PERSPECTIVES OF THE RIVER PLATE AROUND THE TIME OF ROSAS: AN ANALYSIS BASED UPON THE PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, PRIVATE MEMOIRS AND PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF BRITISH SETTLERS, AS WELL AS WORKS BY CREOLE AUTHORS

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of St. Andrews

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Perspectives of the River Plate around the time of Rosas

An analysis based upon the personal correspondence, private memoirs and published accounts of British settlers, as well as literary works by creole authors

IAIN A. D. STEWART

Thesis submitted to the University of St. Andrews in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Ph.D.

MAY 1996
ABSTRACT

Perspectives of the River Plate around the time of Rosas: An analysis based upon the personal correspondence, private memoirs and published accounts of British settlers, as well as literary works by creole authors

Iain A. D. Stewart
Thesis for the Degree of Ph.D., University of St. Andrews

This thesis draws inspiration from the emergence of cultural studies as an academic pursuit, in addition to the current renewal of interest in the relationship between literary works and their socio-cultural milieux, to bring together an assortment of textual traces pertaining to the River Plate around the era of Juan Manuel de Rosas, governor of Buenos Aires and de facto dictator of Argentina for most of the period 1829-1852. The main texts analysed range from private documents relating to two Scottish settler families, through accounts published by British citizens with first-hand knowledge of the region (Un inglés, Cinco años en Buenos Aires and Beaumont, Travels in Buenos Ayres and the Adjacent Provinces), to three influential pieces of early Argentinian literature (Echeverría's El matadero, Mármoles Amalia and Sarmiento's Facundo). One justification of this apparently eclectic approach lies in the prominence accorded to the incomer in the thought of liberal Platine intellectuals, a concern evinced in their literary production.

The methodology involves examining the representation of certain fundamental topics across this range of written artefacts, observing frequent points of thematic convergence amongst the various texts. In this fashion, I construct an image of the River Plate region around the Rosas period, whilst also appraising the degree to which early British settlers matched the idealized notion of the immigrant present in liberal creole writings.

The study is divided into four main chapters, supplemented by an introduction, conclusion and appendix. The first chapter summarizes the historical context of the young Platine republics; the second deals with the themes of society, community and family; the third focuses upon religion; the fourth considers perspectives of politics, dictatorship and civil war. The appendix consists of an unpublished settler autobiography, a remarkable account of the tribulations faced on a daily basis in the developing Argentina.
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DECLARATION

On submitting this thesis to the University of St. Andrews, I, the candidate, declare that:

1) the thesis has been composed by the candidate
2) the work of which it is a record has been done by the candidate
3) it has not been accepted in any previous application for any degree.

SIGNATURE

Iain A. D. Stewart

DATE

May 1996
STATEMENT OF DATE OF ADMISSION

The candidate was first admitted to the University of St. Andrews as a research student in the Department of Spanish at the commencement of session 1992-93, that is, October 1992.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Famosamente infame
su nombre fue desolación en las casas,
idolátrico amor en el gauchaje
y horror del tajo en la garganta.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Rosas'

*Fervor de Buenos Aires*
INTRODUCTION

Some preliminary remarks

The rise of the cultural studies approach in recent years has opened a gamut of new possibilities for the researcher interested in the relationship between textual representations and the social, political and cultural circumstances of their production.¹ As studies of an interdisciplinary nature have gradually infiltrated the academic world, the parallel analysis of outwardly diverse and separate forms of discourse, with the purpose of perceiving their mutual illumination, has steadily gained acceptance, to some extent eroding the privileged status of the literary canon and moving towards a more egalitarian treatment of the multifarious communicative practices of human society. Many exponents of this new method emphasize its ambitious, indefatigable radicalism, translating the ethos of innovation into a quasi-political stance. Fred Inglis, for example, makes the following programmatic statement:

Cultural Studies aspire to the perfect balancing of spontaneity with seriousness, and of both with an energetic solidarity towards what is done to all those people, and the quotidian expression of their lives, who have suffered under political oppression, academic insolence, and the customary pains of historical indifference.²

Whilst not wishing to adopt the conceptual framework of cultural studies wholesale, especially not insofar as any ideological commitment is concerned, I hope to draw

¹ The renewed enthusiasm for contextualizing the literary work was most clearly articulated, albeit with a disparaging tone, by J. Hillis Miller in his now famous Presidential Address to the MLA: 'Literary study in the past few years has undergone a sudden, almost universal turn away from theory in the sense of an orientation toward language as such and has made a corresponding turn toward history, culture, society, politics, institutions, class and gender conditions, the social context, the material base'. 'Presidential Address 1986. The Triumph of Theory, the Resistance to Reading, and the Question of the Material Base', PMLA 102 (1987), 281-91 (p. 283).

upon its liberating possibilities, its capacity to dissolve the boundaries which
conventionally demarcate the intellectual field.

The term 'culture', described by Raymond Williams as 'one of the two or
three most complicated words in the English language', has itself undergone a
reappraisal, no longer denoting the intellectual and artistic activity of a talented and
frequently dominant minority, but often now deployed to represent any practice or
product ascribed to humankind, particularly those arising from some appreciable
creative endeavour. The present study espouses this broad definition, focusing upon
very different types of roughly contemporary writing without consciously privileging
one form above another. To a certain degree, the project coincides with the currently
modish technique of new historicism, an approach which adroitly combines the
issues of context and expression, offering the rapprochement of literature and history
as an antidote to the hegemony of linguistically-oriented criticism. According to
Greenblatt, a pioneer of new historicism, or the 'poetics of culture' as he prefers to
call his practice, the central value of this critical method is 'an intensified willingness
to read all of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred
only on literary texts'. Few statements better encapsulate the project of this thesis.

The texts to be analysed throughout this study all ostensibly portray social,
community or personal 'reality'. However, this does not mean to say that we can
accept any one of these accounts as authoritative or objective, nor even that any
stable, absolute truth can be reached by fashioning a collage from their various

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3 The quotation is from Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976), p. 76. Williams's
writings, along with those of Foucault, are a key influence on cultural materialism and the allied
approach of new historicism. If cultural materialism has evolved largely in Britain, new historicism is its
North American counterpart; the former, however, tends to address contemporary issues, whereas the
gaze of its transatlantic cousin is confined to the past, particularly to the Renaissance and Romantic
periods.

4 The reader will note that the label 'new historicism' and its derivatives are not capitalized in the
present thesis, for this term relates more to a broad attitude towards the study of written texts than to a
unified movement bound by clearly delineated rules. 'Cultural studies' is treated similarly.

5 Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge,
elements. Certain genres (notably the historical novel or travel account) may aspire to mimesis, but the accurate reflection of the real is an unattainable goal. Rather, we will come to appreciate that the textual representations addressed in the present study are irrefutably shaped by the author's self-image, moral convictions, socio-political concerns and target readership, all contingent upon the particular conditions of the moment at which s/he was engaged in the narrative process. Again, this view is compatible with the tenets of new historicist criticism, one of which can be thus defined: 'that no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature'.

Although the term has been comprehensively challenged in the last two or three decades, my enterprise could perhaps be described, in the broadest possible sense, as 'humanistic' in focus and outlook, as it is essentially at odds with those critical trends which seek to decentre the authorial presence (à la Derrida). Rather than subscribing to the autonomy of the written word, I construct the author as a reasoning, interpreting, intending human entity, the essential life-force behind the creation of text. To some, this may verge upon the 'intentional fallacy', the tendency to seek answers in the author's mindset, speculatively reconstructing the writer's opinions on the basis of biographical details and historical context. However, the preponderance of opinion against this posture dictates that we can no longer see an unadulterated and binding correlation between product and producer; rather, authorial intention is just one possible locus of critical appraisal, for no one, not even the writer, possesses an exclusive franchise to determine that signified by the signifier. Like Quentin Skinner,

I see no impropriety in speaking of a work's having a meaning for me which the writer could not have intended. [...] I have been concerned

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only with the converse point that whatever the writer is doing in writing what he writes must be relevant to interpretation, and thus with the claim that amongst the interpreter's tasks must be the recovery of the writer's intentions in writing what he writes.\(^8\)

In this light, the peremptory final statement of Roland Barthes's essay 'The Death of the Author' strikes me as excessively dogmatic:

> We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys [the reader]; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.\(^9\)

Whilst Barthes, in my opinion, goes too far in this closing manifesto, there lies beneath his overbearing tone a valid purpose, namely to cast the reader as a fully dynamic participant in the literary game. But the reader cannot be the only player, for the written text is, after all, the site where one individual (the reader) encounters the creative flow of another (the author). Moreover, text cannot stand on its own, for it only comes to life through the medium of the human intellect. In summary, my view of the author-text-reader triad is close to that expressed by Nigel Rapport in the following quotation:

> Engagement in a cultural discourse need in no way translate as that discourse achieving agency, determining or causing meaning, eliminating the interpretive work of the individual participant. Rather, it is the individual who animates discourse by the imparting to it of personal meaning. [...] To author a text is to impart personality to language; to personalise verbal forms and express a personal construction of the world. Far from language being agential in itself, an author publishes in it a possibly original language-world, and invites listeners and readers to attempt to come to terms with it and enter into it. But then the process of the origination of meaning is not restricted to the writer; it also extends to the reader.\(^10\)

\(^8\) Skinner, 'Motives, intentions and the interpretations of texts', cited in Inglis, Cultural Studies, p. 101.


In this thesis, therefore, it is my unapologetic aspiration to tread a middle path between authorship and readership, implicitly refuting the tricky notion that the author ceases to exist at the precise moment the interactive reader is born. However, whilst Michel Foucault's attempt to reclaim a place for the author (or 'author-function', to borrow from his favoured terminology) must be welcomed by all who find the glib elision of a text's originator rather disconcerting, his classic essay 'What is an Author?' perpetuates certain problematic assumptions. In particular, the assertion that 'the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others: a private letter may have a signatory, but it does not have an author' (p. 235) requires response within the context of the present study. Though this observation is historically justifiable, supported by the traditional scission between accepted literary works and other forms of discourse, I wish to play down the value distinctions imposed by critical convention. Having already indicated my intention to read a range of diverse written artefacts on an equal footing, namely with 'the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts', then it seems only reasonable to grant similar parity of acknowledgement to the writers of these texts themselves. Foucault further states: 'Discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten; neither is it accorded the momentary attention given to ordinary, fleeting words' (p. 235). It would appear, therefore, that only texts attributed with a Foucauldian 'author-function' deserve more than cursory appraisal.

If these two quotations from 'What is an Author?' are juxtaposed, Foucault's specific citation of personal correspondence as an authorless form of discourse might thus infer that the cultural historian is barred from reading letters and other less formally construed texts with the same thoughtfulness as canonical literary works.

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11 Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Burke (ed.), Authorship, pp. 233-46. This essay is also readily available in Paul Rabinow (ed.), The Foucault Reader (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 101-120. Foucault coins the term 'author-function' to evade the simple equation of the author with the living person who wrote the work, perceiving that the act of creation can give rise to a plurality of selves.
As the parameters of this study are elaborated, it will become clear that I forsake any such arbitrary restriction, since it is my belief that both conventional literary texts and other forms of discourse can benefit from close scrutiny, especially when viewed alongside each other.

Objectives and material

The aim of my investigation is to examine the textual representation of the River Plate region at a time of far-reaching social and political transition. The precise historical circumstances are particularized in the following chapter, but for the present it is sufficient to say that the temporal fixation of this study coincides with a period of uncertainty and flux in the emerging Platine republics, a troubled time which mediated between the rupture from colonial domination and the consolidation of cohesive national entities and identities. Perhaps, as numerous historians have suggested, a spell of civil division and intense political debate was an inherent phase of the maturation process from colony to autonomous republic. The polarization of ideologies and the resulting conflicts sharply focused the attention of society's keenest observers, who felt themselves impelled to record their thoughts with the written word. It is the fruits of their labours which are examined throughout the following chapters.

At the most basic level, the sources for this study can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, there are accounts by creole witnesses, that is, the writings of those who were 'native' to the region. Primarily, these are literary texts in the conventional sense. On the other, I examine the testimonies of incomers.

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12 The term River Plate (and its Spanish corollary, Rio de la Plata) is employed advisedly, for though Argentina will feature most prominently, Uruguay also figures in my study, mainly because the fates of these two nations were inextricably linked during the period I embrace.

specifically those left by early British settlers. The records of settler experience to be studied encompass a variety of genres, including comprehensive published accounts of life in the Rio de la Plata, aimed at least partially for the consumption of potential immigrants, autobiography crafted with future generations in mind, as well as personal correspondence between family members. There follows a brief catalogue of my principal texts, a cursory and necessarily simplistic glance at a complex body of material. I ask the reader to excuse the inevitable voids and discontinuities in this introductory résumé, with the assurance that many of the apparent schisms will be reconciled as my argument evolves.

**Esteban Echeverría, El matadero**

*El matadero* can best be described as an unambiguous political denunciation, an allegorical novella which pulls no punches in its criticism of the vulgar brutality of Argentina during the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas. The exact date of the story's authorship is uncertain, but is usually estimated as between late 1839 and early 1840, only a few months before the dictator's repressive measures reached their zenith, circumstances which obliged Echeverría himself to flee into exile. It has been suggested that the watercolour depiction of a Buenos Aires slaughterhouse by the English artist Emeric Essex Vidal may have played some part in inspiring the author to write the work, though the greatest impulse behind his impassioned fulmination was, without doubt, the brutal methods employed by the Rosas regime to suppress any trace of opposition.¹⁴ The action takes place in the late 1830s, developing in and around a slaughter yard in the Barrio del Alto de San Pedro, a part of Buenos Aires that now corresponds to the zones of Constitución and San Telmo, the area in which the author spent his earliest childhood years. In *El matadero*, this southerly district of

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the city, and the slaughterhouse in particular, becomes a microcosm of Rosas's Argentina, where violence and death are commonplace and generally accepted as part of quotidian reality. The story was first published by Juan Maria Gutiérrez in the *Revista del Río de la Plata* in 1871, some twenty years after Echeverría's death.

**José Mármol, *Amalia* (1851-1855)**

Like *El matadero*, *Amalia* was crafted as an eloquent attack upon the Rosas regime. Somewhat more subtle in his approach than Echeverría, Mármol sketches a convincing portrait of life in Buenos Aires during 1840, the year which witnessed some of the worst atrocities and most intense oppression. In particular, *Amalia* permits us an insight into the underground world of the anti-Rosas opposition, as its members scheme to bring down the dictator. Running alongside this tale of political intrigue is the touching romance that develops between the eponymous female character and an injured anti-Rosas dissident whom she nurses prior to his intended flight to Montevideo. Predictably, the affair ends in tragic death at the hands of the dictator's cut-throats. Mármol's masterpiece has been hailed as 'the paradigm of romantic prose fiction in Argentina', a title of which it is more than worthy. The work evades concrete political planning; nowhere is there an explicit statement of the path that the nation should follow towards a (clearly desired) liberal future. Nonetheless, the critic who seeks to emulate the original readership through immersion into the novel's context can observe a myriad of implications linked to the ideological currents of the time, which, when twined together, form Mármol's vision of a free and democratic Argentina.

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Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo* (1845)

Certainly the most enigmatic and heterogeneous of the literary works of the Rosas period, *Facundo* perpetually confounds critical attempts to define its essence. Though blatant in his ideological message, Sarmiento adopts an astute strategy to criticize Rosas. Instead of resorting to an ingenuous diatribe against the dictator himself, he opts to attack through association, vilifying the memory of Juan Facundo Quiroga, a provincial counterpart of Rosas who had been murdered ten years earlier. Many critics have noted the problem of finding an appropriate label for *Facundo*, a difficulty neatly summarized by José Miguel Oviedo: 'La obra es muchas cosas a la vez: sociología, historia, biografía, panfleto político, geografía, testimonio, periodismo, costumbrismo, libro de viajes, novela'. Others have suggested the futility of seeking a conventional classification for the work, considering that recognized epithets are just too restrictive. Nicolas Shumway, for example, has noted:

Gallons of ink have been spent trying to decide if *Facundo* should be catalogued under history, sociology, biography, essay, or some other neat category invented for European letters. Too inaccurate and undocumented for history, too intuitive for sociology, too fictive for biography, and too historical, biographical and sociological for essay, *Facundo* establishes its own genre.

The complexity of the text appears to have its origins in the diverse influences encountered by Sarmiento in his own extensive reading of European and North American literature. *Facundo*'s defiance of accepted categories expands the text's appeal, elevating it above the status of political monograph, and is perhaps the most admirable aspect of a work which all too frequently irritates on account of the inflexible, binary ideology of its author. Sarmiento is often credited as the pioneer of


the influential *civilización y barbarie* dichotomy, though the roots of this concept can be traced in a multitude of earlier works in both the Americas and Europe, stretching right back to Classical times. Ultimately, there is little original in Sarmiento's thought; nearly every individual aspect has a precedent in the European intellectual tradition. That said, the particular mélange of concepts found within *Facundo* is to a good extent moulded to Spanish American conditions.

**Un inglés, *Cinco años en Buenos Aires 1820-1825***

First published as *A Five Years' Residence in Buenos Aires During the Years 1820 to 1825. By an Englishman*, this work provides a comprehensive insight into *porteño* society in the period shortly before Rosas came to power. It is widely held that the anonymous author was in fact Thomas George Love, an early settler in Buenos Aires who founded the city's main English language newspaper of the time, *The British Packet and Argentine News*. Love was already a stalwart of the Argentine-British community when he established the weekly paper in 1826 to satisfy the demands of the expanding settler contingent, and remained editor until his death in 1845. Unlike the works of many of the first British travellers to South America, *Cinco años* is not a scientific account laden with tabulated data, barometric readings etc., but rather a description of the everyday aspects of *porteño* life from the...

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18 The reader of *Facundo* will discern that Sarmiento's notion of barbarism is the product of a long evolutionary process. For the ancient Greeks, the *barbaros* was initially one who could not speak their language, but the term rapidly acquired additional connotations, such as the incapacity to form civil societies. To the Greeks, of course, civilized life could be roughly equated with urban dwelling - a pervasive correlation in Sarmiento's thought too. For a perceptive account of the development of the term barbarian, with particular reference to the Spanish American context, see Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), especially chapter 2.

19 Although extremely rare in the English original (London: G. Herbert, 1825), this work has been translated into Spanish and republished in Argentina, where it is readily available. All references within the present study are to the Hispanic edition (Buenos Aires, 1986).

The book opens with a detailed portrait of the layout of the city and of the appearance of its principal buildings, before describing local customs, religious practices and the educational and political systems. The image of society emerging from this account is largely favourable, in complete contrast to the oppressed and squalid community depicted within the later works of Echeverría, Mármol and Sarmiento.


When the liberal governments of Buenos Aires invited proposals for European colonization projects in their territory during the 1820s, one of the first received was that of J. T. Barber Beaumont, who submitted plans for the establishment of an English agricultural colony in the province. An account of this and subsequent projects was written up by Barber Beaumont's son, J. A. B. Beaumont, as *Travels in Buenos Ayres and the Adjacent Provinces*, to serve both as a history of the early immigration schemes and as a guidebook for prospective settlers. To meet the requirements of the latter function, the work contains a detailed description of the geographical composition of the provinces, their system of government, as well as the flora and fauna of the region. It constitutes one of the earliest reports of the Platine area intended specifically for the consumption of would-be settlers and is the forerunner of many later publications, such as the Mulhall brothers' *The Handbook of the River Plate* and John McColl's officially sanctioned manual for emigrants to Uruguay. In the course of his account,

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21 Typical of the scientific mode of travel writing is John Miers's *Travels in Chile and La Plata*, 2 vols (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1826), in which the author meticulously records the distances between the various points of his journey, the altitudes above sea level of the settlements he encountered whilst crossing the Andes, as well as detailed observations of a meteorological nature.

22 The full title of Beaumont's account is *Travels in Buenos Ayres and the Adjacent Provinces of the Río de la Plata with Observations intended for the use of Persons who Contemplate Emigrating to that Country or Embracing Capital in its Affairs* (London: James Ridgway, 1828).

23 *The Handbook of the River Plate* was published in annual editions between 1861 and 1885 in both
Beaumont sets out to debunk the myth of official hospitality towards foreign citizens by revealing the double-dealing of the Buenos Aires government in relation to his father's enterprise. He draws attention to the many promises made to the settlers by the local authorities, virtually all of which were then disregarded to the severe detriment of the incomers. Unsurprisingly, this leads Beaumont to a thorough and damning critique of the political situation that clashes sharply with the enthusiasm displayed by the author of *Cinco años*.

**The Gibson Papers, especially the letters of George, Robert and Thomas**

Now conserved in the manuscripts section of the National Library of Scotland, the correspondence and papers of the Gibsons permit intimate access to the lives of one particular British family with a long-standing involvement in the River Plate. The first member of this influential Scottish dynasty arrived in Buenos Aires around 1819, initially setting up as a merchant in the city before rapidly acquiring large tracts of rural property. As well as providing important details of the everyday running of an *estancia* during the early years of the Argentine republic, the Gibsons' papers contain a rich reserve of clues in the quest to construct an adequate image of the incomers' perception of their new homeland. Of particular significance within the context of the present study is a series of letters written by Robert to his brother George during the late 1830s, which offer a wealth of comment on the turbulent political situation and habitual conflict of the period. In addition to the papers themselves, I refer to other writings, both published and unpublished, as well as

English and Spanish by the Irish brothers Edward and Michael Mulhall. The Mulhalls also founded *The Standard*, one of the principal Argentine newspapers of the time. John McColl's *The Republic of Uruguay: A Manual for Emigrants to the River Plate* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1862) was produced 'with the authority of the Monte Videan government' (on title page). This work is unusual within the Uruguayan context, since few official efforts were made to attract immigration to the eastern shore of the Plate. In *La emigración europea al Río de la Plata* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1966), Juan Antonio Oddone observes: 'La acción oficial del Uruguay en cuanto a la promoción inmigratoria ha sido limitada: la circunstancia de carecer de un vasto territorio apto y sobre todo la indeterminación real de la tierra pública, dada su caótica situación jurídica, no favorecieron por cierto la política de concesiones y contratos por intermedio de agentes' (p. 80).
information gathered from the Gibsons' descendants, to construct an original overview of this family and their enterprise.

**Faith Hard Tried: Jane Robson's autobiography**

In 1825, a four-year-old Scottish girl arrived in Argentina with her parents, members of a strong immigrant contingent destined to establish an agricultural colony at Monte Grande in the province of Buenos Aires. Early this century, Jane Robson (née Rodger), at an advanced age and as one of the last surviving members of the party which had sailed from Leith over eighty years before, recounted her life story to an interested acquaintance. Mrs. Robson's friend transcribed her oral autobiography to paper for the benefit of future generations of the family under the highly appropriate title of *Faith Hard Tried.* The constant hardships endured by the early settlers and their creditable perseverance when confronted by daunting obstacles are revealed in her narration. This truly remarkable, but as yet unpublished, record of courage bears witness to the pioneering spirit of the first incomers. In one respect, Jane's account is unique amongst those studied in this thesis, for it embodies a female perspective of life in the young Argentinian nation; the inclusion of such a text can only lend greater universality to my analysis of the settlers' writings.

**Justification and method**

Having reviewed the above list of sources, the astute reader may well ask this question: aside from their approximate contemporaneity, what link exists between the writings of British settlers and those of creole authors which might justify the selection of this material as the foundation for the present study? The answer is

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24 This work was kindly made available to the author by May and Hilda Dodds of Turdera, province of Buenos Aires. Jane Robson was the sister of one of their great-grandmothers. As well as being discussed throughout the thesis, Jane's entire account is reproduced in the form of an appendix.
deceptively straightforward and hinges upon the ideological standpoint adopted by Echeverría, MárQUEz and Sarmiento in their works. At this stage, it should be made plain that I view these purportedly literary texts as primarily ideological documents. Their 'literariness' is defined simply by the strategies they employ to convey a political message; with reference to Amalia and El matadero, at least, they generally shy away from outright programmatic statement in favour of allegory, allusion and other rhetorical devices. Whilst the creative imagination behind the engendering of these texts opens a path for some divergence in critical readings, their central meaning is sufficiently unified and explicit to resist challenge; it would be nigh on impossible to arrive at a convincing interpretation that effaced their function within the specific socio-historical context of the Rosas era. Hence, the most pertinent form of inquiry should focus upon the ideology they espouse, striving to define both its exact essence and the manner of its communication through a text that aspires to literary status.

In each of the works by creole writers, Argentine society is depicted as fundamentally riven by irreconcilable differences. On the surface, the conflict can be seen as a battle for supremacy between two political factions, the unitarios and the federales (these terms are elaborated in the course of the following chapter). However, the struggle cannot simply be represented as a conventional political contest between alternative sets of policy and approaches to government; rather, its roots go much deeper, reaching down into the very ethos of society and into the realms of individual and national identity. In essence, the troubles spring from the

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25 Authorial preoccupation with social circumstances is almost certainly more pervasive in Argentinian writing than in European or North American literature. In an article entitled 'Los escritores frente a la realidad nacional', in which he makes particular reference to Echeverría, MárQUEz and José Hernández, Félix Luna notes: 'En otros [países] -Estados Unidos o algunos de Europa occidental, por ejemplo-, los escritores pueden dedicarse a su obra sin expresar la más minima inquietud sobre la realidad que los circunda y nadie les reprochará esta indiferencia. Ni siquiera en los casos más extremos: los dramaturgos y novelistas franceses que publicaron durante la ocupación alemana no fueron repudiados por haberlo hecho. En la Argentina, en cambio, la opinión pública exige a los grandes escritores una permanente definición sobre cada hecho importante y no acepta su silencio o su distracción'. Luna, Fracturas y continuidades en la historia argentina (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1992), pp. 324-26 (p. 325).
collision of radically variant concepts of society, notions which embrace every aspect of the national character. In one corner, stands an attitude of reverence towards the liberal, enlightened democracies of Northern Europe, claiming that this is the model of social organization to which all must aspire. Opposing this view, there is the approach which rejects elaborate foreign paradigms as alien to Spanish American reality and instead seeks the marriage of republican self-determination with the cultural traditions inherited from colonial Spain. For the moment, it is enough to say that Echeverria, Mármoel and Sarmiento subscribed more to the first model than the second; hence, their works are littered with allusions to the innate superiority of Northern European ideas and culture. This sense of admiration was naturally translated into the concrete desire to mould Argentina's future according to the best of imported ideals. From there it was an easy step to the proposal which could realize this ambition, to simply introduce such values wholesale within their most natural medium, the Northern European citizen. Thus, the promotion of immigration rapidly became the cornerstone of liberal plans to transform Argentina from the turbulent domain of political strongmen into a thoroughly civilized democracy. Unsurprisingly, therefore, foreign people and/or their culture feature positively, to varying degrees, in works such as Facundo, Amalia and El matadero.

Although we will later observe that Platine liberalism was not of a uniform character, nor always liberal in the modern sense, and that there were important ideological variations within the movement, the above summary meets its immediate objective, that of exposing a transparent link between the early British settlers and the creole authors whose works enter this study. Clearly, there is a valid rationale behind any attempt to analyse writings in which the settlers and their values figure in an idealized light alongside textual traces left by the incomers themselves.

The plan of the thesis is as follows. Chapter one consists of a fuller introduction to the historical and intellectual context of the Rosas era, giving particular weight to the emotive issue of foreign influence and involvement in the developing Platine republics. This leads to an overview of the status of the British
settler community in the region around this time. I then explore the beliefs of Rosas's liberal opponents, making reference to plainly ideological texts by creole writers, principally Esteban Echeverria's *Dogma socialista* and Juan Bautista Alberdi's *Bases*. This is followed by a brief consideration of the impact of socio-political thought upon early Spanish American literature, revealing the ambiguity of genre prevalent at the time, with the aim of lending further support to my dual consideration of supposedly literary texts and other forms of discourse. Finally, I look some way beyond the Rosas period, to consider the effects of mass immigration when it eventually materialized in the latter years of the nineteenth century, observing that the incomers did indeed bring many changes to the Río de la Plata, though not all were changes for the better.

Chapters two, three and four each consist of the analysis of a particular theme, or range of themes, common to the majority of the texts studied. Naturally, certain texts have more to say about one topic than another, so my emphasis and selection of material vary. In essence, I garner details of certain aspects of life in the Platine area from these distinct voices, set them side by side and consider the light they shed upon one another. An attempt to ascertain to what extent the settlers themselves fulfilled the expectations of the proponents of immigration is of particular consequence. Of course, our consciousness of the author's status is foremost in such an analysis, for we can read more successfully between the lines of the assorted texts given an awareness of the writer's motivations and likely concerns. Therefore, no apology is required for the odd digression into biographical detail or occasional cross-referencing with other contemporary documents.

Chapter two opens with a brief demonstration of my methodology in action, setting creole and incomer descriptions of an aspect of Platine society side by side. Specifically, I note the correspondences between Darwin's description of a Buenos Aires slaughter yard from *The Voyage of the Beagle* and Echeverria's depiction of the same location in *El matadero*, before considering the ramifications of these similarities. From here, I move on to examine topics such as the settlers' first
impressions of the River Plate and their general perception of local society, before observing an ideological parallel between Beaumont's account and Sarmiento's *Facundo*. Proceeding from the theme of society at large, I consider the textual representation of the British community, developing some of the assertions made in the published works through reference to the Gibsons and Jane Robson. The chapter closes on the issue of family, exploring the contrast between the image of the coherent settler kin network, as presented by Jane Robson, and the pernicious individualism of creole society, perceived as one of Rosas's principal means of social control in both *Amalia* and the *Dogma socialista*.

