



THE GAUCHO

by

Frances C. Hollinger

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Arthur L. Owen

Head of Department

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-:-PREFACE:-:-

The most picturesque and romantic figure in the life of Spanish America, and the most interesting in her traditions, is that of the gaucho, the cowboy of the boundless pampas. My imagination intrigued by the colorful and vividly descriptive presentation of this unique character by a lecturer who had come into personal contact with him, I desired to have a closer acquaintance with this strangely fascinating personage, and the environment and circumstances which had moulded him.

The gaucho, though an unlettered rustic, was of prime importance in the colonization and in the economic development of the Río de la Plata Valley during the Colonial Period; he it was who, unsurpassed in horsemanship, self-reliant, and brave to rashness, successfully sustained the patriot cause in the War of Independence; and he who again is the protagonist in the long years of civil strife between the centralists and federalists, supporting whatever political leader was able to gain his respect through physical prowess or courage.

Later, the agricultural development of his country with the utilization of modern scientific methods, together

with the influx of industrious European immigrants practically forced the gaucho out of existence. Because of his lawless and nomadic instincts, and his unwillingness and inability to conform to the conventional life of modern civilization, the gaucho, as a distinct type, can find no place in present-day society and is withdrawing more and more toward the frontier.

The proud, free character of the gaucho, together with his poetic instinct and love of song have, however, resulted in a considerable body of gauchesque literature, which reveals the life, customs, emotions, thoughts and ideals of the gaucho.

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CHAPTER I

The Land

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An adequate conception of any people embraces a consideration of a land, a people, a state, a language and an ideal. The Argentine is then essentially that synthesis formed in the collective consciousness of the country by the amalgamation of its land and its government, which form the body of the nation, with the memory of its people and their language, which are the soul of the nation, all made concrete in an ideal that is both reminiscent of its origins and prophetic of its future. The gaucho, whose character as it is revealed from the varying viewpoints of legend, history, poetry, drama, and novel I propose to study in this work, is inseparably identified with the great Río de la Plata Valley in the moulding of its ideals, in the determination of the course of its history, in the formation of its legends and traditions, and in the shaping of its distinctly national literature.

The dominant characteristic of the Argentine land is the pampas. It is a pastoral region with its far-reaching plain practically unbroken by rivers and trees except on the outskirts which are bounded by the Paraná, the Cuarto, the Colorado and other rivers that unite to form the great

Río de la Plata. Rojas¹ divides this country into two zones, the Southern region, limited by its only river, the Salado, forming the pastos fuertes where the Indians have dwelt apart for half a century, and the northern region of the pastos tiernos put under the influence of Buenos Aires by the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century. The pampa is an indigenous word by which the whole plain is designated while the inhabitants of the wooded and hilly districts use the familiar title of pampita to denominate their dales and plateaus, repairing to the diminutive when the plain does not stretch itself out to the horizon. This plain does ascend from the Plata to the Andes, but with such a gradual slope as to be practically imperceptible.

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Sarmiento would divide the pampas into three districts of different and distinct features, each of which imprints upon its people diverse characteristics according to the manner in which they interpret their surroundings.

1. Rojas, Ricardo: La Literatura Argentina
Los Gauchescos, Buenos Aires 1924, vol.I, p.102.
2. Sarmiento, Domingo F.: Facundo,
Buenos Aires 1927, p.45.

To the North, mingling itself with the Chaco,¹ a thick wood covers, with its well-nigh impenetrable mass of branches, extensions that would be called extraordinary if there were anything strange in colossal forms in South America. In the center and in a zone parallel to the northern region, the pampas and the wood for a long time dispute their ground, with the forest dominating in parts and then degenerating into sickly and spiny thickets only to present itself again as a forest, thanks to some river that favors it, until finally to the South the pampas triumphs and extends its smooth, velvety face without visible limit or noticeable variation toward the distant horizon. It is a sea on land, or land as it appears on a map still waiting for some one to command it to produce plants and seeds.

The immense expanse of this pampas is at its extremities almost entirely uninhabited. The desert surrounds it everywhere, it insinuates itself into the inmost recesses of the pampas, and the desert and solitude without any human habitation are generally the limits between the provinces. There is vastness everywhere, the plain is

1. El Chaco -- a forest region to the north of the Argentine pampas.

vast, the woods are vast, the rivers are vast, and even the horizon is uncertain, always confounding itself with the earth, for the light, swiftly-moving clouds and tenuous mist do not allow in the distant perspective the perception of the point at which the earth ends and the sky begins. Whether the land is covered with the luxuriant, and rank vegetation of the tropics, whether with the stunted and spiny shrubs that reveal the scantiness of the moisture that gives them life, or whether the pampas finally extends its desolate and monotonous face into infinity, the surface is level and unbroken in its continuity, being interrupted only by the mountains of San Luis and of Cordoba in the center, and by some ramifications of the Andes to the north.

A varied, extensive and beautiful flora is to be found over a part of the pampas, especially in the neighborhood of San Luis. Among the trees are the algarroba, the chañor, the mimosa, the retamo, the atamisque, the quebracho, which is an evergreen shrub with yellow flowers known by the name of barba de chivato (goat's beard), the harilla, the vidriera, the xamé, the lycium, the retortuño (diminutive mimosa with beautiful, regularly spiral, yellow seed vessels), the crimson zinnia, the pretty little prostrate

verbena, and the commelina.¹

Great purple bands and patches of the flor morala lie thickly upon the land; these however stand apart since where they grow the serried ranks of blossoms permit no others to raise their heads. A wealth of beautiful plants of the type of English blossoms grow amidst the grass. Away in the far distance the land is no longer green to the eye, but a warm purple that lends magic glamour to this distance.²

This extension of the plain gives to the life of the interior a certain Asiatic tincture that is quite well defined. There is something in the Argentine solitude that brings to mind the Asiatic desert; and the spirit finds some analogy between the pampas and the plains which lie between the Tigris and Euphrates, and some relationship in the lonely train of carts that cross the pampas to arrive at Buenos Aires only at the end of a journey of months with the camel caravan that traverses the desert to reach Bagdad.³

1. Miers, John: Travels in Chile and La Plata, London 1826, vol.I, pp.106-107
2. Koebel, W. H.: Uruguay, London 1911, p.238
3. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.49

The "bedouins of the pampas"¹ are more than nomadic wanderers, however, for they possess the land that they pasture and, regarding it as their own, are the more tenacious in attempting to hold it. In the days when the gaucho flourished the isolation was so great, and the inhabitants so scattered that any government seemed impossible so that the social organization was perforce much that of the feudal family.

One could point out as a notable feature of the physiognomy of the country the agglomeration of the navigable rivers to the East as they come from every direction to unite in the Plata, which flows into the Atlantic.² Even these great rivers did not introduce any change in the national customs or call forth the construction of bridges and boats, for the son of the Spanish adventurers who colonized the country detests navigation and considers himself imprisoned within the narrow limits of a boat. When a great river bars his way he calmly removes his clothes and guides his swimming horse to some small island

1. Blanco-Fombona, Rufino: Los Grandes Escritores de América, Madrid 1917, p.90

2. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.45

that he sees in the distance, upon which both horse and rider rest for a time, repeating the process from island to island until the crossing is completed.

Both to the South and to the North extremities of the pampas lurked the savages who waited only for a moonlit night to fall like hungry hyenas upon the grazing cattle and the defenseless and sleeping dwellings. If the proximity of the savage were not enough to disturb the dwellers of the pampas, there was the constant fear of the tiger or the viper which lay in wait for them. This insecurity of life which is habitual and permanent in that level country imprints in the Argentine character a certain stoic resignation to violent death as one of the misfortunes inseparable from life.¹

Nobody felt the pampas with such genuine emotion as the gauchos of heroic times.² They were masters of the land, but not in the sense that they enclosed it or changed it.

There were no barriers of wire, nor was the

1. Idem: p.44

2. gaucho -- Dates, 1580-1880

magnificent sweep of the land with its native ombú tree¹ and scattered, thatched cottages disfigured as now by clusters of eucalyptis, nor by small red towers. The herds did not graze on fenced-in farms but ranged widely, and there were no gleaming rails but only faint paths or the unbroken pampas. The mystery of eternity made itself tangible in the silence of the heavens and in the loneliness of the earth.² That was the time when the gaucho, solitary like one proscribed from other worlds, crossed the immensity of this plain, acquiring in his wandering life under the tuition of the earth and sky, an almost savage feeling of individuality, an impassioned, untaught longing for liberty, a kind of fatalism in the face of his hard destiny, and a kind of kingship before the open horizon. In his primitive soul these were the lessons of the plains and they have remained in the argentine race as the unfading flowers of the genius of the pampas.

There are some who regard the gaucho literature as offering only a regional character, transitory and limited

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1. ombú -- a tree, native to the pampas, with gnarled roots protruding above the ground, and with meagre foliage.
 2. Rojas: op. cit., p.106

1

to a class of wellknown romances but in this work I will attempt, on the contrary to sustain the premise of the universality of the type within the land, the history, and the culture of the Argentine. Of the land, because the pampas is the foundation of almost all the federal cities as well as because it is inseparably identified with the nature, life, and thought of the countryside; of history, because the gaucho who personifies the pampas was the active factor in the wars that permitted the origin and establishment of the state; of culture, because the thought genuinely Argentine has been born of him and inspired by him, dominating the folklore of oral tradition and the written forms of a more complex literature as well, both in prose and in verse, in criticism and in art.

Within the limitations proper to the recency of the Argentine culture the pampas has succeeded in manifesting itself as true civilization, for it has created a human type representative of itself, it has modeled customs by adaptation to its own needs, it has been influential in defining the form of the Argentine democracy and has reproduced its native emotion in its music and in characters of literary creation.

2

1. romance -- historic ballad or brief lyric.

2. Rojas: op. cit., p.109

CHAPTER II

Racial Origin and Name

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The Argentine gauchos, in definition are only the Andalusians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries¹ transplanted to the pampas. Such was the population of the Argentine countryside at the beginning of the past century: in the cities, the peninsular element rubs² elbows with the Creole.

The negro blood in the Argentine people, including the gauchos, is infinitesimal in amount in comparison with the Brazilian race. During the colonial period England enjoyed the monopoly of the slave trade and, since Spain had forbidden all foreign trade with the Río de la Plata colonies,³ the Argentine settlers had only such few negroes as were smuggled in. They relied instead upon

1. Quesada, Ernesto: El Criollismo,

Buenos Aires 1902, p.17

2. Creole -- an American born person as distinguished from one born in Spain.

3. Dawson, Thomas C.: The South American Republics, Part I., New York 1903, p.82

Indian slavery for their farm labor and mining. The negroes did aid the Argentine materially in a later period as workers and more especially as soldiers. Their loyalty and heroism in defending Buenos Aires during the English Invasion¹ led Pantaleón Rivarola² to consecrate a special passage to them in his Romance as the defenders of Buenos Aires. Whatever may have been their contribution to the evolution of the Argentine state, they do not count as any appreciable ethnic factor.³ They were laborers in the field of external history, as has been seen, for they were workmen and soldiers, but, not having endured as a race, they have not persisted as a spirit or as a factor of internal history, of which the document is the national literature.

If it is evident that in four centuries of ethnic evolution the Argentine race has eliminated almost all its strain of African blood it is also evident that it has assimilated almost entirely its indigenous blood,⁴ to the point of defining itself as a new type of the white race

1. English Invasion -- 1806-07

2. Pantaleón Rivarola (1754-1821) - Argentine poet who is familiarly known as "poet of English Invasions"

3. Rojas: op. cit., p.131

4. Ibid

different from its Spanish progenitor and very similar to its cognate Americans.

Of indigenous blood there were in the Argentine certain Indian groups which stubbornly resisted all fusion with their white conquerors but who yet absorbed much of the new culture. These either withdrew to the margins of the civilized zones or remaining within these zones constantly struggled and fought against the invaders. Contiguous with these rebellious Indians who defended their own ground until succumbing or who periodically rose in revolt in the zones already colonized, at times destroying the new settlements, were others who amalgamated themselves with the new race. Still others tenaciously clung to their old culture as well as to the purity of their racial stock and took refuge in the Chaco or fled to Patagonia. The pampa, propitious to the Indian foray and charge, and the forest, propitious to ambush, were the two haunts of the hostile Indians, where they prepared their ¹malones and from time to time assaulted the roads and villages.

The pure Indian element was visible in the colonial epoch although today this blood goes through the race like

1. malón -- a hostile predatory incursion of Indians.

a subterranean river, which flows submerged and thus is sensed rather than seen. The Indian strain is perhaps more evident in the gaucho than in his urban brother because of his free, outdoor life which brings out to its fullest extent the Indian characteristics.

In the seventeenth century the white nucleus which was almost entirely Spanish and masculine, was reduced to the military group of the conquest. These were in the midst of a large population of Indians whom they assimilated slowly or vanquished by the superiority of their arms and their military genius. The work which has been called the spiritual conquest¹ from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth consisted of a slow impregnation of both progenitors. The conqueror hispanolized intellectually the creole descendant of the Indian and the Indian americanized biologically the progeny of the Spaniard. Name, language, moral sense, religion, dress, dwelling, and industrial methods the white gave to the native, and the latter, thus disguised in the new social structure, changed himself into the mestizo.² This process of impregnation was

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.135

2. mestizo -- half-breed, offspring of a white man and Indian woman or vice versa.

especially great in the suburbs and in the country and extended itself to all Spanish America with common characteristics. From this amalgamation is formed the race that successfully realized its aim of independence and organized a great democracy, a race that has not varied appreciably in other nations during the nineteenth century although tending to dilute itself in the new European immigration to the Río de la Plata.

To this race belongs the gaucho¹ in whose physical and moral type appear not a few traces of the Spaniard and of the native Indian through his adventurous spirit, fatalistic melancholy, and adherence to local custom. Although there is considerable diversity of opinion among historians as to the extent to which the Andalusian pioneers took Indian wives the mingling of the races was extensive enough to show the characteristics of both clearly in the gaucho race. Since the Andalusian had in him a strain of Arabic blood² the gauchos inherited from three races characteristics that were further modified by the pastoral life of the pampas. From their Indian ancestors came their love for

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.137

2. Umphrey, George W.: The Gaucho Poetry of Argentina, Hispania, September 1918, p.145

the free life of the plains, their hatred of restraint, of law, and of order, and their patient acceptance of hardship and physical pain; from the Arabs came their love of the faithful companion of their nomadic life, their superb horsemanship, and their fatalism; and from the Andalusians came their religious superstition, their intensity of feeling and their fondness for poetry and music. Bryce says of the gaucho that he was above all things a horseman¹ and in barbaric picturesqueness compares him to the cossack of Southern Russia of a century and a half ago. The Uruguayan of today is described as a Spaniard moulded by the conditions of his life during the last ninety years, a man of the country and the open air, strong, active, and lawless, always in the saddle, and handy with his lasso and gun. Fifty years ago he was a gaucho much like his Argentine cousin² beyond the river but he is now settling down although retaining much of the breezy recklessness and audacity, the frankness and free-handedness of the older days. The Brazilian gauchos are said to have communicated their love for horses even to the Germans and Italians of their district.

 1. Bryce, James: South America: Observations and Impressions, New York 1916, p.321

2. Idem: p.355

In connection with the gaucho racial stock and its influence in forming the character of the gaucho, it might be profitable to consider the source of the name, gaucho. Some twenty-five etymologies have been suggested for the word, gaucho. The word exists in Castilian as an architectural term ¹ but this has no relation to the Argentine word. It is also the name of a Chilean bird but this was almost certainly taken from the Argentine gauchos. Etymologies from the French gauche (from the clumsy posture of the countryman on foot) and from the arabic chaouch have prospered as well as the Castilian gacho. Neither Rojas nor Quesada is inclined to credit these derivations and the latter especially ridicules them. ² The philologist Lenz ³ is inclined to the Pehuenche cachu ⁴ (friend or comrade) or to the word cauchu (also of the Aurucanian and Patagonian Indians) that they employ as a clever and astute man. This hypothesis warrants

 1. Rodríguez-Navas, M.: Diccionario Completo de la Lengua Española, p.720

2. Quesada: op. cit., p.117, note

3. Rojas: op. cit., p.227, note

4. Pehuenche -- Aurucanian tribe living in territory now a part of southern Argentina.

consideration but Lenz would need to prove that the cachu of the present Indians is not a corruption of gaucho, rather than its source word.

Most of the French adopt the etymology of Martín de Moussy who derives gaucho from the Aurucanian word gatchu¹ (companion). Don Pablo Mantegazza in his Viajes gives the same source, which Rojas thinks confounds with the already mentioned cachu.²

Some relate gaucho to the Chilean guasó (man of the country) which is, according to Vicuña Mackenna, at once a Quichuan and an Aurucanian word, and which is in any event Quichuan. The Quichuan huajcho which is commonly used to mean poor or wretched, although it is literally orphan (applied to animals brought up away from their mother) does not seem to fit the proud, rough type of the true gaucho.³

Vanetta Hosford Warren⁴ is inclined towards this derivation because it is etymologically possible by the

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.117, note

2. Rojas: op. cit., p.227, note

3. Ibid.

4. Warren, Vanetta Hosford: The Gauchos of
Hilario Ascasubi, Thesis, University of Kansas 1926, p.2

substitution of the g for the h (cf. güerto-hüerto) and by simple metathesis proceeding thus from guacho to gaucho. Rojas, however, does not think that words such as this contain the idea of the gaucho for he contends that the Quichuan is not spoken in the Plata, where the gaucho is characteristic, nor do they call the native of other Quichuan districts gaucho.¹

Rojas² prefers to seek the etymology of gaucho in the Guaraní or Portuguese term gaudeo, rustically pronounced gauzo. The natives of Río Grande in Brazil are also called gauchos and he cites as additional evidence the Brazilian regional novel of José de Alencar entitled O gaucho, with the ch pronounced with a Lusitanian inflection. Gaucho could be a corruption of gaudeo. Gaudeo is the first person of the present indicative of gaudēre (to enjoy, to take pleasure in liberty). Gaudeo (gaucho) could well be a transition from gauderio, a name that according to Azara³ designated in the eighteenth century the countrymen of the Banda Oriental and of Buenos Aires who were afterward

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.227, note

2. Idem: p.228, note

3. Azara: Descripción e Historia del Paraguay y Río de la Plata, Madrid 1847, tomo I, p.311

called gaucho. Groussac¹ strongly favors the etymology of gauderio and at great length explains that the primitive form of gaucho was gauderio (Latin gaudeo, gāvisus sum, gaudēre) for many years both as a spoken and written term until the abbreviation of gaucho entered into competition with the original word and concluded by displacing it altogether. In the work of Azara mentioned above the two terms first appeared as synonyms: "además de los dichos (los vaqueanos) hay por aquellos campos principalmente por los de Montevideo y Maldonado, obra casta de gente llamada más propiamente gauchos o gauderios."

The revolution picked up the epithet as the Flemish of the sixteenth century did with that of gueux and spread its use through three viceroyships. At the end of that century the appellation gauderio was in current use in the provinces and appears in numerous private and official documents. It occurs in the Diario of Alvear and in the reports of Doblas. In the Lazarillo de Ciegos Caminantes printed in 1773 and dealing with the period of Rosas (1765) the gauderio refers to the rustic vagabond. Later, about the end of the century, the name was extended to other

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.119, note

provinces and to anyone who identified himself with the life of the gaucho. Rosas, the great Argentine dictator and tyrant, was termed el gaucho bárbaro¹ by Sarmiento who hated the gaucho and regarded him as being responsible for much of the wretchedness found in the Argentine of that period. Quoting Groussac, Quesada² would give the etymology in this form: from gauderio would come gauducho, then gaucho through a natural derivation and the triumph of the latter form because it is shorter and more characteristic.³

1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.183
2. Quesada: op. cit., p.119, note
3. This last explanation is etymologically impossible.

