



THE NEW BOOKS



ROMANTIC SOUTH AMERICA

MR. A. S. FORREST has written a book on South America as he saw it. Now, South America is nearly as hard to see on a flying trip as any other part of the globe. The average traveler may bring back impressions which are quite vivid for him, but are rarely either vivid or valuable for anybody else. We don't know how long Mr. Forrest spent on his trip, but we do know that he has the seeing eye. Which, perhaps, is only natural, considering that he is artist as well as author.

Being an artist, he has also seen the dramatic interest of some of the episodes of the southern republics. He hasn't tried to give us a complete statistical account—gleaned from dull histories—of how each several republic repeated the story of all the rest, and for this we are duly grateful. It is the high lights of history that Mr. Forrest has been happy in selecting. The three first chapters on "Adventures and Discoveries," "Sighting the Pacific," and "Buccaneers," introduce us to the continent with a concreteness and color not often encountered in such retellings. Of course, we know that Mr. Forrest wasn't there when the things happened, but we rather feel that he saw them enacted again before him, when he stood on the stage of so many curious adventures, so many diabolical cruelties, so many noble self-abnegations. So much for having the artist's eye for form and color.

We are spared a diary of the author's itinerary. He hasn't worried much about commercial blue books with figures in them. He has been too modest to hazard much guesswork about present politics and tendencies that nobody yet knows the goal of. For these things, too, we are personally thankful. In place of such facts Mr. Forrest has given us *seen* things. First he saw Panama and the Canal, and saw it vividly. Later on, in the chapters devoted to the great industry of Argentina—cattle raising—he has painted us a very real picture of how things look and how we should see them ourselves, providing, always, that we had the eyes to see. In Brazil it is the growing of coffee and the overawing presence of the Brazilian forest that have caught and held his attention. These are really the two factors that make Brazil today, that governed her past and that will govern her future,

just as the nitrate beds have made Chile. The disproportionate time that the author spends on them—their appearance, their *feel*—is the secret of the concreteness of the book; for these are the things that really count.

It is scarcely a piece of light reading that we have. The pages are loaded—at times overloaded—with detail. But it is always visible and nearly always telling detail. We feel that the man who drew the pictures and wrote the text is telling us only about what he actually saw, and that he saw only interpretive, memorable things, and that he didn't go to compendiums to rehash for us what he didn't see.

His facts are in the main correct and his observations true and informing. We wish that all the Spanish and Portuguese names could have been correctly spelled—but that is Utopian. Artistically, his profuse illustrations leave something to be desired, but he has the big advantage of not having had to depend upon the stock photographs—invariably lifeless—of the average traveler. He has frequently caught the dominant quality of a scene or figure in a realistic fashion. In short, we know no recent book which leaves one with as vivid an impression of the continent to the south.

Considering the novelty and sometimes the excitement of it, it is strange that so few of us have attempted the circuit of South America. Books on the subject are multiplying, to be sure, but then that is because everybody who does it writes a book. They have to. Anna Wentworth Sears has done the trip and the book both—with some differences. Among other things she has made herself a benefactor by giving information about wearing apparel and other supplies—the things which all the travelers around the continent complain nobody told them to take. Nobody did. Because nobody really knew.

But *Two on a Tour* is neither a compendium nor a guide book. All the information is delightfully first hand. It is a breezy story, that's all. It is more concerned about what they did than what they saw. It never lags and is never dull—being about the readable story of the sort that we have seen. It is rather comfortable to travel by proxy, at times, with a delightful woman, who knows how. From snowy, slushy New York we slip straightaway into blue and gold

harbors of "Carabee," cross the Isthmus—of course—but don't linger, lie smothering under mosquito nets, breathing citronella, off the fever-haunted banks of the Guayas River and Guayaquil, and steam along the barren, rainless western coast into Valparaiso. We climb the somewhat nerve-racking Andean pass and cross the Cumbre just under the titanic figure of Christ, cast out of broken up cannon, marking the pact between two nations, and, after the choking dust of the ride across the plains, we dazzle ourselves with the glitter and wealth of Buenos Ayres. One day we spend in Rio and another in Bahia, "where they make big black cigars and where live big black people." And so home, without so much as a dull moment. This story seems to have been written not for information, but for the pleasure of it—it seems; and the pleasure of traveling should justify any book.