In the third chapter, I focus upon a topic of central importance in determining the relations between creole and settler, that of religion. Through reference to *Cinco años*, I begin with an appraisal of the relatively tolerant religious atmosphere that prevailed in Buenos Aires under the liberal administrations of the 1820s, conditions which had opened the way for the interdenominational marriage of incomer and creole. This representation is then set in opposition to the fanaticism of the porteños portrayed in *El matadero*, whose ultra-Catholicism comes to the fore, with political sanction, when faced by a catastrophic flood. Turning to *Amalia*, I find further evidence of the political role of Church and religion during the Rosas era. Having established a specific link between freedom of worship and immigration, drawing upon Alberdi's *Bases*, I consider the religious life of the settlers, observing the adherence of the British community to their native Protestantism, with special emphasis upon the Scots' zeal for preserving their distinctive religious institutions. A sermon delivered by the first Scottish minister in Argentina is analysed, with the aim of both illuminating the incomers' typical beliefs and assessing the part played by religion in their community. This task is further supported through reference to Jane Robson's autobiography. The chapter closes with some final reflections upon religious tolerance and foreign settlement; whilst Alberdi and Sarmiento hinted that a liberal approach was a prerequisite for immigration, I attempt to show that the early settlers' themselves were the most capable agents of national secularization.
In the fourth and last of the main chapters, I investigate perceptions of politics, dictatorship and civil war. The first issue addressed in this section is the conflicting presentations of the political ambience of the 1820s contained within Cinco años and Travels in Buenos Ayres. I then embark upon an analysis of the full ideological import of El matadero and Amalia, treating both texts as vehicles for the expression of the respective authors' political convictions. After venturing into these emotionally charged works, we observe a cooler view of the political scenario through a reading of Robert Gibson's letters. Of particular consequence is an assessment of the motives behind the gradual evolution of partiality in this body of correspondence, as mild, but unbiased, curiosity gives way to frustration and an outraged moral response. By delving into Jane Robson's account, we receive further evidence of the incomers' general reluctance to take sides in the wider ideological debate, an objectivity set off against the keen appreciation of decency and humanity which sometimes obliged them to leap into the cauldron of local politics. The chapter closes with a consideration of the varying techniques employed to convey an ideological message, or to elicit the reader's sympathy, across our range of texts.

In way of an epilogue, I draw together some general thoughts on practice which spring from my excursion into Platine 'local knowledge', evaluating what has been learnt from the juxtaposition of Argentinian literary works with the accounts of British settlers.\(^{26}\) First, I reflect upon the methodology of my study, further debating the decision to analyse supposedly literary texts on the same plane as travel writing, private correspondence and personal memoirs. The case is then argued in practical terms, summarizing the discoveries made through applying this strategy to our particular range of texts. Specifically, I attempt an exercise of synthesis, seeking to

\(^{26}\) Much recent work in the realms of social science has centred upon 'local knowledge', considering the socio-cultural phenomena of peoples' lives within their own immediate context, placing emphasis upon the interpretations held by the subjects of inquiry, all at the expense of the old impulse to theorize, to distil the evidence gathered in the course of field research from its native domain and to reset it within some grand, universal framework. The definitive exponent of this brand of study is the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. See, in particular, his collection *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* [1983] (London: Fontana, 1993).
build a portrait of the River Plate region around the time of Rosas from the cultural
documents gathered and analysed. I do not, however, purport that the resultant
panorama faithfully resembles invariable reality, even if one could say that such a
condition exists and is possible to discern, but rather that my view is the product of
two interacting and inherently subjective forces: on the one hand, the authors'
creative impulse and expressive talent; on the other, my own reading of their texts,
mediated by distinctly personal factors such as experience, set of mind and beliefs.

In this sense, the present thesis constitutes just another textual construct open
to interpretation by further readers, as opposed to an essentialist statement of
indisputable fact. As I compose my analysis, certain facets of my own background
may influence and mould, either explicitly or implicitly, consciously or subliminally,
the conclusions I reach. Assuming that the intellectual quest is governed by a vestige
of common sense, however, these interpretations should at least bear some
resemblance to the likely projects of the authors whose texts are examined. Thus, I
close these prolegomena by adopting a particular theoretical stance: that the most
intelligent form of textual criticism consists not of reading autonomous verbal icons,
but of diligently composed manifestations of human endeavour, produced within a
specific social, political and cultural context, through the continuously variable lens
of one's own interpretive instinct.
1
THE HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

The present chapter serves to provide essential background information for the analyses of the principal sources undertaken in the central portion of this thesis. Naturally, to adequately appreciate the motivations behind the creation of my main texts and to grasp the numerous socio-political references within them, one must first be aware of the historical and cultural forces which shaped the Platine zone during the era investigated. In addition to outlining the major events of the time, thus easing the reader's burden by diminishing the imperative to explore this study in tandem with a mass of secondary works, I attempt to point specifically to the facets of regional history of greatest relevance to the lines of argument developed in later chapters. After sketching the course of the Platine region as it negotiated the troubled path from colonial status towards cementing autonomy, I turn to the Rosas era, summarizing some characteristics of the regime and the ideology of its liberal opponents, before briefly discussing the dictator's fall and the ensuing developments. Specific prominence is accorded to the role of Britain throughout, both as a direct participant in Platine affairs and as an originator of intellectual inspiration, along with introductory details regarding the early British settlers, topics of significance in several of the texts to be examined and indispensable contextual material for all.

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As domestic problems, many arising from the reign of the inept Charles IV, eroded Spain's control of her empire towards the end of the eighteenth century, a blend of the latest European ideas was crystallizing in the discontented colonies. Throughout most of the colonial period, intellectual activity in the Americas had been largely confined to an elite minority in the universities, but scholarly pursuits began to find
wider diffusion, at least in the urban centres, with the arrival of the new brand of thought from Europe in the late 1700s, a fact demonstrated by a sudden proliferation of literary and debating societies. Ranging from the radical agenda of Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762), to the laissez-faire philosophy articulated by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), the ideological imports stimulated Spanish America's evolving consciousness of individual liberty, national independence and democracy. Smith's writings, in particular, were received with enthusiasm by members of the emerging entrepreneurial class, the very people who potentially had most to gain by breaking the restrictive bonds of colonialism. As Fred Sturm has noted, the Scottish thinker's ideas 'became a rallying cry for the nascent Latin American bourgeoisie'.

Adam Smith, like many fellow intellectuals of the age, subscribed to a stadial view of history, believing that society naturally evolves through certain economic stages towards an ultimate ideal, each with a corresponding set of social and political traits. In ascending order and reduced to their most basic form, these consisted of the following levels of economic organization: 1) that of the hunter; 2) that of the shepherd; 3) that of farming; 4) that of commerce. Progress through this hierarchical model, however, depends upon the presence of some immanent drive for self-improvement within the given society, the litmus test of a civilized people. In the view of Smith and his Scottish Enlightenment colleagues, the nations he terms 'savage and barbarous' are incapable of making this progression without the intervention of an outside agency. A contemporary and countryman of the author of the *Wealth of Nations*, William Robertson, describes the natural stagnation of 'barbarous' society in his *History of America* (1777):

A naked savage, cowering near the fire in his miserable cabin, or stretched under a few branches which afford him a temporary shelter,

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has as little inclination as capacity for useless speculation. His thoughts extend not beyond what relates to animal life; and when they are not directed towards some of its concerns, his mind is totally inactive.³

It is not surprising, therefore, that Smith, as part of the vibrant intellectual circle revolving around the learned societies of Edinburgh, perceived colonization by advanced nations to be the most efficient means of bringing social and economic progress to undeveloped lands:

The colonists carry out with them a knowledge of agriculture and other useful arts, superior to what can grow up of its own accord in the course of many centuries among savage and barbarous nations. They carry out with them too the habit of subordination, some notion of the regular government which takes place in their own country, of the system of laws which support it, and of a regular administration of justice; and they naturally establish something of the same kind in the new settlement.⁴

Whilst the Spaniards undoubtedly brought a range of these benefits to their American territories, Smith is quick to identify the shortcomings of their brand of colonialism, being particularly critical of the conquistadores' relentless quest for gold and of the myopic, monopolistic trade policies pursued by imperial powers in general, criticizing the former as a parasitic enterprise and the latter as the surest way to stifle any long-term economic potential of the colony.⁵

³ Cited by Kathryn Sutherland in her explanatory notes to Smith's Wealth of Nations, p. 561.
⁴ Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 344.
⁵ Smith perceived that the Spaniards all-consuming thirst for gold was 'perfectly ruinous', as once the resources of the native people had all been plundered, which he claims occurred within six to eight years of the Discovery, the colonists were obliged to embark upon mining projects in an attempt to satisfy the demands of the Spanish crown (pp. 341-43). Mining ventures, however, 'instead of replacing the capital employed in them, [...] commonly absorb both profit and capital' and, therefore, 'are the projects [...] to which of all others a prudent law-giver, who desired to increase the capital of his nation, would least chuse [sic] to give any extraordinary encouragement' (p. 343). This rather questionable dismissal of mining as an unproductive venture is certainly influenced by Smith's almost idealistic esteem for agricultural labour as the most virtuous of endeavours, alongside which most other schemes to generate wealth appear tarnished. On the issue of trade, Smith notes critically that the first concern of a 'mother country' on taking possession of new colonies is to create regulations 'in view to secure to herself' the monopoly of their commerce, to confine their market, and to enlarge her own at their expense [sic], and, consequently, rather to damp and discourage, than to quicken and forward the course of their prosperity' (pp. 351-52).
Thus, we have a potential paradox: Enlightenment thought of Adam Smith's mark not only supported colonization as a tool of social improvement, but criticized some of its most fundamental characteristics and offered intellectual impetus to those who wished to break away. However, within the Hispanic American context, this is not as inconsistent as it may seem; by the time Smith was writing the Wealth of Nations, Spanish colonialism in many areas of the New World was a spent force insofar as its civilizing benefits were concerned. The basic institutions which Smith associated with the process of colonization (legal system, regular government, etc.) had been in place for some time, but their failings were now becoming evident; hence, the dividends of political subordination no longer sufficiently outweighed its considerable drawbacks. The Napoleonic invasion of imperial Spain's Peninsular base during 1807-08 was but the culmination of an ongoing decline in that nation's status as a world power, no longer in a position to ably govern herself let alone maintain the pretence of control over distant and increasingly rebellious dominions. Since the 1770s, the decade during which the widely unpopular Bourbon reforms began to have a real impact, members of Spanish America's burgeoning creole population had developed an acute consciousness of the injustice of their continued subservience to peninsulares, and saw both in foreign thought and precedent the shining path to emancipation. The North American Declaration of Independence (1776) was particularly influential upon their thought, as were the shockwaves of the French Revolution (1789) with its ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality.

With the advantage of modern scholarship, however, we cannot say that imported models were the exclusive agents of Spanish American liberation. Benedict Anderson, for example, in his often quoted investigation of nationalism, Imagined Communities, argues against this simplistic view. He suggests that foreign influences provided the intellectual framework for the condemnation of restrictive colonialism, 'an arsenal of ideological criticisms of imperial and anciens régimes',

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6 See Anderson, Imagined Communities, pp. 47-65.
but, on their own, are insufficient explanation for the development of coherent national communities (p. 65). Instead, he assigns an important role to the administrative frameworks of colonial times, the very institutions which the liberators ostensibly railed against, suggesting that each viceroyalty constituted a sort of proto-nation with an evolving communal identity and an already defined territorial domain. Hence, the essential conditions for the emergence of nationhood were in fact nurtured within the colonial system and owed less to contemporary ideology imported from modern Europe than is frequently suggested.

In addition, Anderson identifies the very character of the creole class as a vital element of the independence process. Although essential to the administration of the colonies and virtually identical to their colonial masters in all but the accident of birthplace, criollos were largely excluded from the highest offices. Nonetheless, they found themselves in the most unusual position of a social group which 'constituted simultaneously a colonial community and an upper class' (p. 58). Their population was quite different then from the classes which dominate the typical revolutionary process. The independence movement in Spanish America did not follow the pattern of the French uprising, for example, in which the lower echelons of society usurped power from the governing aristocracy, but was rather a rebellion of those who 'had readily at hand the political, cultural and military means for successfully asserting themselves' (p. 58).

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Let us now briefly consider some of the events leading up to the attainment of independence in Argentina, beginning with an episode which constitutes the first major instance of British involvement in the region and thus provides a background to certain strands of the present thesis.

Whilst Peninsular tribulations were lending weight to the creole desire for self-determination, other world powers, notably Great Britain, viewed Spain's
situation as the ideal opportunity to exploit her previously isolated colonies. British interest in the Platine region had been negligible prior to this time and only a few British citizens resided in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. During 1806, however, the maverick and visionary figure of Sir Home Riggs Popham entered the scene. Popham had left Great Britain the previous year as part of an expeditionary force commanded by General Sir David Baird and Brigadier-General William Beresford, with orders to seize possession of the Dutch colonies in Southern Africa, a task which was easily accomplished. But Popham, influenced by the anti-colonial ideology of a Venezuelan-born acquaintance, Francisco Miranda, also considered the mission an ideal opportunity to conquer the Spanish colonies of the Plate. Believing that the cities of Montevideo and Buenos Aires were poorly defended, he convinced Baird to provide troops to pursue this unofficial objective and, along with Beresford, headed for the Río de la Plata with an invasion force largely composed of men and officers of the 71st Light Highland Infantry Regiment. The initial aim was the capture of Montevideo, but, on observing the city's strong fortifications, it was decided to attack Buenos Aires instead.

Beresford led his troops ashore near Quilmes at the end of June and captured Buenos Aires within a matter of days. Throughout the next month, the people of the city, the porteños, plotted to expel the interlopers, a plan which was executed with rapid success. On 10 August, the poorly armed and largely civilian population, supported by a number of Spanish troops advancing steadily through the city, set out to repel the disciplined and well-equipped British forces by all manners of

7 'Francisco Miranda (1750-1816) fue un venezolano que trabajó activamente por la independencia americana. En España seguía la carrera de las armas, en París se entusiasmó con todas las teorías políticas y económicas en boga, afiliándose a la Masonería [...]. Como soldado español, luchó por la independencia de los Estados Unidos y quizá entonces concibió la idea de lograr esa independencia para Venezuela y América del Sur. [...] Buscando ayuda para sus planes insurreccionistas, Miranda visitó las principales Cortes europeas y donde sus ideas fueron mejor escuchadas fue en Inglaterra. El ministro Pitt tuvo su 'Proyecto de Constitución para las Colonias Hispanoamericanas' (1790). La Revolución Francesa contó a Miranda entre sus generales defensores, en Valmy. Vuelto a Inglaterra, continuó sus trabajos contando con la ayuda y amistad de figuras políticas, entre las que destacamos a Sir Home Popham'. María Luisa Coolighan and Juan José Arteaga, Historia del Uruguay (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1992), p. 161.
improvisation. The citizens took to the rooftops and subjected the enemy to an unrelenting barrage of rocks, sniper fire and boiling oil. The regular soldiers, outnumbered and surprised by these unconventional tactics, were gradually driven back towards the city's fortress where Beresford was forced to surrender on 12 August. British reinforcements under Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Auchmuty reached the Plate later that year and finally seized Montevideo in February 1807. The latest conquest served as the base for a renewed attack upon Buenos Aires in early July. In a re-enactment of their earlier triumph, the porteños again proved superior, quickly overwhelming the intruders commanded this time by Lieutenant-General John Whitelocke.

The terms of the surrender included the complete withdrawal of British forces from the Plate and the restoration of prisoners to both sides. Such an unusually ignominious ending to a British venture abroad was met with disbelief and condemnation at home. Whitelocke became the unfortunate scapegoat, returning to face a court martial on charges of incompetence, eventually being cashiered and declared totally unfit for further service in any military capacity.\(^8\)

Whilst the invasions were an unmitigated disaster for Britain, they left an influential legacy in the Platine region. Having repelled one of the foremost world powers of the time, the creole population gained confidence in their capacity to resist Spain. Their victories entered into the developing national mythology as la Reconquista and la Defensa respectively, both of which are still commemorated in street names of Buenos Aires and Montevideo.\(^9\) The aura of self-belief which these


\(^9\) A unifying mythology based upon a shared past is central to the modern concept of nationhood. In *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), Anthony D. Smith characterizes the nation as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' (p. 14).
achievements lent to porteño society was, without doubt, a significant stimulus in the growth of the independence movement.

The defeat of the invasiones inglesas augured well for the quest for emancipation, but, in reality, the transition from colonial dependence to national autonomy was fraught with difficulties. The imposition of Joseph Bonaparte on the throne of Spain was the eventual trigger of full-scale revolt within the American dominions. At first, dissent in the Platine region did not take an overtly republican form, but demanded the restoration of the legitimate Spanish monarchy in the figure of Ferdinand VII, heir to the deposed Charles IV. When the people of Buenos Aires swore allegiance to Ferdinand on 25 May 1810, however, they were effectively declaring their independence from colonial Spain. Nicolas Shumway has suggested that 'the oath was more than anything a way of uniting creoles and Spaniards of all political stripes under one banner; no one objected to swearing allegiance to a nonking'.10 This camouflaged attempt to construct a sense of national identity was short-lived, and the origins of the internal conflicts which reduced the region to civil war and near anarchy around 1820 soon became apparent. As Susan and Peter Calvert have noted, 'the "unity" of the criollo forces was strained' and once victory over Spain had been achieved, 'the only binding force, a common enemy, disappeared and centrifugal forces became overt'.11

Indeed, the independence movement was hindered by differences over the region's future direction from the very start. The porteños dominated the series of constitutional congresses which headed the emancipation process and were jealous guardians of their city's pre-eminent position in the evolving national scenario. Many leading figures in Buenos Aires during the independence era, Mariano Moreno for example, adhered zealously to European ideology, often to the detriment of their


credibility amongst the general population. Their brand of imported thought, which combined economic liberalism with a strong current of social elitism, took little account of everyday reality and was an uneasy bedfellow of the conservative, Hispanic tradition of the interior provinces.\textsuperscript{12} In particular, the widespread notion that the new class of thought was anti-Catholic in nature, or even atheistic, set the reformers at odds with large sectors of the populace. Alienated by the imposition of an incongruous ideology, the common people sought recourse in authoritative leadership with recognizable values, qualities embodied in the figure of the caudillo.

The first significant manifestation of the inevitable conflict between the feudal caudillos and the urban elite can be seen in the breach between José Gervasio Artigas, the legendary guerrilla leader of the Banda Oriental, and the authorities in Buenos Aires. When Artigas sent delegates to the congress of June 1813 with proposals for constitutional organization, they were shunned. His emissaries carried with them the so-called Instrucciones del año XIII, a blueprint for a federal republic composed of virtually autonomous provinces, subject to central government authority only in matters such as foreign policy. In addition to challenging the supremacy of Buenos Aires within a decentralized system, Artigas’s proposals went as far as suggesting a new site for the federal capital.\textsuperscript{13} Angered by the outright rejection of his plan, Artigas withdrew from the congress and was declared an enemy of the state. Félix Luna, a revisionist historian, has portrayed the stance of the porteños as unadvisedly stubborn, suggesting that Artigas made only quite modest demands in exchange for

\textsuperscript{12} The naivety of the early liberals was, on some occasions, flaunted openly. As Calvert and Calvert have recorded, ‘Moreno exemplified the gap between liberalism and Latin American reality when he distributed copies of Rousseau’s \textit{Social Contract} to the rural population’ (p. 38). One must presume that he overlooked the illiteracy of the overwhelming majority of these people.

\textsuperscript{13} Artigas’s threat to the dominance of Buenos Aires was enshrined in article 19 of the Instrucciones: ‘Que precisa e indispensable, sea fuera de Buenos Aires, donde resida el sitio del Gobierno de las Provincias Unidas’. Cited by Coolighan and Arteaga, \textit{Historia del Uruguay}, p. 212.
his support: 'el jefe oriental exigia solamente una razonable cuota de autonomia para su comarca y cierta ayuda para terminar con los españoles en Montevideo y con los portugueses que usurpaban todavia las Misiones y el norte del territorio'.

After this rebuff, Artigas forged alliances with the neighbouring provinces of Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Córdoba, Misiones and Santa Fe, which, along with the Banda Oriental, then constituted the *Liga Federal de los Pueblos Libres del Litoral*. Artigas, in his new capacity as *Protector de los Pueblos Libres*, made fresh approaches to Buenos Aires, all of which were rejected. As a result, the *artiguistas* refused to participate in the new congress in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán, an absence which excluded them from one of the great historic moments of the era. On 9 July 1816, the congress proceeded to issue the definitive declaration of the independence of the United Provinces of the River Plate. The continuation of Artigas's conflict with the *porteños* soon became impossible due to a rapid decline in his fortunes. During the long campaign to repel the Portuguese invaders who had occupied the Banda Oriental in 1816, Artigas's forces suffered a number of defeats, such as those at Catalán (1817) and Tacuarembó Chico (1820). The final blow to Artigas's patriotic struggle to assert the sovereignty of the Banda Oriental came in 1820, when his erstwhile allies Estanislao López and Francisco Ramírez, the caudillos of Santa Fe and Entre Ríos respectively, signed a peace agreement, the *Tratado del Pilar*, with the Buenos Aires government. Now deprived of the military strength to continue the cause, Artigas promptly retired from the public arena, passing the remainder of his life in voluntary exile in Paraguay.

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15 In addition to works mentioned in previous references, I found the following sources especially informative on Artigas's career: *Artigas: estudios publicados en ‘El País’ como homenaje al jefe de los orientales en el centenario de su muerte 1850-1950* (Montevideo: Colombino Hnos., 1951) - this collection consists of articles published in the Uruguayan newspaper *El País* by prominent historical commentators of the time, including Carlos Maggi, Eugenio Petit Muñoz and Emilio Ravignani; Eduardo Azeuy Ameghino, *Historia de Artigas y la independencia argentina* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1993).
The conflict between the porteños and the leader of the Banda Oriental may be considered the precursor of the often violent debate which dominated Platine affairs during the era embraced by this study, namely the bitter struggle of unitarios versus federales. Even after the immediate danger posed by Artigas and his fellow caudillos had passed, temporarily relieving the external threat to the dominance of Buenos Aires, the city continued in a state of political turbulence. There was a deep split within the ruling cabildo between the faction of Europeanized liberals that favoured a centralized national government based in Buenos Aires (the unitarios, also known as directoriales), and those of a more conservative orientation, who preferred a loose confederation of semi-autonomous provinces (the federales). It should be noted that the proposals of the latter group were not so far-reaching as those put forward by Artigas in 1813, in that their version of federalism did little to challenge the ultimate supremacy of the port city, advocating instead a more limited devolution of power to the provinces.

For some months, neither camp enjoyed sufficient support to take control and the city slid towards anarchy. The leading political office in the region at this time was the governorship of Buenos Aires, as the position of national president did not come into existence until 1862 with the rise to power of Bartolomé Mitre. Prior to Martin Rodriguez's election as governor at the end of 1820, the post changed hands with alarming frequency. Accepting a rather loose definition of the governorship, it has been suggested that as many as twenty individuals occupied the office during a single year. Rodriguez brought a conciliatory approach to the administration and, despite his federalist sympathies, included a number of unitarians in the government.

16 In The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay record that 'Buenos Aires went through twenty of them [governors] in that one year [1820], including as many as three on a single day in June' (p. 121).
The election of Rodriguez marked the beginning of a period of relative stability for Buenos Aires and, perhaps most importantly, prompted the rise to high office of Bernardino Rivadavia. A committed unitarian, Rivadavia had been politically active during the independence process and had served as secretary to the triumvirate executive of 1811. It was not until the 1820s, however, that he was able to stamp his particular mark upon national events. No sooner had Rodriguez appointed Rivadavia his Minister of Government and Foreign Affairs than a number of sweeping reforms were introduced. One of Rivadavia's first actions was to implement military cutbacks in an effort to reduce the substantial army, which was proving a dangerous liability during times of peace. In addition, he launched an attack upon the powers of the Catholic clergy, seeking to curb their extensive influence upon the course of society and especially within the political system. Perhaps the most significant of Rivadavia's achievements during this period were in the field of education; in 1821, he oversaw the establishment of a university in Buenos Aires and he founded the Colegio de Ciencias Morales two years later. Throughout his political career, Rivadavia demonstrated an enduring commitment to public education as a means of promoting contemporary European ideology. He also secured governmental support to found a literary society, which disseminated imported liberal thought outwith the academic establishment under the direction of Julián Segundo de Agüero.

As well as these domestic achievements, Rivadavia was active on the international scene. He visited London in 1824 in an attempt to attract British investment to Argentina, also negotiating a loan of £1,000,000 to the Buenos Aires government through Baring Brothers. At this time, unitarian enthusiasm for foreign ideology and culture was reaching its peak, and the issue of European immigration to Argentine territory entered the political debate in earnest. Perceiving the urgent need to populate the country and extend the realm of so-called civilization, Rivadavia and his colleagues formulated proposals to attract settlers from the countries they most admired. Naturally, their efforts focused on the nations which had given birth to the
ideology so dear to the Argentine liberals, namely the advanced societies of Northern Europe; one example, of course, was Great Britain.

Whilst in London, Rivadavia, together with his secretary, Ignacio Núñez, and the immigration commissioners of the Buenos Aires government, Sebastián Lezica and Félix Castro, took the opportunity to promote British settlement in Argentina. The minister and his colleagues held meetings with entrepreneurs interested in undertaking immigration schemes. Notably, they entered into negotiations with J. T. Barber Beaumont, who had presented an initial proposal to found an English agricultural colony in the province of Buenos Aires in 1822. After details of the project had been finalized during Rivadavia's stay in London, Núñez published a pamphlet elaborating the assistance which the settler could expect from the government. Amongst other provisions, this document guaranteed that the incomer would be lodged in a 'commodious house' on arrival in Buenos Aires for the period of fifteen days, would 'remain free from all military and civil service' and would be granted the right to freedom of worship (cited by Beaumont, pp. 102-04). At the same time, Barber Beaumont advertised for potential emigrants. Reference will be made elsewhere in this study to the unforeseen crises which subsequently befell the settlers.

In 1824, Rodriguez's term of office came to an end and Juan Gregorio de las Heras, a hero of the independence wars and former comrade of General José de San Martín, the great liberator, was elected to the governorship. Though his influence waned under the new administration, Rivadavia was entrusted with the vital diplomatic task of canvassing European support for Buenos Aires in a dispute with Brazil over the sovereignty of the Banda Oriental. Unable to secure the assurances he sought from the British government, Rivadavia returned home somewhat disillusioned. On reaching Buenos Aires, he found that many of his earlier reforms

17 For details of this project, see J. A. B. Beaumont's Travels in Buenos Ayres, especially chapter five (pp. 99-131).
were under attack from more conservative elements. Observing the gradual erosion of their power, the unitarians devised a bold, but misguided, plan of action to unite the country and restore confidence in the government. Whilst the final draft of a new constitution was being prepared, the congress elevated Rivadavia to the presidency of the Provincias Unidas del Rio de la Plata on 7 February 1826, a move which the provincial caudillos regarded as a blatant challenge to their authority.

Rivadavia inherited many difficulties on assuming office, not least of which was the international conflict over the Banda Oriental. On 19 April 1825, a small group of exiled orientales led by Juan Antonio Lavalleja and Manuel Oribe had landed on their home soil and proclaimed their intent to free the province from Brazilian occupation, adopting the uncompromising standard Libertad o Muerte. In retaliation for the support given to the invasion by the porteños, the Brazilian navy blockaded the Plate. The economic consequences of this action began to take effect during Rivadavia's presidency, weakening his already precarious position. The mercantile community, including the influential British sector, turned against the government, and the federalist estancieros of the interior were driven to the point of revolt. With the provinces of Córdoba, La Rioja, Catamarca and Santiago del Estero aligned against the porteño government, and with rumours of an imminent uprising in Buenos Aires itself, Rivadavia resigned in July 1827.

Following Rivadavia's demise, power passed to Manuel Dorrego, a respected federalist who recognized provincial autonomy and was content with the title of governor of Buenos Aires. Dorrego accepted British mediation in the conflict with Brazil in order to restore peace and bring an end to the blockade. As a result of Lord

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18 In Uruguayan historiography, the invading party is remembered as the treinta y tres orientales, the act itself as la Cruzada Libertadora. For a detailed account of the events surrounding this episode, see Aníbal Barrios Pintos, Lavalleja: la patria independiente (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1976), especially pp. 51-71.