CHAPTER III

Language

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The history of the colonization of the Río de la Plata gives the key to the explanation of the linguistic peculiarities of its population.¹ The first colonists were Andalusian,² and the characteristics of their speech account for many differences in the orthography and pronunciation of the gauchos. Many Castilian words are still retained in the gaucho speech with the meanings of former centuries in contrast to the more modern significance given them in the Spain of today. Numerous Indian terms were found necessary to designate new and unfamiliar objects of the new environment.

The principal philological nuclei of the indigenous languages were the Quichuan of Tucumán,³ the Guaranian from the Atlantic coast to the Plata, and the Aurucanian

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.13
2. Vide supra: p.10
3. Tucumán -- Argentine province, south of Salta and northeast of Catamarca.

1

of the pampas and Patagonia. These are what may be called "general languages" as distinct from the "partial languages" or dialects, which are restricted to their own tribes. It is not absolutely certain that the early missionaries adopted these specific indigenous languages because they found them already generalized among the various peoples as international ² languages but it is more than probable. It is just possible that the missionaries chose the most highly developed language of each region and generalized it to the detriment of the less advanced dialects. This last, however, would have required on the part of the missionaries or philologists of the spiritual conquest a previous knowledge of all the dialects and of their vocabulary and grammatical structure in order to form bases of choice and it could hardly have happened thus. The most acceptable hypothesis is that they adopted the languages which had the widest range at the time of their

1. Patagonia -- great region that extends in the form of a triangular point and ends the South American Continent on the south.
2. International -- used here in the sense of intertribal as the Indian tribes were sometimes spoken of as nations.

coming. Since the beginning of the conquest the Quichuan has been designated as the general language of Peru, the Guaranian as the general language of the Argentino-Brazilian region and the Aurucanian as the general language of Chile.¹

The traffic of the Indians in the northwest of Argentina had brought the Quichuan language to these districts before the advent of the missionaries and the traffic of the Aurucanians with the tribes east of the Andes had brought their language to Cuyo and western Patagonia since the prehistoric epoch. The motility of the peoples of the Argentine, Uruguayan, Paraguayan and Brazilian regions would have generalized in that part of the country before the colonial period the Guaranian language as the medium of communication.

This philological map would correspond to the following ethnic distribution: the Costal or Guaranian zone: the Chanas, Gharrúcas, Caracás, Timbúes; the Andean or Quichuan zone: the Comechingones, Huarpes, Famatinas, Sanagastas, Calchaquies, Cocanas, Diaguitas, Juríes, Ahipones, Ocloyas, Paypoyas, Humahuacas; and the Patagonian or Aurucanian zone: Huiliches, Pecunches, Pehuenches, Ranquelches.²

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.159

2. Idem: p.160

The council of Lima in 1853 adopted the Quichuan language as the official one for proclamations and sermons in the then very extensive kingdom of Peru. In the Jesuit mission of the Río de la Plata the adoption of the Guaranian speech was so uniform as to banish the Castilian and the lesser indigenous dialects.

The policy adopted by the council of Lima was later ratified by a synod in Asunción and maintained by the Jesuits during the following centuries. These factors must not be disregarded in explaining the geographical extension of the Quichuan and Guaranian languages in the Argentine and the permanent place these languages have acquired in the speech of the Argentine of the nineteenth century. They were spoken quite widely in the period of the struggle for independence and they are still spoken in the provinces which are inhabited by a really bilingual population.

Numerous lesser dialects disappeared, either directly absorbed by the Castilian or supplanted by the general indigenous language adopted in that particular region without leaving any trace other than the name of some place or chieftan.

Some Indian words which have come to form a part of the gaucho vocabulary are:

- 1, arrayán -- 2, ceibo -- 3, cacique -- 4, caracú --
 5, condor -- 6, chala -- 7, chacra -- 8, chaquí --
 9, charque -- 10, charquear -- 11, charquecillo --

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1. arrayán -- a shrub of the myrtaceous family, from eight to ten feet in height, with many flexible branches, and with leaves of bright green, which are lustrous and permanent all through the year.
2. ceibo -- a large spiny tree, the wood of which is white and poisonous.
3. cacique -- a chief or superior of Indian province or town.
4. caracú -- the marrow of the bones of the hoof of quadrupeds; the bone itself.
5. condor -- a bird of the vulture family which lives in South America in the highest mountains of the Andes.
6. chala -- the leaf which envelops the maize when it is green.
7. chacra -- a rustic dwelling of the Indians.
8. chaquí -- foot.
9. charque -- choice piece of cow's flesh, dried in the sun or open air with little if any salt.
10. charquear -- to dry flesh in the sun without salt.
11. charquecillo -- a sea eel.

- 12, charquicán -- 13, apichú -- 14, aji' -- 15, cacahouy --
 16, cacahuete -- 17, chaguar -- 18, china -- 19, choclo --
 20, chiripá -- 21, chicha -- 22, chilúe -- 23, yaguané --
 24, chupe -- 25, chupú -- 26, chuno --

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12. charquicán -- a dish made of charque, seasoned with pimento, sesame, peanuts, and potatoes.
13. apichú -- a vulgar name for the sweet potato.
14. aji' -- the name given in America to a very hot pimento.
15. cacahouy -- the name given to an unclassified American bird with relation to its song.
16. cacahuete -- a leafy plant with white flowers.
17. chaguar -- hemp; horsehair.
18. china -- wife, originally applied to Indian woman.
19. choclo -- maize before complete maturity is reached.
20. chiripá -- form of trouser.
21. chicha -- alcoholic drink made by Indians, and much used in America.
22. chilúe -- big jar in which the chicha is made.
23. yaguané -- applied to an animal with white back and belly and dark sides.
24. chupe -- an American meat dish to which pimentos, cheese, and eggs are added.
25. chupú -- the trunk of a tree after cut.
26. chuno -- grain or seed from which the Indians make bread.

27, galpón -- 28, guanaco -- 29, hurucán -- 30, guanol --
 31, guamani -- 32, guanajo -- 33, guayabo -- 34, guatichú --
 35, locro -- 36, maiz -- 37, macha -- 38, mate --

 27. galpón -- a large shed made from pine, tiles, or straw,
 supported by pillars of strong wood.

28. guanaco -- a South American quadruped similar to the
 camel but without humps and smaller.

29. hurucán -- hurricane.

30. guanol -- Peruvian bird.

31. guamani -- that part of the Andes range lying between
 Peru and Ecuador.

32. guanajo -- turkey.

33. guayabo -- American tree with thick leaves and rose
 shaped flower of many petals.

34. guatichu -- evil spirit to whom some Indian tribes of
 the pampas attribute illness and other misfortunes.

35. locro -- an American dish composed of meat, potatoes
 and cheese.

36. maiz -- corn.

37. macha -- barley flour which serves as the ordinary
 food of the South American Indians.

38. mate -- South American tree from which the bitter
 Paraguayan tea is made; also the tea.

39, mazmorra -- 40, ñandú -- 41, ñacurutú -- 42, ombú
 43, ojota -- 44, pampa -- 45, horoto -- 46, porongo --
 47, pilche -- 48, poncho -- 49, tala -- 50, yugo --

These words which I have given as examples are included in the dictionary of the Spanish Academy and are recognized because of their necessary use in the speech and writing of the people of the Río de la Plata. Since the sixteenth

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39. mazmorra -- hominy.
40. ñandú -- species of bird similar to the ostrich but smaller, which lives on the South American plains.
41. ñacurutú -- small, South American owl.
42. ombú -- Spanish American tree which gives shade similar to the walnut tree.
43. ojota -- Indian footwear.
44. pampa -- pampas or great plain of Argentina.
45. horoto -- a kind of French bean.
46. porongo -- a kind of squash with a very hard rind.
47. pilche -- a kind of gourd in which the Indians carry chicha.
48. poncho -- a mantle without sleeves and with a hole cut for the head, worn by South American plainsmen.
49. tala -- a South American tree.
50. yugo -- a small herb prejudicial to the cornfields.

and seventeenth centuries the Spanish chroniclers have given Indian words entrance to the language to describe the fauna, flora, and inorganic matter of the new world and to explain the customs of the aborigines.¹ Most of the words that have been cited are names of qualities or substances and always of concrete qualities and substances.

Many words go back to the Castilian of earlier periods and are found with much the same sense as that with which they are used in the "Cid", in the "Celestina" and in the "Quijote". Most of these are used to designate the uses and utensils of the pampas such as:

1, chuzo -- 2, corral -- 3, chiquero -- 4, potvo --
5, veriija -- 6, pretal -- 7, agarrar -- 8, cogote --

1. Idem: p.225

1. chuzo -- an iron-tipped stick used for defense.
2. corral -- enclosed space for animals.
3. chiquero -- a place where pigs are kept for the night.
4. potvo -- a wild horse.
5. veriija -- the withers of a horse.
6. pretal -- a leather strap attached by both sides to the front part of the saddle which girds the breast of the mount.
7. agarrar -- to get caught.
8. cogote -- the upper or back part of the neck.

9, jergón -- 10, acollarar -- 11, jeta -- 12, buche --
 13, flete -- 14, rebenque -- 15, manea -- 16, pucha --
 17, canejo -- 18, tiento -- 19, chifle -- 20, apero --
 21, calamaco -- 22, taba -- 23, yesca -- 24, toldo --

 9, jergón -- greasy mattress made of straw, paper cuttings,
 etc.; applied to fat, greasy persons.

10. acollarar -- to put collars on horses.

11. jeta -- a prominent mouth because of thick lips.

12. buche -- the crow of a bird.

13. flete -- a brisk horse of good quality.

14. rebenque -- a whip.

15. manea -- a hobble.

16. pucha -- a small spray of flowers.

17. canejo -- a substitute for an oath.

18. tiento -- a rawhide strap on the saddle.

19. chifle -- a kind of whistle for hunting birds.

20. apero -- a collection of instruments necessary for
 farm labor.

21. calamaco -- a fine woolen cloth.

22. taba -- a game.

23. yesca -- very dry material prepared for kindling fires.

24. toldo -- a kind of shelter which serves as the dwell-
 ing of the pampas Indians.

To the same peninsular fount belong other words of the gaucho dialect which come from the Spanish but which have been adapted to new objects or which have been slightly transformed in the native mouth such as:

- 1, matrero -- 2, cuatrero -- 3, bola -- 4, lazo --
- 5, barajo -- 6, ahijuna -- 7, truco (truque) -- 8, mamarse --
- 9, velay or velahí -- 10, huella -- 11, che -- 12, maule --
- 13, limeta -- 14, palenque -- 15, boliche --

1. matrero -- shy.
2. cuatrero -- applied to player of bolas
3. bola -- iron or stone weight attached to end of lasso.
4. lazo -- lasso.
5. barajo -- gross interjection synonymous to caramba.
6. ahijuna -- interjection (ah! hijo de una puta).
7. truco (truque) -- a game making use of the bolas.
8. mamarse -- to get drunk.
9. velay or velahí -- ve lo allí or ve la ahí.
10. huella -- track.
11. che -- interjection which seems to express joy, sorrow, admiration, depreciation, etc.
12. maule -- the bulk of the Chilean Andes.
13. limeta -- a bottle.
14. palenque -- a hitching post.
15. boliche -- a wineshop.

- 16, chafolote (chaforote) -- 17, horcón -- 18, algarroba --
 19, aloja -- 20, ruano -- 21, picana -- 22, aires --
 23, tristes -- 24, bayero -- 25, peludo --

Spanish archaisms such as are found in the glossaries of the "Cid", Fernan Gonzalez and the Arcipreste de Hita are:

- 1, así (así) -- 2, ansina (así) -- 3, mesmo (mismo) --
 4, indino (indigo) -- 5, cencia (ciencia) -- 6, alguito --
 (dim. of algo) -- 7, lejitos -- (dim. of lejos) -- 8, emplear
 (for comprar) -- 9, ansimesmo (asimismo) -- 10, trujo (trajo)

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16. chafolote (chaforote) -- a cutlass.
 17. horcón -- a support for grape vines.
 18. algarroba -- the name of a bird native to America;
 the carob bean tree.
 19. aloja -- fermented liquor made from the algarroba.
 20. ruano -- a woolen cloth manufactured in Peru which
 serves for clothing for poor people.
 21. picana -- a kind of insect.
 22. aires -- a native song and dance.
 23. tristes -- song which is sad in nature, native to the
 Indians of Peru and Bolivia.
 24. bayero -- one who takes care of cattle.
 25. peludo -- species of armadillo.

Barbarisms or vulgarisms consist of the defective pronunciation of words and are common both to Spain and America. This is especially common in the substitution of ao for the ado of the past participle, the h for the j, the u for the e, and the i for the e.¹ In Spain differences are largely regional and are found especially in the South. Therefore it is only natural that these peculiarities of spelling and pronunciation should find their way into the gaucho speech for the gauchos are descendants of the Andalusians and have retained and emphasized many of their peculiarities of speech during three centuries of oral tradition. Such words as lao for lado, juyeron for fuyeron, jué for fué, güelta for vuelta, güeno for bueno, rigular for regular, respento² for respecto,³ pa for para and nades for nadie are common. Sanz calls the language of the country this beautiful gauchesque language which has all the delicacy of tender hearts, all the sparkling color of the sun and the flowers, and all the brilliancy of the rich argentine fantasy and exuberant imagination.

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.10

2. Umphrey: op. cit., p.149

3. Monner Sanz, R.: Discurso Sobre el Lenguaje Gauchesco, read July 9, 1902 before the American institute, Androque.

CHAPTER IV



LEGEND

CHAPTER IV

Legend

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Poetic instinct which never grows old or changes fundamentally has a tendency toward mystery, toward the extraordinary, and toward mythology. Since primitive times of which we have only the most vague legendary knowledge, the influence of the myth has persisted in a tenacious manner. A human being who was at all exceptional in his ideas or customs stood apart so far from the common body of men that poetry seized upon him, enveloped him in the chaotic cloud of its fantasies, and, despoiling him of the materialism of his bodily incarnation and etherealizing him, converted him into a legendary being. In ancient Greece, the great epics, the Illiad and the Odessey appeared, were popularized, were transmitted and were immortalized while the very existence of the poet himself was shrouded in mystery, and countless critics and scholars have labored in vain to prove his existence or his non-existence, with many preferring to believe that these poems are the work of many poets. Other typical "shadow" authors which may be cited as analogous to Homer are those who composed the Poema de Mio Cid in Spanish, the Nibelungos in Germany, and the Ramayana and the Mahabarata

¹
 in India. No less legendary figures are those considered in the poems. The Cid, who has perhaps fewer mythical qualities than most added to his historical character still has a number of fantastical exaggerations connected with his name.

²
 Bunge defends the teaching of legends in the schools: "They say that one should teach deeds, always deeds, only deeds. But are not traditions or popular legends deeds as soon as they exist in the imagination of the people? The existence of the tradition of Lucía Miranda and of the legend of Santos Vega in the memory of the Argentine people constitute two deeds for me as real and as tangible as the victory of Maipú³ and the Declaration of Independence." Ideas are deeds when they exist dynamically in the imagination of a people. The legendary element in the Argentine is relatively much less than the traditional element. The race has shown comparatively little inclination toward belief in the supernatural and in marvellous

 1. Lehmann-Nitsche, R.: Santos Vega, Buenos Aires 1917, p.419

2. Bunge, Carlos Octavio: La Enseñanza de la Tradición y la Leyenda, Boletín de la Instrucción Pública XI, Buenos Aires 1913, pp.492-93

3. Maipú --, celebrated victory of General San Martín over Osorio, April 5, 1818, which assured the independence of Chile.

inventions, and has always been rather skeptical. This fact, however, did not prevent the existence of some true legends like Kacuy of indigenous origin and Santos Vega of colonial origin. National legends in spite of their fantastic and marvellous element do not lack a certain didactic value for they can constitute useful lessons in national consciousness, in good taste, and in training of the imaginative faculties. Thus it is with Rafael Obligado's version of the legend of Santos Vega. The devil of his Santos vega is not the myth of the Middle Ages. He does not pervert or terrorize; rather he diverts and teaches, and his diabolical arts are now the noble ones of music and poetry.

The colonial legend of Santos Vega is more popular along the coast than in the interior where the best known and most current legends are all of indigenous origin; transformed sometimes during the colonial period by the influence of European elements and ideas. That of Kacuy is one of the most beautiful. It refers to a bird, peculiar to the pampas, whose strident nocturnal cry seems to imprint itself indelibly upon the mind. Thus this legend turns the light of poetry upon nature, and the imagination enhances reality. By virtue of the legend the Kacuy ceases to be a bird in order to transform itself into a

kind of symbol. In the same fashion the ombu under the shade of which Juan Sin Ropa conquers Santos Vega takes on the aspect of a primitive and transcendental phenomenon. And this sympathy toward the kacuy and the ombu expands then, through a propensity of the human spirit for generalization, to include all birds and all trees, all animals and all plants. The imagination informed by a knowledge of these fantasies sees a new and more intimate feeling in things and in human beings, and man is dignified and ennobled by being made to love nature.

The Santos Vega is the best known and most popular pampan legend, because it is regarded as representing the most spiritual and poetic aspect of the gaucho. It has received more attention by the gauchesque school of writers than any other subject and has appeared in countless lyric poems, in epic poems, in the novel and in the drama. Santos Vega is the purest and most elevated personification of the gaucho, and although he was perhaps once a flesh and blood person, he has been transformed into a true myth even to the point of constituting a national symbol.¹

According to the common opinion Santos Vega was one of

1. Bunge, Carlos Octavio: Nuestra Patria Libro de Lectura Para La Educacion Nacional, Buenos Aires 1910, p.48

the gaucho singers of the times of Maricostaña.¹ There was an opinion current in old Buenos Aires that in the fourth decade of the past century there existed a payador² Santos Vega who competed with a singer of the African race in a payada³ which lasted two or three nights. This celebrated payada took place in the "barrio del pino" of Buenos Aires which today is Montevideo street between Sarmiento and Corrientes. The name was taken from a great pine tree. In the conception of Argentine popular poets Santos Vega really lived and his genius admits of comparison only with the most choice spirits of humanity.

"Como Grecia guarda a Homero, Sud America albergó
 En su seno a Santos Vega que en la pampa, en el océano
 En el rancho, en el palacio, su leyenda resonó
 Transmitiendose en Ezeiza, luego en Vásquez, ruiséñores
 Que Ambos cantan a la patria sus proezas, sus mejores
 Episodios nacionales en honor a la virtud."⁴

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1. Maricostaña -- proverbial personage, symbolical of very remote antiquity.
 2. Payador -- the gaucho bard or improviser of popular songs.
 3. Payada -- a composition in the improvisation of popular songs by bards.
 4. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.403

The payadores, those improvisors that began to figure in 1778, were to be found from one extreme to the other of the Río de la Plata vicercyalty by 1830. Fighting and singing, sometimes at the ranch, at others under the ombú, and most of all in the pulpería (tavern), some few of them came to acquire a fame so surprising that there followed an epoch in which they abandoned the obligations of their gaucho life in order to devote themselves completely to the art of singing. Under these circumstances Santos Vega made his appearance. From triumph to triumph, going always from one place to another, he passed one day to the south of the province which was the only part where he was unknown. He arrived at a village store where he asked for a manañita (a drink) and retired to a corner with the intention of resting. The group of gauchos who were drinking there looked upon his humble dress with scorn. Among them was a negro, who was recognized as the first payador of the district, and he, seeing a chance for some amusement asked the stranger in song his identity. Santos Vega replied and the two bards continued their improvisations until finally, a religious theme having been introduced, the negro was conquered, because he had been the devil himself.

