last in Maldonado and the stony lands of Las Minas.

At the commencement of the 19th century the population of Montevideo and the surrounding territory was estimated by Azara at 30,000, one-half of these being given to the city of Montevideo. This total seems not to have included what remained of the in­digenous inhabitants in the north and west, though the Indian population of the Jesuit missions before these were destroyed, about the year 1767, was known to be very numerous. But the aborigines have now completely disappeared. They have been supplanted by half-breeds, from whom the class known as gauchos are mostly re­cruited. The gauchos are now being supplanted by European im­migrants and their progeny. In 1829, the epoch of the declaration of independence, the population is stated to have numbered 74,000, and in 1852, after the great war, 131,969. In 1860 the number had risen to 221,300 and in 1873 to 450,000. Comparatively recent esti­mates place it between 450,000 and 700,000, the latest official estimate being 551,768 ; but no formal census has yet been taken. In the eighteen departments of the state the proportion of foreigners is 25∙41 per cent. of the population (in the department of Monte­video 42∙29 per cent. and in the others 24∙66 per cent.), consisting of 39,780 Spaniards, 36,303 Italians, 20,178 Brazilians, 15,546 Argentinians, 14,375 French (principally Basques), 2772 English, 2125 Germans, and 9143 of other nations. The density of the population in the metropolitan department is 365 inhabitants per square mile ; in the whole republic it is 4∙83, in the agricultural department of Canelones 27∙37, and in the remote departments of Tacuarembó and Rivera about 1∙6. In respect of numbers the males have a slight preponderance over the females. Of the child­ren 20∙23 per cent. are illegitimate, in the metropolitan depart­ment 7∙73 and in the rural departments 23∙24. Illegitimate births have recently decreased, a fact which may be explained by the insti­tution of civil marriage and by the appointment of registrars in the remote country districts. Marriages take place at the rate of 6∙8 per 1000. The death-rate is only 16∙5 per 1000.

The country is divided into eighteen departments, of which that of Montevideo is the smallest, although it contains one-fourth of the total population. Adjoining this is Canelones ; and in a northerly direction are those of Florida, Durazno, Tacuarembó, and Rivera, the last-named bordering on Brazil. To the eastward on the Atlantic are Maldonado and Rocha, and north and west of these Minas, Treinta y Tres, and Cerro Largo. To the west, along the Plate and Uruguay, are San José, Colonia, Soriano, Rio Negro, and Paysandú; and farther north towards the Brazilian frontier are Salto and Artigas. The principal inland town is San José. The chief ports, besides Montevideo, are Salto, Paysandú, Fray Bentos, Mercedes, Colonia, and Maldonado.

More than two centuries ago the Banda Oriental was looked upon by the Spanish colonies on the opposite banks of the Plate and Uruguay as a station for the breeding of live stock and the cutting of timber and firewood. And at this day, in spite of the thriving foreign trade of Montevideo, it still partakes largely of this char­acter. It boasts of 20,000,000 sheep—perhaps 14,000,000 would be nearer the mark—and 8,000,000 head of cattle. The country being in general pastoral, sheep and cattle grazing is the main occupation of the people ; the sheep flourish best in the southern and western departments, whilst the principal cattle districts are towards the north and east. More than two-thirds of the public wealth, estimated variously between £80,000,000 and £120,000,000, consist of land, live stock, and rural properties. Ninety-six per cent. of the exports of the country consists of live stock and their produce—wool, hides, horns, hair, sheepskins, tallow, grease, bones, bone-ash, and jerked beef. More than half the fixed property and commercial capital is in the hands of foreigners. At Fray Bentos, in the department of Rio Negro, is the Liebig factory of extract of meat ; at Colonia there is a branch of the River Plate Frozen Meat Company. But, apart from these, and some breweries, flour-mills, tanneries, establishments in Montevideo for the making of boots and shoes and clothing, and a few local industries, unnaturally fostered by high import duties, there are no manufactures to speak of. Agriculture is still in a promising infancy. Latterly it has made great strides ; yet the export of agricultural produce appears to be relatively insignificant. At intervals during the last twenty years agricultural settlements (colonies) have been established with great success in different departments, but principally in Colonia, where the settlers are mostly Italians and Swiss. These prosperous colonies have already in Colonia outgrown the space originally allotted ; but owing to the irregular and illegal appropriation of the public lands there is no more land to bestow on settlers, native or foreign, except at the exorbitant rates demanded by private owners and speculators.

At Cuñapirú in Tacuarembó gold was accidentally discovered in 1842. The mines have been worked at intervals since 1867, but, partly owing to difficulties of communication, with indifferent suc­cess. But gold-mining seems to have lately assumed a more hope­ful aspect, owing to the employment of improved and economical machinery introduced by a French company. The metals of Uruguay are found in two quite distinct systems of hills. The Cuñapirú mines are in the Santa Ana range, the auriferous quartz being found in thin layers embedded in rocks of red porphyry. The formation of the system in general resembles that of the gold-producing regions in Brazil, California, and Australia. The Pan de Azucar (Sugar-Loaf Mountain), near the south coast of Maldonado, forms the extremity of a second system, which has its origin as far north as Pernambuco in Brazil ; as developed in Uruguay it is Huronian, limestone and slate being superposed on the gneiss and granite. The metals of this system are principally silver, lead, copper, and an argentiferous lead, which in earlier times the Spaniards mistook for silver. Two copper mines at the foot of the Pan de Azucar are now in active operation.

Since the beginning of the 19th century the value of the exports and imports has increased twenty-fold, and with some relapses has more than doubled in the last twenty years. In 1881 the total value was £8,116,680, and in 1885 £10,750,747. The value of the exports is always a little in excess of that of the imports. Within the last ten years the number of vessels entering the port of Montevideo has increased only about 10 per cent., whereas the total tonnage has increased 100 per cent., owing to the large ocean steamers which trade with the port or make it a place of call. A few years ago the imports from Great Britain amounted to about a third of the whole, and the exports to the same country to about one-fourth of the whole. But much of the produce from the river Plate countries in general which formerly was shipped to England or to Antwerp now goes direct to France or to Hamburg and Bremen.

Telegraph lines, with a total length of 661 miles, exist in most of the departments. Submarine cables communicate with Buenos Ayres and the ports of Brazil, and thence with Europe. The rail­ways are comprehended in three main systems, the central, north­western, and eastern ; their combined length barely reaches 300 miles. There are no public roads in the country ; but communica­tion in the more inhabited parts is easily effected over the nearly level grassy plains.

The system of national education is gratuitous and compulsory. The number of school children is over 30,000, about 5∙4 per cent. of the total population. The teaching at the national schools is irre­spective of religious creed or denomination. In higher education much has yet to be accomplished. There is a school of arts and trades in the capital. The university of Montevideo, founded in 1838, numbers about 1300 students. The state religion is Roman Catholic ; but all sects enjoy complete toleration, unless a decided non-toleration of the Jesuits be regarded as an exception to the rule.