19 For further details of Rivadavia's political activities during the 1820s, see H. S. Ferns, Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century, especially chapters 5-6 and David Rock, Argentina 1516-1987, trans. by Néstor Miguez, 2nd edn (Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial, 1991), pp. 141-48.
Ponsonby's diplomacy, both Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro dropped their claims to the Banda Oriental, enabling the creation of the independent República Oriental del Uruguay.\textsuperscript{20} Ironically, Dorrego's successful peace initiative contributed to his own overthrow and assassination. Freed from their positions in the Banda Oriental under the terms of the treaty, two detachments of troops commanded by the unitarian generals Juan Lavalle and José María Paz revolted against the federal authorities. The unfortunate Dorrego was captured by the forces of Lavalle and murdered in cold blood. In a backlash against this atrocity, the rebels were finally vanquished by the federalist armies of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Estanislao López at Puente de Márquez. A new era in Argentinian politics dawned in the aftermath of the unitarian defeat. On 6 December 1829, Rosas, \textit{el Restaurador de las Leyes}, was elected to the governorship of Buenos Aires, a position from which he dominated the national arena for more than two decades.

* * *

Although he had previously resisted involvement in formal politics, Rosas's election to the governorship of Buenos Aires came as no great surprise. During the 1820s, he had become one of the most influential figures on the national scene and had acquired considerable military strength in the form of a private gaucho army. In terms of family background, Rosas's credentials for political office were impeccable. On the side of his father, he was related to colonial officials, including a former governor of Buenos Aires. His maternal grandfather, a wealthy estanciero, was a leading figure in the militia who had died defending his property from an Indian attack. Even as a child, Rosas displayed the bold nature which marked his life; at the age of thirteen, he distinguished himself as an ammunition boy during the \textit{invasiones}.

When only eighteen, he became manager of his father's estancia, thereby acquiring the traditional skills which later guaranteed his popularity amongst the gauchos. Against the wishes of his parents, Rosas married Encarnación Ezcurra in 1813, who, until her premature death in 1838, played a significant role in her husband's public career. Shortly after the marriage, Rosas abandoned his post at the family estancia and set out to seek his fortune. Along with two friends, Luis Dorrego and Juan Nepomuceno Terrero, he founded one of the earliest saladeros (beef salting plants) in Argentina. The business flourished and Rosas invested the profits in his first estancia, Los Cerrillos.

In terms of political allegiance, the young Rosas was neither unitario nor federal, but was committed to a stable and disciplined society. He abhorred the near anarchy of 1820 and had supported the election of Martín Rodríguez as the best chance for a lasting accord with the caudillos of the interior. Soon, however, he became disaffected with the Rodríguez administration, concerned by its ever closer links with the unitarians. The ascending influence of Rivadavia's idealistic and excessively Europeanized brand of liberalism alienated Rosas from the government. The pragmatic agenda of the federalists seemed more attractive and he threw his weight behind Dorrego's bid for power after Rivadavia's resignation. Under the Dorrego government, Rosas became Comandante General de la Campaña, a position which effectively gave him the power of a second governor. In this capacity, he directed the defeat of Lavalle's unitarian rebels during the civil war of 1828 to 1829.

After Dorrego's murder, Rosas inherited the unofficial leadership of the federalists, rapidly becoming the most powerful figure in Buenos Aires. In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, Juan José Viamonte had been appointed interim governor,

21 Sarmiento reminds us of Rosas's gauchesque capabilities in Facundo: 'el general Rosas, dicen, conoce por el gusto el pasto de cada estancia del sur de Buenos Aires' (Madrid: Cátedra, 1993, p. 86). This skill is associated with the baigueno, a gaucho expert in finding directions.

though Rosas was widely considered Dorrego’s natural successor. Certain elements of the oligarchy were reluctant to grant formal authority to Rosas in addition to his established popular support, justifiably fearing the consequences of placing excessive power in the hands of one man. Rosas’s followers finally carried the day, however, and he was elected to the governorship with the facultades extraordinarias required to restore stability.

On 5 December 1832, Rosas completed his first term of office as governor and declined to be considered for re-election. Instead, he supported the candidacy of Juan Ramón Balcarce, who was duly elected by the House of Representatives. Once in power, Balcarce rapidly distanced himself from the rosistas and undermined their pre-eminent position. During 1833, whilst Rosas was leading the Desert Campaign against the Indians, the new governor openly turned against the rosistas and drove a few hundred of their number out of Buenos Aires, only for them to retaliate by laying siege to the city. Doña Encarnación organized internal resistance to Balcarce until he was obliged to concede defeat and resign. Two short-lived administrations followed, but Rosas was persuaded to return to the governorship in 1835. Previous refusals to resume office stood Rosas in good stead, as the popular clamour for his return had become so great that he could now demand power on his own terms, namely that he be granted la suma del poder público. Rosas insisted that the appointment should be approved by referendum and, though he enjoyed genuine popularity, the overwhelming result of the vote probably owed much to electoral intimidation, as there was no secrecy of ballot. Only four votes were recorded against Rosas in the plebiscite, with 9,316 in favour of his re-election.23

The ethos of Rosas’s governorships differed radically from that of the unitarian administrations of the 1820s. Ideological imports no longer held sway; on the contrary, Rosas cultivated an aura of nationalism which despised docile adherence to foreign models. In place of the unitarians’ devotion to modern European

23 These figures are given by Lynch, Argentine Dictator, p. 163.
ideas and culture, Rosas sought a return to traditional values. In the rhetoric of the regime, these institutions were increasingly portrayed as authentically 'American', and thus representative of the noble ideals of independence and self-determination, although most bore close resemblance to the traditions of colonial Spain. The Catholic Church, for example, regained (in appearances, at least) much of the power and prestige which Rivadavia had attempted to strip away from it, and religious doctrine again played a central part in everyday life.

Another upshot of the change in political atmosphere was that European settlers were no longer considered a potential panacea for Argentina's ills on account of their being the embodiment of enlightened culture and ideology, and the active promotion of immigration ceased. On the other hand, Rosas recognized that he could not afford to isolate the outsider nor mistreat the existing settlers, for the Argentine economy relied upon good relations with foreign powers and was particularly dependent on its lucrative commercial alliance with Britain. Naturally, this situation meant that the British government also had a vested interest in maintaining an entente cordiale with Rosas, to the extent that when the French navy blockaded Buenos Aires between 1838 and 1840 during a dispute with the dictator, the Foreign Secretary attempted to end the intervention through diplomatic channels.

Between 1836 and 1845, Britain's policy towards Rosas was greatly influenced by the personal bias of John Henry Mandeville, the British representative in Buenos Aires. As we will observe when reading Antia elsewhere in this study, Mandeville was reputed to possess rosista tendencies, to the extent that John Lynch has suggested that he 'was more than sympathetic; he was almost partisan'. During the early years of Mandeville's mission, relations between London and Buenos Aires were generally good, supported by the liberal foreign policy of Viscount Melbourne's

24 The foundations of Anglo-Argentine trade were set out in the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation signed by the two governments in 1825. The full text of this document is reproduced as an appendix to J. A. B. Beaumont's Travels in Buenos Ayres (pp. 263-70).

Whig administration. Throughout Palmerston's tenure of the post of Foreign Secretary, the government's approach towards Latin America was based upon reaching amicable trading agreements to ensure favourable conditions for British commerce in the region.

In 1841, however, Robert Peel's Conservative government came to power and Palmerston was replaced by Lord Aberdeen. Peel assumed a tougher line towards the Rosas regime, triply motivated by the desire to mend relations with the French, by anger towards the dictator's apparent disregard of the Argentine national debt, most of which was held by British creditors, and by the attempts of Buenos Aires to restrict foreign navigation rights in the Rio Parana. The death of the isolationist dictator of Paraguay, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, in 1840 rendered the region ripe for commercial exploitation, an impossible development unless the Paraná was opened to shipping. Moreover, Rosas's increasing embroilment in an originally civil conflict in Uruguay further jeopardized mercantile activity in the area. In response, Aberdeen instructed Mandeville to press the dictator into accepting British mediation, with the aim of imposing an end to armed struggle in the region, but the envoy's pro-Rosas sympathies soon became incompatible with the instructions of his government and he was recalled to Britain.

The new ambassador to Buenos Aires, William Gore Ouseley, was the antithesis of his predecessor and adopted an openly hostile approach to the Rosas regime, even calling for British military intervention. Having convinced Aberdeen of the need for assertive action, Ouseley, in conjunction with the French representative, Baron Deffaudis, engineered the Anglo-French blockade of Buenos Aires from 1845 to 1848. This measure was principally intended to put an end to Rosas's interference in Uruguay, both to guarantee that nation's autonomy and to ensure a safe haven for European trade in the Platine region. Rather than opening a path for commercial speculation, the blockade only served to damage Anglo-Argentine relations.  

26 On relations between the two countries during the 1830s and 1840s, see Lynch, *Argentine Dictator*, especially pp. 247-94 and Ferns, *Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 240-80. For an
In 1846, Peel's government fell and Palmerston returned to the Foreign Office under Lord John Russell's premiership. He considered that the blockade of Buenos Aires was unjust and that the French and British policy of obliging ships to dock in the port of Montevideo and pay duties there was 'piracy... equivalent to stopping neutral vessels on the high seas and making them pay blackmail'. The new government rebuked Ouseley for his partisan stance and replaced him with Lord Howden. On 7 July 1847, Howden and his French counterpart, Walewski, reached an armistice agreement with Manuel Oribe, one of the protagonists of the Uruguayan conflict and a close ally of Rosas. Although the peace did not hold, the British resolved to withdraw from the Plate; the French, meanwhile, continued the blockade alone for a further year.

As a central component of this study is the analysis of the views of the Platine region held by individual British citizens around the time of Rosas, it is now appropriate to make a preliminary venture into their typical opinions. In spite of the friction I have described between London and Buenos Aires throughout the 1840s, most Britons residing in Argentina seem to have had little quarrel with the dictator. In the words of H. S. Ferns:

The British merchants with an established interest in Argentina, and the Scottish and Irish sheep masters who came out during the 1830s and 1840s, found Rosas an agreeable enough politician. He kept order, he protected property and he made trade possible.


28 H. S. Ferns, 'Britain's Informal Empire in Argentina, 1806-1914', Past and Present, 4 (1954), 60-75
Though broadly supportive of the regime, many settlers regarded Rosas with some suspicion and were alert to his volatile nature. Their cautious attitude becomes manifest in a memorandum sent by Ouseley to Lord Aberdeen, which is reproduced and discussed in a short article by Wilbur Devereux Jones. According to Jones, Ouseley, shortly after arriving in Argentina in 1845, 'requested a number of British residents in Buenos Aires to describe the situation of the British colony for him, and the most informative of these replies he sent to Aberdeen' (p. 90). The envoy's intention was to assess the opinion of the Argentine-British community before advising any intervention against Rosas. Ouseley commends the contents of the document in the following terms:

This memm. is worth reading as containing the opinion of a conscientious unprejudiced man - deeply interested in the results of our proceedings in the River Plate, and in the fate of our countrymen. He is a Scotchman - he requested me not to name him as the author of this memorandum. (p. 90)

The author of the note divides the British contingent into three distinct categories: merchants, farmers and an artisan/labourer class. We are told that the farmers are chiefly of Scottish or Irish origins and live in settlements which 'have been formed during the last fifteen or twenty years and comprise numerous families and individuals' (p. 91). On the whole, it appears that the British population have been fortunate enough to avoid severe hardships during the Rosas administration, but that 'the tendency of the policy pursued towards them latterly, has decidedly been intolerant, hostile and injurious' (p. 92). The main concern of the settlers is that any instance of British intervention in the region may place their lives and property at risk. In such an event, it is those who dwell in rural areas who are perceived as the most likely to encounter danger:

(p. 69).

in view of the impending rupture between England and Buenos Ayres, the situation of the British whose property and residence are in the country, becomes particularly critical and delicate. If they abide in their homes, they must be the prey of habitual dread, and may be the victims of sudden and secret violence; if they abandon them, they reduce themselves to poverty and destitution; they cannot even remove to town without the risk of serious loss. They have no means of living apart from their herds and flocks; they cannot even live long in the city unprovided for, and least of all is it in their power to remove from the country and go elsewhere. They remain, not because they can remain with confidence and security, but because it is not in their power to remove. It is an aggravation of the evil in this case that they are the best and most respectable of the British, in a moral point of view [...] that would suffer most; for they are the honest, the sober and the industrious who have gradually acquired property. (p. 92)

The solidarity and cohesion of the settler community is demonstrated in the memorandum; we are told, for example, that 'they come together at stated times from a circuit of twenty or thirty miles in diameter for the purpose of divine worship' (p. 93). Despite the hazards posed by the prospect of war between Britain and Rosas, the author of the document does not seek to dissuade the British government from adopting this policy, asserting that the settlers will remain loyal British subjects whatever course of action is chosen. Nevertheless, his description of an industrious and morally upstanding settler community is followed by a clear warning that conflict between Britain and Argentina could destroy this lifestyle, a more than adequate implication that he favours a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The reader of the report is left in little doubt of the probable consequences of military conflict for the rural settlers:

War between Buenos Ayres and England, and especially protracted war, would in all likelihood, as far as regards this portion of the British, be their virtual annihilation as Britons. They must either be ruined by abandoning the country altogether, or, by remaining, cease from their distinctive peculiarities, and gradually assimilate themselves in manners and ideas to the inhabitants of the country. (p. 93)

According to Jones's analysis, 'the end product of the document was to leave two alternatives open to the British government - an all-out war against Rosas, or a
peace policy' (p. 96). 'A lingering intervention', Jones reasons, 'such as might ensue from a blockade, was held to be fraught with dangers to the colonists' (p. 96). In addition, he claims that given Aberdeen's 'peace-loving' nature, it was inconceivable that he would have chosen war out of the two options suggested in the memorandum, concluding that, in effect, the document advocated a policy of reconciliation (p. 96).

In a final piece of speculation, Jones casts further doubt over the authorship of the report, conjecturing that it may have been drafted as a clever piece of propaganda 'with the connivance of the dictator', although there is no strong historical evidence to support this verdict (pp. 96-97). Indeed, in my judgement, it seems improbable that Ouseley would have accepted the document had he detected even the vaguest hint of official meddling, especially in light of his personal bias against the regime and the fact that he went on to plan the Anglo-French blockade.

The settlers, therefore, appear to have been relatively unconcerned by the authoritarian nature of the dictatorship provided that there was no direct threat to their way of life. Rosas maintained order in a reasonably effective manner and the occasional brush with the rougher elements amongst his supporters was a small price to pay for a relatively stable political climate. Of all the foreign residents, support for Rosas was probably strongest amongst the English-speaking settlers, who shared the dictator's belief in civil discipline and were relatively unimpressed by idealistic notions of liberty and social equality. Further evidence of this attitude can be seen in William Henry Hudson's Far Away and Long Ago (1918), an autobiographical work in which the elderly author and naturalist recalls his distant youth as the son of North American settlers in Buenos Aires province.

Whilst much of Far Away and Long Ago relates the development of Hudson's passion for nature, and ornithology in particular, he records in the seventh chapter his first visit to Buenos Aires as a young boy, the highlight of which seems to have been catching a glimpse of Rosas's jester, don Eusebio. This reminiscence leads Hudson to a consideration of the dictator himself, describing Rosas as 'the Nero of South America' and 'one of the bloodiest as well as the most original-minded of the
Caudillos and Dictators, and altogether, perhaps, the greatest of those who have climbed into power in this continent of republics and revolutions. He reflects upon the fall of Rosas in the following chapter and here we can observe the typical pro-Rosas attitude of the settler embodied in the figure of Hudson's father, 'an out-and-out Rosista' (p. 109). Portraits of the dictator and his late wife took pride of place on the drawing-room wall of Hudson's boyhood home, 'flanked by the repellent, truculent countenance of the Captain-General Urquiza' and further likenesses of Oribe and the Minister of War (p. 109). In attempting to summarize common opinions of Rosas, Hudson neatly encapsulates the views of the English-speaking settlers:

People were in perpetual conflict about the character of the great man. He was abhorred by many, perhaps by most; others were on his side even for years after he had vanished from their ken, and amongst these were most of the English residents of the country, my father among them. Quite naturally I followed my father and came to believe that all the bloodshed during a quarter of a century, all the crimes and cruelties practised by Rosas, were not like the crimes committed by a private person, but were all for the good of the country, with the result that in Buenos Ayres and throughout our province there had been a long period of peace and prosperity, and that all this ended with his fall and was succeeded by years of fresh revolutionary outbreaks and bloodshed and anarchy. (pp. 126-27)

As Hudson suggests, it was not Rosas that the settlers feared, but rather the chaos which they believed would be the inevitable result of the dictator's demise. Their worries seem to have been justified by Hudson's account of the aftermath of Caseros, the battle which ended Rosas's reign in 1852. A constant stream of defeated troops passed by the family's home, demanding food and horses in a threatening manner since there was no longer a superior authority to restrict their excesses. Hudson asserts that 'these men were now lawless and would not hesitate to plunder and kill in their retreat', and demonstrates that only the courage of his father when confronted by their menaces enabled the family to survive unscathed (p. 117). In the

eyes of the foreign settlers, therefore, Rosas's draconian rule was the single check upon the inherent savageness of the common criollo. Hudson, whilst clearly not condoning the worst brutality of the regime, considered Rosas's actions the product of either 'sudden fits of passion or petulance', 'a peculiar, sardonic, and somewhat primitive sense of humour', or the socio-cultural milieu, the latter resonating the type of environmental determinism prevalent amongst the dictator's liberal opponents (pp. 130-31).

* * *

Having introduced the topic of the British settlers' perceptions of the Rosas era, it now falls to provide a similar backdrop for the accounts left by creole observers, the other principal resource drawn upon throughout this study. As all the creole authors whose texts I consider can be broadly situated under a single ideological banner, namely that of the Generation of 1837, a suitable approach might be to summarize the evolution and some of the fundamental characteristics of this group's thought.

By the late 1830s, domestic opposition to Rosas's autarchic style was growing rapidly. Lack of unity in the opposition camp, however, prevented the antirosistas from forming a credible alternative to the regime. In addition to the unitarians, the opposition included renegade federalists (lomos negros in the terminology of the dictatorship), many of whom had been supporters of Juan Ramón Balcarce, and a new generation of young liberal intellectuals. Old factional loyalties mitigated against the co-operation of the unitarian and federalist elements of the dissident movement, but the younger generation perceived that these distinctions were no longer applicable now that political allegiance was defined simply with reference to the Rosas regime. The absolute nature of the administration left no place for ambivalence: if not an active supporter of Rosas, one became his enemy. Sarmiento has recorded that the dictator himself developed this theme in a public proclamation.
just after resuming office in 1835, the basic ideology of his statement being summarized in the following axiom: 'El que no está conmigo es mi enemigo'. This new division of society motivated the leading thinkers of the Argentinian youth to establish a forum for the discussion and circulation of their ideas. The product of their decision, the Salón Literario, first met in the Buenos Aires bookshop of Marcos Sastre on 23 June 1837, evolving into the Joven Generación Argentina a year later, and finally becoming known as the Asociación de Mayo. Amongst the most prominent members of the salon we find Esteban Echeverría, Juan Bautista Alberdi, Juan María Gutiérrez and Vicente Fidel López. Members of the group and those who shared their ideals later became known as the Generation of '37, a collective regarded as one of the most influential in the history of Argentinian intellectual endeavour.

In the first of a series of lectures to the literary salon, Esteban Echeverría gave a clear insight into the aims of the new generation:

Debemos buscar los materiales de nuestra futura grandeza en la ilustración del siglo. [...] Hinquemos la consideración en esta idea: que Dios, al dotar al hombre de inteligencia y darle por teatro la sociedad, le impuso la obligación de perfeccionarse a sí mismo, y de consagrar sus esfuerzos al bienestar y progreso de su patria y sus semejantes; y llenos de buena fe y entusiasmo, amparándonos de los tesoros intelectuales que nos brinda el mundo civilizado, por medio del tenaz y robusto ejercicio de nuestras facultades, estampemos en ellos el sello indeleble de nuestra individualidad nacional.32

During following meetings of the salon, a more concrete programme embracing these concepts was drawn up, culminating in the compilation of fifteen palabras simbólicas. The symbolic maxims summarize the vision of the Generation of '37 and include such evocative terms as 'fraternidad', 'igualdad' and 'libertad'.

31 See Sarmiento, Facundo, p. 315.
Having defined their principles, the group resolved to produce a manifesto containing a more complete explanation of the new ideology, entrusting the task to Echeverria. The result of his labours was the Código o declaración de principios que constituyen la creencia social de la República Argentina, first published in El Iniciador of Montevideo at the beginning of 1839 and later re-edited as Dogma socialista (1846).33

One of the central arguments of the Dogma socialista is that the work of the independence process is not yet complete. Amongst the tasks set out for the new generation in the palabras simbólicas is the perpetuation of the reforming spirit of 1810. Echeverria perceives that the emancipation movement has succeeded in breaking down political dependence, but that the oppressive Spanish heritage continues to impede the realization of a fully autonomous spirit: 'El gran pensamiento de la revolución no se ha realizado. Somos independientes, pero no libres. Los brazos de España no nos oprimen; pero sus tradiciones nos abruman. De las entrañas de la anarquía nació la contrarrevolución' (p. 388).

Echeverria, therefore, considers that the path to independence entails two distinct stages, 'emancipación política y emancipación social' (p. 389). The former has been achieved, but the latter is yet to be resolved. For Echeverria, social emancipation requires the complete rejection of the Spanish heritage in favour of the concept of 'sociabilidad americana' (p. 389). The attainment of this condition must encompass a revision of every aspect of society: 'La sociabilidad de un pueblo se compone de todos los elementos de la civilización: del elemento político, del filosófico, del religioso, del científico, del artístico y del industrial' (pp. 389-90).

In addition to the need to forge an autonomous social and cultural identity, a further essential theme runs throughout the Dogma socialista, namely the dissolution of the unitarian/federalist dichotomy. Of the traditional opposing groups, the

33 Echeverria, Dogma socialista de la Asociación de Mayo, in Antología, pp. 345-418. The palabras simbólicas are reproduced in full on p. 353. Page references to the Dogma socialista will be cited parenthetically.
Generation of '37 felt closer to the unitarians with whom they shared their intellectual origins and a broadly similar philosophy. Nonetheless, the ultimate failure of many of the ambitious and unrealistic unitarian schemes of the 1820s led the new generation to criticize the errors of their forebears and adopt a more pragmatic agenda. Echeverría was careful to set the Asociación de Mayo apart from the old divisions, denouncing the irrational factionalism of Argentina's post-independence political culture: 'Facción morenista, facción saavedrista, facción rivadavista, facción rosista, son para nosotros voces sin inteligencia; no conocemos partidos personales; no nos adherimos a los hombres; somos secuaces de principios' (p. 412).

Like his unitarian predecessors, Echeverría demonstrates a belief in the superiority of European civilization, but unlike them warns against the unconsidered adoption of foreign ideas and values, thus distancing the new generation from the earlier liberals' unalloyed faith in imported models:

Europa es el centro de la civilización de los siglos y del progreso humanitario. América debe [...] estudiar el movimiento progresivo de la inteligencia europea; pero sin sujetarse ciegamente a sus influencias. El libre examen y la elección tocan de derecho y son el criterio de una razón ilustrada. [...] Cada pueblo tiene su vida y su inteligencia propia. [...] Un pueblo que esclaviza su inteligencia a la inteligencia de otro pueblo es estúpido y sacrílego. (p. 360)

The Dogma socialista explicitly transcends old political rivalries, concluding with a plea for accord between the traditional parties, suggesting that 'de ningún modo mejor que en la armonía de los dos principios rivales podrían encontrar una paz legítima y gloriosa los hombres que han estado divididos en los dos partidos: Unitario y Federal' (p. 417). This theme is developed in a subsequent work, Ojeada retrospectiva sobre el movimiento intelectual en el Plata desde el año 1837, where Echeverría embarks upon a more vigorous and explicit criticism of the old unitarians.34 He acknowledges that the new generation and the unitarians share a

34 Echeverría, Ojeada retrospectiva (1846), in Antología, pp. 276-344. Page references will be cited parenthetically.
common goal, namely a democratic solution to Argentina's predicament, but notes that the earlier attempts of Rivadavia and his colleagues to bring this about lacked credibility due to their adherence to a flawed electoral system:

La raiz de todo sistema democrático es el sufragio. Cortad esa raiz, aniquilad el sufragio, y no hay pueblo ni instituciones populares: habrá, cuando más, oligarquías, aristocracia, despotismo monárquico o republicano. Desquiciad, parodiad el sufragio, hallaréis una legitimidad ambigua y un poder vacilante, como en el sistema unitario. (p. 301)

The major error of the unitarians, Echeverría perceives, was the implementation of democratic principles amongst an uneducated and unprepared population: 'La mayoría del pueblo a quien otorgaba ese derecho no sabía lo que era sufragio, ni a qué fin se encaminaba eso, ni se le daban tampoco medios de adquirir ese conocimiento' (p. 298). Education of the people, therefore, became a central objective of the Generation of '37. Only once this was complete could the Argentinian nation ever realistically aspire to democratic self-government. Education alone, however, was not considered an adequate measure to bring about the complete civilization of society; that would require a more radical restructuring of the national framework, to be achieved principally through immigration from admired European countries.

As well as being an unwelcome reminder of the colonial era, the regressive Spanish heritage referred to in the Dogma socialista was considered by the new generation to be the root of caudillismo and its brutal archetype, the Rosas regime. To overcome this legacy and construct a nation according to the advanced European model, the dilution of old racial and cultural tendencies was deemed essential, a measure which could only be realized through the attraction of immigrants from allegedly civilized societies. This policy was not entirely original; Rivadavia, of course, had made similar proposals in the 1820s. Although previous attempts to attract settlement had failed to effect a major shift in the population base, members of the Generation of '37 believed that, with the correct conditions, immigration could
resolve many of Argentina's problems. This argument is elaborated by Juan Bautista Alberdi in his *Bases*: 'Cada europeo que viene a nuestras playas nos trae más civilización en sus hábitos que luego comunica a nuestros habitantes, que muchos libros de filosofía'.

Racial diversification is the key to Alberdi's vision; in his view, Argentines have nothing to fear from an influx of foreigners, for intermingling will soon eliminate initial tensions and differences, giving rise to a stronger, more united people, emulating the process of cultural fusion which forged the much admired British nation:

El pueblo inglés ha sido el pueblo más conquistado de cuantos existen; todas las naciones han pisado su suelo y mezclado a él su sangre y su raza. Es producto de un cruzamiento infinito de castas; y por eso justamente el inglés es el más perfecto de los hombres, y su nacionalidad tan pronunciada que hace creer al vulgo que su raza es sin mezcla. (p. 271)

As well as reforming the existing society, Alberdi perceived that immigration could play a vital role in the expansion of the national domain, thus formulating his celebrated dictum 'gobernar es poblar'. By populating the 'desierto', the vast hinterland of Argentina, the settler would bring order and convert this under-utilized resource into an integral part of a dynamic nation. In response to his own question '¿cuál es la constitución que mejor conviene al desierto?'. Alberdi writes: 'La que sirve para hacerlo desaparecer; la que sirve para hacer que el desierto deje de serlo en el menor tiempo posible y se convierta en país poblado' (p. 409).

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35 *Las 'Bases' de Alberdi*, ed. by Jorge M. Mayer (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1969), p. 250. Further page references will be cited parenthetically. Alberdi's text was originally published as *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (1852).
Members of the Generation of '37 chose to promote their vision of Argentine society in literary works as well as through political essays such as *Bases* and the *Dogma socialista*. This apparent fluidity of material between conventional genres was by no means unusual in early Latin American writing, with matters of ideology commonly entering the literary realm. During the nineteenth century, as William Rowe and Vivian Schelling have observed, 'different types of intellectual work were not clearly separated, so that politics and the study of society were included in literature', a fact which clearly underscores a central premise of this thesis, namely that literary texts can indeed be read as valid socio-political documents alongside more transparent modes of ideological discourse.  

Naturally enough, Spanish America's politically motivated authors adopted the literary styles which were most compatible with their ideological intentions. Always alert to the latest European trends, young *antirosista* intellectuals saw the non-conformist character of the romantic movement as a suitable vehicle for the assertion of their independent, free-thinking spirit in the face of repression. Esteban Echeverría became the first Argentinian writer to appropriate the romantic style in earnest and was quite conscious of the political implications of his innovation, noting that 'el romanticismo no es más que el liberalismo en literatura'.  

The appearance of Echeverría's narrative poem *La cautiva* in September 1837 marked the consolidation of romanticism in the Argentinian literary canon. In accordance with the sentiments expressed in the *Dogma socialista*, *La cautiva* is not a slavish imitation of European precedents, but demonstrates a degree of originality which reflects local conditions. As Jean Franco has noted, Echeverría actually inverts a foreign precedent to reflect Argentinian circumstances. A common theme in

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contemporary European literature was the flight from the urban centre and a return to idyllic nature, the city being the embodiment of monstrous industrialization, the ultimate romantic anathema. In *La cautiva*, on the other hand, it is the wilderness which is portrayed in a threatening and hostile light. For creole liberals, of course, the city was the centre of civilization, the place where unruly nature had been tamed, the only sanctuary from abhorred barbarism. *La cautiva* relates the attempt of a young couple, Maria and Brian, to escape from captivity after being abducted by Indian raiders and to return to normal society from enforced isolation in the frontier territory. Their endeavour thus symbolizes the Argentinian struggle to transcend the region's endemic conditions, and to finally subjugate the Indian tribes and their environment as part of the grand programme of civilization.