This tradition was conserved intact there but on going among the people of the North, the fame of Santos Vega was eclipsed in order to cede his place to Trillería. They say that Vega after conquering the devil, passed to this region seeking some one to compete with, and arrived one night at a dance where Trillería was present. The latter, a simple peasant, on hearing Santos Vega's challenge felt the blood flow hotly in his veins and accepted. The struggle was vigorous and heated, and for two days and nights the talent and genius of the two payadores was exhibited until finally Santos Vega broke his guitar declaring his defeat. This counter tradition that has invaded the people of the North, was invented by the inhabitants of Córdoba with the intention of detracting from the fame of the gaucho prodigy.²

Another and less poetic conception of the gaucho life isolates Santos Vega still farther from the ordinary gaucho, and makes of him not the natural outgrowth of a

1. Lynch, Ventura R., La Provincia de Buenos Aires Hasta la Definición de la Cuestión Capital de la República, Buenos Aires 1883, p.6

2. Idem, p.7

people whose ears were accustomed to daily songs and improvisations. This more rare point of view would picture the country people as having few subtleties to express, and leading a sanguinary and happy life like the Greek heroes; they lived, killed and died, with no more stable affections than those for their horse and their knife, and without other aesthetic necessities than their truco (popular game somewhat resembling billiards) and their bottle. The guitar was a luxury so that Santos Vega the wandering payador (routed by the devil himself according to tradition and by a native of Cordoba according to the people of Córdoba) was the exception, as the clean and rich gaucho was the exception.¹ That the clean or rich gaucho, or the clean gaucho even when rich, was very much the exception is a fact repeatedly stressed by Miers,² but gaucho improvisors were no more uncommon than were Grecian poets and bards, who were present at every feast to sing of the glorious deeds of the battle heroes:

1. Álvarez, Juan: Orígenes de la Música Argentina,

Buenos Aires 1908, p.18

2. Miers: op. cit., pp.32-150

"...en sus horas tristes
 Cada gaucho es un poeta,
 Poeta que canta trovas
 De misteriosa cadencia
 En las que lleva una lágrima
 Cada pié de cada décima
 Sin más arte que su alma
 Que en la soledad le enseña
 A sentir lo que retrate
 Y a retratar lo que sienta;
 Arte que escribió con llanto¹
 Las trovas de Santos Vega"

Santos Vega, whose name is deeply imbedded in the consciousness of the Argentine people was the greatest of those early payadores who wandered over the solitary pampas singing to the accompaniment of the melancholy guitar² the most touching and harmonious tristes and cielitos.

1. Gutiérrez, Ricardo: Poesías Escogidas,

Buenos Aires 1878, p.162

2. Tristes, cielitos, vidalitas -- Argentine folk-songs composed typically of hexasyllabic verse, of a sad and sentimental character.

He was one of those gauchos who loved liberty because they were born like the lion in the desert, who recognized a God because they believed that without him existence was not possible in the solitude, and who saw his image and the hand of Providence in the most insignificant acts of their lives. But above all, Vega was a superior genius and the fame of his just renown has been highly appreciated in the Argentine. Conqueror in all the contrapuntos (musical competitions) he never felt personal pride in his triumphs because he was born to sing the charms of his native land. The years did not diminish the fire of his great inspiration and in the last days of his life Vega sang with the passion of the young man that carries in itself the virility of the physical and intellectual forces. Because of this the Argentine people say,

"que murió cantando su amor
como el pájaro en la rama"¹

The legend of the gaucho poet Santos Vega has been transmitted from generation to generation in the imagination of the people. His work is almost totally ignored in the exploitation of his personality. A décima or two and

1. Popular song which Rafael Obligado uses as epigraph to his Santos Vega.

a few redondillas which show the technical inexperience of their improviser are the only remnants that tradition has conserved of the nomadic troubador whose name still illuminates the traditional story of the pampas. Even some of these strophes have been observed in literatures both foreign and anterior to Santos Vega, as these lines, which, according to Menéndez y Pelayo are of Portuguese origin:

"El día que yo me muera
 No me entierren en sagrado
 Entiérrenme en campo verde
 Donde me pise el ganado."¹

It is very difficult to establish with exactitude which, if any, of the poems attributed to Santos Vega really belong to him, for it has happened with this popular payador as with other poets more or less famous but equally traditional under whose names renowned in the popular conception there have been launched to the wind of fame at times verses not very worthy of the glorious origin to which they were attributed. It has been said that since the verses were the improvisations of a fundamentally illiterate singer they ought to have enjoyed the ephemeral existence of only the moment in which they were orally emitted.

 1. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.420

The medium in which the gaucho poet worked being popular and the mass of his audience scattered and almost savage, his endechas have been retained in the popular mind and preserved only in rare cases. It is not then the work of Santos Vega which exists in the primitive national legend of the Argentine but his personality.

A minority opinion denies the reality of the existence of Santos Vega, saying he is but a myth confounded with the archetype of the gaucho baquiano (guide) who does not live except in legend and whose shadow and renowned deeds are customarily utilized to vivify and quicken the slow stories of the fireside.¹

The majority opinion seems to be that Santos Vega is a true personage, a gaucho with poetic talent,² who is, however, still considered as a personal ideal, even when General Mitre records his burial in Tuyú.³ An old man, 72 years of age in 1885, affirms on his word of honor that

1. Leguizamón, Martiniano: La Cinta Colorada.

Notas y Perfiles, Buenos Aires 1916, p.166

2. Carranza, Adolfo P.: Leyendas Nacionales, Buenos Aires 1894, p.59

3. Lehmann-Nitche: op. cit., p.411

he was present at the death of Santos Vega, at sunset of a cold winter afternoon in 1825.¹ The witness was himself then twelve years old and he gives a detailed description of his appearance, and his thin face, with its white beard and hair. His death occurred on the estancia of Saenz Valiente and his burial was at Tuyú in a coffin made from wood salvaged from a shipwreck.² Owing to the immense distances which separated the towns, and to the small number of persons who were present at the death of Santos Vega, the historical facts have perhaps been unknown. The inhabitants of the countryside saw him disappear and not being certain of how to explain his disappearance, they fabricated a thousand fairy tales and among them that of his payada with the devil. This has a certain justification if we take into account the superstition and fanaticism of the gauchos and much more since they had the firm conviction that Santos Vega was invincible. Even those who were

1. The death occurred between the last days of June and the first days of July but it is impossible to fix the exact day. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.413

2. Rodríguez Ocón, P.: Santos Vega. Su Muerte, La Prensa, Buenos Aires, July 28, 1885

present at his death doubted that it was produced by a natural cause and saw in it a supernatural element because they thought that Santos Vega being immortal, as some one said of him during his life, only the devil could conquer him and make him disappear from the world of the living.

More recent poets have given a symbolical significance to the legend. One has analyzed the tradition in this manner. Santos Vega represents Adam; his sweetheart, Eve; the ombu, the tree of good and evil; Juan Sin Ropa, the serpent; the pampa, the land of paradise; the guitar, the science and arts of man.¹ The more commonly accepted significance is the triumph of modern civilization over the old gauchesque life.

1. Bunge: La Enseñanza, p.500

CHAPTER V

HISTORY

CHAPTER V

History

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During the colonial period it was the gauchos who opened the vast plains of the Argentine up to civilization, during the war of independence it was the gauchos, unsurpassed in horsemanship, self-reliant, brave to rashness, ready for attack at a moment's notice, who fought valiantly and effectively against the Spanish armies in the cause of freedom, and during the troubled times following national independence, in the long struggle between the centralists and federalists, it was the gauchos who fought as valiantly in a less worthy cause in support of caudillos, the political leaders who were able to gain their respect by physical prowess, expert horsemanship, and audacious courage.

Though no great character of gaucho origin comes down in history to be honored by a national holiday, the gauchos as a class are remembered as having made possible the colonial development of the Río de la Plata, the independence of that colony from Spain and the civil unrest and guerilla warfare of the dictatorship.

The Río de la Plata valley had two distinct sources of colonization: one directly from Spain and the other overland from Chile and Bolivia. Juan Diaz de Solis is the

1. Umphrey: op. cit., p.144

first white man known to have landed from Spain in the Río de la Plata region. He was killed shortly after his landing in 1516 and his accompanying force completely annihilated. Magellan on his voyage around the world landed there in 1520 and took the land in the name of Spain under whose colors he was serving. In 1526 Sebastian Cabot, who had been sent out by Spain to determine astronomically the location of the demarcation line between Spain and Portugal, was led by rumors of a wealthy inland empire to make an unsuccessful prospecting trip up the Paraná, after which he returned to Spain. The fort that he had established on the lower Paraná was captured and its inhabitants massacred. In 1535 Pedro de Mendoza made the first definite attempt at colonization in founding Buenos Aires at the mouth of the Río de la Plata. Part of his force, in command of Ayolas, was lost while on an expedition to the interior and the Indians were so hostile, food so difficult to obtain and disease so prevalent that only six or seven hundred of his original two thousand remained three years later. Buenos Aires and its offshoot, San Espíritu, which had already been once repopled from the Buenos Aires settlement during this time, were both abandoned and the remaining colonists in 1538, under the leadership of Irala, founded Asunción on the Paraguay river. Repeated attempts

to establish a settlement at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata were thwarted by the warlike Guaranians and not until 1580 was Buenos Aires established as a permanent colony by settlers from Santa Fe, which had itself been founded in 1573 by Juan de Garay from Asunción.

The Inca Empire of Peru which Pizarro had finally subjugated by the capture of Cuzco, its capital, in 1532, embraced the highlands, including the north-western district of modern Argentina. The first overland contact with the Río de la Plata region came in 1542 through a Peruvian expedition under Diego Rojas who was sent out to bring the outlying Inca settlements under Spanish control. Santiago de Estero, the first permanent settlement on Argentine soil was founded in 1553 from Chile. As an offshoot from this colony Córdoba was established in 1573. Mendoza, founded in 1561, and San Juan, founded in 1562, were also peopled by Chilean immigrants.

When the Creole, Juan de Garay founded Buenos Aires in 1580, he divided the lands surrounding the new colony into ranches which he distributed among the two hundred Indian families that he had brought as colonists from Asunción. The Indians, native to the pampas in that district he assigned as slaves to the new colonists, and a

 1. Moses, Bernard: The Spanish Dependencies in South America, New York 1914, vol. I, pp. 188-89

pastoral community with cattle-raising as its chief industry was organized. The gaucho was the one who tended the herds and so has a foremost place in the colonization of the Argentine. During the following century it was the gaucho who pushed out into the interior to establish new settlements and herds, who alone was able to exist on the products of the pampas and to make use of his knowledge of the pampas trail to care for his herds and make some resistance against the hostile and predatory Indians. Few Europeans found their way into the frontier armies and the protective force came to consist largely of the local provincial levies with prisoners sent from the jails to fill the ranks.³ The military commandant was usually a quite terrible person who drove away the gaucho's horses and sent him off to the frontier to fight the Indians while others usurped his property and home. The gaucho was then often an outcast and on his return found no trace of his family nor remnant of his property.

3. Quesada: op. cit., p.31

"Volvía al cabo de tres años

De tanto sufrir alñudo,..

Resertor, pobre y desnudo

A procurar suerte nueva,

Y lo mesmo que el peludo

Enderecé pa mi cueva

No hallé ni rastro del rancho—

Solo estaba la tapera!—

Por Cristo, si aquello era

Pa enlutar el corazon

Yo juré en esa ocasion

Ser más malo que una fiera!"¹

The Colonial development of the Argentine was in a great measure due to the gaucho who extended the settled area, pushed back the Indians and made possible its economic development and wealth. Spain seemed unable to realize that the wealth of the pampas lay in its pasture and gauchos but continued to expect the gold and silver of Mexico and Peru. Fearing that the English and Dutch would use Buenos Aires as a base for sending treasure seeking expeditions into the interior Spain passed commercial

 1. Hernández, Jose: Martín Fierro, edited by Santiago M. Lugones, Buenos Aires 1926, pp.71-72

restriction laws, severe in the extreme. In 1599 all trade with the colony of the Río de la Plata was forbidden¹ under penalty of death and forfeiture of property.

These restrictions led to the growth of smuggling and in 1658, under the governorship of Hernando Arias de Saavedra,² 300,000 hides were smuggled out of the colony. The pastoral development of the Argentine did not claim the attention of Europe however, until the surface supplies of gold and silver in Peru and Bolivia had been exhausted. In the eighteenth century there was a European demand for wool and hides with a corresponding increase in prices, and the pastoral lands were extended and the gaucho recognized as an economic asset. No longer the colonial "guaso" or "gauderio" whose charge it was to tend the herds, the gaucho comes into increased importance in the war with the Portuguese in 1776. Some battles of minor importance had taken place before this time largely against the Indians but in this year foreign foes were met for the first time. While the war was short-lived and was not carried to a decisive end because orders came from the Spanish king for the suspension of hostilities after an agreement reached

1. Dawson: op. cit., p.50

6. Idem: p.60

with the Portuguese nation, the Argentine forces had been victorious at Colonia and this gave them confidence in themselves.¹ Further impetus was given to this spirit by the creation in 1776 of a viceroyalty in Buenos Aires, and by the permission given to the Atlantic ports to trade with Europe.² The spirit of patriotism aroused by the defense of Buenos Aires against the English in the invasion of 1806 was of extreme influence in unifying the provincial gauchos for the coming struggle against Spain. The spread of more liberal ideas through contact with the English prisoners who spent some time in the upper country and the incitement of a military spirit in the natives, self-defensive in its origin, but invigorated by growth, and finally powerful, and enlightened enough to pull down those who raised it, are largely responsible for the increasing importance of the gaucho in the political history of the Argentine.³

1. Moses, Bernard: Spain's Declining Power In South America, 1730-1806, Berkeley 1919, p.163
2. Bryce: op. cit., p.327
3. Gillespie, Major Alexander: Gleanings and Remarks Collected During Many Months of Residence at Buenos Aires And Within the Upper Country, Leeds 1818, p.64

To the growing economic strength of the Río de la Plata colony and its increasing political independence, for the Creoles had the privilege of buying seats in the Cabildos or city governing bodies, the spirit of self-management was added by the successful repulse of the British and by the virtual commercial and political freedom gained by Brazil when the Portuguese ruler took refuge there in the flight from the forces of Napoleon and Charles IV of Spain.¹

The immediate cause of the provincial dissensions which led to the revolution, was the abdication of the Spanish throne by Charles IV in favor of his son, Ferdinand VII in 1808. Both these monarchs were weak pawns moved about by Napoleon in his plan to control Spain. Liniers, the viceroy of the La Plata wished to defer any action on the part of his colony toward recognizing Ferdinand, although the treacherous invasion of Spain by the French, and the degradation of the Spanish monarchs called forth a universal sentiment of indignation and of generous sympathy for the royal sufferers from the inhabitants of the viceroyalty.²

1. Cooper, Clayton Sedgwick: The Brazilians and Their Country, New York 1917, p.38

2. Gillespie: op. cit., p.300

The Spanish governor in Montevideo took the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand in direct insubordination to Liniers, his chief, whose artifices in delaying the fulfillment of his orders from Madrid demonstrate his fixed and early predilection for the cause of Napoleon.¹ The Creoles were united in their refusal to accept Joseph Bonaparte as their ruler in the place of Ferdinand, and when Liniers' policy was disclosed to them upon the arrival of an emissary from Bonaparte in the autumn of 1808, the viceroy's downfall was assured. In 1809, the junta of Sevilla, acting in the name of Ferdinand, sent the Marquis Cisneros to replace Liniers as viceroy and a short period of comparative peace followed. On May 25, 1810, the cabildo abierto (the municipality and the people) met in armed assembly in the plaza of Buenos Aires, demanded the dismissal of the viceroy, and elected a local governmental and revolutionary ² junta. From this beginning, singing the cielitos of liberty, the gauchos reappeared on the scene of battle to expel the Spaniards from the neighboring provinces.

1. Idem: p.302

2. García Calderón, F.: Latin America: Its Rise and Progress, London 1913, p.65

In 1811, Artigas¹ with some thousand gauchos from Entre Ríos crossed to Uruguay and defeated the Spaniards at Piedras. It was a blind instrument which Artigas put in movement, but it was full of life, and had instincts hostile to European civilization and to regular organization.² Belgrano won the battle of Tucumán because the gauchos on their swift horses so harrassed the Spaniards as they fled,³ and in Bolivia, Rondeau was able to save his republican army after defeat while the gauchos under Guemes protected the border behind his crossing.⁴ Unconditional surrender being the only terms offered Rivadavia and Belgrano when they went to Spain in 1813 to effect a compromise, a formal declaration of independence was drawn up on July 9, 1816. This was followed by the victory of Chacabuco, February 12, 1817 under San Martín, who at this time appeared from the province of Cuzco to be the savior of his country. This success renewed the courage of the revolutionists and led to the Peruvian campaigns which drove Spain from her

1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.73
2. Idem: p.74
3. Dawson: op. cit., p.94
4. Idem: p.104

strongest position.¹ Once having freed herself from Spanish domination the Río de la Plata colony was engulfed in a period of anarchy reminiscent of the triumph of feudalism (1820).² The Caudillos were like chiefs of barbarian tribes; they upheld local autonomy, division, and chaos. Sarmiento compares Lopez, Ibarra, and Quiroga, violent chieftains of the Argentine sierra and pampas, to Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. "Individualism," he says, "is their essence; the horse their only arm; the pampas their theater."³

With the struggles of the federation the gaucho passes resolutely to the center of the stage and reaches his most dramatic moment. The heroes which had conducted the gaucho forces to former victories have disappeared from the scene. Guemes and Belgrano had died and San Martín and Rivadavia were in exile. From the mass itself, emboldened by this civil strife sprang the new champions, and the crowds went eagerly in their support, lustily singing their barbarous songs. The reality that the gauchos

1. Mitre, Bartolomé, *Historia de San Martín*,

Buenos Aires 1889, vol.II, p.20

2. Fernández, Juan Rómulo: Los Estudios Históricos,
Nosotros LXII, Buenos Aires 1907, p.174

3. García Calderón: op. cit., p.89

dreamed of in 1810 they began to realize in 1820; moulding their leaders in Dorrego, in Lavalle, in La Madrid, in Quiroga, in Rosas, in Ibarra; they utilized the tactics of the malón (Indian attack) in their battles and the system of the Arabs in their camps.¹ Everybody was Gauchesque, adopting the gaucho dress and the payadoresque speech. It was not so much that the gauchos raised themselves against a more cultured class but that the foreign mould of the colony had been definitely broken and the liberated spirit of the Argentine pampas and mountains felt itself finally free to run wild over its native plain.² The genius of the American countryside which had been given life in 1776, in 1806 and in 1810, had come to possess the cities and had begun its task of remaking the old colonial society. It was not barbarity that arrived but the revolution that continued. The revolt of the gaucho provinces against Brazil gave Rosas his opportunity for dominating Argentine politics. Rivadavia, the unitarian leader, brought unpopularity to himself and his party by his reluctance to continue war against the Brazilians, so

1. Rojas: op. cit., vol.II, p.598

2. Idem: p.599

that Rosas, with the aid of his gauchos was able to gain the balance of power, whereupon he immediately had himself proclaimed dictator (1829). His rule (1829-52) was one of extreme tyranny and his atrocities and those of his general, Facundo Quiroga, earned for each of them the title of "gaucho malo."¹ The leading literary and intellectual geniuses of the country were forced to flee for their lives and the years of his dictatorship form the bloodiest pages in Argentine history. His persecution extended to all factions so that gradually all elements came to unite in opposition to him. This movement was led by Urquiza, a former Rosist leader, whose gauchos from Entre Ríos finally succeeding in crushing the Rosist dictatorship at Caseros, December 24, 1851. Rosas fell when his work of uniting the country was complete and Urquiza without great difficulty convoked the congress which met in Santa Fe and from which issued the form of government which today rules the destiny of Argentina.²

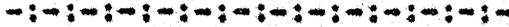
1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.201

2. Fernández: op. cit., p.175

As the government became stabilized and as the industrial development of the cities and the agricultural development of the country effaced the marks of the civil wars, the gaucho began to lose prestige as the dominant figure of the pampas. At first he stood out boldly and contemptuously against the ever-advancing forces of modern industry, against the puebleros (villagers) who became financially interested in the agricultural possibilities of the fertile plains, against the incessant flow of immigration from the older countries; but such opposition to the new industrial and political forces was not of long duration. Because of his lawless and nomadic instincts, because of his unwillingness and inability to conform to the conventional life of modern civilization, the gaucho, as a distinct type, could find no place in modern Argentina. The sons of the gauchos of a generation ago are to be found in the army, among the rural mounted police, or on the large estancias, while some few of them, the exception to the rule, become land-¹owners. It is only in the outlying districts not yet reached by railways and scientific farming that representatives of the gaucho type are still to be found, and it is in history and in literature that the gaucho has his definite place.