Two handsome volumes describe in Mr. Savage-Landor's entertaining style a journey which fell mainly in the year 1911. The route was from London to Rio; by rail to Sao Paulo; by rail to Morro da Meza; by mule to Goyaz (population 13,000); by mule to the Salesian missions of the Matto Grosso; to Diamantino; to the Arinos River; down the Arinos by canoe to the Tapajoz; on foot and *barefoot*, across to the Madeira; back to the Tapajoz; by steamer down to Pará; by steamer up to Iquitos; by steamer up the Ucayali; by mule over the traveled road to Oroya; by rail to Lima; by steamer to Mollendo; by rail to Cuzco and by steamer over Lake Titicaca to La Paz; to Oruro; by rail to Antofagasta; by steamer to Santiago; by trans-Andine railway to Buenos Aires, and back to London. The part of the journey in what may be called "unknown" country was from the Salesian Missions to the Tapajoz River, occupying about three months, not eighteen months as stated in the advertisement on the cover, a distance of about a thousand miles. This was the important feature of the whole time and his trip down the Arinos River in a dugout canoe forty-two feet long and three and one-half feet wide, with a crew of outcasts and criminals, presents the chief novelty of the book. It ought to be an important contribution to geographic knowledge, but its value is impaired by the author's generally fantastic statements. He gives a magnetic traverse of his route down the river with

characteristics of the surroundings, rapids, islands, etc. There were many rapids and there was much hard work, and this was a creditable performance.

Mr. Landor is, first of all, a traveler by profession. He goes forth to see things and write a book, and consequently he sees them. In this case the Brazilian Government contributed \$20,000. There is hardly a dull page in the two volumes, but the reader must be wary about accepting, unconditionally, the conclusions, or depending on the narrative for accurate information. There is something of a Don Quixote flavor about it.

In describing the rubber industry he several times gives weights in *kilometres*, which, considering that rubber is so very elastic, looks, at first glance, admirably original. It is, of course, only an error in proof-reading, yet it gages the value of the work as a serious contribution to geographic knowledge. His geological theories are also astonishingly original. The continents, he maintains, were formed by a simple pulling asunder, leaving great gaps extending from pole to pole for the oceans to fill. Anybody, he declares, can see the correctness of this idea by simply looking at a map of the world! He thinks the Grand Canyon of the Colorado was formed in a similar way. Suess, Penck, Powell, Dutton, Gilbert, Davis and all the other savants are dead to him. Nor does he appear, either, to have any clear understanding of the denuding power of water. Everything in his ken is produced by cataclysms. The sandstone buttes of horizontal strata which he saw in crossing the plateau of Matto Grosso, were formed, he decides, by the subsidence of the surroundings, whereas his own photographs indicate that they are buttes of erosion like thousands in our Southwest. One beautiful specimen, the *Paredao Grande*, from his photographs, seems to be a detached mass of homogeneous sandstone, the product of denudation, with the customary arch fracture of this formation in weathering, and these surface arches he ascribes to the former existence of great cauldrons whose roofs have blown up or fallen in, leaving only these marks on the cliff sides. Of course faulting may have played a part in some cases in the production of these cliffs, but not in the way he imagines.

He is little better in ethnology. After a few days at the Salesian Missions among the Bororo Indians he is able to write three chapters on them with entire confidence, and presents another of his astonishing

theories. He thinks the Bororos resemble the Malay races, therefore they are of that stock. He is sure, however, they did not come via Bering Strait; no, "it is not they who have moved, but it is the country under them which has shifted and separated them, leaving members of the same race thousands of miles apart." (Preface, p. xii.)

The photographic illustrations are excellent, but nothing can be said in favor of the color reproductions from the author's water colors. He is no more of an artist than he is of a geologist or ethnologist. Perhaps his most extraordinary feat was the marching for sixteen days, on the journey to the Madeira, without any food whatever, and at the same time with no footgear, his bare feet serving him for all those miles thru tropical undergrowth. Nothing like it was ever performed before. But the volumes are full of the extraordinary. In a way they are a curiosity.

A Tour Through South America,
by A. S. Forrest. New York: James
Pott & Co. \$3.

Two on a Tour in South America
by Anna Wentworth Sears. New
York: D. Appleton & Co. \$2.

Across Unknown South America, by
A. Henry Savage-Landor. Illustra-
tions and maps. Two volumes. Bos-
ton: Little, Brown & Co. \$10.