The romantic style rapidly permeated Platine literature of all genres, including drama. Probably the most politically explicit dramatic piece of this period is Francisco Javier de Acha's *Una victima de Rosas*, composed when the author was a mere seventeen years of age.39 First performed in Montevideo in December 1845 and contemporaneously recognized as the earliest theatrical work by a Uruguayan writer, the play depicts the emotional turmoil produced when political allegiance disrupts family relationships and compromises love. Enrique, a young antirosista, plans to flee from Buenos Aires, but finds his situation complicated by the impending marriage of his sister, Carolina, to don Juan, a supporter of Rosas. The tale ends in a scene of shocking cruelty; Enrique is seized and decapitated by the dictator's lackeys within earshot of his mother and two sisters. In a final affront to civilized values, the severed head is thrown into the room where Enrique's family are gathered and his mother falls dead with shock, having already disowned Carolina on account of don Juan's connection with the regime.

In the course of sketching the foregoing insights into the context of the Rosas age, some phases of the development of early Platine liberalism have been observed. We have noted the favourable reception of Enlightenment ideology around the time of independence and its continuing influence upon the intellectual community in subsequent years. The extensive impact of the thought of Smith, Rousseau and their contemporaries can still be discerned in the dissident liberalism of the late 1830s, although younger thinkers were beginning to ask more trying questions of European ideology, increasingly pondering its applicability to conditions in the Rio de la Plata. As we have seen, the immigrant came to be perceived as the most natural and effective vessel in which advanced thought and culture could be imported to Spanish America. To complete our picture of the era, it now remains to summarize the circumstances which finally precipitated the fall of Rosas before briefly exploring the state of the developing Argentina during the period of greatest European immigration, namely when liberal policies moved out of the theoretical realm and were tested in government.

Somewhat ironically, Rosas's demise was the product of caudillismo, the very institution regarded by many of his opponents as the source of Argentina's ills. During 1849 and 1850, resentment grew in the interior provinces of the privileged position enjoyed by Buenos Aires under the regime. Whilst nominally a federalist, Rosas recognized that he could not survive without the support of the wealthy porteño elite and structured his economic policy accordingly. In the words of John Lynch, 'the so-called unification of Argentina by Rosas was a façade; it was rather the conquest of Argentina by Buenos Aires'. The most powerful of the provinces, Entre Rios, opposed the port city's monopolization of trade and supported free navigation in the Rivers Plate and Paraná. Throughout the 1840s, as I have

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mentioned, Rosas became increasingly entangled in the prolonged civil war in Uruguay after intervening in support of the deposed Blanco president, Manuel Oribe. As part of this campaign, the dictator prohibited the export of goods to rebel forces within the besieged city of Montevideo, an embargo which undermined the previously lucrative meat trade between Entre Rios and Uruguay. Entre Rios persistently defied the sanctions, but Rosas's attempt to meddle with the provincial economy provoked much resentment. Although the caudillo of Entre Rios, Justo José de Urquiza, had served as a distinguished general in the federal army and was a veteran of many battles against unitarian insurgents, Rosas made no attempt to appease him. Indeed, he only aggravated the situation by rendering goods imported into Buenos Aires from the interior liable to customs tariffs.

In May 1851, Urquiza's patience finally snapped. He openly declared war against Rosas, forming an alliance with Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro. Though weakened by the loss of Urquiza's forces from the federal army, Rosas was still able to count on considerable military strength in the form of his own troops in Buenos Aires and those under the command of Oribe in the Banda Oriental. In August 1851, whilst Urquiza advanced through Uruguay, Buenos Aires rashly declared war upon Brazil. Now fully supported by the Brazilians, the odds shifted heavily in Urquiza's favour and, rather than see his army annihilated, Oribe resolved to negotiate peace in October 1851. In a conciliatory gesture intended to reunite the country after thirteen years of civil turmoil, Urquiza proclaimed the celebrated aphorism 'no habrá vencidos ni vencedores', the first step towards the uniquely Uruguayan concept of coparticipation.41

41 Quoted by Benjamin Nahum, Manual de historia del Uruguay 1830-1903, 2nd edn (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1994), p. 98. Coparticipation is an institutionalized form of cross-party co-operation. Under this system, regardless of which of the main parties is in power, Blanco (Partido Nacional) or Colorado, there is always a role for the opposition in the government of the country. For a fuller definition of coparticipacion, especially in its modern form, see Phil Gunson, Andrew Thompson and Greg Chamberlain, The Dictionary of Contemporary Politics of South America (London Routledge, 1989), p. 81.
Following the declaration of peace in the Banda Oriental, Urquiza's army was reinforced by Colorado troops who had fought against Oribe in defence of Montevideo during the conflict. In the next stage of the campaign, Urquiza crossed to Entre Ríos where he was joined by notable antirosistas, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Bartolomé Mitre. The army swept down through the province and across the Paraná en route to the final conflict near Buenos Aires. Urquiza encountered little opposition during the long march, fighting only a small encounter against a cavalry contingent. By 3 February 1852, his forces reached Puente de Márquez on the outskirts of Buenos Aires and battle was joined with the federalists at Caseros. After a short combat, Rosas realized that defeat was imminent and fled from the battlefield with a minor bullet wound to the hand. Within a matter of hours, Urquiza's troops occupied the regime's military headquarters at Santos Lugares. Rosas sought refuge in the house of Captain Robert Gore, the British commercial attaché, who arranged the transfer of the former dictator and his family to a nearby British warship. They were then ferried to England to spend their lives in exile near Southampton. The Rosas era had ended and the reconstruction and modernization of Argentina could now begin.

The old-style unitarians co-operated with Urquiza during the struggle against Rosas, but splits appeared in the victorious camp as soon as the regime was defeated. The unitarians regarded Urquiza with deep suspicion from the moment he stepped into the void left by Rosas's demise and assumed responsibility for Argentina's reorganization; perhaps it seemed that one authoritarian leader had simply supplanted another. Moreover, their distrust of his established federalist credentials was not without foundation; in the aftermath of Caseros, Argentina moved towards a truly federal form of government for the first time. This led the unitarians to express concern over Urquiza's previous links with the Rosas regime and to criticize the prominent position enjoyed by regional caudillos under the new administration. Nevertheless, Urquiza pressed on with his reforms and appointed a constitutional convention consisting of members of all factions. This body prepared the way for the
transition of power to a statutory government, granting full authority to Urquiza in
the interim period. The reformers were undeterred by the constant opposition of the
porteño unitarians and a new constitution was approved in 1853 at an assembly in
Santa Fe. Alberdi's influence in drafting the document is evident; article 25, for
example, states:

El Gobierno Federal fomentará la inmigración europea, y no podrá
restringir, limitar ni gravar con impuesto alguno la entrada en el
territorio argentino de los extranjeros que traigan por objeto labrar la
tierra, mejorar las industrias e introducir y enseñar las ciencias y las
artes. 42

The new federal authorities attempted to attract immigration in the form of
colonization schemes in the rural provinces. Many incomers, however, preferred to
remain in the city of Buenos Aires due to its prosperity and high rate of economic
growth. These settlers, therefore, failed to fulfil one of the primary objectives of the
immigration proposals of the liberal thinkers, the development of the under-
populated interior. In addition, immigrants proved more difficult to attract than was
previously anticipated. It took many years to realize mass immigration on the scale
which had been envisaged. Even in 1877, a quarter of a century after the fall of
Rosas, only 14,675 settlers arrived from Europe, a minute number given the physical
extent of Argentinian territory. 43

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It would appear, therefore, that the reform of post-Rosas Argentina was to be a much
slower and more painful process than its proponents had initially considered. The
task of consolidating the nation-state only began with the removal of the dictator; his

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42 Quoted by Mayer, *Las 'Bases' de Alberdi*, p. 488.

demise was not the instant panacea many dissidents had believed it to be. Rather than having been consigned to history, old divisions between the unitarians and the federalists were still very much in evidence. Discord between the secessionist government of Buenos Aires and Urquiza's Argentine Confederation based in Paraná was a grave obstacle to progress, since it was highly impractical to construct a national entity without the co-operation of both the provinces and the port city. In an attempt to reduce commercial reliance upon Buenos Aires, the Confederation resolved to establish an alternative entrepôt at Rosario. The efficacy of this measure was limited by the continued preference of foreign shipping lines to dock at Buenos Aires. Consequently, the export-oriented economies of the interior provinces were still dependent upon the successful incorporation of Buenos Aires into the Confederation. Neither side wished to compromise and conflict became inevitable. The rival armies clashed at Cepeda in 1859, with Urquiza's forces emerging triumphant. The porteños were forced to capitulate, but struck back under the command of Bartolomé Mitre in 1861 at the battle of Pavón. Though not entirely decisive, Mitre's victory weakened the Confederation. The resulting stalemate could only be resolved through negotiation and, in return for the acceptance of Mitre as first national president, Buenos Aires reluctantly adopted the constitution of 1853.

After completing his term of office in 1868, Mitre was succeeded by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Although not a participant in the original Asociación de Mayo, Sarmiento shared the basic ideology of this group and is usually classified as a member of the Generation of '37. He implemented many of the ideals of the new generation during his presidency and achieved notable progress in the quest to educate the people. His efforts laid the foundation of a literate population, although it was not until the twentieth century that this ambition was complete. Argentina's current enjoyment of the third highest adult literacy rate in South America

undoubtedly owes much to Sarmiento's lifelong commitment to popular education. Nonetheless, the country remained divided throughout his presidency: regional conflicts with rural caudillos were an ever present danger to the administration. In addition, certain elements of the porteño elite mistakenly regarded Sarmiento as a threat to the position of their city in the national scenario, owing to the fact that he was the first national leader from an interior province, San Juan. Sarmiento, however, was able to secure the support of the Partido Autonomista, a party which evolved into the dominant Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1874, Sarmiento was succeeded by the PAN presidential candidate, Nicolás Avellaneda.

Little by little, the conflict between the unitarians and the federalists died a natural death; as the new order stabilized, this essentially constitutional dispute faded from the agenda. The feudal power of the caudillos was gradually eroded and supplanted by a rather corrupt system of political patronage under the auspices of the PAN. Ostensibly democratic elections were held during this period, a charade which served only to conceal the unethical reality of regional party organizers manipulating the voters, resorting to bribery and coercion. By means of this underhand system, the PAN was able to monopolize power until 1916, when truly democratic elections resulted in a victory for the Radical leader, Hipólito Yrigoyen. This development had been made possible by the new electoral law of 1912, proposed by, and named after, President Roque Sáenz Peña.

Since the fall of Rosas, therefore, Argentina had progressed from a loose association of feuding, semi-autonomous provinces governed by tyrannical despots into a modern democracy. The nation had physically expanded, both in geographical terms and in human resources. The War of the Triple Alliance, during which the governments of Argentina and Brazil unscrupulously toppled the legitimate Blanco

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45 Statistics compiled in 1991 show that Argentina's literacy rate of 95% compares very favourably with that of other South American nations, trailing behind only Guyana (98%) and Uruguay (96%). Source: Roland Dallas, *The Economist Pocket Latin America and the Caribbean* (London: The Economist in association with Hamish Hamilton, 1994), p. 21.
government of Uruguay and then destroyed its Paraguayan allies, resulted in the annexation of a considerable portion of land to Northern Argentina. In addition, General Julio Roca's Conquest of the Desert during 1878 and 1879 further extended the national domain by confining the indigenous population to the western and southern extremities of Argentine territory. As a result of this expansion, there was now even more terrain available for foreign settlement. In 1876, law 817, commonly known as *ley Avellaneda*, had been passed, with the specific aim of attracting large-scale immigration. In addition to clearly defining the government's constitutional obligation to promote settlement, the new law made provision to assist the immigrants in establishing their homes on Argentinian soil. Aid was to be given to the incomers to reach their final destination after disembarking at Buenos Aires and the first 100 families to take advantage of the new measures were to be granted 100 hectares of land without charge. With the active encouragement of the authorities, immigration increased rapidly during the 1880s, reaching its peak in 1889 when some 260,909 settlers arrived in Argentina. The developing railway network opened up the hinterland, facilitating the establishment of settler communities in remote regions such as the northerly portion of Entre Rios.

Notwithstanding these far-reaching changes, the idealized, Northern European citizen proved reluctant to settle in Argentina. Few Protestant immigrants were drawn towards Buenos Aires, probably deterred by the nation's Catholicism. To such people, the under-populated expanses of the United States and Canada proved more appealing. Opportunities for self-improvement were at least as abundant in North America and political conditions were more stable than in Argentina. For the British, of course, emigration to these regions was particularly attractive due to cultural similarities and a common language. When the flood-tide of immigrants did reach the River Plate, the majority of the incomers were fleeing from the poverty and unemployment of Southern Europe. This background could not be reconciled with

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the image of the ideal immigrant visualized by Alberdi and his colleagues; not only were the racial origins of the settlers contrary to those which the liberal thinkers had admired, but the incomers were products of traditional societies which had yet to move into the modern order sought for Argentina. Moreover, many of the Spanish and Italian immigrants brought with them the latest socialist and anarchist ideologies of the Southern European workforce, beliefs which were to play a central role in subsequent labour unrest in Argentina.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, anarchist immigrants acquired considerable influence in the trade union movement, resulting in a period of violent disturbances on the streets of the main cities. Demonstrators clashed with the police and conservative groups on several occasions, culminating in the Semana Trágica of 1919, when the death toll in Buenos Aires may have exceeded 1,000. The anarchists took their campaign of disruption to the countryside during the early 1920s; this time, the government responded even more decisively. Faced by a strike which threatened to escalate into full-scale revolution in the Patagonian town of Rio Gallegos during 1921, the authorities showed no mercy. The president, Hipólito Yrigoyen, called in a cavalry regiment and authorized the use of extreme measures to put down the uprising. Outgunned and given assurances that their lives would be respected, the strikers agreed to surrender on five separate occasions. Each time, however, hundreds of their number were summarily executed and buried in mass graves or cremated on bonfires. The anarchists lost support after such bloody episodes and the labour movement gradually became more moderate. From an account of these events, the less than desirable consequences of certain brands of imported ideology are revealed, verifying, perhaps, the cautious and selective adoption of foreign models advocated by Echeverria.


If the wave of immigration which reached Argentina in the latter years of the century brought with it the ideological currencies of Southern Europe, does this then confirm the effectiveness of the settler as a medium for socio-cultural translation, no matter the virtue of the end result, and thus lend a certain credibility to the pro-immigration arguments of creole liberals? In reaching a conviction of the superior essence of the Northern European settler, liberal thinkers had mainly derived assumptions about the properties of individual foreign citizens from a generalizing overview of their societies' cultural production and only the most limited personal contact. Of course, some had visited Europe, acquiring first-hand experience of the nations they admired, and were better qualified to assess the actual character of the typical Briton, Frenchman or German and their suitability as reformative immigrants. Esteban Echeverría, for instance, left Argentina in 1825 and did not return until 1830, spending most of this time in Paris, but also visiting London. In Echeverría's case, a stay in Europe merely reinforced his affinity for foreign culture and ideas.49

Other members of his generation, however, who had formulated their ideology solely through bookish learning in the relative isolation of the Americas and who did not venture overseas until later in life, sometimes found that the realities of European society did not quite fulfil expectations. Sarmiento exemplifies this phenomenon of disillusionment. On finally making the journey to his anticipated Gallic paradise in the late 1840s, he found much to praise in the ordinary French citizen, but equally much to criticize in the nation's political system. The French government no longer seemed a model democracy inspired by the egalitarian ideals of Rousseau, Saint-Simon and their type, but a bureaucratic monster whose officials were, in Sarmiento's words, 'beasts with two legs'.50 Whereas he had previously

49 On Echeverría's time in Europe, see Juan María Gutiérrez, Noticias biográficas, in Echeverría, Autología, pp. 35-109, especially pp. 41-58.

regarded the French example as a remedy for Argentina's ills. Before leaving France, Sarmiento wrote out a prescription for its cure: electoral and parliamentary reform, the reorganization of the national guard, the revision of the September Laws, and many others. As a consequence of such unhappy revelations of official European inadequacy, creole intellectuals gradually widened their search for a constitutional paradigm of republican government, often finding new inspiration in the United States.

One objective of this thesis consists of reaching some appraisal of the degree to which the average British settler conformed to the model of the reformative immigrant. Did the actual incomers live up to the ideal of their creole backers, an ideal which was rooted more in hearsay and abstract philosophizing than personal experience of the benefits associated with the immigration process? Through close analysis of the textual traces left by the early incomers, it should be possible to discern both the practical advances brought by the settlers and the common ground, if any, between their beliefs and those of their creole advocates. More specifically, perhaps we can gain an insight into the settlers' guiding philosophy from descriptions of their surroundings and daily lives, and observe the extent of its compatibility with the ideas of liberal Platine thinkers, as expressed in their writings. As we learned earlier, much of the latter brand of ideology had its origin in the sphere of the British settlers' native land and was imported, more or less intact, to Spanish America, where it was assimilated wholeheartedly by the local intelligentsia.

Already, I have presented some evidence which indicates that the British incomer brought values of enterprise and industry to the Rio de la Plata, values that were also to be found in the exported ideology of the European Enlightenment, in the work of Adam Smith for instance, whose influence upon creole intellectuals we have already noted. The anonymous author of the document reproduced in Wilbur

Devereux Jones's article, if we recall, attests to the moral and assiduous character of his fellow settlers, especially those living in rural areas. The reference in this note to the honesty, sobriety and industry of the country dwellers calls to mind Smith's words on the general superiority of the farmer or agricultural labourer to his urban counterpart. In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith pays tribute to the far greater 'judgment and discretion' required by those who cultivate the land than the typical worker engaged in technological industry, and asserts that such qualities permeate every strata of agricultural society:

> Not only the art of the farmer, the general direction of the operations of husbandry, but many inferior branches of country labour require much more skill and experience than the greater part of the mechanick trades. The man who works upon brass and iron, works with instruments and upon materials of which the temper is always the same, or very nearly the same. But the man who ploughs the ground with a team of horses or oxen, works with instruments of which the health, strength, and temper are very different upon different occasions. The conditions of the materials which he works upon too is as variable as that of the instruments which he works with, and both require to be managed with much judgment and discretion. The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in this judgment and discretion. [...] How much the lower ranks of people in the country are really superior to those of the town, is well known to every man whom either business or curiosity has led to converse much with both. ⁵²

It is certainly not beyond the bounds of likelihood that the writer of the report requested by Ouseley was, like many of the Argentine liberals in whose nation he lived, familiar with Smith's work, especially as we are told that he was a compatriot of the great Scottish thinker.

If, as the previous paragraph would suggest, common influences and concerns were indeed at work in the intellectual makeup of both incomer and creole, I expect to find many similar ideological overlaps in the main settler accounts and literary works to be analysed in the following chapters. Naturally, overtly ideological

statements do not abound in the private documents to be studied, for they served no obvious political purpose; hence, when reading the accounts left by the Gibsons and Jane Robson, I shall mostly be picking upon the implicit beliefs and values evoked by the descriptions of their lifestyle and experiences. Inevitably, personal writing of this sort is strongly coloured by the author's mindset, so it should be quite possible, though undoubtedly challenging, to access and analyse the governing ideology of the typical settler in the course of this project.
On arriving in Buenos Aires on 20 September 1832, the young Charles Darwin was witness to one of the city's most typical and awe-inspiring sights, which he reports in his customarily detailed style:

The great corral, where the animals are kept for slaughter to supply food to this beef-eating population, is one of the spectacles best worth seeing. The strength of the horse as compared to that of the bullock is quite astonishing; a man on horseback having thrown his lazo round the horns of a beast, can drag it any where he chooses. The animal ploughing up the ground with outstretched legs, in vain efforts to resist the force, generally dashes at full speed to one side; but the horse immediately turning to receive the shock, stands so firmly that the bullock is almost thrown down, and it is surprising that their necks are not broken. [...] When the bullock has been dragged to the spot where it is to be slaughtered, the matador with great caution cuts the hamstrings. Then is given the death bellow; a noise more expressive of fierce agony than any I know: I have often distinguished it from a long distance, and have always known that the struggle was then drawing to a close. The whole sight is horrible and revolting: the ground is almost made of bones; and the horses and riders are drenched with gore.¹

Darwin's lively cameo of the slaughter yard indicates that he finds the scene grotesque yet strangely attractive. The reader can sense the young naturalist's emotions oscillating between fascination and repulsion as he observes this alien display. On the one hand, it is 'one of the spectacles best worth seeing', a noble test of strength between two animals, the horse and the bullock; on the other, 'the whole sight is horrible and revolting', an instance of humankind's capacity to inflict gratuitous suffering upon its fellow creatures. If first impressions are indeed as formative as some would have us believe, Darwin must have constructed a

Dantesque mental image of Buenos Aires, the city resembling a tumultuous, seething, cauldron of barbarity.

Whilst the slaughter scene may have made compelling viewing for the passing traveller, who always had the reassurance that s/he would soon move on, we can only guess the impact it would have made upon the newly arrived settler. Having reached the strange land that was to be their home for the foreseeable future, if not for ever, what conclusions would Northern European incomers have drawn about the nature of Platine society on observing this brutal, other-worldly spectacle? Just how much does the slaughter scene capture the essence of life in the young Argentina, the settlers may have asked - is the cruelty and hubbub commonplace, or is it confined to this one reasonably appropriate area?

From our brief venture into Darwin's account, we can discern two thematic currents of relevance to the present study: first, the detailed annotation of the typical characteristics of another society provided by extrinsic observers; second, the impressions and judgements reached by such witnesses, informed by their own experience, culture and moral values. The unaccustomed eyes of the outsider often record a scene more vividly, with greater sensibility and attention to detail, purely because of its unfamiliarity, than those of a local onlooker. The subject matter of Darwin's verbal sketch is also intriguing: his decision to describe a slaughter yard, an unusual topic for a travel account, acquires larger significance in light of the repetition of this image throughout the cultural artefacts of porteño society around that time. Esteban Echeverría's El matadero and Essex Vidal's watercolour depiction of an abattoir scene both evoke a spectacle similar to that described by Darwin, suggesting, at the very least, the physical prominence of the Buenos Aires slaughter yards, but undoubtedly inferring much more about the ethos of that society.²

² The slaughter scene features in many records of Buenos Aires around this time, regularly appearing amongst artistic and literary attempts to capture the essence of the city. For instance, an image of the corrales de abasto was included in a collection of prints published in 1833 by Bacle y Compañía, the first lithography studio in Argentina, under the title Trages y costumbres de la Provincia de Buenos Aires. In Far Away and Long Ago, W. H. Hudson portrays the slaughter yards of the late 1840s in a manner reminiscent of Darwin, emphasizing the assault they constituted upon the observer's senses.
As this study aims to set incomer and creole perceptions of the Rio de la Plata side by side, I shall open by undertaking a brief experiment in this approach, noting the similarities between the descriptions of the slaughter yard offered by Darwin and Echeverría. The slaughterhouse portrayed in *El matadero* is just emerging from a period of unaccustomed inactivity, a condition enforced by the twin restrictions of the city's isolation by floodwater, which impedes the arrival of cattle from the surrounding countryside, and a religious prohibition upon the consumption of meat during Lent. When the first herd is finally led into the yard, activity resumes at a frenzied pace as many animals are quickly and brutally dispatched. All proceeds as normal, until a bull is selected as the next victim. The spirited beast puts up a tremendous struggle, the restraining *lazo* breaks under tension and the free end hisses through the air, decapitating a young boy in its path. There follows a frantic chase as the fleeing bull is pursued through the nearby streets; the slaughterhouse mob, blinded by their obsession, even trample a passing Englishman into the mud. When the renegade animal is finally subdued and dragged back to the yard, the scene bears more than a casual resemblance to that sketched by Darwin, both in terms of subject matter and Echeverría's minute, almost scientific mode of description. The detail of Echeverría's sketch, like that of Darwin, is compatible with the precise, ordered prose one would employ when writing up the method and results of a laboratory experiment:

Enlazaron muy luego por las astas al animal que brincaba haciendo hincapié y lanzando roncos bramidos. Echaronle uno, dos, tres piales; pero infructuosos: al cuarto quedó prendido de una pata; su brio y su furia redoblaron; su lengua, estirándose convulsiva, arrojaba espuma, su nariz, humo, sus ojos, miradas encendidas. —¡Desgarren ese animal!— exclamó una voz imperiosa. Matasiete se tiró al punto del caballo, cortóle el garrón de una echillada y gambeteando en torno de él con su enorme daga en mano, se la hundió al cabo hasta el puño en la garganta, mostrándola enseguida humeante y roja a los espectadores. Brotó un torrente de la herida, exhaló algunos bramidos describing their revolting odour as 'probably the worst ever known on the earth', asserting that passers-by 'would hold their noses and ride a mile or so at a furious gallop' to escape the 'abominable stench' (pp. 286-87).
roncos, vació y cayó el soberbio animal entre los gritos de la chusma.³

Perhaps these strikingly similar descriptions of the slaughter scene can be read as mutually validating, each lending weight to the other's claim to realism. Alternatively, both may be instances of literary hyperbole, for quite different motivations. Darwin, having just arrived in a foreign city, portrays a scene that is exotically appealing, but the sheer brutality of which reinforces his likely belief in the primitive nature and moral inferiority of the average Argentine in contrast to his own perceived standing as the representative of an advanced and enlightened culture.⁴ The adoption of such a perspective assists the isolated traveller to maintain some distance from local society, a strategy for the reassuring preservation of the familiar, of personal and national identity, values frequently emphasized when immersed in alien surroundings. With specific reference to nineteenth-century visitors to South America, one critic has noted that 'the most arduous trial [...] was for the traveler to retain his sense of self at the same time as he searched for knowledge [...] in the midst of a world that threatened to unveil secrets that could conceivably jolt the traveler out of his identity'.⁵ Thus, Darwin's status as a scientific investigator, one who was deliberately seeking to uncover the deepest mysteries of nature, made him particularly susceptible to fragmentation of the self; the new truths which awaited the early exponents of modern science were set to shake the very foundations upon which their lives, and those of all humankind, were constructed. The conscious preservation of values and the assertion of detachment entered the traveller's armoury as weapons of self-defence which could most easily be deployed...


⁴ Although Darwin demonstrates some admiration for the typical Argentine (especially the gaucho) later in his account, it is mitigated by references to the unruly behaviour and idle disposition of the common citizen. He also condemns the vice and corruption prevalent in higher society.

⁵ González Echevarría, Myth and Archive, p. 108.
through stressing, or even exaggerating, the indecorous aspects of local society. Hence, the act of writing their experiences, and especially those that ran against their own moral grain, had a cathartic function for foreign observers of Darwin’s brand.

Echeverría, on the other hand, would have overstated the harsh, violent atmosphere of the slaughter yard to intensify the political message he is trying to convey. It is clear that the slaughterhouse of the story’s title does not only refer to the *matadero de la Convalecencia*, the main site of the action, but stands for Argentina itself. The author’s project is to expose the customary brutality of society during the Rosas era, as well as the stifling authority of officialdom in its various guises - the dictator, the Catholic Church and the *juez del matadero*. Of course, the more emphatic and shocking his description, the more horrifying is the light which it casts upon contemporary circumstances.

Before moving on to a wider consideration of the textual traces of Platine society around the Rosas era, it may be useful to clarify the model within which I envisage the operation of the assorted cultural discourses brought together in my analysis. In these few opening paragraphs, several separate strands have begun to traverse one another, forming a web-like pattern. At its centre, we find the general issue of ‘perceptions of Platine society’, increasingly surrounded by diverging tendrils, each representing a particular view (that of Darwin, the generic traveller/incomer, or Echeverría, the liberal critic, for example), with thematic cross filaments, such as the motif of the slaughter yard and the outsider’s first impressions of a foreign land, running between the radial threads. By perceiving a structure with a potentially endless permutation of intersections, I purposefully resist the urge to establish rigid, formulaic links between the various components of this cultural *bricolage*, reflecting my conviction that diverse cultural products of similar reference and era cannot be neatly segregated, analysed and interpreted through the mediation of some external, objective order; rather, they are all inextricably tangled, multiply and complexly related, understandable only in the light of their mutual tangency. In the course of the following pages, the resultant structure will be more fully explored
as we move between its composing strands, settling on one broad theme at a time and pursuing it around the web in a circular pattern, pausing for the occasional digression into essential contextual detail.

I shall begin, logically enough, with the initial impressions of Platine society recorded by foreign observers. Naturally, the first instance of contact between an incomer and the receptor society usually occurs at one of a nation's recognized points of entry, most commonly the airport in our own experience, but the dock in the early nineteenth century. For this reason, the anonymous author of Cinco años en Buenos Aires opens his account in that very place, or, to be more precise, with a description of the panorama which greets the traveller on the final approach to port. Having already attributed the city with 'un imponente aspecto' when viewed from a distance of eight miles, with the major public buildings and the domes of numerous churches eclipsing less salubrious details, he asserts that any sense of 'grandeza' is rapidly dispelled on drawing closer from the seaward side, as the storm-damaged pier, destroyed in August 1821, comes into view (p. 9). As a result of the loss of this most essential feature of any port, disembarkation cannot take place in the conventional manner; instead, most of the passengers and their belongings are transferred through the shallows by cart or, occasionally, borne ashore on sailors' shoulders (p. 13).