1. Umphrey: op. cit., p.144

CHAPTER VI



EPIC POETRY

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Epic Poetry

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The poetry of the gauchos, the productions of illiterate payadores and therefore entirely popular, would have disappeared with them, were it not for certain Argentine poets of high literary ability, who made for it a permanent place in literature. These poets, instead of collecting and publishing the original poems, the vidalitas, cielitos, and tristes, as literary men have sometimes done with the popular poetry of other countries, sought inspiration and material for their own poetic compositions in the life and poetry of the gauchos and produced a body of literature that holds an important place in the literary history of Spanish America. Menéndez y Pelayo, the most eminent Spanish critic asserts that the germ of this peculiar gauchesque poetry has produced the most original works of South American literature,¹ and the poet Nuñez de Arce expressed the opinion to Ernesto Quesada that the gauchesque productions are the most interesting

1. Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino: Historia de la Poesía Hispano - Americana, Madrid 1913, vol.II, p.469

of all the American literature for their originality, their savour of the land, the singular vigor of their ideas, and the picturesqueness of their form, at once daring and beautiful in its locution, its turn, phrase and its comparisons.¹

The popular epic poetry consists at times of reflections or maxims, the character of which is rather didactic in nature,- true epic moralizations,- but which because of being in verse and generally sung together with the eratic ballads of the dances, show characteristics of lyric poetry with regard to their form (coplas) and of dramatic poetry with regard to the presentation (dances).² The intention of the payador was to bring together in his poem- and it was in this that it was epic - the life, the soul, the customs and the lore of the pampas in the period of the gauchesque life. The primitive epic was born from a biological necessity rather than from an aesthetic delight.³ The bard appeared as the divulger of the collective knowledge, of the useful experience, and of immemorial tradition of his people. The narrative form of the gaucho

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.3

2. Rojas: op. cit., p.318

3. Idem: p.305

epic which is an anecdotal or biographical relation includes in itself the early fragmentary maxims, proverbs, and philosophy. The primitive epic moulded in the gaucho milieu from the gaucho character and culture came from the oral epics. These oral epics had, however, no direct expression in written form except as they appear in the form of anonymous romances, dramas, coplas, décimas and cielos. All that is known of an early epic poetry which is supposed to have been original with the payador is through a reference made to it by Sarmiento who evidently was familiar with it when he wrote in 1845. He defines the original poetry of the payador as heavy and monotonous, and more narrative than sentimental, although occasionally rising to lyric height. Menéndez y Pelayo accepts this as sufficient evidence of its existence. The verses that were sung or spoken in the country dance are probably the nearest approach to the original gaucho poetry, and many coplas handed down from father to son in popular memory

1. Idem: p.321

2. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.60

3. Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino: Antalogía de Poetas Hispano--Americanos, Madrid 1895, vol.IV, p.CXCIV

are said to have been sung by the payador, or even by Santos Vega.

Passing over for the moment the popular and lyric phases of the gauchesque poetry, let us examine the epic. The romances of Pantaleón Rivarola while not epic in character form a kind of precedent for Hidalgo's "Dialogos". Any number of old popular lyrics had gradually been acquiring epic marks,¹ but only the three greatest expressions of the gauchesque life were more epic than lyric in character, and perhaps of these the Martín Fierro should alone be assigned to that category. The Santos Vega of Ascasubi, the Fausto of Del Campo, and the Martín Fierro of Hernández are all long, sustained attempts to portray the customs, thoughts, and life of a people—the gaucho²—and while they have, of course, beautiful lyric passages, they are not, as is the Santos Vega of Obligado, primarily lyric.

Bartolomé Hidalgo who seems to have been the first to foreshadow these epics which were the culmination of the gauchesque literature gives in his dialogues recitals of

1. Holmes, Henry A.: Martín Fierro: An Epic of the Argentine, New York 1923, p.26

2. Velloso, Enrique: Historia de la Literatura Argentina, Buenos Aires 1914, p.385

historical events, with a high purpose and an epic amplitude. Hidalgo's dialogues were in truth romances and in them lies a partial explanation of the rise of the great gaucho trio: Ascasubi, Del Campo, and Hernández.¹ It cannot be denied that Hidalgo's dialogues were the source of that peculiar gaucho literature which has produced the most original works in South American literature.² With the gauchos the real moving force of the revolution of 1810 a more definite interest was aroused in them and a poetry became known. Hidalgo with his cielitos heróicos was not as much the creator of new models as Argentine critics have been wont to assert, but was rather the popular singer moved to express the intimate life of the people of those times.³

Having had the popular songs and the oral epics as well as some minor writers like Maziel and Rivarola as precursors, Hidalgo was nevertheless of enough importance for Mitre, in speaking of the gauchesque genre of literature, to say in a letter of 1879 to José Hernández: "Hidalgo will always be its Homer."

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.33

2. Menéndez y Pelayo: Historia, op. cit., vol.II, p.469

3. Rojas: op. cit., p.464

The life of Bartolomé Hidalgo is obscure. Mystery envelops both his early youth and his last days. Various birthplaces have been given him by critics and it is only recently that Montevideo was discovered to have been his birthplace, August 24, 1788.¹ Of his family nothing is known other than what he himself wrote in a letter dated 1819. "I have already said that I am of a very poor but honorable family, and that is all my patrimony."

There has been an attempt to relate Hidalgo to a Hidalgo family of Buenos Aires, several members of which served in the revolutionary army.² This is based upon some lines from his first dialogue.

"Cuando el general Belgrano
 (que esté gozando de Diós)
 entró en Tucuman mi hermano
 por fortuna lo topó
 y hasta entregar el rosquete
 ya no lo desamparó"

He was a barber in Montevideo during his adolescence, but little is known of him. In 1811 he joined the Uruguayan

1. Idem: vol. II, p.497, note

2. Zeballos, Estanislao S.: Cancionero Popular,
 Buenos Aires 1905, p.239

forces and fought against the Portuguese at Mercedes, Uruguay. The government at Buenos Aires named him Commissioner of war in the Uruguayan patriot army in 1812.¹ The personal tone with which certain episodes are related in his dialogues would seem to suggest that the next two years were spent in the campaign in Northern Argentine.

"(Eso si Ramón Contreras)

Se acuerda del fandango
que vimos en lo de Andujar,
Cuando el general Belgrano
hizo sonar los cueritos
en Salta a los maturrangos."

Late in 1814 we find Hidalgo as assistant to the treasurer of the customs house in Buenos Aires. During this last period of his life he composed his romances and cielitos. His health was precarious and he died very young from a pulmonary affection. The exact date of his death and his burial place are unknown although he died sometime around 1823.²

Hidalgo's fame rests on his cielitos and his Dialogos, and it is especially with the latter that we are concerned.

1. Idem: p.242

2. Rojas: op. cit., vol.II, p.502

For the most part his poems circulated among the people on loose sheets and his dialogues were represented in the play-houses of Montevideo and Buenos Aires.¹ The first publication of his work was by Ignacio Nunez in his Lira Argentina in 1824.² The bulk of his work was in dialogue form, didactic in that the cause of the gaucho was perhaps a little too insistently urged, but original in that the gaucho dialect was used.

The titles of the dialogues are Diálogo patriótico interesante entre Jacinto Chano, capataz de una estancia en los islas del Tordillo, y el gaucho de la guardia del Monte;³ Nuevo diálogo... entre Ramón Contreras... y Chano,⁴ capataz de una estancia en los islas del Tordillo; Relación que hace gaucho Ramón Contreras a Jacinto Chano,⁵ de todo lo que vió en los fiestas en Buenos Aires (1822).

Hidalgo's method was one that has appealed to many dialectical writers, namely to introduce two or more rustics and have them discuss in their own vernacular

1. Menéndez y Pelayo: Antalogía, p.CXCVI
2. Ibid
3. Zeballos: op. cit., p.245
4. Idem: p.251.
5. Menéndez y Pelayo; Antalogía, p.425

political or other events of the day. A realistic touch is given the dialogue by the device of having the gauchos partake from time to time of the cimarrón¹ and discuss it.

In the first dialogue, the interlocutors, both gauchos, lament the falling-off of real democracy and impartial justice since the good old days when independence was won. The dialogue concludes:

"Que el que la hizo la pague...

Guerra eterna a la discordia...

Y gozaremos el don

Más precioso de la tierra

Americanos, unión."

In the second dialogue Chano's restraint is most commendable. While he regrets the lack of union among the patriots, which is a source of joy to the Spaniards, and dwells upon the hopes centered in San Martín's Peruvian campaign he does not dilate upon any grievances at great length but follows with a characteristically rapid and effective transition such as:

"Ah! sangre, amigo preciosa

Tanta que se ha derramando!"

1. cimarrón -- a little tea partaken of through a tube.

which enlivens and emotionalizes his work. Both dialogues complain of the poverty of the gaucho, of the compulsory military service and the futility of revolutions which do nothing but consume money. A strong feeling against Spain and against Ferdinand is apparent in both. Chano speaks in the first dialogue of having spent ten years in an attempt to remove the chains of Ferdinand from his country.

The third dialogue turns on a visit one of these gauchos has made to the capital on the anniversary of Independence Day, May 25th. The patriotic fervor is touching but the dialogue is free from the political allusions which characterize the preceding two, and shows rather the carefree life of the gaucho and his abandonment to the pleasures of a fiesta. Contreras recounts his experiences to his friend Chano, who has been unable to attend the celebration because of a bullet wound received in a horse trading deal, in assonantal octosyllabic verses, with many picturesque turns of expression and humorous observations that prove Hidalgo's familiarity with the gaucho and his way of thinking although he was not a gaucho himself.

It might perhaps be well to consider for a moment in what the gaucho literature consists. Commentators are not

agreed in their definition of gauchesque literature. In brief, the question resolves itself to this: shall a work be classed as gauchesque because it employs the dialect, though it may not portray the gaucho life and spirit or be literature in the true sense of the word; shall another work be excluded because it does not employ the gauchesque dialect, even though the gaucho is its theme. The criterion that is coming more and more to be accepted is whether the writer truly interprets the spirit of the gaucho and his environment, employing the dialect or not as he may choose.¹

Hilario Ascasubi, the first of the trio which stand at the pinnacle of gauchesque literature was in a way the disciple of Hidalgo.² He sometimes names the characters in his Trovas, Jacinto Cielo, and Ramón Contreras.³ Ascasubi was born at Fraile Muerto, a post house on the

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.25

2. Idem: p.42

3. Velloso (Historia; p.392) gives Fray Bentos as the birthplace but since the data of Rosas coincides with that given in the biographical notes in the 1919 edition of the Santos Vega, which were in turn copied from the 1872 edition, I am led to conclude that Velloso is in error.

Caravan route between Córdoba and Buenos Aires, January 14, 1807, when his mother took refuge from a severe storm under the wagon in which she was traveling.¹ The circumstances surrounding his birth were prophetic of his life which was lived during the most tempestuous epoch of Argentine history. His early years were spent in Buenos Aires where he acquired his education. Family means were limited and he was forced to work as a type-setter but his employment was interrupted in 1819 when he started on a journey to the United States and to French Guinea. He returned in 1822 but went to Bolivia later in the same year. In 1825 he came from Bolivia to the province of Salta to join an infantry company which was being recruited under José María Paz fo free Uruguay from Brazilian domination. He fought at Ituzaingo, February 1827, after which he returned to Buenos Aires where he aligned himself with the unitarians.² Imprisoned by Rosas because of his outspoken championship of the unitarians, he spent twenty-three months in prison. Still a prisoner, he was at that time removed to a beautiful home near the bridge El Cacique, and there he began to write his first gaucho

1. Rojas: op. cit., vol.II, p.622

2. Velloso: op. cit., p.392

verses. Changing his mind Rosas ordered one of his governors to shoot the young enthusiast but quite inexplicably the governor disobeyed the order and allowed his prisoner to escape. Rosas ordered his recapture but as Ascasubi was being led into the fortress, he purposely tripped on a wall and fell fifteen metres into an opening from which he was successful in making a second escape, seeking refuge with Argentine patriots in Uruguay. The following years were occupied in war against the tyrant and his house and money was at all times at the disposal of the unitarians. His last military service was with Urquiza at Caseros when the dictator's power was broken. After the defeat of the tyrant, Ascasubi went to Europe where he made many literary friendships. From 1861 to 1872 he remained in Argentina, returning to France then for a three years' stay. He lived only a few months after his return to the Argentine, dying November 17, 1875 in his native city. The poetry of Ascasubi was a weapon against Rosas and shows a bitter hatred for the tyrant. None of his youthful productions is in existence but the second period of his work,

 1. Ascasubi, Hilario: Santos Vega o Los Mellizos de la Flor, Buenos Aires 1919, Biographical Preface.

that of his banishment, was prolific. In it he wrote and published the many cielitos and diálogos of propagandist character which were later collected under the title of Las Trovas de Paulino Lucero. His third period, that of conservatism, includes the propagandist prose and poetry directed to the federalists, published, upon his return to Buenos Aires, under the title of Aniceto el Gallo and his epic narrative Santos Vega o Mellizos de la Flor. The first complete edition of his work appeared in 1872 in Paris in three volumes.

Las Trovas de Paulino Lucero has a long descriptive subtitle: "The Gauchos of the Río de la Plata Singing and Fighting Against the Tyranny of the Republics of Argentina and Uruguay between 1839 and 1851 Which Refer to all the Episodes of the Nine Years when Montevideo Heroically Resisted and also the Work of the Patriotic Gauchos until They Overcame the Tyrant Rosas and His Satelites." The first dialogue describes an event which takes place six years before any other in the volume and is free from political allusions, thus leading to the belief that it had been previously published perhaps before Ascasubi turned definitely toward propaganda. In the last half of this

1. Ascasubi: Paulino Lucero, Buenos Aires 1900

collection the name Paulino Lucero appears as the pseudonym of the poet. Other pseudonyms are: Anastasio el Chileno;¹ Luciano Callejas;² Juan de Dios Chana;³ and Santos Contreras.⁴ The poems in the Paulino Lucero have a vivacity that marks them as the sincere expression of a lover of freedom.

The Aniceto el Gallo collection was propaganda in favor of unitarianism as against the federalist views held by the adherents of Urquiza, with the relation of much of the suffering at Buenos Aires in 1853 by the latter's troops.⁵

The Santos Vega belongs to the third and conservative period of Ascasubi's life. He says in his opening words that he began the story in 1850 but was able to finish only ten chapters in that year because of the tempestuous times. He has attempted to show the good traits which are characteristic of the gaucho, who had always been a favorite type with him, as well as the bad tendencies.

1. Idem: p.206

2. Idem: p.226

3. Idem: p.265

4. Idem: p.270

5. Coester, Alfred: The Literary History of Spanish America, New York 1916, p.139

The Santos Vega gives a true picture of the gaucho life from 1778 to 1808. This period was some twenty years before his own time and this in the eyes of Bunge constitutes a real weakness, but the gaucho life could not have been so different from that with which he was familiar. Incidentally the historical facts are correct, even though they do not materially affect the realism of the poem.

Though from the title one would expect the poem to be concerned with the legendary payador, Santos Vega, he really serves only as a framework upon which the poet hangs his tale. The very human and realistic interruptions, as when he weeps over his sad story, or stops to drink his mate or to smoke, keep him ever in the background as a real figure, but the primary interest is in the story of the twins of La Flor. The poetic narrative is divided into sixty-four chapters and an epilogue, totaling 13,000 verses. A glimpse of the gaucho life is given in the opening of the poem where the two gauchos, though strangers, fall into idle conversation under the shade of a tree where they have dismounted to rest. The hospitable invitation of Rufo Tolosa to Santos Vega that he accompany him to his poor ranchito and the homely life pictured upon their arrival is quite realistic. Juana Petrona hastenes to prepare some roast meat for the guest from the half a heifer hanging in their yard.

A beautifully clear-cut picture, perfect in detail, of the flat grass-covered pampas with here and there a swamp, marked out by rank swamp grass, is the first song of the bard. He fills in this landscape then with the beautiful estancia of La Flor and its owners. The story itself is that of twins, Jacinto, the good boy, and Luis, the bad one, who are reared by the owners of La Flor upon the death of their parents. Cattle branding, Indian attacks, military service, prison life, and police duty are some of the incidents that enter into the poem.

The quarreling of Santos Vega and Rufo, after they have drunk a little too freely, over Rufo's statement that he knows a better singer than Santos Vega; the credulity, simplicity and naïveté of the gaucho family as shown in their sympathetic reaction to the bard's story; Juana's heart attack over especially pathetic and dramatic parts; Rufo's wakeful night after a poignant description; and the wakefulness of the poet himself because of some fleas which had invaded his sleeping quarters are all realistic touches that suggest the homely life of the gauchos and show something of the poem's spirit.

The story with its many characters and ramifications is too complicated to be reviewed here, more especially since it is with the gaucho life, which is to be read

between the lines, that we are particularly concerned.

The poem closes with an evidence of the host's appreciation of Santos Vega's verses:

"Ansí fue; al día siguiente
 Con su bragao ensillado
 estaba ya el payador
 y al despedirse, un regalo
 le hizo su amigo Tolosa,
 dándole el mejor caballo
 parejero que tenía
 sin haberse descuidado
 tampoco Juana Petrona
 pues ya le había cribado
 los más lindos calcanzillos
 que se puso el gaucho Santos,
 desde que nació cantar
 hasta que murió cantando"¹

Few compositions have a more perfect gauchesque form and a better poetic style than the "Fausto" of Del Campo. Estanislao del Campo was born in Buenos Aires, February 7, 1834. He was a business man, soldier, journalist, and politician. He began his military career in 1853, fought

1. Ascasubi: Santos Vega: p.334

under Adolfo Alsina at Cepeda in 1869 and at Pavón in 1861 under Mitre. The military triumphs of his party and his service as a ballad-maker brought him bureaucratic positions, and by 1872 he had come to be the chief of the ministry of his province. The revolutionary crisis of 1874 turned him again to armed action in which he had the rank of Colonel. Ill then, perhaps as a result of his military life, he died November 6, 1880 in the city in which he was born.¹

Del Campo's work was not abundant for almost all of it is in a small volume of his Poesías, which he published in 1870, and from which editions were repeated in following years. He wrote always under the pseudonym of Anastasio el Pollo. The principal pieces of this collection have since been included in the most popular Argentine anthologies, such as those of Romagosa, Pagano, Barrera, and Puig. His work has three aspects: one is that of the political espinelas (ten line stanzas) in the gauchesque manner like Acentos de Mi Guitarra; another is that of the epigrams and letrillas in the manner of the Madrilenian ballad-makers like Composiciones festivas; the last is that of his lyric poems in learned form,² upon civil or erotic subjects like Composiciones varias.

1. Rojas: op. cit., vol.II, p.736-37

2. Idem: p.738

The Fausto, the most celebrated of his payadoresque works, includes all these, and its fame has eclipsed the remembrance of these others in such a way that the literary reputation of its author rests almost entirely upon it. The Fausto has given Del Campo an indisputable place with Ascasubi and Hernández. It is a poem of transition between the native poetry of gauchesque form and the learned poetry of native subject, and its position is between the Santos Vega of Ascasubi and La Cautiva of Echeverría.¹ Del Campo was not a gaucho but a city man of surprising versatility and while it is natural to group him with Hernández and Ascasubi because of his eminence, he lacks some of their genuineness and spontaneity. But the Fausto though a work of literary artifice, has many fine poetic touches and lines which convey abiding truths.² Del Campo's poem does not have the true epic savor of the Santos Vega and the Martín Fierro, and is more lyric than either of these, yet it bears more resemblance to them than it does to Obligado's lyric interpretation of the payadoresque legend and for this reason I have discussed it along with them. The Fausto is a poem of about 1,500 lines, in which the author's

1. Idem: p.742

2. Holmes: op. cit., p.50

purpose is to give the impressions produced upon an illiterate gaucho by Gounod's opera of the same name. The gaucho, Anastasio el Pollo, returning from Buenos Aires, meets a friend in a lonely part of the beloved pampa. They dismount for a chat and refreshments, and in the course of conversation the friend happens to mention the devil; this recalls to el Pollo what had impressed him most deeply in his visit to Buenos Aires, and he interrupts his friend, exclaiming:

" — Callesé,
amigo! No sabe usted
que la otra noche lo he visto
al Demonio?

— Jesucristo!....

— Hace bien, santigüese

— Pues no me he de santiguar!

Con esas cosas no juego;

pero no importa, le ruego

que me dentre a relatar,

el cómo llegó a topar

con el malo ¡Virgen Santa!

solo el pensarlo me espanta...

— Güeno, le voy a contar,

pero antes voy a buscar

con que mojar la garganta.¹"

Then in his own way and in his own gaucho language el Pollo ingenuously, with many interruptions and digressions, gives the story of the opera, with a running commentary expressed in terms of his gaucho experience. There are skillful touches of local color and many short and effective descriptions of the natural phenomenon of the pampas. The description of the stage-setting for Marguerite's repentance is one of the best.

"El sol ya se iba poniendo,

la clarida se auyentaba,

y la noche se acercaba

su negro poncho teniendo.

Ya las estrellas brillantes

una por una salían

y los montes parecían

batallones de gigantes.

 1. Page, F. M. : Fausto, A Gaucho Poem, Publications,
of the Modern Language Association of America,
 Baltimore 1896, vol.XI, p.21

Ya las ovejas balaban
 en el corral prisioneras,
 y ya las aves caseras
 sobre el alero ganaban.

El toque de la oración
 triste los aire rompía,
 y entre sombras se movía
 el crespo sauce llorón.

Ya sobre el agua estancada
 de silenciosa laguna
 al asomarse la luna,
 se miraba retratada.

Y haciendo un extraño ruido
 en las hojas tropezaban
 los pájaros que volaban
 a guarecerse en su nido.

Ya del sereno brillando
 la hoja de la higuera estaba
 y la lechuza pasaba
 de trecho en trecho chillando.¹ "

El Pollo recounts what he has seen, believing it to be
 a spectacle of magic and not the fiction of an art of which

 1. Idem: p.53

he is ignorant. What might have been conventional in the interpretation of such a deep drama by the simple soul of a gaucho is saved by the simple form of the interpretation. The gaucho's description of the devil is a vivid portrait and of interest to show the reaction of his appearance on the credulous el Pollo:

"Viera al diablo! Uñas de gato,
 flacón, un sable largote,
 gorro con pluma, capote,
 y una barba de chivato
 Medias hasta la verija,
 con cada ojo como un charco
 y cada ceja era un arco
 para correr la sortija".¹

Reflections upon love and death abound in the Fausto, and since they are also copious in the anonymous poetry of the payadores, Rojas concludes that this lyrical or philosophical element, which he deems the flower of popular psychology, is entirely in keeping with the gauchesque poetry and not incongruous, as many other commentators have believed.²

 1. Idem: p.26

2. Rojas: op. cit., p.754

The fusion of the universal psychological element and of the pictorial regional element appears most intimate and artistic in the following passage:

"Cuando un verdadero amor,
se estrella en un alma ingrata,
más vale el fierro que mata
que el fuego devorador;
siempre ese amor le persigue
adondequiera que va;
es una fatalidá
que a todas partes le sigue.
Si usted en su rancho se queda
o si sale para un viaje,
es de balde: no hay paraje
ande olvidarla usted pueda.
Cuando duerme todo el mundo,
usted sobre su recaó,
se da gueltas, desvelao,
pensando en su amor profundo.
y si el viento hace sonar
su pobre techo de paja
cree usted que es ella que baja
sus lágrimas a secar.

y si en alguna lomada
 tiene que dormir al raso,
 pensando en ella, amigazo,
 lo hallará la madrugada.
 allí acostao sobre abrojos
 o entre cardos, don Laguna,
 verá su cara en la luna,
 y en las estrellas, sus ojos.
 ¿Qué habrá que no le recuerde
 al bien de su alma querido
 si hasta cree ver su vestido
 en la nube que se pierde?¹

El Pollo shows unusual delicacy of feeling in contemplation of Marguerite, describing the impression her beauty and innocence made on him thus:

"...Blanca como una cuajada
 y celeste la pollera.
 Don Laguna, si aquello era
 mirar a la Inmaculada!"²

1. Page: op. cit., p.40

2. Idem: p.29

He laments her defenseless state:

"Si ella tuviese un hermano,
y en su rancho miserable
hubiera colgao un sable,
juera otra cosa, paisano.

¿Pero sola y despreciada
en el mundo que ha de hacer?
¿A quién la cara volver?
¿Ande llevar la pisada?

Soltar al aire la queja
será su solo consuelo,
y amparar con llanto el pelo
del hijo que usté le deja.¹"

His own reaction to Marguerite's suffering in the scene of her repentance at the church is given simply and dramatically:

"Allí la pobre cayó
de rodillas sobre el suelo,
alzó los ojos al cielo,
y cuatro credos rezó

1. Idem: p.50

Nunca he sentido más pena
 que al mirar a esa mujer,
 amigo, aquello era ver
 a la mesa Madalena.¹"

The undoubted masterpiece of gaucho literature is the Martín Fierro of Hernández.² Its popularity has endured both among the educated readers and among the rural population of the whole of Argentine, and no other poem in Argentine literature can rival it in popularity with all kinds of people. Its popularity with the educated indicates it has excellent literary qualities; its popularity with the illiterate plainsmen tends to show that, along with the vernacular of the gaucho, the poem expresses the spirit of the gaucho type and life. El Gaucho Martín Fierro and La Vuelta de Martín Fierro form an enchanting poem, which paints an epoch, going fearlessly into all the profundities and constituting the true epic poem of the gaucho race, in the period which extends from the fall of Rosas to the mastery of the pampas.³

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1. Idem: p.52
 2. Menéndez y Pelayo: Antalogía, vol.IV, p.150
 3. Quesada: op. cit., p.30

José Hernández was born in the partido (township) of San Martín, in the province of Buenos Aires, November 10, 1834. Here were spent his most impressionable years. On the maternal side his family was patrician and related to that of Pueyrredón, then and now an honored line.¹ He lived the customs that he was later to reflect in his celebrated work.² Later he was sent by his parents, for the sake of his health to certain estancias in the South, where, close to the frontier, he learned what Indians were like and even took part in the desperate warfare between the gauchos and the savages. Details of his education are lacking. He was stenographer for the Senate of the Confederation, in Entre Ríos from 1852 to 1861. During this period he also shared in the military campaigns and rose to the grade of sergeant major.³ He was second in charge of the National Audit Bureau and, for a time, was also secretary to Governor Pedernera of Entre Ríos. After the battle of

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.67

2. Bunge, Carlos Octavio: Appreciations of Martín Fierro: in the Edition of La Cultura Argentina, Buenos Aires 1917, Biographical Preface.

3. Rojas: op. cit., p.464

Pavón and the triumph of the partisans of Mitre, Hernández continues his provincial existence. He publishes his Life of the Chacho (the Chacho, like Rosas, was a leader of the gauchos) and we next see him as secretary of the treasury for Corrientes Province. Having resided in the river provinces it was natural that he should engage in the clashes between the Buenos Aires forces and the Correntinos and Enterrerrianos led by López Jordán in 1870-72. Two uprisings failed and in 1872 Jordán was driven into Brazil, where Hernández followed him. This uprising being the last of the gaucho insurrections, in 1874 Hernández returned to his natal province where he lived for a number of years as a legislator and administrator. In politics he opposed both Mitre and Sarmiento.

His journalistic labors are notable. In the late sixties, he was editing in Buenos Aires the Revista del Río de la Plata, a federal organ which advocated his party's policies. Bunge cites other federal papers that he guided at other periods: El Argentino in Entre Ríos and La Patria in Montevideo. He wrote also a few short poems which were included in the 1894 edition of the Martín Fierro, but these lacked inspiration. Hernández died in Belgrano, a fashionable quarter of Buenos Aires, October 10, 1894.

The purpose of the *Martín Fierro* is thus expressed by the author himself: "Me he esforzado, sin presumir haberlo conseguido, en presentar un tipo que personificara el carácter de nuestros gauchos, concentrando el modo de ser, de sentir, de pensar y de expresarse que les es peculiar; dotándolo con todos los juegos de su imaginación llena de imágenes y de colorido, con todos los arranques de su altivez, inmoderados hasta el crimen, y todos los impulsos y arrebatos, hijos, de una naturaleza que la educación no ha pulido y suavizado.....y he deseado todo esto, empeñándome en imitar ese estilo abundante en metáforas, que el gaucho usa sin conocer y sin valorar, y su empleo constante de comparaciones tan extrañas como frecuentes; en copiar sus reflexiones con el sello de la originalidad que los distingue y el tinto sombrío de que jamás carecen, revelándose en ellas esa especie de filosofía propia, que sin estudiar, aprende en la misma Naturaleza; en respetar la superstición y sus preocupaciones, nacidas y fomentadas por su misma ignorancia; en dibujar el orden de sus impresiones, y de sus afectos, que él encubre y disimula studiosamente; sus desencantos producidos por su misma condición social, y esa indolencia que le es habitual, hasta llegar a constituir una de las condiciones de su espíritu; en relatar, en fin, lo más fielmente que me fuera posible, con todas sus

especialidades propias, ese tipo original de nuestras Pampas, tan poco conocido por lo mismo que es difícil estudiarlo, tan erróneamente juzgado muchas veces, y que al paso que avanzan, las conquistas de la civilización, va perdiéndose casi por completo."

Martín Fierro, the hero of the poem, tells in person the story of the unjust treatment that has changed him from a peaceful gaucho into an outlaw, a gaucho malo y matrero, defying the laws which have not protected him from oppression. The opening lines of the poem are reminiscent of the traditional beginning of the payadoresque poems:

"Aquí me pongo a cantar
 Al compás de la vigüela
 Que el hombre que lo desvela
 Una pena extraordinaria,
 Como la ave solitaria
 Con el cantar se consuela
 Pido a los santos del cielo
 Que ayuden mi pensamiento,
 Les pido en este momento,
 Que voy a cantar mi historia,
 Me refresquen la memoria,
 Y aclaren mi entendimiento. "¹

 1. Hernández: op. cit., p.21

Martín Fierro prides himself on being a gaucho, and is determined to live completely the independent outlaw life to which injustice and the love of freedom have brought him:

"Soy gaucho, y entiendanlo
 Como mi lengua lo explica,
 Para mi la tierra es chica
 Y pudiera ser mayor,
 Ni la víbora me pica
 Ni quema mi frente el sol.

Nací como nace el peje
 En el fondo de la mar,
 Naidas me puede guitar
 Aquello que Dios me dió
 Lo que al mundo truje yo
 Del mundo lo he de llevar.

Mi gloria es vivir tan libre
 Como el pájaro en el cielo,
 No hago nido en este suelo
 Ande hay tanto que sufrir;
 Y naidas me ha de seguir
 Cuando yo remonto el vuelo.

Yo no tengo en el amor
 Quién me venga con querellas,
 Como esas aves tan bellas
 Que saltan de rama en rama-
 Yo hago en el trebol mi cama,
 Y me cubren las estrellas.

Y sepan cuantos escuchan
 De mis penas el relato,
 Que nunca peleo ni mato
 Sino por necesidá;
 Y que a tanta alversidá
 Solo me arrojó el mal trato.

Y atiendan la relación
 Que hace un gaucho perseguido,
 Que fué buen padre y marido,
 Empeñoso y diligente
 Y sin embargo la gente
 Lo tiene por un bandido.¹ "

With keen emotion he remembers the life of former days
 when he lived happily with wife and children and

 1. Idem: pp.24-25

describes with picturesque details a typical day on his ranch.

"Entonces, cuando el lucero
 Brillaba en el cielo santo,
 Y los gallos con su canto
 Nos decían que el día llegaba
 A la cocina rumbiaba
 El gaucho, que era un encanto
 Y sentao junto al jogón
 A esperar que venga el día
 Al cimarrón le prendía
 Hasta ponerse reconcho
 Mientras su china dormía
 Tapadita con su poncho.

 Y apenas la madrugada,
 Empezaba a coloriar,
 Los pájaros a cantar
 Y las gallinas a apiarse,
 Era cosa de largarse
 Cada cual a trabajar

 Este se ata las espuelas,
 Se sale el otro cantando,
 Uno busca un pellón blando
 Este un lazo, otro un rebenque,
 Y los pingos relinchando
 Los llaman dende el palenque

El que era pion domador
 Enderezaba al corral
 Ande estaba el animal
 Bufidos que se las pela...
 Y más malo que su agüela
 Se hacía astillas el bagual. ¹ ..."

The Indians, however, were making trouble on the frontier and he, and many others like him, were impressed into military service, and although they were promised good treatment and permission to return home in six months, they were harshly treated, made to fight the Indians without adequate weapons, and compelled to labor in the fields. After three years of this, Martín Fierro deserted and went home only to find his ranch deserted and in ruins.

"No hallé ni rastro del rancho,
 ¡Sólo estaba la tapera!

Por Cristo si aquello era
 Para enlutar el corazón:
 Yo juré en esa ocasión
 Ser más malo que una fiera

1. Idem: pp.26-28

¡Quién no sentirá lo mesmo
 Cuando así padece tante!
 Puedo asigurar que el llanto
 Como una mujer largué. . . .
 ¡Ay! mi Dios si me quedé
 Más triste que Jueves Santo!
 Sólo se óiban los aullidos
 De un gato se salvo
 El pobre se guareció
 Cerca, en una vizcachera.
 Venía como si supiera
 Que estaba de güelta yo.¹

The thought of the defenseless condition of his wife and children, who had been driven from their home because they were unable to pay the rent and taxes, makes him desperate and he decides to meet force by force. He turns to the life of the gaucho malo, outwitting or killing those who attempt to capture him or arouse his anger. He glories in his cunning and physical prowess although he longs at times for a more peaceful life. Finally wearying of the incessant effort to escape capture he and Cruz, another gaucho malo decide to cross the frontier and live with the Indians.

1. Idem: p.71

Here Hernández left his protagonist and many would-be sequels and imitations were written in which the criminal tendencies of the gaucho malo were more and more stressed, so that Hernández in an attempt to counteract the bad influence of his sympathetic treatment of the gaucho malo produced a sequel-- La Vuelta de Martín Fierro, in which the outlaw, now peaceful and law abiding, returns to take his place in the new life. The appeal of this sequel is to a much more restricted class of readers, and is far from rivaling it in popularity. The gaucho as a social type was beginning to disappear when Hernández published his Martín Fierro in 1872; so that it served, as it were to crystallize the gaucho type and to give it a final, permanent form in Argentine literature.

1. Novels and gauchi-criollo plays in which the gaucho protagonist has degenerated into a conventional criminal type. Eg. Juan Moreira of Eduardo Gutiérrez.

The simplicity and the melancholy tone of the payadoresque songs show a resemblance to the monotonous chants of the Indians. The following verse gives a clear impression of the effect of the song of the natives on the frontier of the Chaco.

"Su canto es una palabra,
 Y de ay no salen jamás;
 llevan todos el compás,
Yoka, Yoka, repitiendo,
 me parece estarlos viendo,
 mas fieros que Satanás."

The Jesuit Father Sanchez Labrador describes the Guaycurú song as it has existed for centuries. In theme, it consists of an imitation of the cry of an animal or of a human being, and in verse form, of an interjection in two or three words: In their festivals to the moon, they greet its appearance with the simple exclamation:

Epe nai Oh la luna,
 Epe nai! la luna!

¹
 which they repeat over and over.

The Quichuan verses have been described as not Indian but gaucho, in the true sense of the word, in the life,

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.329

the type of character and mind, and the customs that they reveal. ¹ These descriptive verses somewhat resemble a fable.

1. Karay puca sencken llañu
 Huyan cacheten largasca
 Maquisitum tenedor
 chupitan sortijas- unta
2. Kamchu canqui bala- yuna
 pupum urapi mischquioj
 nockam cani bala- puca
 pupum urapi uachioj
3. Karay- puca nisacara
 nocka comisario cani
 hualuta hua jyachipaychis
 libretasta kockonampaj
4. Rumiampatu kharan cuadros
 maquin maniapa botonin
 uman hua utulay pupum
 chupam viejop esclanonin
6. Kaina tarde jojserani
 añatuya caballupi
 sacha- lazú riendasinoj
 tackopp caran jergasnioj

7. Huassimanta llojserani
lechuzanlla khaparejta
mamay tatay huajllichiptin
suj tratu ceñido trujta
1. Iguana nariz delgada
cara de flojas mejillas,
manitos de tenedor,
cola llena de sortijas.
2. Tu tienes un panal negro
Ombligo abajo, con miel,
yo el abejón colorado,
y la flecha tenga en él.
3. (Ahora) yo soy comisario—
dijo la iguana (una siesta),—
llamen pronto a la tortuga
que me traigas las libretas.
4. Tortuga cuero con cuadros,
manos boton de manea,
cabeza ombligo de nino,
cola de clavija vieja.
6. Ayer tarde yo salí
un zorrino cabalgado
riendas de lazo del monte
silla de corteza de árbol

7. Al salir yo de mi rancho
 las lechuzas agoraron,
 y así "atajaroni" mi padres¹
 la cita que iba a buscar.

The short coplas of the Indians and of the gauchos sing of love, of sorrow, and even of death, but not as abstract ideas or with an universal appeal. What the gaucho poet expresses is his love and his sorrow, or those of his beloved, in the way that feeling reveals them to his soul. It is a poetry which makes use of a word only to reveal the state of mind and the emotion and not to elaborate some concept. Because of this its composition is laconic, its images are suggestive, and its rhythm is penetrating.

"La piedra, con ser la piedra,
 al golpe del eslabón,
 llora lágrimas de sangre;
 Que será mi corazón."²

The lyric of the negro is very similar in its simplicity and in the monotony of its melody to that of the Indian. The gaucho poetry does not owe so much to it however as to the native lyric except for a sensual sort of

1. Idem: p.186

2. Idem: p.325

rhythm which is reflected in some of the popular dances. The origins of lyric poetry can be traced in those simple fragments of indigenous and of African origin, although true lyric poetry did not come into existence until in the more subjective atmosphere of religion, magic and the dance.

The verses sung or spoken in the country dance are probably the nearest approach to the original Creole poetry. Favorite Argentine dances are the pericón, the gato, the cielito, the huella, and the zamba.

The pericón is the national dance of the Argentine. It takes its name from the leader who directs the dance, and is quite intricate in nature. Six or eight couples are required to enact the five formations. Because of the number of its protagonists and the variety of its figures, it resembles a dramatized chorus. Like almost all the gauchesque dances, the pericón is voluptuous but is never gross. The type of coplas which accompany this dance varies according to the sentiments of each dancer, as he expresses his love, his jealousy, his despair, or his disdain. For the great fiestas, the payadores would compose new coplas, which they would sing in the chorus or which they would teach to the dancers. Although today the lover's dialogues are given without music, in the old dance the song of the musicians, or perhaps it might properly be

called a chorus, was composed of seguidillas:

De los cien imposibles
 que el amor tiene,
 yo ya llevo vencidos
 noventa y nueve;
 uno me falta,
 y preciso vencerlo
 con la esperanza...
 uno me falta,
 y preciso vencerlo
 con la esperanza.