Whilst published accounts of this type may have given a few settlers some prior inkling of the character of their new homeland, most newcomers had very little knowledge of the society they were about to join, a fact recorded by some of their number. En route to Buenos Aires on board the Symmetry in 1825, one member of the party bound for the Scottish agricultural colony at Monte Grande wrote a poetic account of his voyage under the nom de plume 'Tam O'Stirling'.6 Though humorous in tone, his verses reflect issues of serious concern to the naïve emigrants. As they near South America, Tam notes the wild speculation rife amongst his fellow passengers:

6 The poem is reproduced in its entirety in James Dodds, Records of the Scottish Settlers in the River Plate and their Churches (Buenos Aires: Grant and Sylvester, 1897), pp. 24-26.
They wondered what people the Argentines were,
Savage or civilised - colour, and figure,
And lassies resolved they would droon themselves ere
They'd gang without claes or be kissed by a nigger. [...] 

On landing at the port, the settlers seem to have had little idea of what to expect,
were confused by their surroundings and mystified by linguistic difference:

The Symmetry anchored, boats gathered around them,
While jabbering foreigners their luggage received
The Babel o' tongues was enough to confound them,
But naebody understood Scotch, they perceived.

It is hard for the modern reader of the emigrants' accounts to fully appreciate
their trauma on reaching the Rio de la Plata. The world must have seemed so much
larger and more mysterious in the 1820s than it does in the age of efficient global
travel and communications. By leaving Scotland, the settlers had effectively crossed
their personal Rubicon; even a visit home was a daunting if not impossible prospect,
the uncomfortable sea voyage being both costly and of around ten weeks' duration.
The virtual irreversibility of the settlers' decision is suggested in Tam's poem, where
Argentina is described as 'their land of adoption, home of the stranger,/ From where
they would ne'er go to sea any more'.

It would appear that the average incomer's first impressions of Buenos Aires
were not entirely favourable. Naturally, the homesickness experienced by many
would have contributed to a feeling of alienation and the initial perception of their
adopted country as an unwelcoming, hostile place. Even those of the settlers who
professed the importance of maintaining an open mind found little to cheer them on
first arriving in Argentina. William Grierson, for instance, another passenger of the
Symmetry, recorded in his diary soon after venturing ashore:

I have observed that the Country seems bleak, and the City gloomy,
and the aspect of the Inhabitants rather forbidding. We have certainly
seen everything to disadvantage, and we have carried prejudices
alongst with us which we must overcome, before we can form proper, and consistent Ideas.\(^7\)

Like the author of *Cinco años*, but writing from an historical perspective, James Dodds refers to the insalubrious environment of the port, stating that the Scottish party landed 'on a tempest-worn beach, without breakwater or landing stage, and amidst rows of unsavoury rubbish heaps' (p. 14). He also notes, however, that the settlers had sufficient time to visit a few of the local landmarks and 'were agreeably surprised at the splendid interior of some of the churches' (p. 15). After only a few days in the city, the Scots proceeded to the Monte Grande site, where they quickly established a thriving community. Let us now take a moment to summarize the origins, achievements and untimely collapse of their enterprise.

* * *

**A brief history of the Monte Grande colony**

Although they must have encountered many difficulties in coming to terms with their adopted homeland, the Monte Grande settlers soon began to fulfil the potential envisaged by both the creole proponents of immigration and the project's organizers. The original plan to establish a Scottish agricultural colony on Argentine soil had been the brainchild of one Daniel Mackinlay, a prominent figure in the early British merchant community of Buenos Aires.\(^8\) Sadly, Mackinlay fell seriously ill before he could bring his plan to fruition. His idea, however, reached the attention of two enterprising brothers with a long-standing interest in the Rio de la Plata region, John and William Parish Robertson, probably through a mutual business partner, Thomas

\(^7\) William Grierson, *The Voyage of the Symmetry*, published in instalments by the Iglesia Presbiteriana San Andrés, Buenos Aires, exact year of publication unknown. Grierson enters this observation into his diary under 11 August 1825.

\(^8\) Graham-Yooll, *The Forgotten Colony*, p. 163.
Fair. The Parish Robertsons, natives of Kelso (Scotland), first began their association with South America in December 1806, when John, at the age of fourteen, sailed for the Plate. Tales of Beresford's invasion of Buenos Aires had inspired the young man to seek his fortune there, believing that the city was under the control of his compatriots. Much to John's dismay, he arrived only to discover that Buenos Aires had been recaptured; the ship on which he was travelling diverted to Montevideo, just in time to witness Auchmuty's attack upon the city. When Montevideo fell into British hands, John went ashore and embraced his new life enthusiastically. But after the failure of Whitelocke's assault on Buenos Aires and the subsequent withdrawal of the British from the Plate, John was obliged to return home. A few months later, he again embarked for South America, this time making for Rio de Janeiro. From the Brazilian capital he ventured south, renewing contacts made during his previous stay in Montevideo, finally reaching Buenos Aires.

From 1811 onwards, Parish Roberston engaged in commercial activities which took him into Northern Argentina and Paraguay, such as trading in yerba mate and hides, and almost cost him his life in an encounter with supporters of Artigas. A mob of drunken artigueños, as John calls them, boarded his vessel in the Paraná, looted the cargo and threatened him with death. His personal possessions were ruthlessly plundered and misappropriated, resulting in a quite ridiculous scene:

Many of the Artigueños [...] were now to be seen strutting about in Bond Street cut coats, leather breeches [...], Andrés hats, tight fits of boots, both top and hessian, with broad-frilled shirts, and large ties of white cravat. Here were my gold chain and seals dangling at the fob of the sergeant, he having preferred them to the watch, which went to the corporal. One man had on a pair of buckskins and hessian boots, another a pair of Hoby's best tops over white cord pantaloons, and as this last personage was considered the smartest of the group, my opera hat was seized upon by him to crown his attire. (cited by Dodds, p. 104)

After being threatened with military intervention by the captain of a nearby British warship, Artigas finally ordered Parish Robertson's release.
John was joined by his brother William in 1814, but both were soon expelled from Paraguay, with the loss of most of their property, when the country was closed to foreigners by decree of the xenophobic dictator, Francia. In 1818, the Parish Robertsons settled in Buenos Aires and rose to prominence within the British community. In association with Thomas Fair, they traded successfully in various commodities, forging links with merchants based in Britain. John returned to Scotland in 1824 with a considerable fortune, the better part of which he then reinvested in the Monte Grande project. This decision was to prove the most rash of an otherwise auspicious commercial career.9

After adopting Mackinlay's colonization scheme as their own, the Parish Robertsons made the relevant approaches to the Buenos Aires government in 1824. The authorities offered land for the project, but the brothers considered the tract assigned to them to be of insufficient quality. Instead, according to The British Packet of 25 October 1828, they invested around '60,000 hard dollars' of their own resources to purchase 'three contiguous Chacras, or farms' (cited by Dodds, p. 38). The land, comprising around 16,660 acres within the modern districts of Lomas de Zamora and Esteban Echeverría in the province of Buenos Aires, was purchased from the Scottish brothers John and George Gibson, the proprietors of several estancias in the region.10 The colony was to be known officially as Santa Catalina, the name of one of the original chacras which became the personal residence of the

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9 The biographical details of the Parish Robertsons given in the preceding pages are taken from Dodds, Records of the Scottish Settlers, pp. 63-135. In addition to substantial passages from Letters on Paraguay and Letters on South America, the Parish Robertsons' own accounts of their experiences, Dodds quotes from a brief sketch of John Parish Robertson's life in M. G. Mulhall's The English in South America (Buenos Aires: Standard Office, 1878).

10 In The History and Present State of the Sheep-Breeding Industry in the Argentine Republic (Buenos Aires: Ravenscroft and Mills, 1893), Herbert Gibson records that his family sold the property to 'Messrs. Robertson, who founded there the famous Scotch colony, and later on resold the land to Mr. William Fair' (p. 243). These are the same Gibsons who are referred to extensively elsewhere in this study.
Parish Robertsons. Their house is now the head office of the University of Lomas de Zamora.\footnote{William Denis Grant, 'A History of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Argentina', in the November-December 1989 issue of the newsletter of the Iglesia Presbiteriana San Andrés, Buenos Aires.}

According to James Dodds, prospective settlers were recruited in the spring of 1825 from 'the quiet hamlets and granges on the banks and braes o' bonnie Doon, the dales of the sweet winding Nith, the Annan, the Teviot, [...] Ettrick's bonnie birken shaws, and the dowie dens o' Yarrow, all so celebrated in song and romance' (p. 6). The colony was to consist of eight farmers from the Scottish Border country along with their families and servants, as well as a number of tradesmen and labourers for the general service of the community. The first group of emigrants congregated in Edinburgh in May 1825 and set sail from Leith on board the Symmetry. Dodds states that the colonists 'numbered more or less, 250 souls including children' (p. 11), but the passenger list which he reproduces amounts to only 220 (pp. 18-20). He claims that the discrepancy can be explained by the fact that other settlers sailed separately, but there are no records nor passenger lists to verify this assertion. Dodds, however, quotes an article from The Buenos Aires Standard of 1 January 1868 in which extracts from The British Packet of 23 August 1828 are duplicated (pp. 32-33). The latter had been found amongst the 'papers of an old Scotchwoman' and included a census of the Monte Grande colony. According to The British Packet, by 1828 there were some 241 Scottish adults resident at the settlement, 85 Scottish children, 158 native adults and 30 native children. From these statistics, it seems probable that the colony was reinforced by a relatively small number of settlers who had not figured amongst the original emigrants aboard the Symmetry.

The initial success of the settlement becomes manifest from the article in The British Packet of 25 October 1828:
the colony not only soon laid the foundation of a permanent prosperity, but in two years entirely changed the face of that part of the country which it occupied, and at this moment the colony presents to the view of every one the realisation of all that the proprietors could propose - a model of industry, comfort, agricultural improvement, and moral excellence worthy of imitation, and highly creditable to the parties who have produced this happy result. (cited by Dodds, p. 38)

The early actions of the settlers, therefore, would appear to confirm the pro-immigration arguments of creole liberals, bringing recognizable signs of civilization to an undeveloped corner of Buenos Aires province. By 1826, the colony was already flourishing to the extent that the appointment of a minister and teacher was deemed necessary. To this end, the recently ordained Rev. William Brown was engaged to establish a Presbyterian mission at Monte Grande and to provide education to the colonists’ children. Brown had been born in the Fife village of Leuchars in 1800 and had attended the grammar school and university in St. Andrews. He then completed his theological studies at Aberdeen, before spending seven years as a private tutor in Banffshire. Having been licensed by the Presbytery of Banff and ordained in Glasgow, he was selected to undertake the challenging Monte Grande mission on account of ‘su tesón y fortaleza de carácter’.12

The settlers’ circumstances, however, were soon to take a turn for the worse. In the words of James Dodds,

The resignation of President Rivadavia in 1827 sounded the death-knell to all the hopes of Messrs. Robertson for any assistance from the succeeding Federal Government, who acted like the ‘deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charming never so cunningly,’ and thus the obligations of the Government, moral and written, were totally ignored. (p. 40).

12 Un siglo y medio después: Escuela Escocesa San Andrés 1838-1988 (Buenos Aires: Asociación Civil Escuela Escocesa San Andrés, 1988). A detailed account of the life of William Brown is provided in this work (pp. 126-29). Alternatively, see Dodds, pp. 201-10.
The unstable economic climate associated with the war against Brazil and the fall of the unitarian government prejudiced the prosperity of the settlement. Already in financial difficulties, the final straw for the colony was the civil conflict of 1828 to 1829 between Rosas's federalists and the unitarians commanded by Lavalle. In May 1829, the countryside around Monte Grande was occupied by forces of both factions and, fearing for their lives, many of the colonists fled to the city of Buenos Aires, others scattered throughout the province. Harassment by marauding bands of troops was to remain a constant threat to those Scots who persisted in rural areas during the Rosas era. In one incident, described by Dodds, soldiers robbed a house and attempted to murder its occupant, James Miller (pp. 54-55). On another occasion, the Robsons' property was assaulted and, when confronted by young John Robson, 'one of the wretches raised his blunderbuss and shot him in the face, and then each with his sword (four of them) stabbed him to death' (Dodds, p. 56). 13

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We can only guess the initial view of local society formed by most of the early settlers, but the opinions set out in the account left by Jane Robson (née Rodger) were probably quite typical. Base dishonesty, greed and unreliability are the essential characteristics which Jane assigns to the average creole in the rural parts of the province, an opinion informed by an apparent belief in the innate moral superiority of her Scottish community, probably the product of a Presbyterian upbringing, as well as a lifetime of bitter experiences at the hands of both officialdom and Argentine neighbours. Jane even begins her autobiography with a tale of deceit and double-dealing: soon after arriving in Buenos Aires, her father decided to break away from the Monte Grande group for the simple reason that 'things were not as had been

13 Here Dodds relies upon the verbal testimony of Jane Robson. More than a decade after the publication of Dodds's history, the elderly Mrs. Robson dictated the story of her arduous life to a friend, the account analysed throughout this study and presented as an appendix.
represented to him'. Although Jane does not elaborate upon the exact nature of her father's disillusionment, the fact that the authorities failed to provide the generous financial assistance they had originally promised to the Parish Robertsons would probably figure in any explanation. Then, having finally set up on their own, the Rodger family immediately fall victim to the tricks of an unscrupulous local:

Father started by buying a milk cow which promptly returned to its previous owner some distance across the camp. Father got it back but the same thing happened again and on each occasion he had to buy it over again or at any rate pay something, such was the dishonesty of those amongst whom we lived. (p. 221)

Brazen theft of this kind was supplemented by that of a more threatening nature. Jane recalls an attempt by 'three horrible rough looking men' to rob and kill her mother and a companion as they returned home from selling butter and cheese in the nearby town of Chascomús, a fate avoided only by leaving the road and riding through the tall, dense thistles which flourished in that part of the province (pp. 223-24). During the civil war of 1828 to 1829, the Rodgers' property was frequently visited by 'wandering ruffians', who, on one occasion, attacked an employee of the family, intimidated Jane's mother and killed their dog by 'cutting him to the backbone in three places' with a sword (p. 227). Worse would have probably followed were it not for the fortuitous arrival of a neighbour and the proximity of a party of rival troops. References to the corrupt conduct and brutality of the typical Argentine abound throughout Jane's account; others will be mentioned elsewhere in this study, but for the moment I shall confine my analysis to the settlers' early experiences.

It was not only the nature of the creole population which the new arrivals found disconcerting; many of the incomers seem to have been totally unprepared for such mundane factors as climatic difference and the reversal of the seasons in the southern hemisphere, discoveries which only intensified their feeling of

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14 *Faith Hard Tried*, p. 221. Further references, corresponding to the pagination of this account as it appears in the appendix of the present thesis, will be cited parenthetically.
vulnerability and evoked nostalgic recollections of home. In his diary, William Grierson reflects:

We left home on the eve of summer; experienced the Sultry heat, the bright glare, and the debilitating influence of the Torrid Zone, and tropical climes: nay we may say, 'that we have been cast upon these plains from the midst of Thunder and Lightning'. Yea our Nomenclature must undergo a reform, and the qualities of our Kalendar submit to a very material alteration - and when we characterize the days or the Seasons, we must make a complete transfer of qualities, and put summer for winters, Spring for Autumn, long for short, and heat for cold, and so forth. We must learn that Boreas now blows upon us from the South: that he yet lingers in these plains, that his last embraces are impressive, when he is about to retire to the mountains of Patagonia, or the Cloud surmounting the Andes, where he always sits covered with his snowy Mantle, as he often does upon Benlomond, and Benlawers, in the Land of Cakes. (11 August 1825)

Jane Robson also vividly recalls the fear inspired by unfamiliar meteorological phenomena during her childhood. She recalls being struck on the neck by an 'aire', which is described as 'a shock of bad air [...] that often causes great damage; it will crack or shatter a mirror, glasses etc.' (pp. 221-22). Whilst the scientific grounding of this observation seems rather dubious (her neck was probably affected by nothing more than a draught, but an air current of such destructive potential beggars belief), it serves to attribute a dimension of mysterious, unseen power to the Argentine environment, thus boosting the implicit pioneer myth that pervades Jane's story and casts the settlers' enterprise as a quasi-heroic crusade against the conspiracy of both unfriendly locals and hostile natural forces. In similar vein, having mentioned frequent 'terrible storms', Jane remembers being hit by lightning on one occasion:

One day my sister and I were coming from the kitchen to the dining room, she carrying a kettle of boiling water. She was holding my hand as the wind was so high, and I suppose we felt safer holding hands. Anyway, I turned to close the door when a severe flash of lightning struck me. I fell to the ground and for some hours was quite unconscious; my clothes were burned and it was a narrow escape from death, one of the many I have had in my life. (p. 223)
Again, this description stretches the bounds of credibility despite the very matter-of-fact style in which it is related, almost suggesting an aura of personal impregnability and indifference to physical danger. Courage, inordinate physical strength and the relegation of private safety to secondary importance are recurrent themes throughout Jane's autobiography. Her self-image seems very clearly defined and central to the narrative; she constantly evokes an apparent belief in her own moral fortitude and strength of character. Whilst not wishing to cast aspersions upon Jane's good name nor imply any deliberate intention to mislead, I am convinced that she has to some degree embellished her autobiography to reinforce and convey her obviously elevated sense of self-esteem. Of course, we can all be guilty of such innocent subjectivity when telling stories, exaggerating our own capacity, painting bygone troubles as just that bit more daunting to augment our triumph, in an attempt to impress the given audience. This minor fallacy in no way devalues Jane's account; on the contrary, it adds another dimension of interest to the cultural historian's interpretive enterprise. It is, however, essential that we take this factor into our considerations and do not merely accept her words as the mimesis of truth. The tale of the lightning is one of many episodes open to aggrandizement, with the directness of the strike, the length of unconsciousness and the proximity of death all likely subjects for overstatement.

The issues of exaggeration and authorial subjectivity are by no means confined to Jane Robson's account. Indeed, such concerns are central and explicit in most of the works to be analysed in this study, something which will become increasingly plain as we proceed. Having dwelt upon the incomers' first impressions of the Rio de la Plata in some detail, let us now review the more general presentation of local society within a selection of settler and creole testimonies.

The reading of Cinco años en Buenos Aires reveals much about the foreigner's perception of the porteño way of life between the years 1820 and 1825, a few years prior to the rise of Rosas. Generally, a favourable picture emerges, with many references which suggest a high degree of civilization in the city. The
The anonymous author portrays a society that values every element of modern European culture, a clear reflection of the prevailing liberal ethos. The flourishing cultural life of the city is epitomized in the many works of drama, opera and ballet staged in the theatre. Members of all levels of society attend these productions: 'No es raro ver en el teatro a niños de meses en brazos de sus madres, así como también esclavos' (p. 41). In a somewhat critical tone, the author records that the rather aloof British population tends to be absent from such occasions: 'Los ingleses no van al teatro con asiduidad. Dicen ellos que es falta de interés, pero yo creo que los verdaderos motivos de su indiferencia son los negocios y su inclinación por la sociedad británica' (p. 40). The choice of dramatic material presented reinforces the European affinity of Buenos Aires at this time and includes works of such evidently foreign themes as 'El vagabundo escocés' and 'Carlos Eduardo Estuardo' (p. 35).

Despite the tone of approval which colours much of the work, certain local customs are deprecated; the consumption of mate, for example, is condemned as an unhygienic practice prejudicial to dental health, the infusion itself being considered far inferior to tea (p. 71). The diet of the city dwellers is criticized for the excessive inclusion of confectionery substances, accounting for the apparent frequency of dental problems amongst the porteños. Having referred to widespread tooth loss, especially in the young, the author notes:

Se ven constantemente personas con la cara atada por padecer de dolores de muelas: la mala dentadura es, en verdad, una enfermedad del país. [...] Como no es fácil procurarse dientes postizos, en Buenos Aires todo el mundo se entera del defecto. (p. 73).

The main vice of the creole is chainsmoking from dawn till dusk, a custom widespread amongst men, women and children, but deemed unacceptable for ladies of high society (p. 70). The author, though not a smoker himself, finds this trait agreeable in men, and envies the pleasure many derive from cigars, but asserts that the sight of women smoking offends his 'sentimientos británicos' (p. 70). The consumption of alcohol is not so popular amongst the local population and
drunkeness causes relatively few problems in the city. Unlike their counterparts in Britain, members of the working classes do not spend their free time in taverns, preferring to engage in more congenial pursuits:

Los obreros pasan sus horas de ocio tocando la guitarra: en las noches de verano las puertas y ventanas están abiertas y pueden verse parejas bailando, otras cantando o fumando cigarros. En mi patria, los obreros dan preferencia a las tabernas, en donde pueden, en medio de bebidas y cantos, denigrar a los ministros y a los impuestos, jurando al mismo tiempo ser británicos de pura cepa. (p. 80)

We are told that slavery still exists in Argentine society, though there is none of the brutality conventionally associated with this practice; hence, relations between master and slave are usually amicable (pp. 78-79). If discontented, slaves may seek themselves a buyer; if maltreated, they may take their complaint to the judicial system. The British community own few slaves, however, preferring to employ servants instead. In matters of social order, the people of Buenos Aires are depicted as an upstanding community, where even 'las clases inferiores' generally conduct themselves in a decorous manner and pay due respect to foreign citizens (p. 79).

Crime is a minor problem, the most common infringement of the law being the practice of resorting to the gauchesque duel with knives to resolve even the slightest difference. Whereas similar quarrels in England would result only in 'ojos amoratados y narices sangrientas', the death of one of the combatants was a common outcome in Buenos Aires (p. 138). Rivadavia is credited with having reduced the incidence of such tragedies by legislating against the misuse of knives in the city (p. 138). Other measures have also added to the force of law; whilst murder had not been severely punished in earlier times, the perpetrator facing only a short prison sentence, an offender in the 1820s was liable to be brought before the firing squad (pp. 139-41).

Moving on to Beaumont's Travels in Buenos Ayres, we are presented with some other salient details of creole society from the perspective of the British incomer. Generally, the Argentinians themselves are perceived as being of a friendly
and open disposition, though given to idleness and likely to benefit from increased European influence:

The Creoles are polite in their manners, sober in their habits, and attentive to strangers from Europe; but there is a listlessness, an unpunctuality, and a procrastination about them, which is by no means congenial with the habits of an Englishman of business. They are always thrusting in the provoking word *mañana*, when one has particular occasion for dispatch. [...] The Creoles, generally, are very acute; and when a more extended intercourse with the better sort of Europeans shall have extended their views from mere personal and immediate advantages to general and prospective interests, their acuteness may turn to an improved account. (p. 59)

Setting aside his gentlemanly references to the attractive nature and appearance of the 'creolean ladies', who are 'fascinating as girls' and appear 'to make faithful and domestic wives', it is the gauchos who arouse the most positive reaction in Beaumont (pp. 59-60). The latter are hailed as 'the most independent creatures in the universe' with so few requirements that 'their pursuits in life are so free from care - and their habits from expense, ostentation or rivalry' (pp. 60-61). Curiously, Beaumont observes that 'in some places they are clouded with superstition, and sunk in idleness; but more generally, they live too remote from the priesthood to have been much influenced by them' (my italics, p. 61). The clear implication of this remark is a prejudice against the Catholic Church as a force which somehow stultifies its adherents. From this evidence, it would be reasonable to deduce that the author holds overbearing religious dogma in contempt, his view probably informed by Enlightenment rationality and the more eclectic religious traditions of his native land. The rather self-righteous tone of Beaumont's description of creole indolence also has its referent in the author's socio-cultural background, harking back to the Puritan belief that the failure to engage in constant moral activity was a diabolical sin.

On first noting Beaumont's emphasis upon the idleness of the typical Argentine, we may be tempted to dismiss it as an instance of narrow-mindedness, a manifestation of the imperial mentality which holds that all foreigners are work-shy
in comparison to the driven, industrious Briton. This type of belief was supported by the links between racial origin, environment and an idle nature established in certain brands of Enlightenment thought, ideas with which Beaumont may well have been familiar, and further substantiated by the attitude that would later be defined as the Protestant work ethic. However, it is inadequate to blithely describe Beaumont's outlook as the exclusive product of his nationality, for some creole observers wrote of their compatriots in a similarly disparaging manner. Sarmiento, in particular, expresses comparable views within the pages of Facundo. There is no common ground in either the racial origin or native environment of Beaumont and Sarmiento, so such deterministic explanations of this coincidence must be ruled out; we can say with surety, however, that both have a stake in similar ideological discourses, each having acquired within the parameters of his own existence cognate mental baggage, an infusion of progressive, capitalist values in which self-improvement, defined as a proclivity to industry and material acquisition, is presented as the natural impulse of the decent, moral individual. Moreover, the ideology of both authors is only reinforced by bitter personal experience of Argentine society, a fact which naturally colours their accounts: in the case of Sarmiento, this will become clear presently; the reader seeking a full appreciation of the incidents behind Beaumont's disillusionment is referred to the fourth chapter of this study. For the moment, a brief excursion into Sarmiento's life reveals some of the forces, both material and intellectual, which shaped his thought, certain of which are plainly compatible with the belief-system Beaumont was likely to have acquired whilst maturing in early nineteenth-century Britain. At the same time, of course, this undertaking bolsters the view that authorial background is a cardinal determinant of the character of any text with an evident ideological thrust.

* * *
Sarmiento: the formative years

Faustino Valentin Sarmiento was born on 15 February 1811 into a distinguished family of the western Argentinian province of San Juan. Amongst his relatives he became known as Domingo, in honour of the Dominican order in which several of the family had served. The young Domingo began his education under the guidance of his father's brother, José Eufraiso de Quiroga Sarmiento, who later became Bishop of Cuyo. At the age of five, having already learnt the basics of reading and writing from his illustrious relation, Sarmiento enrolled in the Escuela de la Patria, recently established in the city of San Juan by the porteño brothers José Genaro and Ignacio Rodriguez. His teachers brought with them from Buenos Aires the idealism of the independence process and imbued their pupils with these values.

In 1823, Sarmiento's name was put forward for a scholarship to attend the newly founded Colegio de Ciencias Morales in Buenos Aires, but he was not selected. At this time, San Juan was a centre of liberal values under the progressive government of Dr. Salvador Maria Del Carril. During Del Carril's governorship, the citizens of San Juan were granted unprecedented liberty, including the right to religious freedom. This situation angered the conservative Catholic clergy, many of whom were active in the leadership of a subsequent revolt. Del Carril was overthrown and fled to Mendoza. The new government, led by Plácido Fernández Maradona, endured for less than two months before being swept aside by the invading forces of Mendoza under the command of José Félix Aldao.

José de Oro, an uncle of Sarmiento and one of the priests who had figured in the original uprising, was sent into exile by the new regime. Before leaving, he offered his young nephew the opportunity to accompany him. With no reason to remain in San Juan following the enforced closure of the school of the Rodriguez brothers, Sarmiento trekked across the mountains with his uncle into the province of San Luis. There they settled in the small town of San Francisco del Monte where, at the age of fifteen, Sarmiento displayed the first indication of his lifelong crusade to
educate the people by establishing his own school. In 1827, Sarmiento's idyllic lifestyle was interrupted by his father's insistence that he should take up a place at the Colegio de Ciencias Morales, arranged for him by the current governor of San Juan, José Sánchez. By the time he returned to his home town, however, Sánchez had been overthrown and the province had fallen under the control of Juan Facundo Quiroga and his gaucho army. With the demise of Sánchez, Sarmiento's opportunity to further his formal education in Buenos Aires disappeared. Instead, he reluctantly accepted employment as manager of his aunt's general store in San Juan.

Prior to conquering San Juan, Facundo Quiroga had swept through the neighbouring provinces of Tucumán and Catamarca, deposing any regional government which was sympathetic to the Rivadavian unitarios in Buenos Aires. During this period, Facundo Quiroga acquired a fearsome reputation as champion of the Catholic faith, epitomized in his official emblem of a plain black flag emblazoned with the slogan Religión o Muerte. The invasion of San Juan and the installation of a puppet government, initially led by Manuel Gregorio Quiroga, had a profound effect upon the young Sarmiento. Not only did the disruption prejudice his own chances of educational advancement, but the very institutions and values which he had come to esteem under the tutelage of the Rodriguez brothers had all but vanished. In Facundo, he testifies to the degeneration of San Juan after the town's fall into the hands of despotism. Prior to this period of turbulence, the population had been steadily increasing due to 'progresos de la agricultura y de la emigración de la Rioja y San Luis, que huye del hambre y de la miseria' (p. 118). Moreover, the previous governments of the province, regardless of political orientation, had always consisted of learned men. Under the tyranny initiated by Facundo Quiroga, on the other hand, the educated classes had all but disappeared:

15 It is interesting to note that this town is now named San Francisco del Monte de Oro, probably in honour of Sarmiento's uncle.
En una población de cuarenta mil habitantes reunidos en una ciudad, no hay hoy un solo abogado hijo del país ni de otras provincias.