In the final figure handkerchiefs are used, and in the time of the civil wars the dancers adopted for the color of their handkerchiefs the color of their party so that the pericoón came to take on a political note.

In the gato only two couples participate. The escobilla (stamping) and the castanet are essentials of the dance, and the seguidilla is employed as the verse most suited to the music.

Salta la infeliz madre,
 salta la infeliz,
 que se la lleva el gato
 el gato miz - miz.

The cielito is a dance in which five couples join hands

round a sixth. Between movements of the dance the man recites cielitos to the lady, who replies in other verses. This dance is said to have descended from the jaleo of Spain, in which the fingers of the dancers serve as castanets.¹ It, too, came to have a political character. The following quatrains on the seige of Montevideo illustrate the character of the patriotic cielito:

Vigodet en su corral
 Se encerró con sus gallegos
 Y temiendo que lo pialen
 Se anda haciendo el chancho rengo.

Cielo de los mancarrones
 Ay! cielto de los potrillos
 Y brincarán cuando sientan
 Las espuelas y el lomillo.²

The huella is a dance similar to the cielito and with responses, but has a chorus in addition:

La voz
 Por entre tortorales
 Formando espuma
 Va corriendo el arroyo
 Pa la laguna.

-
1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.48
 2. Zeballos: op. cit., p.153

a.
2 voz

Ansina mis amores
 Como el arroyo
 Van buscando los legos
 Que son tus ojos...

Coro

A la huella, huella
 Huella sin cesar,
 Ábrase la tierra
 Vuélvase a cerrar. ¹

The zamba is an elegant pantomime of gallantry. The movement of the music and the gestures of the protagonists are enough to express the "drama" of the feelings and events, although there is no song. It is danced by one couple and consists of an ardent wooing of the lady, who with calculated coldness seems at the same time to invite and to withdraw. The music combines the delicacy and elegance of a minuet and the melancholy and the indolent sensuality of the indigenous and African music. ²

1. Leguizamón, Martiniano: Calandria, Buenos Aires 1898, p.135
2. Rojas: op. cit., p.395

The firmeza, another popular dance, is also an amorous dialogue with a third verse supplied by the director. The dialogue is at first a rapid repartee:

"Ante noche me confesé
 con el cura de Santa Clara,
 y me dió por penitencia
 que la firmeza bailara

A El - Dese una vueltitita.

A Ella - Con su compañera.

- Con la tras trasera.

- Con la delantera.

- Con el otro lado.

- Con ese costado

- Con ese modito.

- Pónele el codito.

- Con la mano al hombre

- Te lo correspondo

- Retírate un paso.

- Dámele un abrazo

- Otro poquitito.

- Dámele un besito

- No, tengo vergüenza

- Tópate la cara

- Te daré licencia

From that point on each of the dancers sings a quatrain which is followed by the director's comment.

El galán:

"Las estrellas en el cielo
forman un cuadro imperial;
mi corazón por el tuyo,
y el tuyo no se por cuál."

The lady replies:

"Si te duele la cabeza
atate con mi pañuelo,
que mi pañuelo se llama
quita - pena y trae consuelo."

And the director comments:

"Dicen que del pedernal
saca fuego el eslabón
yo también suelo sacar
ullaqueando en un cardón.¹"

The coplas may vary according to the sentiments the dancers desire to express, and thus a very rich field for improvisation is afforded. The early payadores were accustomed to act as directors of the dance and even composed

1. Idem: p.400

coplas which they taught to the dancers. Because of this the gaucho dances probably are the nearest approach to the original gaucho poetry.

Other well known dances of gauchesque society which I do not have space to discuss are: the trunfo, the marote, the palito, the prado, the malambo, the samacueca, the caramba, the chilena, the chacarera, the aires, the media-cana, the mariquita, the arunga, the tirana, the habanera,¹ the escondido, the sombrerito, and the cuando.

The triste and the vidalita are popular songs, unaccompanied by the dance. The triste is any song of a sad nature, generally a love song.² The vidalita is also of a melancholy character. It is said to be of religious origin and a part of a religious festival.³ It is sung to the accompaniment of a guitar and has a chorus.

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.389
2. Garzón: op. cit., p.484
3. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.47

"Nubesita blanca

¡Vidality!

Que crusas el sielo,

Dime si en los montes

¡Vidality!

Has visto a mi dueño;

Dime si en los montes

¡Vidality!¹

There is division of opinion as to who is the first known author to be representative of the gaucho lyric poetry. These first lyrics of the dance and the tristes are anonymous and have been preserved only by oral tradition.

Juan Baltazar Maziel (1727-1788) seems to hold this honor, for to him is attributed the authorship of the first poem which had the gaucho as its subject: "Canta un guaso en estilo campestre los triunfos del Excmo. Sr. D. Pedro de Cevallos."² The viceroy Cevallos occupied the coast of Santa Catalina in February of 1777. It is very probable that this composition dates from then or from the following year. All the elements which characterize the gauchesque

1. Leguizamón: Calandria, p.132

2. Rojas: op. cit., p.552

poetry are present in this composition: the metre, the tone, the contrast between the idea of country and of city, the attribution of the poem to a payador of the pampa, the suggestion that it was to be sung to the sound of the guitar, the touches of local color, and the gaucho vocabulary.

"Aquí me pongo a cantar,
 abajo de aquestas talas,
 del maior guaina del mundo,
 los triunfos y las gazañas,
 del señor de Cabezon,
 que por fuerza es camarada
 de los guapos Cabezones
 que nada tienen de mandrias.
 He de puja, el caballero,
 y bien vaia toda su alma,
 que a los portugueses jaques,
 a surrado la badana.
 Como a ovejas los ha arriado
 y repartido en las pampas,
 donde con guanpas y lazos
 sean de nuestra lechigada.
 De balde eran mis germanos,
 sus cacareos y bravatas,

sí al columbrar a cavallos,
 no lo hubo así el come Bacas
 O más aina: come gente,
 vuestro don Pina Bandeira,
 salteador de la otra banda,
 que allá por sus andurriales,
 y siempre de disparada,
 huyendo como abestrúz,
 aún de deja atrás la gama...
 Y a de Santa Catalina,
 las batatas y baranjas,
 no le darán en el pico,
 aunque mas griten chicharras.
 Su colonia raz con raz,
 disque que queda con la plaza
 y en ella, i cuando la otra
 harán de azulejos casa?
 Perdone, señor Ceballos,
 mi rana silvestre y guaza,
 que las germanas de Apolo,
 no habitan en las compañas."

The many archaic words which are found in this poem
 are characteristic of the country speech of that period.

While it does not give such a definite picture of the gaucho it must be remembered that the psychological and social type of the gaucho did not come to be defined until the latter part of the eighteenth century, and that even in the "Diálogos" of Hidalgo it is not too clear-cut.

Maziel was a friar and lived the sixty years of his restless life in many cities in America. He was a graduate of the University of Córdoba, a professor in Chile, and a lawyer in Charcas. In Buenos Aires he was the adviser of two illustrious bishops, vicar-general of a bishopric, and magistrate in the ecclesiastical Cabildo. The influence of Maziel in the education of Argentine youth was mighty. He read widely and numbered the works of Bayle, Voltaire, Bossuet, Massillon, and Fenelon in his library. He was an eminent Latinist. He wrote excellent prose of which his best works are: Reflexiones sobre la famosa arenga que se hizo en Lima por un individuo de la Universidad de San Marcos, con ocasión del recibimiento al virrey Jáuregui; Consulta sobre los matrimonios ocultos o de conveniencia; Oración funebre a la memoria de don Pedro de Ceballos, and a collection of Pláticas dominicales. His real importance in the gauchesque literature rests however upon his verses, which were the first to be written in that style although the payadores had for long years been singing their oral improvisations.

Quesada, who includes among the writers of the gaucho poetry only those who use the gaucho dialect artistically, gives the poem "Cuento al caso" as the first known poetic treatment of the gaucho.

".....cierto noble huaso
 Montado en su caballo
 Sin otro ajuar ni adorno
 Que un bozal repulido,
 Un par de guardamontes,
 Unos bastos estribos,
 Una usada carona
 Y un recado mezquino."¹

This poem is by Fray Cayetano José Rodríguez and was circulated, probably on loose sheets, around 1811. He was the author of many poems and patriotic songs, and in 1813, together with Vicente López, was asked to submit a national anthem to the revolutionary assembly. Fray Rodríguez, however, was so charmed with López's poem that he refused to read his own. His "Himno a la Patria" which appeared later in a collection of patriotic songs is thought to be the one he had planned to present.²

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1. Quesada: op. cit., pp.17-18
 2. Zeballos: op. cit., p.128

Velloso insists that Juan Gualberto Godoy (1798-1864) is the originator of the gauchesque verse. He takes his information from critical notes on the poet published by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (hijo) in 1865. His dialogues were familiar in Cuyo from about 1818. His works are; El Verdadero amigo del país; a dialogue Corro; satires published in El Eco de los Andes (1824), and in El Huracán; Las Llanuras de mi patria and El Cipres published in El Correo de Domingo.¹

With the appearance of these printed works the popular anonymous muse did not retire but continued composing its cielitos. In 1812 appeared this famous cielito, which I have cited elsewhere in describing the dance of that name:

"Cielo de los mancarrones
¡Ay! cielito de los potrillos,
Ya brincaron cuando sientan
Las espuelas y el lomillo."²

In 1814 another anonymous cielito appeared:

"Ay! cielito, cielito, cielo,
Cielo de andar y andar,
Que les concedan las vidas
Porque se van a entregar."³

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1. Velloso: op. cit., pp.388-389
 2. Quesada: op. cit., p.18
 3. Ibid.

Echeverría is, by some critics, excluded from the category of gaucho writers, because his Cautiva is written in classical Spanish, with no single example of the gaucho dialect employed. The poem affords, however, detailed and excellent descriptions of the pampas and of the Indians and so I include it among the list of gauchesque poems.

Esteban Echeverría (1805-1851) is best known perhaps for his introduction of Romanticism into the Argentine. At twenty he went to Europe where he became acquainted with the work of Schiller and Goethe in translation, and with Chateaubriand, Byron, and Shakespeare in the original.¹ After five years, he returned in 1830 to Buenos Aires, enthusiastic over European liberalism and desirous of intervening in the public life of his own country. He found his country however, in the power of the dictator, Rosas, and joined the asociación de Mayo, a secret society of students opposed to the tyrant. Because of this he had to flee to Montevideo in 1841 and remained there until his death which occurred one year before Rosas was deposed. His first publication, Elvira o la Novia del Plata, which formally presented Romanticism to the Argentine, appeared in 1832. It has little value for it is rarely poetic and not even valuable for its local color.²

1. Velloso: op. cit., p.307

2. Menéndez y Pelayo: Antalogía, vol.IV, p.CLVII

His next poem, the Cautiva, published in an edition of Rimas (1837) brought recognition and fame to Echeverría.

The first nine parts of the Cautiva give the romantic experiences of María and her husband Brian, who have been captured by the Indians. The chief value of the poem is in its descriptions of the pampas and of the character and life of the Indians. The scene in which the Indians celebrate the success of their attack by a drunken orgy around their camp fire and by torturing and killing their prisoners is extremely effective. The rest of the story is not essential, and is, in brief, the unsuccessful attempt of María and Brian to return to their home after she has stabbed the drunken Cacique (Indian chief) who is their captor. If Chateaubriand were less visible in the work, and María and Brian were more real, the Cautiva would be one of the finest things in American literature.¹

Escheverría inspired two writers who are of interest in the study of the gauchesque poetry: Juan María Gutiérrez and Bartolomé Mitre. Gutiérrez (1809-1878), in addition to his critical works which made him the most eminent critic of the nineteenth century Argentine,² published a

1. Idem: p.LXXIV

2. Velloso: op. cit., p.262

poem, Los Amores del Payador in 1838¹, the year after the publication of La Cautiva, and in 1843 the short lyric A Mi Caballo. The opening verse shows the rider's love for his horse:

"Rey de los llanos de la patria mía,
 Mi tostado alazán! Quien me volviera
 Tu fiel y generosa compañía
 Y tu mirada inteligente y fiera!"

The verses come from a heart which is homesick in exile. The poet asks his horse whether he has missed him in his absence, and if he remembers the times when he was present at his master's love making by the river.

Bartolomé Mitre (1821-1906) general, governor of the province of Buenos Aires, president of the Argentine, historian, biographer of General Belgrano and of San Martín, was also famous for his youthful verses. Regarding him, Sarmiento, when he became acquainted with him in Montevideo, said: "a poet by vocation," "a gaucho of the pampas."²

 1. Coester: op. cit., p.126

2. Rojas, Ricardo: Bartolomé Mitre: His Intellectual Personality, Inter-America, New York, December 1921, p.71, note

In 1844 he edited his Rimas,¹ which contains his Harmonías de la Pampa. They are Echeverrian in their treatment of the pampas and national honor. The most famous is the Santos Vega, in which the legendary payador is first used as a literary theme. Of this poem Mitre says in his third edition of 1891 (note I, p.363):

"Esta composición pertenece a un género que puede llamarse nuevo, no tanto por el asunto cuanto por el estilo. Los costumbres primitivas y originales de la pampa han tenido entre nosotros muchos cantores, pero casi todos ellos se han limitado a copiarlas toscamente, en vez de poetizarlas, poniendo en juego sus pasiones, modificadas por la vida del desierto, y sacar partido de sus preocupaciones. Así es que, para hacer hablar a los gauchos, los poetas han empleado todos los modismos gauchos, han aceptado todos sus barbarismos, elevando al rango de poesía una jerga, muy enérgica, muy pintoresca y muy graciosa, para los que conocen las costumbres de nuestros campesinos, pero que por sí no constituye lo que propiamente puede llamarse poética....la verdad poesía es distinta de la realidad concreta, es decir, que sin ser precisamente el trasunto de la vida de todos los días, es, sin embargo, hasta cierto

1. Mitre, Bartolomé: Rimas, Buenos Aires 1916.

punto su idealización, que sin perder de vista el original, lo ilumina con los colores de la imaginación, agrupa en torno suyo los elementos que no se encuentran reunidos en un solo individuo, y que no obstante existen dispersos, y que reunidos forman lo que se llama un tipo.

... La elegía a Santos Vega no es sino la aplicación ingenua de esta teoría..."

"Santos Vega, tus cantares

No te han dado excelsa gloria

Mas viven en la memoria

De la turba popular;

Y sin tinta ni papel

Que los salve del olvido

De padre a hijo han venido

Por la tradición oral.

Bardo inculto de la pampa,

Como el pajarero canoro

Tu canto rudo y sonoro

Diste a la brisa fugaz;

Y tus versos se repiten

En el bosque y en el llano

Por el gaucho americano

Por el indio montaraz..."

Mitre gives the legend of the payador's life and death in much the same manner as all those who write of the famous bard:

"..(Si has vivido
 Cantando cual la cigarra,
 Al son de humilde guitarra,
 Bajo el ombú colosal! ...
 Cantando de pago en pago
 Y venciendo payadores
 Entre todos los cantores
 Fuiste aclamado el mejor;
 Pero al fin caíste vencido
 En un duelo de armonías,
 Despues de pagar dos días;
 Y moríste de dolor..."

The masterpiece of gaucho lyric poetry is the Santos Vega of Obligado. His Santos Vega is the most poetical interpretation of the famous payador, and "a jewel worthy of figuring in the best of South American literature."¹

Rafael Obligado was born, January 27, 1851 in Buenos Aires of a distinguished family and died in

1. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.29

Mendoza, March 8, 1920.¹ Most of his life was spent along the Paraná, where he evidently got his nature inspiration. Interested in the classics, he was one of several who founded the faculty of Filosofía y Letras (University of Buenos Aires) and was a corresponding member of the Spanish Academy. His Poesías² appeared first in 1885. Line, relief, and image are the principal dominators of Obligado's poetic form and national character of his subject, which is manifested under four aspects: the glorification of the heroes and deeds of the struggle for independence; a feeling for and a portrayal of the surrounding nature; the scenes and affections of the traditional Argentine home; and the narration and interpretation of popular legends and traditions.³ The first aspect is brilliantly represented by three compositions: Ayohuma, El negro Falucho, and La Retirada de Moquegua. The second and third aspects—nature and the home—are often presented delicately mingled in the same composition, as in: El Hogar Paterno.

1. Oyuela, Calixto: Rafael Obligado,

Inter—America, New York, December 1920, p.84

2. Obligado, Rafael: Poesías, Buenos Aires 1921

3. Oyuela: op. cit., p.87

Autobiografía, Los Horneros, and A Aurora Riso Patrón. Of the last aspect, that of popular legends and traditions, under the general title of Las Leyendas Argentinas appears: Santos Vega, La Salamanca, La mula ánima, El yaguarón, and El Cacuí.

The Santos Vega forms a series of four compositions: El alma, La prenda, El himno and La muerte del payador. In the hands of Obligado this legend possesses a vital and spontaneous symbolism which is intimately fused with the narrative. He represents the conqueror of the payador, Juan Sin Ropa, as modern industrialism or progress which comes to replace the old simple country life of the gaucho.

The poem abounds in beautiful descriptions:

"Cuando la tarde se inclina
 Sollozando al occidente
 Corre una sombre doliente
 Sobre la pampa argentina;
 Y cuando el sol ilumina
 Con luz brillante y serena
 Del ancho campo la escena,
 La melancólica sombra
 Huye besando su alfombra
 Con el afán de la pena."¹

 1. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.31

"Luego, inflamando el vacío,
 Se levantó la alborada,
 Con esa blanca mirada
 Que hace chispear el rocío.
 Y cuando el sol en el río
 Vertió su lumbre primera,
 Se vió una sombra ligera
 En occidente ocultarse,
 Y el alto ombú balancearse
 Sobre una antigua tapera."¹

"La Prenda" is one of the most beautiful lyric passages in the composition, and was an original addition by Obligado. Especially lovely are the lines of Vega:

"Yo soy la nube lejana
 (Vega en su canto decía)
 Que con la noche sombría
 Huye al venir la mañana;
 Soy la luz que en tu ventana
 Filtra en manojos la luna;
 La que de niña, en la cuna,
 Abrió tus ojos risueños;
 La que dibuja tus sueños
 En la desierta laguna."²

1. Idem: p.38

2. Idem: p.37

The description of the song in which Santos Vega is conquered is most effective and explains his symbolism:

"Era el grito poderoso
 Del progreso, dado al viento;
 El solemne llamamiento
 Al combate más glorioso
 Era, en medio del reposo
 De la Pampa ayer dormida,
 La visión ennoblecida
 Del trabajo, antes no honrado;
 La promesa del arado
 Que abre cauces a la vida
 Como en mágico espejismo,
 Al compás de ese concierto,
 Mil ciudades el desierto
 Levantaba de si mismo.
 Y a la par que en el abismo
 Una edad se desmorona,
 Al conjuro, en la ancha zona
 Derramábase la Europa,
 Que sin duda Juan Sin Ropa
 Era la ciencia en persona."¹

 1. Idem: p.48

Probably the most touching lines in the poem are those in which Vega, admitting his defeat and brokenheartedly giving way to his rival, takes leave of the things he loves:

"Adiós, luz del alma mía,
 Adiós, flor de mis llanuras,
 Manantial de los dulzuras
 Que mi espíritu bebía;
 Adiós, mi única alegría,
 Dulce afán de mi existir;
 Santos Vega se va a hundir
 En lo inmenso de esos llanos...
 ¡Lo han vencido: ¡Llego hermanos,
 El momento de morir!"¹

With the appearance of Obligado's poem numerous shorter lyrics of this type, and even of this subject were produced. Many of these imitated one of the parts of the Santos Vega, as the Leyenda de la Pampa of Cayetano Oreste, the Tradición Nacional of Samuel Anon, El Payador Santos Vega of Sebastian C. Berón, La Guitarra of Jaime Molins, Con Mi Guitarra of Alcides De-María,

1. Ídem: p.49

En la Pampa of José Cibils, El Gaucho Pobre of César Hidalgo, Los Perros del Barrio of Evaristo Carriego, to mention only a few of the minor lyric poets of the gauchesque vein.

CHAPTER VIII

The Novel

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A new cycle in the evolution of gauchesque literature made its appearance with the novels of Eduardo Gutiérrez. The only representative of the novelistic genre who had preceded him was Sarmiento, whose Facundo was epoch-making. The Facundo was written as propaganda against the tyrant Rosas who dominated the Argentine from 1829 to 1852. Sarmiento was very bitter against the gaucho because of his intense hatred of their leader Rosas. While the "gaucho bárbaro"¹ was the champion of the gaucho cause he was by no means representative of the gaucho type as Sarmiento implies, for such cruelty, vindictiveness, perseverance, and energy are far from being the dominant characteristics of the gaucho. The Facundo, published in 1845, is one of the few works which treat of the gaucho as a reality for most of the gauchesque productions were in a sense written of a type that was already passing from prominence if not from existence. Sarmiento found the gaucho not only a reality but a menace, and the barbarisms that he found in the Argentine were the fault of the romantic, care-free

1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.183

life of the gaucho. The gaucho was particularly an evil influence because of his support of Rosas. Because ~~of~~ the gaucho homes were dirty, children were uneducated, crimes were committed, and civilization was stagnant. Sarmiento gives in the first part of his Facundo a chapter descriptive of gaucho characters-- the rastreador (tracker), the baquiano (guide), the gaucho malo (outlaw), and the cantor (singer).¹ The rastreador possesses a certain reserved and mysterious dignity, probably because of his profession.² The baquiano, on the darkest night, in the midst of woods or plains, can orientate himself by tasting the soil.³ El Gaucho Malo is a type of certain localities, an outlaw. Justice pursues him for years: his name is feared, and pronounced in a low voice, but without hate and almost with respect. He is a mysterious personage; he dwells in the pampas; he lives on partridges and armadillos, and if occasionally he wants a tongue, he lassos, throws and kills a cow, cuts out the chosen delicacy and abandons the rest.⁴ El Cantor idealizes the gaucho life and is, like the

1. Idem: Primera parte, Capitulo II
2. Idem: p.72
3. Idem: p.75
4. Idem: p.78

troubador of the Middle Ages, the singer of struggles between cities and the country, and of pampan heroes pursued by justice.¹

Since Sarmiento was the source of many of the succeeding gauchesque works it is perhaps surprising that none of the gaucho novels has suggested any side of the gaucho character other than that of the gaucho malo to which they have devoted themselves. The apostle of the new evolution of the gauchesque genre was Eduardo Gutiérrez, whose serials in the newspaper La Patria Argentina, made popular the legend of Santos Vega and his friend Carmona; Pastor Luna and his companion Mataco, Juan Cuello and the Barrientos, concluding with Juan Moreira, who personified² the legendary caste which fought the forces of the law. This last character was taken from a real Moreira bandit famous in the sixties and whose figure needed little elaboration to make it appealing to a public eager for thrills.

Eduardo Gutiérrez was born in Buenos Aires in 1853 and died there in 1890. His premature death makes his fecundity the more unusual for living only thirty-seven years, he wrote thirty-one volumes.³ From a child he had a passion

1. Idem: p.80

2. Quesada: op. cit., p.34

3. Rojas: op. cit., p.875

for the piano. He played with surprising skill then and his later technique was that of a concert musician although he played by ear and did not know music. Gutiérrez had also an extraordinary facility for languages, speaking English, French, Italian and Portuguese. During one epoch of his life he was the idol of a brilliant coterie in the Italian colony and from this contact he became acquainted with the greater part of the Italian dialects: Genoese, Neapolitan, Milanese, and Piedmontese, together with a number of songs in these dialects. He was far from being a student and his brother Carlos said that his reading list contained only one name, the Quijote. His heritage then was nothing else than his own intellect and his enormous facility of assimilation. His newspaper career began when he was but a child with a humorous section of local color entitled La Crónica in La Nación Argentina. From then on (1866) he wrote without ceasing until his death writing for La Tribuna, El Mercantil, La Época, and El Nacional after the sale of the Gutiérrez paper, La Nación Argentina, to Mitre in 1870.

His work has been grouped according to its respective arguments into novelas gauchescas, crónicas históricas,

1. Idem: p.879

and relatos policiales. The novelas gauchescas include: Juan Moreira, Juan Cuello, Juan Sin Patria, Pastor Luna, El Mataco, Santos Vega, and Una Amistad Hasta la Muerte (the second part of Santos Vega); the Crónicas históricas: El Chacho, Las Montoneras, El Rastreador, La muerte de un héroe, Juan Manuel de Rosas, La Mazorca, Una tragedia de doce años, El punal del tirano, La Muerte de Buenos Aires, and Siluetas militares, and relatos policiales: Los grandes ladrones; Antonio Larrea, Los siete bravos, La infamia de una madre, El jorobado, Astucia de una negra, Carlos Lanza, El gran banquero, Los hermanos Barrientos, El tigre del Quequen, Domingo Rivadavia, Amor funesto, Hormiga negra,¹ and El Asesinato de Alvaréz.

His entire production belongs to the narrative genre although epic, historical and novelistic elements enter into its composition. Because of the character and influence of Gutiérrez's work the gaucho tradition was fixed in written form and pampan types were moulded definitely. The atmosphere and style of these groups is identical and all employ the note of personal valor.

Juan Moreira, the most famous gaucho novel, is a study of a gaucho in opposition to authority and consists of the

1. Idem: p.871

tale of the hero's crimes and quarrels with the police. It is also historical for Gutiérrez did not create his protagonist but took him from judicial history. It is primarily a gaucho romance because it paints the character and customs of the gaucho through the psychology of the hero and the pampan atmosphere in which we see him moving among the cattle brandings, the taverns, the dances, the payadas and quarrels with the police. Gutiérrez was a careless journalist, not an artist.¹ He wrote not in the gauchesque dialect but in the familiar speech of his popular clientele. His work has little artistic or literary interest but its social interest and influence is undeniable.

He takes the types and episodes of his gauchesque novels from the folklore tradition (Santos Vega) or from the judicial records (Juan Moreira) and in the whole group repeats himself, fashioning his characters, his situations, and his speech in such a manner that the whole series could be reduced to the two aforementioned books, which also present a strong analogy with each other. He treats almost always of a gaucho, brave, generous and a singer, who is the victim of the tavern keeper, of the landlord, the commissary or the judge. As the gaucho is always in love there

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.64

is always a china or perhaps several successive ones, and as he is a payador there are always dance and tavern scenes, serenades, horsebreakings, sheepshearings and brandings. There are many individual, almost knightly duels of the gaucho with the agents of the law. The constant repetition of one type and the improvised and vulgar form of his writing prevent his work from being artistic but Gutiérrez's novels have become a part of the popular life because of the vitality that he has infused into his character types. The outstanding defects of Gutiérrez's work were his repetition in the narrative and inconsistency in the composition. Contrary to Sarmiento, Gutiérrez's sympathy is with his gaucho protagonist and he makes such a hero of his gaucho malo, that Hernández felt himself obliged to write a sequel to his Ida de Martín Fierro to combat not only the influence of the spurious sequels to his work, but more especially the novels of Gutiérrez.¹ Two characteristics reveal themselves in a study of Gutiérrez's gauchesque novels: his profound knowledge of the pampan life without having lived as a gaucho, and his disregard of the gaucho dialect in favor of the Castilian. An excess of realism in the perspective, united to the lightness and vulgarity of the form

 1. Umphrey: op. cit., p.154

keep Gutiérrez from leaving in his vigorous rural chronicles truly great novels.

When Gutiérrez flourished the gauchos were not only pursued as dangerous men by the bourgeoisie but despised by the cosmopolitan culture of Buenos Aires as types of an inferior race. The word gaucho, which signified herdsman during the viceroyships, soldier in the struggle for independence and expert horseman and proud man in the epoch of federal germination, came to denote a bandit and lazy idler¹ to the new generation.

Critics are very harsh with Gutiérrez. "Desgraciadamente, los tales folletines, halagando todas las bajas pasiones de las masas incultas, adquirieron una popularidad colosas; ediciones económicas a precios ínfimos los pusieron en manos hasta de los mas menesterosos. Todos los que viven en pugna con la sociedad, desde el ladrón hasta el desterrado de la fortuna... todos los fermentos malsanos de la sociedad experimentaron verdadera fruición al leer las hazanas, de esos matreros."²

"El estilo de Gutiérrez no puede ser mas vulgar: descuidado en la forma, no se le ve nunca entretenerse en una descripción; pasa por alto lo bueno que pudiera haber

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.892

2. Quesada: op. cit., p.35

entretejido en sus pinceladas sanguinarias; solo quiere el atropellamiento y la confusión de las escenas, casi todas iguales, recargadas de tintas oscuras y uniformas para agitar el organismo con siniestras perspectivas. Sus escritos están condenados por el arte, por la cultura, por el sentido común y cuando quiere inclinarse al buen terreno, cultivando la leyenda del payador Santos Vega, es ya tarde; se ha contagiado su alma con esos negros pinturas que empezó por pasatiempo y concluyó por afición y monomanía, y al pretender hacer la de ese personaje tan grande, cantado por Obligado, no pudo, y lo degrado haciéndole un vulgar asesino.¹"

The same authors who collaborated with him in some of his newspaper work show little appreciation of the novelist Gutiérrez: "Hay vemos al gaucho falsificado de bombacha y botas, pero no cuán al digno vate criollo Santos Vega, esa era la verdadera vestimenta pampeana, el lindo chiripá, calzoncillos afundados que caían graciosamente sobre la

1. Martínez, Felipe: La literatura Argentina desde la conquista hasta nuestros días seguida de un estudio sobre la literatura de los demás países Hispano-Americanos, Buenos Aires 1905, p.154

bota, la linda camisa bordada y que al cantar una payada describiendo un dolor, lo hacía con tanto ardor que llanto era lo que producía...Oh, gran Santos Vega eras el gran payador y no él, peleador como decía el escritor Gutiérrez."¹

Because of their melodramatic and exaggerated character Gutiérrez's novels made such a wide appeal to the common people that Santos Vega, Juan Cuello and Juan Moreira were household words. His novels were and still are popular and their influence was so great that all gaucho novels and poems which followed were of the gaucho malo character. His novels have documental value for the period of which they treat when the exaggerated descriptions are discounted.²

The Santos Vega will serve as an example of the entire series. In a prologue Gutiérrez gives what he considers to be the true biography of the payador. How much of this is authentic and how much the invention of the novelist is uncertain.³ Gutiérrez gave Santos Vega a rich father, a delicate mother, an early love affair with María and a

1. Carta a mi querido amigo, el Gaucho Relámpago.

El Gaucho Relámpago, año I, número 2,

Buenos Aires, August 16, 1911.

2. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.132.

3. Gutiérrez, Eduardo: Dramas policiales.

Santos Vega, Montevideo 1913, vol.I, pp.5-12

later one with Dolores, and a friend Carmona. Like the typical gaucho malo Santos Vega was a fugitive from justice and was received at friendly estancias and taverns with honor. Here he sang the verses which brought him fame as the greatest payador. Santos Vega's devotion to his friend Carmona and his grief at his death were responsible for his final defeat, for he had become so weak from fasting over his loved one's grave that he was unable to win his payada with the devil.

Something of the social position of the gaucho is shown when Santos Vega wished to marry María. Blindly disregarding his father's advice: "Esos bocados no son para los gauchos!", he cannot understand the social distance which separates him from María and persists in his love. The mockery of María's cousin, who has been destined as her husband is utterly contemptuous: "Al fin me pagaste, gaucho miserable, todo el dano que me hiciste al pretender enamorar la mujer que yo amo, y si no te he hecho matar, es porque quiero gozar de toda la rabia y dolor que vas a sentir cuando me veas casado con María! Que! te has creído un señor, gaucho ruín, que podías tener amores con una niña, ni más ni menos si fueras igual a mi? Ya pagarás tu osadía, Canalla!" For the realization of his love he finds no remedy other than killing María's father and this

makes of him an outlaw. His friendship for Carmona is such that the second half of the novel, in its last editions, has had the title of Una amistad hasta la muerte.

Other novelists who have kept the gaucho fire burning are Leguizamón, whose Montaraz has certain noble touches that remind us of the Facundo of Sarmiento, the Uruguayan Javier de Viana who is a literary portraitist of more than average ability, Roberto Payró, whose Divertidas aventuras del nieto de Juan Moreira is said by some critics to be the national novel of the Argentine and Cambaceres,¹ Daireaux, Regules, Ugarte and Bunge.

Two writers more mentioned than any others by Argentine critics, have converted into everlasting novelistic material their knowledge of the Argentine and of its types, passions and dramas: Horacio Quiroga and Benito Lynch.² Quiroga, a Uruguayan, is noted for his Cuentos de amor, de locura y de muerte. The art of Benito Lynch is hard and tragic as are the lives of the men who have inspired his novels. Nothing escaped Lynch which could portray a scene or a

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.64

2. Giusti, Roberto F.: La Novela y El Cuento Argentina, Nosotros, Numero Aniversario, Buenos Aires 1927, p.92

type more realistically: actions, gestures, attitudes, silences, although his details are never superfluous. His work offers a wealth of animation and color but is never overdone. The two novels which best represent him are Los Caranchos de la Florida and Raquela.

Ricardo Güiraldes has won to the first rank of costumbrista literature with his novel Don Segundo Sombra, which appeared in 1926. The narration, the evocation with color and with the appearance of reality of the gaucho, the exaltation of his rude and barbaric strength, of his bravery and fortitude in an uninhabited and hostile pampas have an epic savor.¹ Güiraldes presents Sombra as an exemplary gaucho, a gaucho who, by his education, his natural environment, his constitution and his mode of life, has qualities which, good, or bad, command the admiration of other men. Sombra is not the ordinary gaucho but a personage in which the qualities of the gaucho have been exalted. There are no Indians or justices of the peace so that Sombra is a gaucho of a later date than Martín Fierro and belongs possibly to 1900.²

1. Idem: p.93

2. Doll, Ramón: Segundo Sombra y el gaucho que ve el hijo del patrón, Nosotros, Buenos Aires, December 1927, p.270

Lugones sings of the epic struggle of the civil wars in the La Guerra gaucha and Ricardo Rojas describes the life, customs, myths and legends of the people at the northern edge of the pampas in El País de la Selva.

Roberto Payró deserves perhaps more attention because of his "national novel". This work is, however, more than a gaucho novel, although its descriptions of the countryside and the figure Don Ingenio are gauchesque, it is rather an Argentine novel for it portrays the society of Buenos Aires, the political intrigue of the nation and the wealthy foreigner as well.

Gustave Martínez Zuviría, who wrote under the pseudonym of Hugo Wast, is probably the most popular of the gaucho novelists since Gutiérrez. He has many excellent descriptive pages and his narratives are intense and colorful. Critics assail his work as inartistic and common but his popularity continues. His Valle Negro, Fuente Sellada, La Casa de los Cuervos, and Desierto de la Piedra are his best.

El Desierto de la Piedra which won the national literary prize for its author, portrays ranch life in a barren district. There was nothing particularly outstanding about its descriptions of rural life or its characters although the old Pedro Ontiveras was a quite interesting

figure to me. His rugged personality, his kind heart and, above all, his deep and abiding affection for his land are worthy of note. He loved his trees so much that the sound of an axe cutting them down caused his death. The unknown and mysterious Carpio gives some idea of the outlaw type and of the awe and respect with which the ignorant country people regarded him.

CHAPTER IX



THE DRAMA

the germs of folklore were confounded with popular reality as an instinctive representation of its allegories and mental anxieties, Such is the indigenous or gauchesque pantomime, with its song and music. If the genealogy of the popular dances is somewhat confused, and it is like that of every country, its definition as a dramatic entity is not less precise, for there appear confounded in these dances the theatrical elements of gesture along with the lyrics of the song.¹ In all of the dances we find germs of realistic mimicry and symbolic tragedy.

The colonizing Spaniards brought a type of culture to the Río de la Plata and to them the Argentine owes the introduction of its printing-press, its university, and its theater.² However, neither the representations that Vertiz organized in the Ranchería³ nor the liturgical representations that the Jesuits organized in the missions can be considered as a genuinely national theater. A second Spanish dramatic emigration came to the Argentine, when after the independence, the country was opened again to the

1. Idem: p.428

2. Idem: vol. II, p.897

3. Rancheria -- The first Argentine theater. It was organized by the viceroy Vertiz.

peninsular culture. Spanish companies were found then in Buenos Aires and all of South America and were enthusiastically received.

The theater showed an extreme poverty of original writers. Perhaps the first known indigenous production was the Ollantay, an anonymous Quichuan drama of old America. Some critics attribute the authorship of Ollantay to its discoverer, Valdés.¹ The historian Garciloso, in his Comentarios Reales, devotes a paragraph to the Incas: "The Amauttas", who were the wise men, did not lack ability in the composition of comedies and tragedies, which were presented on the feast days and occasions of great solemnity before the kings and lords of the court. The actors were not rustics but Incas, noble sons of the chieftains or the chieftains themselves, and even the rulers. This was because the representation was made without costumes or masks, since the argument of the tragedies always versified military deeds, battles and victories, or the prowess and glory of outstanding and past heroes. The comedies referred to agriculture, to the labors in the field, to the affairs of the hearth and the life of the family.²

1. Velloso: op. cit., p.54

2. Idem: p.55

By the grandeur of its scenes, the painting of its characters, its hidden passions, and especially by its magnificent end, the Ollantay exhibits the ability of an artist, unusual to that period and civilization.

To Manuel José de Labarden belongs the honor of being the author of the first Argentine drama. He was educated, against his will, to be a lawyer and after his father's death realized his ambition of taking a degree as doctor of philosophy. He was a poet and satirist as well as a dramatist. His Siripo is an historical tragedy, and there has been some question whether his work was an original one with other writers plagiarizing him or whether he himself copied from another and earlier writer. An historical drama Lucía de Miranda, signed Miguel Ortega, in five acts and in verse, has been found in the National Library. A critical note of Navarro Viola announces the appearance in 1863 of the drama "El Gaucho", bearing the initials of Ortega.

The tragedy "Siripo" was represented in 1818 but exists only in fragmentary form now as an original manuscript although actor's copies are extant. The scene of the drama is Fort San Espiritu in America, and the characters are the early Andalusian colonists and Indians. Marangore, a conquered Indian chieftain has two absorbing

passions: hate for his Spanish conquerors and love for Lucía de Miranda, the wife of a colonist. Lucía de Miranda and her husband are devoted to each other and she spurns every attempt of the Indian to make advances to her.

Swearing revenge because of her disdain, Marangore enlists the aid of his brother Siripo in destroying the white colony. He arranges to present the colony with some food and secure lodging there for the night for himself and a few of his men, while his brother gathers with all his forces outside. The strength of the colony is divided at this time by an expedition sent into the interior under the command of Lucía's husband. Marangore's treacherous plan succeeds, but he is himself killed in the massacre. Siripo reaps the spoils, among which is Lucía de Miranda. Siripo falls in love with her and offers her her liberty if she will give herself to him. Indignantly spurning him, she is treated as a captive. Her husband returns from his expedition, and, finding the fort destroyed, goes in search of his wife. He is captured and to prevent his death Lucía intercedes with the chieftain who exacts as the price of his life, the breaking of their marriage vows and the marriage of Hurtado to an Indian woman. The love of the husband and wife was however so strong that they could not resist seeking each other's company when Siripo was away

so that the Indian, informed of their love by one of his wives, ordered Lucía thrown into a bonfire and Hurtado barbarously killed with arrows.

This drama was not a gaucho drama but it did have a pampan setting and portrayed scenes from Indian life, so that it, in a sense, has a strong resemblance to some phases of gauchesque literature.