Todos los tribunales están desempeñados por hombres que no tienen el más leve conocimiento del derecho, y que son además hombres negados en toda la expresión de la palabra. No hay establecimiento ninguno de educación pública. [...] 

Sólo tres jóvenes se están educando fuera de la provincia./ Sólo hay un médico sanjuanino./ No hay tres jóvenes que sepan inglés, ni cuatro que hablen francés./ Uno sólo hay que ha cursado matemáticas.

Un sólo joven hay que posee instrucción digna de un pueblo culto, el Sr. Rawson, distinguido ya por sus talentos extraordinarios. Su padre es norteamericano, y a esto ha debido recibir educación. (p. 119)

This catalogue of San Juan's cultural poverty demonstrates both Sarmiento's affinity to formal education and his belief that the importation of foreign elements would enrich Argentine society. Moreover, through setting these attributes in opposition to the regressive values of Facundo's lackeys, Sarmiento frames the situation within the dichotomy of civilización y barbarie, the fundamental concept underlying his view of the Argentine predicament.

Whilst working in his aunt's store, Sarmiento continued the process of his education by reading widely, studying works such as Rousseau's Social Contract. Meanwhile, the political situation around San Juan remained turbulent, with numerous clashes between federalist and unitarian forces. During this conflict, Sarmiento joined the unitarians and took part in his first battle in June 1829 at Niquivil. The unitarians gained control of San Juan for a short period before Facundo Quiroga again emerged victorious early in 1831. In April of that year, Sarmiento left San Juan and fled across the Andes to Chile. There he remained in exile until 1836,
working firstly as a teacher and then as a silver miner, before a severe bout of typhoid fever obliged him to return home.  

Whilst in Chile, Sarmiento came into contact with current literary trends, imported models which would shape his own writings. For example, he encountered, and eagerly studied, the works of Walter Scott, thus acquiring an insight into the genre of the historical romance, with all its possible implications for the questions of identity and national development, concerns that certainly impinge upon Pacundo. After his return to San Juan and subsequent recuperation, he began to borrow books from the library of an acquaintance, Manuel Quiroga Rosas, who had brought a collection of the latest European writings to the province, including works by Villemain, Guizot, Tocqueville and Leroux, texts which were previously unobtainable in the interior of the country. The wide-ranging scope of Sarmiento's reading later manifested itself in the frequent references to European texts throughout Pacundo. During his stay in San Juan, Sarmiento's political awareness continued to develop and he exploited his role as editor of a newspaper, El Zonda, as a forum for increasingly hostile attacks upon the provincial government. Hindered by the intervention of the authorities, the paper soon closed. By November 1840, Sarmiento found himself in a prison cell with a drunken mob of federalists besieging the jail, baying for his blood. The provincial governor arrived with no time to spare, saved Sarmiento from a cruel death and ordered the young dissident to seek exile in Chile.

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16 Two main sources have been employed in compiling the preceding details of Sarmiento's early life: Bunkley, *The Life of Sarmiento* and Manuel Gálvez, *Vida de Sarmiento: El hombre de autoridad* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1945).

17 In his account of Sarmiento's life as a miner near Copiapó, Bunkley writes: 'From a nearby English resident, Edward Abbott, Sarmiento borrowed copies of Sir Walter Scott. Translating the English into Spanish, 500 meters underground, he read by candlelight at the rate of a volume a day and quickly exhausted Mr. Abbott's collection of sixty volumes' (*The Life of Sarmiento*, pp. 96-97).

During this second period of exile, Sarmiento wrote widely in the Chilean press and became closely involved in politics, supporting the campaign of the conservative candidate, General Manuel Bulnes, during the presidential election campaign of 1841. In addition to comment upon Chilean politics, Sarmiento wrote articles on the topics of language and culture. In 1842, for example, he became involved in a bitter polemic with Andrés Bello and his followers over issues of grammatical correctness, accusing Chilean writers of placing excessive emphasis upon the form and use of language.\(^{19}\) In a series of letters written by Sarmiento to La Gaceta del Comercio, one can observe a precedent for the racial analysis of the Argentine predicament later peddled through the pages of Facundo.\(^{20}\) Sarmiento launches a bitter attack against Spain and its heritage, asserting that the former colonial power 'no ha tenido un solo escritor de nota, ningún filósofo, ningún sabio' and even that 'no ha habido en España un hombre que piense'.\(^{21}\) Also during this period, he began to formulate the pro-immigration ideology which is evident in Facundo.\(^{22}\) Throughout his Chilean exile, Sarmiento continued to pursue his keen interest in education and was appointed first director of the nation's Escuela Normal de Preceptores in 1842.

From the preceding details of Sarmiento's early life, the origins of his ideology have become apparent. A precocious intellectual talent and passion for

\(^{19}\) For details of Sarmiento's activities in the Chilean press, see Iván Jaksic, 'Sarmiento and the Chilean Press, 1841-1851', in Sarmiento: Author of a Nation, ed. by Tulio Halperin Donghi and others, pp. 31-60. For specific information on the polemic with Bello, see Bunkley, The Life of Sarmiento, pp. 160-62.

\(^{20}\) Gálvez, Vida de Sarmiento, p. 131.

\(^{21}\) Cited by Gálvez, Vida de Sarmiento, p. 131.

\(^{22}\) Samuel L. Baily writes: 'Between 1841 and 1845, when he left for Europe, Sarmiento, writing for several Chilean newspapers (El Progreso, La Crónica, El Mercurio), set forth his major ideas on immigration: immigration was essential to the development of the South American countries, governments must take a leading role in encouraging immigration; the state must see that immigrants assimilate to the culture of the host society; and the United States was the model for a successful immigration policy.' Sarmiento and Immigration: Changing Views on the Role of Immigration in the Development of Argentina', in Sarmiento and his Argentina, ed. by Joseph T. Criscenti (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 131-42 (p. 132).
reading brought the young Sarmiento into contact with both the works of Enlightenment intellectuals, such as Rousseau, and the most recent literary developments of the 'civilized' world, typified by the works of Walter Scott. Inspired by this blend of influences, he developed an affinity for European culture and democratic organization, naturally aligning himself with the local representatives of these values. The barbarization of San Juan at the hands of Facundo Quiroga's gaucho hordes was the very antithesis of Sarmiento's idealized vision of the future. Furthermore, his own life was adversely affected by the rise of caudillismo in San Juan, forcing him both to abandon his formal education and leave home for a life of exile. Therefore, Sarmiento's decision to produce a hostile biography of Facundo Quiroga, the man principally responsible for his personal misfortune, can be largely understood through reference to the author's own life story and experiences.

* * *

In Facundo, Sarmiento builds his critique of Argentine society around an attack upon the values and characteristics of the masses, in this way suggesting the need for a fundamental change in the composition of the population. After opening with an environmentally deterministic treatise, in which he attributes many of Argentina's problems to its physical form, Sarmiento develops his case around a consideration of the regressive tendencies and primal instincts of the gaucho, though he is unable to conceal some measure of fascination for these colourful nomads of the pampa. Critics have devoted much time and energy to analysing this aspect of Facundo, trying to reconcile the author's blatant ideological condemnation of the gaucho with this aura of sneaking admiration, generally agreeing that the inconsistency arises from Sarmiento's appreciation of the romantic style, in which the figure of the savage holds a certain aesthetic appeal.23 Nevertheless, ideological concerns prevail, and

23 In a recent essay, Solomon Lipp has neatly summarized the apparent conflict between ideology and emotion in Facundo: 'On the political side, he wanted to attack the centers of barbarism that he
Facundo Quiroga is represented as the epitome of barbarism, the most dangerous of gauchos, a man who has elevated himself above his natural station and usurped power from the rightful governing elite (namely the educated, Europeanized liberals with whom the author identifies). Sarmiento sets out to discredit Facundo and, through association, to attack the even more sinister Rosas regime. The relationship between the two despots is established from the very start of the book; Rosas is the heir to Facundo's methods of government, but is a rung further up the evolutionary ladder of cruel dictators:

Facundo no ha muerto; está vivo en las tradiciones populares, en la política y revoluciones argentinas; en Rosas, su heredero, su complemento: su alma ha pasado en este otro molde más acabado, más perfecto, y lo que en él era sólo instinto, iniciación, tendencia, convirtiése en Rosas en sistema, efecto y fin. (pp. 38-39)

Sarmiento portrays Facundo as irredeemably barbaric: 'no es cruel, no es sanguinario, es bárbaro no más, que no sabe contener sus pasiones, y que una vez irritadas no conocen freno ni medida' (pp. 260-61). His brutal and nomadic existence is typical of the gaucho and is quite the opposite of Sarmiento's ideal vision of settled centres of population serving as the nucleus of a civilized society, where hard work and self-improvement are valued above primitive strength and raw courage. These opposing lifestyles are contrasted in Facundo in the description of the Scottish and German colonies to the south of Buenos Aires and their converse, 'la villa nacional' (p. 64). The colonists' dwellings are decorated and clean, the settlers are always active. In comparison, the idle, dishevelled criollos live in a state of wretched believed existed in the vast plains of the interior and in the customs and institutions of rural society. But on the aesthetic side he pays homage to the natural environment and picturesque way of life of his native country. The men of the pampas should have been poets and dreamers. From a practical point of view, Sarmiento condemns the gaucho as a retarded social element, yet his romantic impulses well up as he describes, with no small measure of admiration and in the most colorful of terms, the life-style of the various types of gauchos. 'Sarmiento Revisited: Contradictions and Curiosities', in Criscenti (ed.), Sarmiento and his Argentina, pp. 7-16 (p. 9). We should be careful not to equate Sarmiento's curiosity for the gaucho with Rousseau's concept of the noble savage, for any measure of regard shown by the former remains subordinate to the ideological impulse to civilize his nation's rural inhabitants. Unlike Rousseau, Sarmiento in no sense suggests that modernization has a warping or corrupting effect, on the contrary, the gaucho must be changed in spite of his few admirable qualities.
squalor. Sarmiento holds up the colonies as the shining example of civilized living to which the native population can never aspire:

Las razas americanas viven en la ociosidad, y se muestran incapaces, aún por medio de la compulsión, para dedicarse a un trabajo duro y seguido. [...] Da compasión y vergüenza en la República Argentina comparar la colonia alemana o escocesa del Sur de Buenos Aires, y la villa que se forma en el interior: en la primera las casitas son pintadas, el frente de la casa siempre aseado, adornado de flores y arbustillos graciosos; el amueblado sencillo, pero completo, la vajilla de cobre o estaño reluciente siempre, la cama con cortinillas graciosas; y los habitantes en un movimiento y acción continuo. [...] La villa nacional es el reverso indigno de esta medalla: niños, sucios y cubiertos de harapos viven en una jauría de perros; hombres tendidos por el suelo en la más completa inacción, el desaseo y la pobreza por todas partes, una mesita y petacas por todo amueblado, ranchos miserables por habitación, y un aspecto general de barbarie y de incuria los hacen notables. (p. 64)

It would seem that the foreign colonists are driven by the ambition of financial and material betterment; those who achieve this retire to the city 'a gozar de las comodidades' (p. 64). To Sarmiento the settlers' ultimate goal of moving to an urban environment is further confirmation of their civilized values.

Sarmiento's contrasting descriptions of creole and settler lifestyles make a convenient point to turn our attention away from society at large towards a specific consideration of the Argentine-British community, its composition, characteristics and typical beliefs. Thinking back to the brief discussion of El matadero at the beginning of this chapter, we may recall that an unfortunate Englishman was caught up in the stampede of the slaughterhouse rabble. Thrown by his startled horse, this hapless bystander is left stranded in the mob's path; they take no evasive action and ride straight over him. The gringo, we are told, on finally struggling out of the mire, appears more like 'un demonio tostado por las llamas del infierno' than 'un hombre blanco pelirrubio' (p. 106). Once returned to the slaughterhouse with their quarry, the rabble derive much entertainment from the Englishman's fate: 'la aventura del gringo en el pantano excitaba principalmente la risa y el sarcasmo' (p. 107). This episode could well be dismissed as nothing more than a comical aside, but Echeverría
provides some additional information that illuminates a typical feature of the 
contemporary Argentine-British community. First, we are informed that the 
Englishman was on his way home from 'su saladero'; second, that he failed to heed 
the crowd's noisy approach on account of being 'tan absorto en sus cálculos' (p. 106). 
The gringo, therefore, is the undoubtedly affluent proprietor of a meat preservation 
enterprise, who is so preoccupied with financial concerns that he fails to take notice 
of his surroundings. Perhaps the image of the materialistic and aloof outsider 
conjured by these words implies a subtle criticism on Echeverría's part of the values 
of the British settler community. The Englishman's apparent detachment from the 
everyday realities of his environment may be considered a reflection of the wilful 
blindness exercised by the British commercial sector towards the local population in 
post-colonial Argentina. The isolation in which many of the early incomers chose to 
remain and the deliberate exclusion of creoles from their social circle has been noted 
by H. S. Ferns:

The capacity of the British mercantile class for close organization, 
which has so often in foreign countries been both its greatest strength 
and weakness, soon manifested itself in Buenos Aires. In 1811 the 
British Commercial Rooms were established as a centre of 
commercial intelligence and sociability. Creoles and 'foreigners' were 
excluded from its amenities, and it was not until 1829 that a spirit of 
liberality provoked a reorganization which admitted Creoles to 
membership.24

This relatively late acknowledgement of the local population, together with a 
persisting and ironic perception of all non-Britons as foreigners, conveys the 
impression of a rather reserved and exclusive British community, with little 
appreciation of creole society and concerned only with the exploitation of the 
developing nation's resources. Of course, it would be inconsistent with Echeverría's 
intellectual background and ideology, as evinced in his other writings, to assume that 
such a critique constituted an outright condemnation of the settlers' presence; rather,

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24 Ferns, Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 75-76.
his attitude was probably one of discontent with a certain brand of incomer. After all, an immigrant population unwilling to integrate and form ties with the local community was of little assistance to the programme of cultural assimilation and racial improvement proposed by the Generation of '37. Moreover, it should be remembered that the ideology of this group did not advocate a wholesale adoption of European elements, but a discriminatory process of selection, drawing upon those which were most fitting to the Argentine condition. As we have already observed in the previous chapter, this theme was postulated by Echeverría himself in the *Dogma socialista*.

In this selective light, Echeverría's latent criticism of the gringo is entirely compatible with his ideological orientation, suggesting the rejection of a specific type of incomer rather than a more general comment upon the issue of immigration. Indeed, within the context of *El matadero*, the very fact that the Englishman falls victim to the mob may even lend a certain degree of prestige to his character; as the slaughterhouse butchers come to represent an assault upon any manifestation of civilization, their inhuman treatment of the gringo can perhaps be read as implying his equation with refined values.

This episode could also suggest the attitude of the Rosas regime towards the immigration question. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the settler was tolerated by the administration, but received no official encouragement and few special favours. As a rule, in the words of John Lynch, 'immigration was thought to be expensive, unnecessary, and probably subversive; above all, it would bring competition for land and labour, and raise the cost of both'.

Given the currency of this perspective upon the settlement process and the close association of the mob with *rosismo*, it is hardly surprising that they display no compunction in maltreating the Englishman and regard the whole episode as amusing.

If the Argentine-British settlers were indeed reluctant to integrate with creole society, exactly how can we define their interaction with the local population? John P. Bailey has attempted to illuminate this issue in an analysis of the power relations between the British incomers and the receptor society, in which he demonstrates that the situation of English-speaking settlers in Argentina does not readily correspond to conventional precedents in immigration studies.\(^{26}\) Whereas most examinations of the interaction between Spanish- and English-speaking societies have cast the Latin Americans as the immigrant minority (studies of the *chicano* population in the United States serve as an example) this model is reversed in the case of Argentina. Bailey is unable to suggest a convincing parallel to the situation of the British settlers, as most other immigrant groups in the region display significant differences. He cites, for instance, the ideologically motivated emigration of the Welsh to Patagonia in an attempt to defend their culture from the increasing anglicization encountered in their homeland. Bailey rightly suggests that the Welsh colony in Patagonia cannot be equated with the mainstream Argentine-British community, as its location in an isolated and sparsely populated area provided the settlers with little opportunity to integrate with creole society, in contrast to the majority of the British who lived in and around the major conurbation of Buenos Aires. Indeed, as Bailey notes, the Welsh chose the remote location of their colony 'precisamente para separarse de todos aquellos que no eran congéneres' (p. 544). The Scots and English, on the other hand, whilst maintaining some distance from creole society, recognized the need for a degree of interaction with the local population, though frequently only to serve their commercial interests. Bailey fits the Welsh within William Peterson's category of conservative migrants, namely people who emigrate with the intention of preserving a threatened way of life (p. 545). He further suggests that the Scots settlers at Monte Grande fall into this category, a rather questionable assumption.

given that all available accounts indicate that economic improvement, rather than 
ethnic conservation, was the motivating factor behind the establishment of the 
colony. In any case, after the collapse of the Monte Grande venture the Scots were 
rapidly assimilated into the wider Argentine-British circle. It should also be noted 
that their preservation of traditional Scottish customs was far from isolationist; 
indeed, many of the Scots' typical activities, such as the celebration of St. Andrew's 
Day and Burns Night, were, and still are, enjoyed by a cross-section of Argentine 
society.

In the course of his article, Bailey considers the British settlers according to 
the following methodology. Drawing upon the work of Stanley Lieberson, he 
suggests that the study of immigrant communities can be approached through one of 
two paradigms: firstly, the model of a settler population which imposes its values 
and social order upon the receptor society, such as in colonial situations; 
alternatively, an immigrant community that resides within a dominant receptor 
society (p. 551). A superficial consideration may result in the inclusion of the 
Argentine-British in the second model, but, as Bailey demonstrates, their true 
situation lay somewhere between the two categories. The British invasions of 1806 
and 1807 were clearly an attempt to establish colonial dominance corresponding to 
the first pattern, but the failure of the incursions must lead to a rejection of this 
model. On the other hand, whilst the British settlers were subject to the political and 
economic control of the Argentine authorities, Bailey proposes that they were in no 
other way dominated by the receptor society. On the contrary, the immigrants were 
perceived as the holders of vital knowledge required by the developing nation, a 
view which loaded the power relationship in their favour. This leads Bailey to

27 In her work, *Colonia de Monte Grande: primera y única colonia formada por escoceses en la 
Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Jacobo Peuser, 1925), Cecilia Grierson rightly notes that the nature of the 
Parish Robertsons' enterprise was principally 'especulativa y comercial' (p. 11). Dr. Grierson's study is 
heavily based upon *Records of the Scottish Settlers in the River Plate and their Churches*, to the extent 
that large sections of the work are little more than Spanish translations of extracts from Dodds's earlier 
account.
suggest that the high status attained by the British symbolized 'la dependencia de la Argentina de recursos mucho mayores que los que cualquier residente británico poseía individual o colectivamente' (p. 556). He considers that the Argentine-British community gradually evolved from the early 'proprietario-empresarios' into a colony of those who represented major foreign enterprises and personified the essential link between Argentina and the powers of international commerce (p. 556). In a final twist, Bailey posits that although this situation boosted the prestige of the British in Argentina, it may have provoked some resentment amongst the creole population, a factor, perhaps, in the durability of the incomers' distinct identity (p. 556).

Having reviewed Bailey's wide-ranging discussion of the Argentine-British settlers, let us now give further consideration to their community in the specific era embraced by this study. The anonymous author of Cinco años dedicates an entire chapter to the English-speaking population of Buenos Aires during the early 1820s, from which we can gather some significant details. He opens by listing the major British commercial houses in the city; amongst these we find W. P. Robertson & Co., John Gibson & Co., Thomas Fair and Daniel Mackinlay, all of which are mentioned elsewhere in this study. The author notes:

Los comerciantes británicos gozan de gran estimación en Buenos Aires: el comercio del país se halla principalmente en sus manos. [...] La mayor parte de los comerciantes británicos son escoceses, hombres proverbiales por su talento y actividad en el comercio. (pp. 45-46)

As well as the major establishments, British incomers run many small businesses and shops, counting among their number cobblers, watchmakers, carpenters and tailors. In addition, there are three British physicians in the city, Doctors Leper, Dick and Ougham, and two pharmacists, Jenkinson and Whitefield. (p. 47). Dr. James Leper was particularly prominent in porteño society as a founder of both the Argentine
Academy of Medicine and of the British Hospital, and acted as a personal physician to Rosas in later years.  

There is a detailed description of the British Commercial Society, which makes reference to its excellent facilities, including a library of six hundred English works open to British citizens, creoles and other foreigners. A selection of (presumably long outdated) British newspapers is available in the Society's rooms, as well as binoculars to observe approaching ships (pp. 48-50).

We are told that the majority of the British subjects live in comfortable dwellings on the outskirts of the city, some distance from their places of work, as if trying to recapture the atmosphere of suburban England on foreign soil:

La inclinación inglesa a mantener separados el hogar y los negocios y a vivir cierta distancia de la ciudad es muy visible aquí. No faltan los Stockwells, Kenningtons, Newingtons, Camberwells de Buenos Aires, con sus huertas y jardines semejantes a las del Londres suburbano [...] Las residencias inglesas son fácilmente reconocibles por su pulcritud y confort. (p. 51)

A number of the British have also acquired 'estancias o chacras para la cria de ganado'; the author fears, however, that they will be unable to compete with the creoles, 'quienes parecen ser excelentes ganaderos' (p. 48). The passage of time would reveal that this judgement was patently flawed, for many British-owned estancias gained enviable reputations in the cattle and sheep breeding industries during the following decades. This point can best be illustrated by composing an original biography of one family whose achievements epitomized the success of numerous British settlers in the rural economy. As well as revealing in some detail the innovative contributions made by this dynasty to the developing livestock industry, the following case study, much of which is based on previously unstudied material, serves to further highlight the hostile local conditions that the typical settler had to withstand in early nineteenth-century Argentina, a theme that we have already encountered with reference to Jane Robson.

28 These details are from Graham-Yooll, The Forgotten Colony, pp. 142-44.
The Gibsons of Los Yngleses estancia

One day in 1818, according to family legend, a young Glaswegian by the name of John Gibson was summoned to his father's study. The elder man, an affluent merchant, revolved the globe on his desk and pointed to the Argentine, telling his son 'We will go there'. The firm of Gibson and Company specialized in the export of woollen and muslin products to the Far Eastern market and already had overseas branches in Brussels and Singapore. The rich pickings of the newly independent South American republics were their next target. Shortly after the meeting with his father, and having recently celebrated his twenty-second birthday, John set sail for the Plate, entrusted with the establishment of a subsidiary of the family business.

Once he had settled in Buenos Aires, young John became a typical member of the British mercantile community, initially setting up business in Calle Potosi as an importer of British textiles and an exporter of hides and nutria (coypu) skins. The hide trading venture had the potential to produce outstanding profit margins; during the 1820s, a horse hide bought in the interior for around one shilling could fetch as much as seven or eight shillings in the British marketplace. John considered that the proceeds of the enterprise could best be invested in land. Whilst on a visit to Scotland in 1822, he persuaded his father to provide additional capital to expand this side of the business. Later that year, John purchased the company's first rural property in the wooded region known as the Montes Grandes. This was the estate which the Parish Robertsons subsequently purchased for their colonization project.

In 1823 or 1824, John was joined in Argentina by his brother George. Together, the Gibsons intensified their operations in the realms of land speculation, acquiring substantial tracts in the southern portion of Buenos Aires province. After

29 Ferns, Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century, p. 81.
the Monte Grande property, the company's next investment was the *estancia* El Paraiso, a property of four square leagues (c. 26,800 acres), with six thousand head of cattle and some sheep. Soon afterwards they bought Sol de Mayo, an *estancia* of six square leagues (c. 40,200 acres) with cattle and slaves included. At the beginning of 1824, Los Portugueses, alternatively known as Isla de Yeguas, became their next acquisition. This property lay on the Samborombón river and comprised some sixteen square leagues (c. 107,200 acres). The Gibsons gave the *estancia* a new name, San Borombón, and, for management purposes, it was later incorporated into one of their largest purchases, Los Jagüeles. Once combined, this estate extended from the Samborombón river to the Laguna Adela near Chascomús, bordering the *estancia* of Gervasio Rosas, the younger brother of Juan Manuel. A further purchase took the form of twenty square leagues (c. 134,000 acres) near the Laguna Caquel Huencul, a property bought through a middleman, Andrés Hidalgo. The Gibsons made their final investment in the Carmen *estancia*, close to what is today the town of General Lavalle.30 When the Gibsons acquired this property in May 1825, Hidalgo was again employed as agent by the original proprietor, Esteven Méndez, who apparently 'could not bring himself to sell directly to a "gringo"'.31 Instead, the land was first transferred to Hidalgo, who had no such prejudices.

Two months after the purchase of the Carmen *estancia*, the Gibsons appointed one of their young employees, Richard Newton, as manager. Newton was himself a member of one of the oldest British families with an interest in the Platine region, his father having first set foot on Argentine soil shortly after the independence declaration of 1810 (Herbert Gibson, p. 197). Richard arrived in 1819 and found employment almost immediately in John Gibson's commercial enterprise, initially undertaking an expedition to Santa Fe to buy nutria pelts. When he took

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30 Details of the Gibsons' property investments are from an article by Herbert Gibson on his family history, published in *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 17 April 1938.

31 Herbert Gibson, *The History and Present State of the Sheep-Breeding Industry in the Argentine Republic*, p. 243. Henceforth, page references to this work will be cited parenthetically.
charge of the Carmen property, it was sufficiently close to the Indian frontier to require substantial defences. According to Herbert Gibbson, amongst the first provisions sent to the new manager were 'gunpowder, two cannons, eight muskets, twenty sabres, lead and stone cannonballs' (p. 243). Newton remained at Carmen until January 1826, when he moved to take over the management of the San Borombón property. At this time, having already sold the Monte Grande lands, the Gibsons were the proprietors of five estancias, some 60,000 cattle, 4,000 horses, many mules and a small number of slaves. In 1827, John and George Gibson were joined by their younger brother, Robert, a graduate of the medical faculty of Edinburgh University who abandoned his profession to enter the family business. Until this point, the Gibsons' involvement in the Platine region seems a fairly typical record of the achievements of the more prosperous sector of the Argentine-British community, but their fortunes were soon to change.

During 1827, the war with Brazil and the ensuing economic crisis began to have an adverse effect upon the prosperity of the Gibsons' business interests. The devaluation of the Argentine peso from around four shillings to just over one penny undermined commercial operations. This had particularly serious consequences for those engaged in the business of import and export as 'merchants had to meet their European obligations in gold and could only collect their local debts in debased currency'.32 For the Gibsons the situation was yet more serious, as the cattle breeding side of their enterprise was prejudiced by the loss of many animals during a severe drought which began in 1824 and continued for four years. It was reported that 'the dry beds of the San Borombón and Salado rivers were filled with the carcasses of dead cattle from bank to bank'.33 To make matters even worse, John Gibson fell ill with pneumonia and decided to return to Scotland in an effort to recuperate his

32 'Old British and American Firms', The Standard (Buenos Aires), 70th anniversary issue, 1 May 1930.

33 Ibid.
health and persuade his father to provide further resources to prop up the troubled Argentine branch of the company. John, however, became gravely ill whilst at sea and was obliged to discontinue his journey at Gibraltar, where he died a short while later.

Disheartened by the loss of his eldest son and troubled by unstable economic conditions in the River Plate region, the Glasgow-based patriarch of the family instructed George and Robert to liquidate the company's Argentinian assets and return home. Selling property was no easy task in the climate of the time, but the brothers managed to dispose of all but one of their large estates and a small adjoining property by 1834. The remaining estancia, Carmen, which they had now renamed Rincón del Tuyú, proved impossible to sell on account of its remote location, difficulty of access and marshy terrain, as did a portion of the San Borombón terrain. The overland route to the Tuyú property was frequently impassable due to flooding; the only alternative was to approach by sea, a journey complicated by unpredictable wind and tides. Instead of deserting the estancia, thereby receiving no return on their investment, the Gibson brothers resolved to persevere and succeeded in transforming this inhospitable territory into a profitable ranching operation. Once again, therefore, persistence in the face of adversity seems to have been a characteristic feature of settler life.