After the lyric formation of the native song in the popular cycle of the anonymous payadores was well on its way to completion, one phase of it was metamorphosed with Hidalgo to begin the epic formation, which ended with Hernández. This phase underwent a second change with Gutiérrez, giving place to the dramatic formation of the Argentine national theater, which was begun with the pantomime or sainete of the gauchos. This theater, both in origin and character was a pastoral theater, a pampan eclogue transported to the stage with all the rudeness of its real model and language.¹

To the gauchos is owed the emancipation of the Argentine stage. From the gaucho pantomimes which appeared as a part of circus performances, when the epic adventures of Martín Fierro were represented, the dramatic evolution

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.901

was already turning toward the novelistic narration of Gutiérrez, and finishing its esthetic development by passing to the representations of the Podestá. With the fugitive gaucho there entered into the circus track a party of police, all on horseback. As this gaucho was brave, his drama consisted in a personal encounter with his unjust pursuers, thus coming to convert himself into a protagonist who had the sympathy of his audience and causing it to feel, as he did, an instinctive disdain for authority and an almost atavistic respect for chivalrous valor. This pursued gaucho was also a singer so that in the intervals between his conflicts with authority, scenes of song and dance softened the representation.

The picture of a bonfire in the open air, in the center of the circus track, or that of a pulpería at the edge of the bull-ring, naturally evoked, together with touches of authentic realism such as the roasting of a turkey near the fire and the making of mate, suggestions of a rustic tertulia (gathering). With the dance entered a rudiment of symbolic drama, and with the song, the necessity of a payada, also dramatic in essence and in form, because of its dialogue and of its dénouement which the onlookers applauded.

These representations which were so popular in the

eighties in Buenos Aires and in the provincial cities still live today in the circuses and also transformed in the performances of actors in the theater. The development of the drama began from these by dialogizing the original pantomime and by welding the unconnected episodes of pampan atmosphere into the continuity of an argument. The drama came then to consist of the biography of some gaucho singer or of some brave gaucho fighter. Juan Moreira, Santos Vega, and Martín Fierro sprang then from the written novel or poem to scenic reality. The tapera (gaucho's hut), the pulpería (wine shop), the galpón (slaves' dormitory), the tranquera (palisade), the corral de estancia (courtyard of ranch), the comisaría (the commissariat), the fortín (fortress), the juzgado de paz (court of justice), the cárcel (jail), the camino de carretero (cart-road), the playa del rodeo (round-up), and the hierra (branding): all this was depicted by these primitive representations, against a background of the pampan solitude. With Gutiérrez the novel was given a protagonist, an argument and a dialogue, and from this it was not difficult to transform his chronicles into action. His schematic narration lent itself readily to the dramatic version, so much

 1. Idem: p.905

the more easily since the drama consisted at first of a mere succession of realistic pictures. The simplicity of the characters never offered great difficulty to the artists who were to interpret them; they consisted of sentimental and valiant gauchos who were accustomed to breaking and riding horses, making love to their chinas, strumming their guitars, improvising rude verses, and ready at an instant's notice to hurl their knife or bolas. Austere characters in love, loyal in friendship, and rashly brave in danger-- thus were the protagonists of this new-born theater. The friend of the protagonist came from the primitive payadores--que poetry through the epics to be a necessary and well-defined type.

Comic types were not lacking in these early representations, and were commonly, a negro dancer, or an Italian, who was generally crafty and sordid. From here were born the tavern-keeper Sardetti, and Cocoliche, a hybrid type of immigrant.

The drama had begun by presenting the gaucho in conflict with the civil authorities; it passed from that to present him in conflict with the industrious European.

1. Idem: p.907

2. Sardetti -- Character in drama Juan Moreira.

With this idea as a nucleus native authors at once saw other possibilities, and began to paint idyllic scenes of the estancias or internal family conflicts due to an abrupt social transformation: gauchos and country people whose children were becoming urbanized and foreigners whose children were becoming creolized; discord of generations and races, political conflicts appropriate for drama, and strange types proper for comedies.

Potentially, Martín Fierro, had all the dramatic elements¹ so that once this rapid, sweeping action was held in situations the drama assumed definite form. The first dramas were no more than the dramatization of existing gauchesque works. The Martín Fierro arranged by Elías Regules which was the second to appear was represented by the Podestá² company in La Plata in March and April 1890.

The creators of the "drama criollo" were the members of the Uruguayan^{ya} Podestá family, especially the brothers José J. and Jerónimo Podestá. In June 1884 a great equestrian company directed by the North American brothers Carlo was presenting an act in the Politeama Argentina of Buenos Aires. To these the novelist Gutiérrez proposed

1. Holmes: op. cit., p.64

2. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.235

the presentation of a pantomime of the same kind as was commonly given at the end of a pageant, but a pantomime of local character, elaborated by Gutiérrez himself from one of his works. He chose the hero that was most beloved by the public, Juan Moreira. José de Podestá figured as the protagonist in it under the professional name of Pepino el 88.¹ This production was repeated a dozen times before the company departed for Río de Janeiro. The Podestá brothers did not accompany them but organized another troupe with their relative, Scotti. In their repertoire was the pantomime Juan Moreira, which they represented from time to time, as for example in 1886 in Arrecifes. Podestá extracted from the novel the necessary dialogues, he added other complementary ones to elaborate the plot, thus giving progressive form to the drama Juan Moreira. It was a work of many months, for the work was represented night after night and was always with innovations until he considered it completed. It was given for the first time in definite form in Chivilcay, April 1886.

The third native drama was Juan Cuello which was taken from Gutiérrez's novel by Luis Mejías and adapted to the stage by Pepe Podestá.

1. Idem: p.236

In 1892 the Julian Jiménez of Abdón Aróztegui was put on in two sections; the first in the Rosario and the other in the Jardín Florida. A few weeks later the El entena of Regules followed it. In the same year, in the Politeama of Montevideo there appeared the Juan Soldao of Orosman Moratorio. In 1894 the Cobarde and the Tribulaciones de un criollo of the doctor, Victor Pérez Petit and the Santos Vega, arranged by Juan Carlos Nosiglia were represented. In 1896 one of the most famous of these dramas made its appearance in the Calandria of Martiniano Leguizamón.

The drama, following in the footsteps of the novel presented the gaucho malo with perhaps even less artistry than had the novel. The drama criollo has been resented and criticized because it has lamentably confounded the noble and arrogant character of the legendary gaucho type with the decrepit, quarrelsome and repugnant outlaw, who is but a degeneration of the pure gaucho.¹

"Los Moreiras sus numerosos compadres-regresión insalubre de la estética popular-llenaron la escena rioplatense durante dos o tres lustros" is an example of the opposition to the gaucho drama.²

1. Quesada: op. cit., p.37

2. Velasco y Arias, María: Dramaturgia Argentina. Thesis, Buenos Aires 1913, p.52

"Aunque el fondo de la obra lo constituya el gaucho, (su autor) lo ha colocado a una distancia inmensa de esos tipos sanguinarios y brutales como Juan Cuello y Juan Moreira que no perdían ocasión de asaltar policías, matar soldados, perseguir patrullas enteras armando continuas trifulcas con la autoridad y con los pacíficos habitantes de la campaña y que muy pobre idea dan de lo que se ha dado en llamar dramas nacionales. Esos engendros, así denominados, no representan hasta ahora sino una tendencia retroactiva, como es la de presentar tipos de peleadores y de asesinos como gauchos verdaderos, denaturalizando de este modo al típico que era noble, desinteresado, laborioso, enamorado y cantor cuya personificación más alta y genuinamente leyendaria es Santos Vega el payador." ¹ The above opinion is that of the majority of critics in regard to the first dramatic productions.

In June 1913 the Podestá company presented the Santos Vega of Luis Bayón Herrera. It was in three acts, and in verse, with a prologue. Herrera's drama is much shorter and more simple than that of Nosiglia, and consequently more effective. Nosiglia, follows Gutiérrez's novel as does Spindola in his version (1903-04) and many incidents

1. Berisso, Luis: Artículo. La Nación,

Buenos Aires, May 24, 1896

are crowded into the representation. Minor payadas, an Indian attack, the death of Vega's father, Vega's love affairs and various other details detract from the drama. Still others make the production a bloody, thrill-seeking series of episodes.

Herrera's drama has a prologue in which he brings up the question of the bard's existence. Some idea of the gauchesque life is given in the quarrels, the dance, the struggles with the forces of the law, the recklessness of the gaucho in defying the authorities to stand a fugitive and in the payada. The love of Argentina and Santos Vega is quite well done as is the Contrapunto with Juan Sin Ropa. The device of having Santos Vega dream of his defeat is new and adds, I think, in bringing out the payador's feelings. The dramatist has chosen to make his drama allegorical through the characters of Juan Sin Ropa and of Argentina.¹

The Juan Moreira of Silvo Manca which is the one played today is far superior to the dramatization of the novel. This version is extremely short, being only one act in length. The act is divided into six scenes of which the

1. Bierstadt, Edward Hale: Three Plays of the Argentine, New York 1920, pp.23-76

title gives the substance: 1. Injustice, 2. Alone,
 3. The Stocks, 4. Fatality, 5. Dishonored, 6. Conquered.¹

The Calandria of Leguizamón is an attempt to repudiate the harmful effects of the Juan Moreira type of drama, and is a recreation of the idealistic conception of Martín Fierro or of Santos Vega. The gaucho Calandria is a paya-dor, a carefree wanderer of the pampas, and a lover of justice and freedom, but he did not hate the law except as it forced him into military service and he was not a wanton killer. In the end he threw away his knife which symbolized his old nomadic life for love of his china and settled down to a life of work. Leguizamón has glorified as his hero the "gaucho trabajador".² With the trend of the later dramas away from the biographical sketch of some gaucho and toward the family strife caused by abrupt social transformations, the Uruguayan, Florencio Sanchez came to be the leader in the drama dealing with the gaucho. In addition to his dramas of this type he wrote problem plays such as Nuestros Hijos and dramas dealing with life in Buenos Aires such as Los Muertos. The other Argentine dramatists of

1. Idem: pp.1-19

2. Lehmann-Mitsche: op. cit., p.237

note were writing plays of this last type and seem to have forsaken the gaucho: Enrique García Velloso, Jesus Nazareno, Roberto Payró, Canción trágica, and Martín Coronado, La piedra de escándalo.

To return to Florencio Sanchez, his first work in which the gaucho appears is M'Hijo el Dotor.¹ Don Olegario is a typical gaucho of the finest old stock. He loves his land, his horses and his family. He is proud, kind and loving. Above all he believes in being honest and honorable and he dies of grief over his spoiled, wayward son who has learned nothing but laziness, extravagance, disrespect, and selfishness in the city.

La Gringa also deals with the gaucho but in a different manner. The conflict in this play is between the new immigrant who labors incessantly to accumulate wealth and property and the romantic gaucho who can perform prodigies of strength in games or at branding time, but who finds himself unable to compete in a steady, daily grind of work. The immigrants are rather unsympathetically treated and one feels intensely sorry for the old gaucho who is unable to adjust himself to the new conditions or even to understand

1. Sanchez, Florencio: El Teatro del Uruguayo;

Florencio Sanchez, Barcelona 1926

what is happening to his world.

Barranca abajo is Sanchez's masterpiece.¹ From the time the curtain rises until the last scene, the scenes between the sisters ironing and disputing in the patio, while the mother complains of her aches and pains, are natural indeed. Don Zoilo, the old gaucho protagonist, is so resigned under his bad fortune and so sad that Aniceto feels he does not have the right to prevent him from killing himself, when he has been despoiled of all he has, even of the affection of his family, and feels that his honor, too, has been smirched.

Other less outstanding dramas were: El Sargento Palma of Martín Coronado, Facundo² of David Peña, and Alma gaucha of Alberto Ghirardo.

In 1927, a film version of Santos Vega was being arranged by Carlos de Paoli. No other gauchesque drama had then been filmed and the gaucho was ceasing to occupy the center of the literary stage, as fifty years before he had quietly faded from historical importance with the cessation

1. Bianchi, Alfredo A.: 25 Años de Teatro Nacional, Nosotros, Numero Aniversario, Buenos Aires 1927, p.156

2. Idem: p.157

of civil war and the advent of the immigrant.

It might perhaps be mentioned that the gaucho as a romantic figure holds such an appeal for the imagination that it has been utilized as the subject matter for a North American film, The Gaucho, which, however, was far from portraying the real character as he was or is.

CHAPTER X



THE GAUCHO CHARACTER

"Santos Vega el payador,
 Aquel de la larga fama
 Murió cantando su amor
 Como el pájaro en la rama."¹

The gaucho is possessed of a dignity and a reserve not necessarily or commonly found in people of the lower class, but which is an essential attribute of those who pass long solitary hours on the plain or in the woods and who must always be alert and resourceful. The gaucho is above everything else a lover of freedom in life and in thought. He has an intense love for horses and is an expert rider, horse breaker, and bolas thrower. He knows his country thoroughly and loves it passionately, noting every change of color that passes over it and every movement of the animals.

"— Sabe que es linda la mar?

— La viera de moñanita,
 cuando a gatas la puntita
 del sol comienza asomar.
 Usté ve venir a esa hora,
 roncando la marejada,

 1. Lehmann-Nitsche: op. cit., p.31

y ve la espuma encrespada,
los colores de la aurora,
a veces, con viento en la anca,
y con la vela al solcito,
se ve cruzar un barquito,
como una paloma blanca.
Otras, usted ve potente
venir boyando un islote,
y es que trae a un camalote
cabrestando la corriente
y con un campo quebrao,
bien se puede comparar,
cuando el lomo empieza a hinchar
el río medio alterao
Las olas chicas, cansadas,
a la playa agatas vienen
y allí en lamber se entretienen
las arenitas labradas
Es lindo ver en los ratos
en que la mar bajao
cair volando al displayao
gaviotas, garzas y patos.
Y en las toscas es divino
mirar las olas quebrarse

como al fin viene a estrellarse
el hombre con su destino.

Y no se que da mirar
cuando barrosa y bramando,
sierras de agua viene alzando,
embravecida la mar.

Parece que el Dios del cielo
se mostrase retobao,
al mirar tanto pecao
como se ve en este suelo.

Y es cosa de bendecir
cuando el Señor la serena,
sobre ancha cama de arena,
obligándola a dormir.¹"

"— Y embelesaba el ganao,
lerdiando para el rodeo
como era en lindo recreo
ver sobre un toro plantao
dir cantando un venteveo;
en cuyo canto la fiera

1. Page: Fausto, A Gaucho Poem, pp.31-32

parece que se gozara
 porque las orejas para,
 manista, cual si quisiera
 que el ave no se asustara.¹"

The stars have meaning for the gaucho for by them he reckons the time at night and he admires their beauty as he lies under his poncho. He knows even the trees and soil so that he may find his way by them on the darkest night: "En lo más obscuro de la noche, en medio de los bosques o en llanuras sin límites, perdidos sus compañeros, extraviados, da una vuelta en círculo de ellos, observa los árboles; si no los hay, se desmonta, se inclina a tierra, examina algunos matorrales y se orienta de la altura en que se halla; monta en seguida, y les dice para asegurarlos: "Estamos en derreseras de tal lugar, a tantas leguas de las habitaciones; el camino ha de ir al Sur," y se dirige hacia el rumbo que señala, tranquilo, sin prisa de encontrarlo y sin responder a las objeciones que el temor o la fascinación sugiere a los otros. Si aun esto no basta, o si se encuentra en la pampa y la obscuridad es impenetrable, entonces arranca pastos de varios puntos huelle la raíz y la tierra, las masca,

1. Rojas: op. cit., p.733

y después de repetir este procedimiento varias veces, se cerciora de la proximidad de algún lago, o arroyo salado, o de agua dulce, y sale en su busca para orientarse fijamente.¹"

The preceding passage shows that though the gaucho may be unversed in scholastic learning and, according to the common conception, ignorant, he nevertheless has adapted himself to his own particular environment and struggle for existence, and interprets the universe in his own terms with perhaps as much intelligence as the scholar does.

He may not have an orthodox conception of God or the church, and he is often superstitious, yet he sees God in the phenomena of nature and takes comfort in invoking His aid and blessing in prayer, which is none the less sincere for not being couched in a set form of expression.

The gaucho is generous and hospitable and willingly shares his humble home and food with any guest.

"— Pues yo quisiera, aparcero,
 que hay mesmo, si es de su agrado,
 se viniera en mi compañía
 a saber en donde paro;
 y alvierta que, sin lisonja,

1. Sarmiento: op. cit., p.75

yo sería afortunado
 haciéndole conocer
 a mi chinita y mi rancho,
 adonde entre la pobreza
 sobresale el agasajo,
 con el cual allí le ofrezco,
 un cimarrón y un churrasco
 y cuarto pesos también
 si usted gusta disfrutarlos.¹

The gaucho has his code of honor which is simply loyalty to friends and to wife and family, and honest dealing with his fellow gauchos. He loves his china even more than his horse and saddle and is moved to despair at the loss of his family. Who could say that the gaucho loved nothing and abhorred family ties when he reads of Martín Fierro's homecoming?

"Volví al cabo de tres años
 De tanto sufrir al ñudo,
 Resertor, pobre y desnudo,
 A procurar suerte nueva,
 Y lo mesmo que el peludo
 Enderecé pa mi cueva.

 1. Ascasubi: Santos Vega, p. 34

No hallé ni rastro del rancho
 Solo estaba la tapera!
 Por Cristo si aquello era
 Pa enlutar el corazon.
 Yo juré en esa ocasión,
 Ser más malo que una fiera!

Quien no sentirá lo mesmo
 Cuando así padece tanto!
 Puedo asigurar que el llanto
 Como una mujer largué
 Ay, mi Dios, si me quede
 Más triste que Jueves Santo.¹

It is true that the gaucho was not ambitious either for wealth or for personal advancement, and that aside from his herding, his riding, his games, and his dancing he was content to sit around the fire or in the sun for hours, drinking his mate and improvising or listening to verses to the sound of the guitar. His existence was a lazy, effortless one but there are some who might conceivably think it better than the avaricious greed and hurrying clamor of a more progressive life. That the gaucho enjoyed his life,

1. Hernández: op. cit., p.71

living it from one day to the next is true, and his civilization might have continued there on the pampas for centuries without noticeable change if he had been left undisturbed by the influx of immigrants, who were grasping, who loved property, and worked to accumulate it. They, however, brought about the disruption of this life. The old gaucho life is gone except in the most remote corners of the pampas and the new civilization is rapidly penetrating there and overwhelming it. The few that remain have been forced to become landowners, soldiers, ranch laborers or mounted policemen and they now bear little resemblance to the old, free gaucho.

Even the gaucho literature now belongs to history for its great day has passed. In one century it was born, flowered and is dying out. Agriculture as well as the immigrant has pushed the old gaucho singers to the unpopulated extremes of the pampas or the crossing of the gaucho race with the immigrants has produced a new generation with different ideas and customs. On some few remote estancias genuine payadores still sing in verses as sad as the resignation of a race that succumbs, the legends of their heroes, the loves, sufferings, constancy and loyalty of the true gaucho.

 1. Quesada: op. cit., p.48

Nobody is more sympathetic than the true gaucho: nobody more noble, more faithful, more enthusiastic or able; he is the companion of his landlord who trusts him implicitly, for it is necessary to treat him with the respect that a free, proud man deserves.

Of a silent race, accustomed to contemplation, his soul is full of melancholy poetry: his spirit, alive and keen, comprehends his destiny, knows that, given his idiosyncrasy, he cannot compete with the foreign worker, who is ready for anything without regard to treatment or price. The gaucho prefers to leave his ranch and go farther away and in this exodus without end has gone even to the Rio Negro where the Indians dwell. But the immigrants advance and he cannot remain much longer there. He must go farther..... and farther.....until perhaps in a half century more he will be remembered only in history and in literature.

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