George Gibson did not visit the Rincón del Tuyú property himself until February 1835 and his description of the journey, contained within a letter to Robert, is ample testimony to the impractical location of the estancia. Travelling by sea, George wrote:

The vessel arrived at the mouth of the Salado on Sunday the 8th, but in consequence of a strong wind blowing right into the harbour she could not get out again till Tuesday morning. We were then kept beating about for two days with a head wind, without being able to make a mile in our course. At the end of that time we got a fresh breeze from the North, which sent us spinning along at a good rate, so that in 24 hours we were anchored off the coast of the Tuyu, 4 or 5 miles distant. Here again we were kept three days before we got into the river or creek, waiting till both wind and water answered, as both
at once are necessary to get in. On the bar at the entrance there are seven feet of water at the highest tide and only about a foot at low tide. When we did get in the wind was again contrary to proceeding up the creek; we therefore started next morning in the boat for the berth the vessel usually occupies, about 15 miles up from the mouth, which we reached in about two and a half hours, and landed on the estancia. We despatched a sailor on foot to the steading, but he met Don Mariano, the manager, and a peon and we soon had horses and left for the station, a distance of about 12 miles by the roundabout road necessary to avoid the deep marshes.34

The original area of the Rincón del Tuyú property was 28,356 acres, with grazing rights to a large tract of land bounded on the north by the Río de la Plata and on the east and west by two creeks running into the Bahía Samborombón. This territory was later purchased from the government, expanding the area of the property to 68,352 acres. Of this, 3,300 acres were subsequently brought back into public ownership after the fall of Rosas as the site for the new town of General Lavalle.35 The nature of some of the land, however, made it entirely unsuitable for development. Herbert Gibson states:

Fully 12,000 acres of the northern portion of the estate are useless for grazing purposes; innumerable muddy creeks traverse this section in all directions, rendering it impossible to travel over it on horseback. This land is clothed with an abundant rank vegetation, in which may be mentioned a plant of the gynecium family called the 'cortadero', whose graceful tall plumes, ascending to a height of over six feet, give beauty to this wild spot. The ostrich (rhea), the deer, as well as tiger-cats, 'possums, flamingo, swan, and an infinity of wild fowl, have made this place their home. The cattle occasionally find their way in, but the mosquitoes and the lack of fresh water - the creeks being tidal, and their water salt or brackish - soon drive them out again. (pp. 244-45)

Whilst the natural characteristics of the Rincón del Tuyú did not facilitate the Gibsons' endeavour, they were quick to appreciate the attractive terrain. On his first sight of the property, George Gibson described the wooded areas as 'some of the

34 National Library of Scotland, MSS 10326, George Gibson to Robert Gibson, 15 February 1835.
35 The preceding details of the estancia are given by Herbert Gibson, The History and Present State of the Sheep-Breeding Industry, p. 244.
finest sylvan scenes I ever looked upon'. During the first decade of their ownership, the Gibsons bred only cattle and horses at the estancia, the stock numbering around 18,000 head of cattle and some 3,000 mares (Herbert Gibson, p. 248). At this time, the only sheep kept at the Rincón del Tuyú were a small flock of the criollo variety and were reared only for mutton. With the arrival of the ambitious George in 1835, many changes occurred which were to have a extensive influence upon the development of the enterprise. At the end of 1834, without ever having seen the property, George took the bold step of resolving to introduce merino rams to the area in order that they might interbreed with the existing poor quality sheep to form a superior mestizo stock. On arriving at the estancia, one of his first actions was to dispatch the manager and a handful of workers on the perilous journey to Buenos Aires to collect the merino rams which he had already purchased. Over the following months, George also negotiated the acquisition of additional ewes from nearby landowners in exchange for calves. To the neighbours, the bartering of sheep in return for cattle must have seemed an extremely advantageous trade, especially as they were traditionally regarded as vastly inferior animals. In all probability, the local population would have interpreted the Gibsons' quest to improve their ovine stock as the action of eccentric foreigners who had much to learn about life in the Argentine, a reputation which may be reflected in the further change of name which the estancia underwent at this time, becoming known as Los Yngleses.

By 1835, therefore, the Gibsons had taken the first steps towards establishing themselves as pioneers in the sphere of land husbandry. Until the late 1840s, Argentina was dominated by the politically and financially powerful cattle ranching elite, typified by Rosas himself, and sheep breeding remained very much a minority activity throughout the Platine region. Although the first merinos had been

36 National Library of Scotland, MSS 10326, George Gibson to Robert Gibson, 15 February 1835.

37 As the term ingleses is commonly employed in Argentinian Spanish to describe all native speakers of the English language, sometimes even including citizens of the United States, it is not particularly surprising to find a Scottish-owned estancia bearing a form of this name.
introduced to the Banda Oriental in 1794 by Manuel José de Labarden, and in spite of some later experiments to establish this variety around Buenos Aires, it took many years for sheep raising to be recognized as a potentially lucrative enterprise (Herbert Gibson, p. 15). During the last years of the Rosas regime, however, the first indications of a sea change in the rural economy began to sweep across the Platine region, a phenomenon which one observer has justifiably termed 'la revolución del lanar'.

For Argentina, the export of wool became an ever more significant source of national income, rising from 1,609.6 tons in 1840 to 7,681 tons in 1850, before surging to 17,316.9 tons by 1860, an increase which went some way towards meeting the demands of the booming European textile manufacturers. Whilst Rosas himself diversified to a small extent into the sheep breeding industry, he remained firstly a cattle rancher and his demise may be considered symbolic of the changing economic climate.

In the space of fifteen years, the Gibsons' enterprise had evolved from a fledgling urban mercantile operation, typical of the early British involvement in Argentina, into a primarily rural, pastoral concern. Unlike the majority of the British merchant class, who remained in the Platine region only so long as it was profitable, circumstances had dictated that the Gibsons must stay in Argentina. The decision of John Gibson senior to liquidate the family's Argentinian assets in the wake of his eldest son's death represented the conventional route of escape followed by British traders across the world in times of local crisis. The Gibson brothers did not choose to remain in Argentina on account of commercial opportunities, but because of their failure to sell the Rincón del Tuyú property. Rather than abandon the land and write


39 These figures are given by Lynch, 'From independence to national organization', p. 36. For a wide-ranging survey of the developing pastoral economy, see Hilda Sabato, *Agrarian Capitalism and the World Market: Buenos Aires in the Pastoral Age, 1840-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990). The Gibsons conform closely to the archetype of the first wool-producing entrepreneurs, defined by Sabato as 'a small group of enterprising men, most of them immigrants seeking a profitable field for investing their capital made in other activities' (p. 122).
off their financial commitment, they boldly elected to struggle on against adverse conditions. Their lifestyle, therefore, came to resemble more closely that of the sedulous agricultural colonists than the affluent British trader. The strong financial position of the Gibsons' family base in Scotland ensured that the occasional journey home was always a possibility, although the Argentine side of the business obliged an eventual return to, or at least a continuing interest in, the Platine region. As will be revealed presently, the Gibsons' close ties with Britain prevents their classification as immigrants in the most authentic sense of the word, though their enduring and increasingly prominent involvement in nineteenth-century Argentina brought many of the benefits associated with the immigration ideal.

Like the Monte Grande colonists, the Gibsons encountered frequent obstacles and suffered great perils during their attempts to forge a profitable concern from the Los Yngleses property. The remote location of the estancia, cut off from the pampa by large expanses of marshland and numerous creeks, made it the natural refuge of outlaws and cut-throats who were fleeing from the authorities. Herbert Gibson writes:

In the days of Governor Rosas this impenetrable spot was the home of more than one deserter or marked man, who by hiding there got to know his way in among thetreacherous creeks, and who at night-time kindled his fire in a hole in the ground, lest the vigilant scouts should see the light and track him down. (p. 245)

On the other hand, the terrain also afforded protection from the worst of the Indian raids, although Herbert Gibson records that 'on one or two occasions the invasions reached the place, and in 1831 there was a sharp encounter in the head station woods, the carronades and stone cannon-balls proving useful accessories to the defenders' (p. 253). During the Rosas era, these attacks were not common, probably on account of the regime's policy of supplying the nearby Indians with a food ration of 2,000 horses per month (Herbert Gibson, p. 253). This measure was an outcome of the peace treaty agreed with the indigenous population in the aftermath of Rosas's Desert Campaign of 1833, under the terms of which the Indians undertook
to remain on their side of the frontier, unless given prior permission to cross, and to render military service to the dictator when required. In return for their compliance with the treaty, the tribes received regular consignments of essential provisions, including horses, tobacco and yerba mate, from the government. According to John Lynch, the supply of these items 'became a thriving rural business'.

On one occasion, the Gibsons were contracted to provide a month's ration of mares for the Indians and were paid two shillings and sixpence per head (Herbert Gibson, pp. 253-54). Rosas's policy of dealing with the Indians by peaceful means brought a degree of stability to the frontier territories, but the old troubles resumed after his fall in 1852.

Herbert Gibson records the effect of this upon Los Yngleses:

The estancia was barricaded and patrolled at night; the carts and horses were kept ready to beat a retreat if necessary; and the author's mother passed a trying time, prepared at any moment for the savage war-whoops of the invaders. The Indians came within a day's march of the estancia, and then retreated, carrying away with them great droves of cattle and horses. This was the last ever heard of them in the district. They were a more formidable and warlike race than the submissive 'Pampa,' whom one still occasionally meets in the far south-west. (p. 254)

The initial venture of the Gibsons into sheep breeding proved to be an outstanding success. In the eighteen months following George Gibson's establishment of the flock, a 110% profit was recorded (Herbert Gibson, p. 252). Soon, the achievements of George and Robert drew the youngest of the Gibson siblings, Thomas, to join the Argentine enterprise. Initially, the brothers divided their time between Los Yngleses, San Borombón and Buenos Aires, probably finding the harsh conditions at the remote estancia unbearable for long periods. The spartan nature of the Los Yngleses homestead is revealed in the following extract from a letter written by Robert to George, dated November 1837:

A gale last month which began at night shook the old rancho to its foundation, and about 2 A.M. carried off the uppermost layer of

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40 Lynch, Argentine Dictator, p. 55.
thatch or rigging of the roof, leaving me of course in a tolerably [?] uncomfortable plight. There was no remedy for it, however, but to move my bed to the side the wind blew from, and, wrapping myself up the best way I could, to wait for daylight.41

The expansion of the Los Yngleses flocks at this time dictated that ever more remote corners of the estancia were employed as pasture, resulting in increased losses to predators. Pumas took so many sheep that a one hundred peso reward was offered for each cat exterminated on the property. Even more serious was the threat posed by packs of wild dogs known as cimarrones. It soon became necessary to corral the sheep every night to avoid heavy losses. In an effort to eradicate the problem, premiums were offered of four pesos for large dogs, two pesos for smaller animals and one peso for puppies (Herbert Gibson, pp. 255-56).

The Gibsons' position at the cutting edge of the modern pastoral economy was reinforced in 1856 through their introduction of new breeds of sheep to Argentina (Herbert Gibson, pp. 270-76). In many ways, the terrain of Los Yngleses was not ideal for sheep raising and was particularly unsuited to the delicate constitution of the merino. These animals were unable to thrive on the reed grasses which covered the marshy portions of the estancia and the wet land caused afflictions such as foot rot. Flooding was a constant worry and sometimes reduced Los Yngleses to as little as thirty to fifty percent of its normal area. In order to avoid the loss of flocks through drowning, the Gibsons kept a careful watch upon the rising waters at times of flood and frequently resorted to evacuating sheep on huge horse-drawn rafts. When conditions were particularly severe their only recourse was to slaughter and boil down large numbers of the stock, thus salvaging at least the skins and tallow to minimize their losses. Whilst Robert Gibson was on a visit to England in 1856, he observed many similarities between the Romney Marsh district and the low lying lands of the Tuyú. He also noted that sheep on the farms around the marsh appeared to be in much better health than the Los Yngleses merinos. Robert soon

41 National Library of Scotland, MSS 10326.
decided to introduce the Romney breed to Argentina and a thriving flock was established within a few years. Constant improvement of the stock was the order of the day; between 1856 and 1864 no fewer than ten different breeds were brought to Los Yngleses for experimental purposes. By 1865, the Lincoln had emerged as the breed most compatible with the marshy terrain and all other varieties were eliminated. Along with John Fair of the estancia Espartillar, the Gibsons were the first sheep breeders to introduce the Lincoln to the Platine region.

Although they remained in overall charge of Los Yngleses, many of these later developments were conducted without the personal involvement of the original Gibson brothers. George retired from Argentina during the 1850s, but continued to visit the country until 1860, at which point he settled in England permanently. Already well into his fifties, George married Louisa Platton of Norfolk and set up home in Kings Lynn. They had four children, including two sons, John and George, both of whom became proprietors of Argentine estancias. Robert Gibson also retired early, in 1858, but never married. Until his death in 1881 at the age of seventy-six, he lived with his two spinster sisters, Eliza and Jessie, at 14 Hamilton Park Terrace, Glasgow.

Whilst still working in Argentina, Thomas Gibson married Clementina Corbett and, by the time of his retirement in 1862, the couple had four children, Ernest, May, Hope and John. When Thomas left Argentina, his brother-in-law, George Corbett, was appointed manager of Los Yngleses. The remainder of Thomas's life was troubled by poor health and eventual separation from his wife. The family's existence was not easy on returning to Britain, spending a few months here and there in rented properties whilst Clementina was almost constantly pregnant. As Thomas was obsessively cautious with his money, they enjoyed few luxuries. Of their final tally of nine offspring, the following merit special mention within this study.42

42 I am indebted to descendants of the Gibson brothers for details of the later lives of George, Robert and Thomas. Particularly helpful were a series of notes supplied by Peter Mackern of Buenos Aires.
The eldest son of Thomas and Clementina, Ernest, was a shy and sensitive child, ill-suited to his strict Presbyterian upbringing and the harsh regime at boarding school. He gained a reputation as a quiet, sensitive and kind-hearted boy. After leaving school, Ernest was sent by his father to spend a year as an apprentice to the engineering firm of Smith and Wellstood of Bonnybridge, in order that he might become accustomed to manual labour. During this time, Ernest befriended a foreman at the works after discovering that they had a mutual interest in ornithology. In 1872, he travelled to Argentina to join his uncle, George Corbett, at Los Yngleces and learn the sheep breeding business. On the death of his father in 1903, Ernest fell heir to Los Yngleces, but left the estate in the hands of managers and passed most of his later life in England. During his stay in Argentina, Ernest maintained a keen interest in nature which, after his return to England, led to a friendship with W. H. Hudson.

Of all the younger generation of the Gibson family, it was Herbert, one of Ernest's brothers, whose achievements were most outstanding. He was born on 8 July 1863 at Henderson Place, Bridge of Allan, near Stirling, his parents' temporary place of residence. Herbert is reputed to have possessed an I.Q. of almost genius proportion and he excelled at the Norfolk County School. At an early age, he became an avid writer of letters and personal reminiscences which now provide a valuable source of information on the Gibson family. Thanks to Herbert's literary inclination, many details of the history of the Los Yngleces enterprise, which might otherwise have been lost, are preserved in his private diaries and published works, notably in his history of Argentine sheep breeding cited throughout the present study. During a distinguished career as administrator of the Gibson lands, Herbert twice served as vice-president of the Argentine Rural Society and, in 1917, was appointed Wheat Commissioner for the British government in Argentina. In recognition for services in this capacity, he was knighted in 1919, a most unusual award for an expatriate living outwith the British Empire. In addition to his farming activities, Herbert served as

province, a great-grandson of Thomas Gibson.
both a director and chairman of Argentina's Southern Railways. In 1928, he was elected president of the St. Andrew's Society of the River Plate.

From the preceding details of the Gibsons' involvement in Argentina, there has emerged the portrait of a highly influential and prosperous commercial and agricultural dynasty, the members of which overcame trying circumstances to stake their claim to a place in the forefront of the developing Argentinian nation. Juan Bautista Alberdi's often quoted maxim 'gobernar es poblar' has never been better represented than by the pioneering activities of the Gibsons at Los Yngleses. This inhospitable tract of land, which lay on the extremities of Argentine territory until General Julio Roca's campaign against the Indians of the late 1870s, would have, in all probability, remained largely undeveloped for many years were it not for the Gibsons' persistent attempts to improve the estancia. The arrival of the Gibsons and their defence of the Los Yngleses lands from Indian attack consolidated the Rincón del Tuyú as Argentine territory, thus extending the national boundaries. The rolling back of the frontiers and the resulting displacement of the indigenous population is, of course, a concept closely allied with the immigration ideology of the Generation of '37. The Gibsons, however, deviated from the image of the ideal immigrant in the relative transience of each individual's stay in Argentina. During the nineteenth century, no member of the family made a lifelong commitment to the Platine region, nor can we find any instance of substantial integration with the creole population. These factors are partly offset by the combined long term dedication of the family to Argentina. From the time of John Gibson's arrival in 1819 until the end of the century, there was almost always at least one Gibson in residence at Los Yngleses or in the city of Buenos Aires.

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Most of the British settlers in rural areas did not operate on the large scale of the Gibsons, but made comparable advances in their personal and family fortunes. Jane
Robson's life story exemplifies the gradual progress made by many of the incomers. The pattern of Jane's existence, and that of her family, seems to have been one of steady advance and acquisition of property, cut across by the occasional dramatic setback and resultant new beginning. After a spell in the city during the civil war of 1828 to 1829, for instance, the Rodger family returned to their rural home only to find it had been ransacked and destroyed: 'everything that would burn had gone, there was nothing left but ashes' (p. 230). Having already learned that the family had been doing well prior to the war, acquiring a partnership in a large dairy farm and even importing some pigs from home, we might expect that the loss of nearly all their hard-earned property would have proved a devastating, spirit-breaking blow. Jane's account, however, reveals no hint of a negative attitude nor inclination to bow to unfortunate circumstance; on the contrary, the Rodgers simply start over again and willingly put in the hours of labour required:

We now had to start our life afresh, and very up-hill work it was. The first thing to be done was to build our house, working literally day and night until it was accomplished. Then father hired cows, milked them, and made butter and cheese for sale. Gradually we once more got cattle of our own. (p. 230)

Their next trial came in the form of a drought, probably the same one described by Darwin in *The Voyage of the Beagle*. Jane tells us that many of her family's animals perished, again reducing them to penury. More hard work brought renewed prosperity, permitting the Rodgers to purchase a tract of land and build a better residence which they called New Caledonia, a name that clearly demonstrates the endurance of their Scottish identity. In 1840, Jane left home to marry Hugh Robson, another Scot who had arrived in Argentina as a child on board the Symmetry. Many Scottish settlers gathered for the ceremony, revealing the durability

43 Darwin notes: 'The period between the years 1827 and 1830 is called the 'gran seco,' or the great drought. During this time so little rain fell, that the vegetation, even to the thistles, failed; the brooks were dried up, and the whole country assumed the appearance of a dusty high road. [...] The lowest estimation of the loss of cattle in the province of Buenos Ayres alone, was taken at one million head. A proprietor at San Pedro had previously to these years 20,000 cattle; at the end not one remained' (*The Voyage of the Beagle*, p. 133).
of ethnic bonds and their sense of community solidarity. Jane's wedding gift from her father consisted of entirely practical items, the tools to facilitate financial independence: 'He gave me some animals, 10 cows, and, among other things, a cheese press' (p. 236). Once married, Jane's life became no easier and the routine ordeals of her youth were re-enacted. The theft of horses by passing soldiers, the misappropriation of property by both creole and Scottish neighbours, and the periodic trauma of moving to start afresh on better lands all had to be withstood.

Thus far, a fair proportion of my analysis has hinged upon biography: although not ostensibly written as life stories, both Cinco años and Beaumont's Travels in Buenos Ayres are accounts of personal experience and carry a strong authorial imprint from which much can be deduced about the writers themselves; the lives of both the author and the eponymous figure are never far from mind when considering Facundo; when discussing Jane Robson, my task has been the reading and interpretation of autobiography; in the case of the Gibsons, I have personally been engaged in the biographer's practice, drawing together, and setting in context, previously unconnected facts about one family from a range of sources. Through the study and construction of life stories which encircle an historical moment, we gain access not only to the stuff of traditional historiography (major events, dates, statistics etc.), but also to the 'lived-in' experience of the times, the personal angle all too often cast aside by conventional historians and sociologists as too abstract and unquantifiable for serious academic analysis. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once famously wrote, 'there is properly no history; only biography', but many scholars over the years have simply extracted the verifiable hard data from life stories and discarded the subjective, emotional frame within which their factual icons were originally presented.

With particular reference to the interdisciplinary practice of immigration studies, Virginia Yans-McLaughlin recently put up a spirited defence of personal
testimony as a valid tool for the investigation of settler communities. She sets out a convincing case against the privileging of statistical evidence practised by the traditional social scientist, concluding that 'it is possible and useful, after all, to understand a people's history not only as the experts describe it but also as it is conceived by those who lived it' (p. 284). The individual life story as a legitimate vehicle for the exploration of a given society at a given time is a subject close to the heart of practitioners of cultural studies too, for the genre of (auto)biography offers a postmodern antidote to the authoritarian tendency to theorize the human condition according to overarching ideologies, a quality which appeals to the egalitarian idealism of this emerging discipline:

Biography provides the form, and consequently the explanation, of individual life. At a time such as the present when grander theories once purporting to tell people which way history was tending are having a hard time of it, biography offers the best chance we have of making sense of our bit of experience.  

As this study has progressed, its focus has sharpened, gradually becoming more specific; we opened with a consideration of society at large, before zooming in on the British settlers as a unit, finally giving particular prominence to two families within that community - those of Jane Robson and the Gibsons. However, though I have put forward general statements about society and the settler community, I have yet to consider in depth the family per se as both a structure of social organization and the most immediate context of the life stories which have come to feature so centrally.

44 Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, 'Metaphors of Self in History: Subjectivity, Oral Narrative and Immigration Studies', in Yans-McLaughlin (ed.). Immigration Reconsidered (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 254-90. In this article, Yans-McLaughlin explores the differing attitudes to the value of personal testimony across the academic spectrum, ranging from the behaviourist's mistrust of non-statistical evidence to the field ethnographer's almost total reliance upon subjective sources. She attempts to demonstrate the worth of immigrant autobiographies in the study of settler communities through a series of revealing interviews with Jewish and Italian garment manufacturers and dock labourers in New York.

45 Inglis, Cultural Studies, p. 204.
We have already hinted at the bond of community which lent some coherence to the Scottish incomers as an entity, but throughout Jane Robson's account, and to a lesser extent in the history of the Gibsons, family ties take precedence and form the principal referential matrix of the individual settler. In the experience of both the Robsons and the Gibsons, the family constitutes the single most important unit of social and economic organization. In the case of the Robsons, the nuclear family (mother, father, plus dependent children) is emphasized in both Jane's childhood and adult lives. With the Gibsons, on the other hand, filial relations are those of greatest significance; the figure of the remote patriarch is initially prominent, but rapidly reduced to a marginal position. Therefore, whilst the ties between husband-wife and parent-child are the essential coordinates of Jane Robson's life, it is the vinculum of interdependence between the longest surviving of the Gibson brothers (George, Robert and Thomas) which exerts most influence upon each of their existences.

Of all the settler accounts considered in my analysis, Jane Robson's autobiography offers the most informative details of the role occupied by the family as a social structure. The concept of family that emerges from Jane's life story extends beyond the self-sufficient, self-contained unit we may expect the settler in a strange land to favour, instead resembling a microcosm of liberal social organization which functions as guardian of moral values and agent of good deeds, with altruistic tentacles spreading into the outside world. This may all sound a little abstruse, but I trust that the forthcoming illustrations will clarify my point.

Despite the trying circumstances of both Jane's childhood and adult lives, the family units of which she was a member always displayed uncommon willingness to help fellow human beings, especially those in unfortunate circumstances. This generosity prevailed even when the actions of others might have justified a less charitable reaction. Soon after Mrs. Rodger had secured shelter in the city for herself and the children during the civil war of 1828 to 1829, Jane fell ill with measles and the entire family were turned out of their lodgings by the landlady, who was anxious
to protect her own offspring from contact with the infectious disease. The Rodgers' plight was compounded by the fact that Jane's mother was herself unwell and not up to the task of finding alternative accommodation, though this necessity was finally attended to by friends. Nothing remarkable so far, the reader may think, but the twist is yet to come. A short while later, Jane's mother heard that the children of the woman who evicted her had succumbed to smallpox, but nobody would help them such was the terror inspired by that disease at the time. Demonstrating absolute selflessness, Mrs. Rodger went to the family's aid and nursed the children back to health. In subsequent years, the Rodgers again came to the rescue of this unfortunate family, taking them into their home after the husband's business had failed (see pp. 228-29).

Another example of the Rodgers' generosity reveals itself in the fact that the family provided shelter, sustenance and education for no less than seven orphan boys. When narrating this episode, Jane adds: 'at that time slavery had not been suppressed, and in some instances great cruelty took place, so that when kind people took and cared for these homeless little creatures, it was a great blessing for them' (p. 232). Notwithstanding her reference to cruelty, Jane saw nothing wrong in resorting to strong measures to keep the boys in check:

Father had a teacher for them, but when they were outside it was like trying to get wild cattle in, to get them under control and back to the house, so I had a whip, and used it too. Sometimes my sister would come out and call me cruel. The boys would at once turn on her and say it was no business of hers, and I could whip them if I liked. (p. 233)

Once an adult, Jane continued the tradition of charity established by her parents. At one point she provided refuge to a man who was fleeing to avoid conscription into the army. This deed was to pay unexpected dividends some years later. Around 1853, we are told, the Robsons took in a man, his pregnant wife and child, and Jane even nursed the woman through labour. One day, after the family had been with them for about six months, Jane and her husband went to the market in
Chascomús, leaving their youngest child in his cradle and the older children playing outside. On their way home from town, the Robsons observed a pall of smoke hanging over their property; it transpired that their guests had stolen a considerable amount of money concealed in the house, set the building alight and escaped. Jane's baby would have been burnt alive in his crib, had it not been for a passerby who, in the course of attempting to extinguish the blaze, had discovered the child. By some amazing coincidence, the Good Samaritan was the same man whom Jane had earlier helped to elude the military (see pp. 243-45).

The family (if we accept that the Rodgers/Robsons were fairly typical), it would seem, constituted the settlers' single greatest defence against, and antidote to, the infiltration of the pernicious, self-centred values which Jane implicitly attributes to the average creole. The local population appear to have little innate appreciation of higher morality until educated by the incomers through the medium of the united, high-minded settler family. Perhaps the tale of the reluctant soldier who escaped his dreaded fate through Jane's good efforts and then returned to save his protector from her own greatest horror, the loss of her beloved son, is instructive of the civilized settler's potential to transform creole society by example. We cannot say with certainty that this is the case, for the passerby may have been a naturally benevolent soul who would have done the same on observing any burning house, but the inference of reciprocity is clearly present in Jane's mind at least:

The first time the man came to our house, I saved him from a very unhappy fate, the next time he came he saved my child's life. When I cast my bread upon the waters, little did I think that it would return to me in such manner. (p. 245)

The view of the family I have developed through reference to Jane Robson's account is that of an almost impregnable fortress of civilized standards, a small but solid unit capable of resisting the advance of barbarous thought and action. Within the context of the Rosas era, therefore, surely communities built up of such cellular bricks would have desisted the atrocities perpetrated by the regime. This, of course,
is the type of assumption developed in the pro-immigration arguments of anti-Rosas intellectuals, in which the settler forms a principal line of resistance to the official barbarization of Argentina. The dictator's opponents even went as far as suggesting that the regime itself recognized the threat posed by the strong family front and had done everything in its power to break down such bonds within creole society. In the *Dogma socialista*, Echeverría writes:

> La humanidad o la concordia de la familia humana [...] no existía. Los tiranos y egoístas fácilmente ofuscaron con un soplo mortífero la luz divina del Redentor y pusieron, para reinar, en lucha al padre con el hijo, al hermano con el hermano, la familia con la familia.46

Rosas's conscious attempt to undermine any structure which represented solidarity and to create an easily-led society of isolated individuals is also postulated by José María Marmol in *Amalia*. When the hero of the novel, Daniel Bello, crosses the Plate from Buenos Aires to Montevideo to liaise with the *antirosista* opposition movement based in the Uruguayan city and their French allies, he first discovers the lack of unity among the dissident forces, the assorted members of which seem to indulge personal interests at the expense of the collective good. During his meeting with the agent of the French government, Bouchet de Martigny, Daniel is informed that there are insurmountable differences between the leaders of the military resistance - the unitarian general Juan Lavalle, and the Uruguayan caudillo Fructuoso Rivera. Until this point, Montevideo, the safe haven of Rosas's enemies, has been presented throughout the novel as the centre of civilization in the Platine region and the apotheosis of enlightened liberal values. As Daniel approaches the Uruguayan capital by boat, for instance, we are told:

> No era simplemente la bella perspectiva de la ciudad lo que absorbía la atención de ese hombre [Daniel], sino los recuerdos que en 1840 despertaba en todo corazón argentino la presencia de la ciudad de Montevideo: contraste vivo y palpitante de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, en su libertad y en su progreso; y más que esto todavía,

46 Echeverría, *Dogma socialista*, p. 361.
Montevideo despertaba en todo corazón argentino que llegaba a sus playas el recuerdo de una emigración refugiada en él por el espacio de once años, y la perspectiva de todas las esperanzas sobre la libertad argentina, que de allí surgían, fomentadas por la acción incansable de los emigrados, y por los acontecimientos que fermentaban continuamente en ese elaboratorio vasto y prolijo de oposición a Rosas.\textsuperscript{47}

Daniel's vision of a free and democratic Montevideo is marred, however, by the French agent's description of the discord in the opposition camp arising from Rivera's refusal to support Lavalle's plan for an immediate invasion of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, Daniel is astounded by the lack of democracy in Montevideo, the supposed epitome of civilization. In short, there is no recognizable form of government in the city other than the personality cult of Rivera, a situation which clearly resembles Buenos Aires under Rosas:

\begin{quote}
-¿Quién manda en Montevideo, señor? preguntó el joven.
-Rivera.
-¿Y la asamblea?
-No hay asamblea.
-¿Pero hay pueblo?
-No hay pueblo; los pueblos no tienen voz todavía en la América; hay Rivera, nada más que Rivera. (p. 173)
\end{quote}

The lack of cohesion amongst the opposition forces not only contributes to the exiles' failure to topple the Rosas regime, but is also the dictator's most potent weapon in suppressing revolt in Buenos Aires itself. Daniel comes to see the inherent individualism of society as the single greatest weakness of the opposition. He proposes this thesis during his meeting with two senior unitarian dissidents, Julián Agüero and Florencio Varela, in Montevideo:

\begin{quote}
El individualismo, no trepido en repetirlo, esa es la causa de la inacción de nuestros compatriotas. Rosas no encontró clases, no halló sino individuos cuando estableció su gobierno; aprovechóse de este hecho establecido, y tomó por instrumentos de explotación en él, la
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{47} Mármol, Análisis (Mexico City: Porrua, 1991), p. 168. Further page references will be cited parenthetically.
corrupción individual, la traición privada, la delación del doméstico, del débil y del venal, contra el amo, contra el fuerte y contra el bueno. Fundó de este modo el temor y la desconfianza en las clases aparentemente solidarias, y hasta en el recinto mismo de la familia. (p. 184)

Thus, from the writings of both Már mol and Echeverría, we receive an image of the fragmented creole family as a miniature version of society during the Rosas era, in complete contrast to the picture of the resilient, indivisible settler folk painted by Jane Robson. Like the larger society in which it operates, the creole kin network is internally divided over issues of politics, fearful of official retribution and so fundamentally weak that it constitutes no defensive rampart against the assault of barbaric values.

Már mol and Echeverría, therefore, bear witness to what they consider a critical failing of creole society during the Rosas era, one which would require a comprehensive social revolution to amend. In all the writings we have studied by creole liberals, the perspective of society is uniformly disparaging and despairing. In El matadero, Echeverría considers Rosas's Argentina to be a slaughterhouse, a bloodbath in which the majority of the population willingly participate; Sarmiento holds the average citizen completely unsuited to his vision of civilized living and probably too indolent to be receptive to change; Már mol identifies social weakness as the mainstay of the dictatorship. Many of these features are confirmed in the accounts left by British incomers, which, at the same time, project the settler community in a totally contrasting light. This, of course, leads us back to the notion of the ideal immigrant, the industrious, morally upstanding Northern European who comes to tame and reform the regressive, savage Americas. Two of the texts I have mentioned in this chapter are particularly unambiguous in supporting the immigration process: one, Facundo, argues from the perspective of the liberal creole, whilst the other, Cinco años en Buenos Aires, mainly from that of the outsider.

From the early reference in Facundo to the Scottish and German colonies, and the frequent reminders of the moral and cultural superiority of Northern
European societies scattered throughout the work, the reader must already suspect before reaching Sarmiento's concluding statements that immigration is the cornerstone of the author's agenda. It is not until the very last chapter, however, that Sarmiento explicitly reaches the verdict that so many previous indications have augured. The ultimate disclosure of the full extent of his belief in the curative potential of civilized settlers comes as no surprise:

el elemento principal de orden y moralización que la República Argentina cuenta hoy, es la inmigración europea, que de suyo y en despecho de la falta de seguridad que le ofrece, se agolpa de día en día al Plata, y si hubiera un Gobierno capaz de dirigir su movimiento, bastaría por sí sola a sanar en diez años no más, todas las heridas que han hecho a la Patria los bandidos, desde Facundo hasta Rosas, que la han dominado. (pp. 369-70)

Sarmiento then turns his attention to the reasons why the prospective settlers would be likely to select Argentina. He argues that North America is no longer a viable destination, for massive immigration has already brought overcrowding to the cities, to the extent that conditions are no better than those which the emigrant is leaving behind in urban Europe. Furthermore, the Platine region is the only part of Latin America suitable for European settlement on account of its temperate climate and fertile lands. To lend additional support to his belief in the civilizing capacity of cultural diversification, Sarmiento cites the abundant foreign influence in Montevideo during the late 1830s, suggesting that it transformed the Uruguayan capital into 'una ciudad floreciente y rica, más bella que Buenos Aires y más llena de movimiento y de comercio' (p. 371). By 1845, however, Montevideo is no longer a desirable place to live due to the bitter conflict between Blancos and Colorados, a struggle for which Sarmiento appears to hold Rosas responsible. Instead, he asserts, the immigrants are now heading for Buenos Aires to take the place of those killed in the service of Rosas's army. Even under the rule of tyranny, therefore, Argentina is able to attract settlers. If the nation was free from 'la horrible fama de Rosas', Sarmiento ponders, surely this number would be much greater, perhaps even reaching 'cien mil por año' (p. 371).
For Sarmiento, immigration from advanced societies not only brings prosperity and cultural enrichment, but also peace, a most elusive condition in nineteenth-century Argentina. He claims: 'con un millón de hombres civilizados la guerra civil es imposible, porque serían menos los que se hallarían en estado de desearla' (p. 372). This statement is supported through yet another reference to the Scottish and German colonies to the south of Buenos Aires:

La Colonia escocesa que Rivadavia fundó al sur de Buenos Aires lo prueba hasta la evidencia; ha sufrido de la guerra, pero ella jamás ha tomado parte, y ningún gaucho alemán ha abandonado su trabajo, su lechería o su fábrica de quesos para ir a corretear por la Pampa. (p. 372)

Let us now compare Sarmiento’s promotion of immigration with that of the anonymous writer of Cinco años. In the penultimate chapter of this work, the author diagnoses that the greatest problem facing the Argentine nation is a lack of population. Like the Rivadavian unitarios and the Generation of '37, therefore, he asserts that the promotion of immigration is a vital investment in the country’s future:

Lo que necesita este país es población. La agricultura se mantendrá al bajo nivel presente mientras hombres laboriosos no se ocupen de ella. El mismo motivo los presenta indefensos ante enemigos lejanos, vecinos poderosos y saqueos de la indígena. Sería muy ventajoso fomentar la inmigración de los países superpoblados de Europa y proteger y dar facilidades a los inmigrantes. (p. 169)

The Indian question is of particular concern, and the author is highly enthusiastic about schemes to subdue the indigenous people and push back the provincial frontiers. He regrets that the Spaniards did not put an end to the Indian troubles during the colonial period and hints that the British would have done things rather differently:

Es vergonzoso que después de trescientos cincuenta años de colonización las autoridades españolas no hayan terminado con este flagelo en la América civilizada. Las Indias Orientales y sus cientos de millones de habitantes sujetos al poder británico muestran un aspecto muy distinto: la una vez poderosa nación Mahratta, los Pindaris y otras tribus guerreras, han sido sometidas o apaciguadas a
As if prophesying the campaigns mounted by Rosas and much later by Julio Roca, the author suggests that it would be worthwhile recruiting an army of three to four thousand men specifically to launch an expedition against the Indians, but in the absence of such grandiose schemes, settlement is portrayed as the most natural means of displacing the tribes, a fact which the creoles would do well to recognize: 'Un criollo que ame realmente a su país considerará la llegada de un colono como un beneficio y no como un daño' (p. 171).

Having thus summarized the likely benefits of large-scale immigration for Argentina, the author sets out to convince his intended readership (compatriots who are considering emigration) of the country's many attractions. He finds the prospect of immigration from Britain particularly appealing as it would alleviate the perceived overpopulation of his native land, but he warns his countrymen against embarking for Argentina without firm offers of employment awaiting their arrival. As British commercial houses tend to make their appointments in England, 'las oportunidades de obtener empleos son muy escasas' (p. 171). Manual labour, however, is always in demand. He concludes:

Este es un suelo rico, sin las arenas ni las plagas del Cabo de Buena Esperanza. Si es difícil amasar en él una fortuna, puede vivirse con bastante comodidad y holgura. [...] Estén seguros mis compatriotas de que no encontrarán otros extranjeros con quienes se sientan más en su casa, que con los naturales de Buenos Aires. Por eso repito que los agricultores y labradores que dispongan de un pequeño capital, pueden ganar bien el sustento y aun algo más, porque los labradores encuentran siempre trabajo y los artesanos son muy buscados. El clima es agradable; en el gobierno encontrarán protección segura, y el pueblo, no obstante todos mis prejuicios, estima a nuestra patria. El periodo de las revoluciones, según veo, ha pasado y aun en los momentos más duros debo decir que nunca se molestó a los extranjeros. (pp. 174-75)

The final statement above, regarding the unlikelihood of future revolution, was reached at a time of relative stability and its ultimate inaccuracy can thus be
excused. Of course, as we have already learned from the Monte Grande example, political turbulence was often injurious to the settler community, its recurrence being a major factor in the downfall of the Scottish colony a few short years after the publication of this account. In summary, it seems that the author of Cinco años paints as largely a complimentary portrait of creole society as he truthfully can, depicting Argentina as a propitious destination for the European emigrant. This suggests some strong motive on his part for encouraging immigration; whether he was moved altruistically by love for his adopted land, genuinely believing that settlement was a good thing, or by some other force, such as the official patronage of the pro-immigration unitarian authorities of the time, we cannot know. Regardless of such factors, I believe it is reasonable to conclude that the image of porteño society presented by our anonymous writer is deeply tinted by his desire to attract settlers to Buenos Aires and that his work was carefully crafted with this aim in mind, the impact of his statements upon the likely reader always well considered.

Through examination of the cultural artefacts handed down to us by both creole and British writers, we have been able to explore the textual representation of certain fundamental aspects of life in the nineteenth-century Rio de la Plata, establishing an image of society at large, the settler community, as well as some of the families and individuals upon whose words our investigation is based. In the course of criss-crossing between the testimonies of foreign and local writers, we have noted many shared concepts and compatible ideological premises. This common ground has been especially evident around the notion of outside involvement as a beneficial force, manifesting itself both as programmatic statement (the concluding sections of Facundo and Cinco años), and as implicit ramification of related good deeds (the charity of the Rodgers/Robsons being an outstanding example). The enterprise has been fundamentally interdisciplinary, or even antidisciplinary, in both selection of material and practice: sometimes I have acted as a conventional literary analyst within the tradition of historicist criticism; elsewhere, my project has taken a more sociological/anthropological slant; some material on
animal husbandry has been incorporated; I have ventured into historical and biographical story-telling, describing the Monte Grande colony and Sarmiento's early life through summarization of secondary sources, and building an original narrative of the Gibsons from family anecdote, private documents and published accounts. It is my hope and belief that this eclectic journey into the nineteenth-century Rio de la Plata approximates an understanding of what it was like to live on a day-to-day basis in the region at that time, both as 'native' and more especially as incomer, an ambition which traditional, depersonalized historiography and aloof, privileged literary criticism are inadequately equipped to realize. Even if it falls short of facilitating such an elusive comprehension, our textual excursion at least offers a collection of experiences upon which we can base some impressions and judgements, be they close to reality (whatever that is) or merely the spurious products of a stimulated imagination.

Having identified the general parameters within which the dramas of creole and settler life were acted out, our next task must be to explore some more specific issues articulated in this assortment of cultural artefacts. As we will soon come to appreciate, the religious debate was a topic of universal concern amongst all sectors of the population, as it impinged upon every existence, and is of particular relevance to the dynamics of the creole-incomer relationship.
3

RELIGION

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

Jonathan Swift, 'Thoughts on Various Subjects'

Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a god of peace
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Queen Mab'

Either of the two quotations above could easily have been drafted by a liberal opponent of Rosas, sickened by the dictator's sanctimonious adoption of Christian values, his desecration of religious rhetoric to legitimize perversely unholy conduct. This was how the dissidents, at least, perceived the regime's professions of staunch Catholicism. Whatever the sincerity of his private beliefs, Rosas was quick to appropriate a religious aura, instilling fanaticism into the population and portraying himself almost as a minor deity, recognizing that this provided an additional buttress to his already considerable authority. The dictator consistently presented his mode of government as no ordinary political structure, but the manifestation of divine will, 'la Santa Federación'; the regime's enemies, therefore, were heretics, its critics guilty of sacrilege, and all who stood against it thoroughly deserving of the wrath of God, which would, of course, be administered by the Almighty's faithful rosista acolytes. In his masterful study of the Rosas era, John Lynch has noted that 'no occasion was missed to identify federalism with religion', going on to cite an illustrative example:

In March 1842 the Comandante del Parque constructed six effigies of Judas, yearly objects of the people's hatred; this year, on orders of Rosas, they were made in the form of 'savage unitarians'. Rosas gave precise instructions that they were to be modelled on Paz, La Madrid, Rivera, and other notorious unitarians, and provided detailed information on their uniforms and appearance. Finally he ordered that
they were to be burned publicly on Holy Saturday in different parts of
the city.¹

* * *

Before moving on to an analysis of the textual representation of religion under
Rosas, it is first relevant to ascertain the character of religious life in the Rio de la
Plata prior to the dictator's rise to power. Only in this way can we reach a proper
understanding of the extent to which Rosas's manipulation of creed and Church was
original, or determine if it was simply the product of the natural evolution of
established trends. In the manner of my larger project, I shall approach this task
through reference to our accounts of the pre-Rosas era, Cinco años en Buenos Aires
and Beaumont's Travels in Buenos Ayres and the Adjacent Provinces.

In Cinco años, we find a chapter dedicated to the topic of religion under the
unitarian governments of the 1820s, but further relevant details are presented
elsewhere in the work. The first mention of religion occurs during the author's
description of the typical buildings of Buenos Aires, in which the churches are
depicted as particularly noteworthy. From the very opening of this passage, the
theme of difference between the devotional practices of incomer and creole
predominates:

En los países católicos la atención de los viajeros protestantes es
atraída por las iglesias. Las decoraciones suntuosas, la música, la
indumentaria de los oficiantes, etc., contrastan en tal forma con la
simplidad de nuestra religión reformada, que nos parece
encontrarnos frente a un espléndido espectáculo teatral. Por un
momento comprendemos la influencia que esta opulenta Iglesia ha
ejercido -y ejerce aún- sobre una gran parte del mundo cristiano. (p.
28)

What follows, however, is in no way a diatribe against the Catholic Church, for the
elaborate decoration of its places of worship holds a certain appeal; in fact, the more
ostentatious the building and its accoutrements, the greater the author's delight. He

¹ Lynch, Argentine Dictator, p. 184.
describes the church of San Francisco, with its splendid altar which shines like gold leaf, its precious ornaments, and the tiled roofs of its towers that resemble marble when viewed from a distance. This scene, which would provoke disgust in many Protestants of the more puritanical and self-righteous variety, is simply appreciated by the author for its beauty, to the extent that he states: 'San Francisco es mi iglesia predilecta, porque a mi, como a los niños, me encanta lo que brilla' (p. 30). But in the very next paragraph, the favourable impression of porteño religious institutions created by San Francisco's magnificent edifice is somewhat tainted by the hostile attitude of a representative of the Iglesia del Colegio:

A la Iglesia del Colegio voy rara vez, por prejuicio o por el deseo de venganza que suscitó en mi uno de los sacristanes, quien me informó que los ingleses estaban de más en ese sitio, agarrándome el brazo para indicarme la puerta de salida. En cualquier otro lugar le habría dado su merecido. (p. 30)

In addition to the conventional trappings of Catholicism, - the relics, flowers and statuettes - some of the Buenos Aires churches display poignant artefacts commemorating the people's triumph over colonialism. Suspended from the roof of the central cathedral at this time were almost twenty flags captured from Spanish forces during the fight for independence (some of these, incidentally, can still be seen in the building to this day); in the church of Santo Domingo, similar battle trophies hang, but these are the standards seized from British divisions in the course of repelling the invasiones inglesas. Naturally enough, such reminders of an inauspicious episode of his own nation's past disturb the author, but his reflections upon the events which led up to the capture of the British colours are curious to say the least:

Los más penosos recuerdos me trajeron estas banderas, obtenidas no en lucha franca, sino por enemigos ocultos e inaccesibles. Me he compadecido del destino de mis compatriotas, asesinados y sin posibilidad de desquite, por quienes no hubieran podido resistirles media hora en un honrado campo de batalla. (p. 31)
Making a minor detour from the topic of religion, the above quotation is worth considering for what it reveals about the writer. Our anonymous witness does not seem to appreciate the heroism of the porteños in taking on a regular army, eschewing their street-fighting tactics to come down firmly on the side of antiquated, 'gentlemanly' warfare in which two armies meet face-to-face across open ground and manoeuvre according to the whim of remote generals, who dictate the action from the margins as if engaged in a game of grand-scale chess. Even by the mid 1820s, this form of engagement was becoming rather outdated and less sanitized styles of combat were undergoing a revival. Indeed, the author's own countrymen had been known to indulge in what would now be called urban warfare during the Peninsular campaign, engaging in ferocious hand-to-hand fighting, clearing towns of their dogged French defenders building by building, street by street, at times probably deploying concealed snipers in much the same manner as had the porteños. Such innovations must have appalled the archetypal English gentleman, of whom our author seems to be an example, running contrary to his belief in fair play and ritualized conduct.

Notwithstanding that unfortunate experience in the Iglesia del Colegio, which he considers to be a personal action on the part of his antagonist and not the product of Church policy, the author concludes his description on a note that suggests an atmosphere of religious tolerance, asserting that foreigners are free to enter all places of worship in Buenos Aires and to partake of the services. Furthermore, he hints that religious fervour may have held sway during an earlier era, but that this has now passed. Having referred to the large tracts of land occupied by some churches and convents, he asserts that these institutions were constructed 'en una época en que el entusiasmo religioso era muy intenso', the use of the past tense being significant (p. 32).

Scanning the text for further allusions to religion prior to the main chapter devoted to this issue, we find a specific reference to matters of faith and the British settlers. Whilst discussing the English-speaking community of Buenos Aires, the
author notes that 'muchos ingleses se han casado con criollas', an unlikely development were it not for a reasonably ecumenical approach on the part of both Protestant incomer and Catholic creole (p. 57). The only barrier to intermarriage, it would appear, is the universality of the Catholic matrimonial sacrament, but many British citizens have gladly accepted this minor imposition in order to wed their loved one:

Los ingleses casados con criollas han tenido que aceptar las ceremonias matrimoniales católicas. Algunas personas escrupulosas se espantarán de este perjurio, pero aquellos compatriotas que se han casado por amor comprenden el poco valor de estas formalidades. Entre personas liberales la diferencia de religión no puede turbar la paz doméstica; nuestras diferencias, por otra parte, son tan sólo de forma. (p. 57)

In unitarian Buenos Aires, therefore, conditions seem quite conducive to the full assimilation of the immigrant; from the union of incomer and creole, we are told, there has resulted a new generation of bilingual Anglo-Argentine children, who feel equal affinity to both their parental homelands, a sure indication of amicable relations between the two nations in the future (p. 57). Only a few years previously, however, such remarkable progress towards the goal of the proponents of immigration would have proved quite impossible, solely on account of religious bigotry:

Tan acendrados eran los prejuicios religiosos hasta hace algunos años, que una dama hubiera vacilado –y su familia intervenido– en casarse con un ‘hereje’. El cambio en las costumbres es plausible y evidencia que los criollos no son ni sacristanes ni fanáticos. (p. 57)

Whilst noting the advances that had occurred in the field of education in recent years, the author gives away some further indication of his views upon the Catholic/Protestant divide, from which we may deduce that he was himself tolerant of religious difference, but committed to his own faith at least to the extent that he would never consider conversion. He mentions that a number of young porteños have gone abroad to receive their education, particularly to Stonyhurst School near
Liverpool. This establishment specialized in the provision of a Catholic education, mostly to foreign pupils. The author looks favourably upon the enrolment of young men from Buenos Aires, considering that they will acquire a permanent affection for the British nation from their time at the Lancashire school: 'los muchachos se sentirán ligados al país en que recibieron sus primeras impresiones' (p. 112). However, his implicit desire to see the porteño pupils acquire British ways even extends to matters of religion: 'Antes que contaminar a los ingleses con el catolicismo, puede darse el caso de que ellos se conviertan al protestantismo' (p. 112). In a footnote, it is indicated that this statement is in fact a riposte to critics who suggested that the number of Catholics around Stonyhurst had increased since the school's foundation; instead, the author observes:

Lancashire ha sido siempre católico, y es lógico suponer que las familias de estas creencias habiten una región donde sus prácticas sean respetadas. No creo que los prosélitos sean numerosos: estamos demasiado satisfechos de nuestra religión para adoptar una extraña. (p. 112 n).

When we finally arrive at the chapter which focuses upon matters of religion, we find that it largely consists of a detailed, and predominantly objective, account of the devotional customs of porteño society (pp. 115-135). There is little sign of any prejudice on the part of the author; on the contrary, there are certain elements of local Catholicism which he finds rather more pleasing than the sober Anglican traditions of his native land. The Argentine custom of playing secular music in church, such as strident battle marches or operatic arias, is particularly appealing and forms a favourable contrast to 'la monótona y melancólica música de nuestras iglesias' (p. 118). Bigotry is alive, however, amongst certain sectors of the population even in the liberal 1820s. The Catholic priesthood, for instance, often display 'un intenso odio contra los protestantes' (p. 120). Some of the Protestant community also hold intolerant views: 'Es menester admitir que también nosotros tenemos nuestros prejuicios' (p. 120).
The author makes reference to the attempts by the governing unitarians to undermine the Church's position within society; one such action was the closure of the monasteries in 1822. This policy caused affront to many pious porteños, including some of influential standing. The result was a short-lived uprising against the government, which achieved little other than to force its leader into exile. Another attempted coup followed in March 1823 and it too was easily put down. But the unitarian project to liberalize the Church and diminish its power had quite the opposite effect to that intended, at least insofar as the former aim was concerned:

Hace tres años podían verse grupos de frailes a la puerta de las iglesias, en los cafés y en las calles, fumando y en apariencia sin prestar mucho respeto a las leyes de la Iglesia. Pero cuando los proyectos de reforma comenzaron a discutirse, se volvieron más severos y las puertas de los conventos se cerraron después de cierta hora. (p. 122)

Convents, meanwhile, escaped the fate of the monasteries; we are told that two still exist in Buenos Aires, San Juan and Santa Catalina. The former is inhabited by an order of the most strict nature, and the nuns' only permitted contact with the outside world is a very occasional visit from their closest relatives. Santa Catalina, on the other hand, is a bastion of more liberal views. In both establishments, nearly all of the sisters are elderly, for few young porteñas relish the lifestyle of the religious devotee.

Much space is dedicated in this section of Cinco años to the processions which mark the high days on the Catholic calendar. These events have declined throughout the years of unitarian rule and the number of participants has become ever smaller. During Holy Week, however, much of the past splendour is retained, with even the governor and his officials taking part in ceremonial occasions. The tradition of 'Judas burning' on Good Friday was still observed at the time the author was writing, though it was increasingly considered a savage display and was becoming less popular by the year, a trend which would be reversed after Rosas's accession to power:
La quema del Judas es un espectáculo grotesco. En el medio de la calle se cuelgan muñecos de trapo rellenos de cohetes y combustibles. En la noche del sábado se les prende fuego y don Judas estalla entre los gritos de la multitud. Esta costumbre ha decaído mucho y seguramente terminará por desaparecer. Los periódicos la han calificado de 'bárbara'. (p. 129)

We are informed that the effigy was sometimes made to resemble a contemporary figure despised by the people, a fact which evokes John Lynch's reference to the manipulation of this custom for political ends during the Rosas dictatorship. In April 1821, for instance, an attempt had been made by the government to oblige all foreign citizens to take up arms whenever necessary for the defence of Buenos Aires; the English-speaking community fiercely resisted this demand and one Captain O'Brien, the master of the Slaney, acted as their spokesman. Thus, O'Brien attracted the hostility of some intolerant criollos and the likeness of a British naval officer was prepared for incineration during the Easter celebrations. When the police realized the significance of the mannequin, however, they ordered that it be withdrawn from the ceremony to avoid conflict.

Another Catholic custom which catches the attention of Protestant incomers is that of the 'Santo Viático', the ceremonial journey undertaken by a priest and his assistants when going to administer the last rites (pp. 131-32). They travel slowly in a horse-drawn coach, accompanied by a small escort of soldiers and ordinary citizens carrying lanterns. When they approach the house of the soon-to-be deceased, a bell is rung; all bystanders must then remove their hats and kneel as the carriage draws alongside. We are told that the latter operation is highly unpopular amongst foreign incomers, on account of the filth which lines the streets. Those who wish to avoid soiling their clothes, therefore, make off in the opposite direction when they hear the peal of the bell. Once, the author records, a British citizen failed to kneel at the appropriate time and was beaten by a soldier, but the authorities agreed after this lamentable incident that foreigners may be excused from the obligatory mark of respect.
His description of the 'Santo Viático' leads the author neatly to the concluding section of his consideration of religion, in which he explores the rituals associated with the funeral procedure (pp. 133-35). The corpse is habitually allowed to lie in a brightly lit room prior to burial, with the windows open so that the passer-by may view the coffin encircled by religious ornaments and crucifixes. The funeral itself usually takes place within twenty-four hours of death, for haste is necessary in the warm climate of Buenos Aires. The cemeteries in the centre of the city were full by the mid 1820s, so the majority of the deceased were taken to the new burial ground at the Recoleta, which is today a magnificent necropolis and tourist attraction containing the graves of many distinguished Argentines, including those of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Evita Perón. We are told that even some corpses previously interred in city-centre graveyards are being transferred to the new site. The funeral mass itself can last anything between one and two hours, after which the mourners return to the house of the deceased or remove to the church refectory for the wake, an event at which copious amounts of food and drink are consumed.

Until 1821, Protestants had no burial place of their own and had to overcome the hostility of the Catholic Church to be permitted anything resembling a Christian funeral. In that year, however, the government gave authorization for Protestants to start a cemetery near the Retiro; the costs of its establishment were defrayed by subscriptions from their community. By June 1824, we are told, seventy-one people had been interred there, including some sixty British citizens. Owing to the lack of a proper vicar or minister to officiate, the funeral service was customarily read by one of the mourners.

Relatively little attention is given to matters of religion by J. A. B. Beaumont in his Travels in Buenos Ayres. His brief description of the metropolitan cathedral is broadly similar to that offered in Cinco años, except for the fact that some additional battle standards now adorn its rafters, specifically those captured from the Brazilians during the recent dispute over the Banda Oriental. Beaumont, however, describes the convents in rather greater detail than our previous witness:
The nunneries of Buenos Ayres are reduced to two: the one of the Cataline nuns, the other of the Capuchin order; the latter is the most severe in its rules. No members are admitted under the age of thirty, when it is presumed they are able to deliberate coolly upon the measure which they are about to adopt; if, after a year's probation, they still continue resolved to devote themselves to a life of seclusion and prayer, they are allowed to do so, and from that moment are totally shut out from the world, not being allowed to see even their nearest relations. Their whole life is passed in prayer, and in fastings and other mortifications. The other convent (the Catalines) receives members of all ages, and is far less strict in its rules; both are provided with large gardens, where the nuns take their daily bodily exercises. (p. 78)

The only discrepancy between our two accounts of the convents lies in the extent to which the inhabitants were isolated from the outside world: in Cinco años, it is asserted that close relatives were allowed an occasional visit to members of even the most strict establishment; here we are informed that they were totally cut off.

Members of the Capuchin order appear in José Mármol's Amalia in a manner which indicates the close ties between religion and politics during the Rosas era (part IV, chapter 6, 'Sor Marta del Rosario', pp. 276-79). In this section, we meet two nuns, one of whom is the abbess, sitting in the garden of the Capuchin convent pondering the exact wording of a letter they are about to send to the dictator. This highly formal document serves to congratulate Rosas upon recent victories over his opponents in battle, especially that of Sauce Grande, and to assure him of his omnipresence in the nuns' prayers. Interestingly, however, the abbess seems somewhat unsure of the morality of sending such a document, telling her companion that she had weighed the matter in her mind for many days and searched her conscience prior to writing the letter. Then, as if to convince herself as much as the listener, she proceeds to enumerate the various reasons for which her order should respect and honour the dictator:

El [Rosas] nos ha regalado la reja de fierro que tiene el atrio del templo. A él debemos que se haya arreglado nuestro asunto con el sindico; y de él y su familia estamos todos los días recibiendo obsequios; ¿qué sería de nosotros si él faltase? (p. 276)
Furthermore, the abbess tells that the heads of other convents have already sent similar messages; hence, it would be noted if she was the only exception, with the undesirable result that her community might fall dangerously out of the regime's favour.

* * *

Through straying into *Amalia*, we have arrived at the issue of the textual representation of religion during the Rosas era. Of all the works considered in this study, one stands out as particularly eloquent in expressing the relationship between the dictator and the Catholic Church, namely Echeverria's *El matadero*. In this story, religion features as a tool of social control, the Church advocating a certain code of behaviour and warning of the dire punishments awaiting those who dare to rebel. The opening pages of the novella are laden with allusions to Christian tradition, as well as to the conduct of the clergy in Buenos Aires at that time. In the very first sentence, Echeverria mentions 'el arca de Noé', a Biblical reference which conjures the image of a great flood, itself a factor in the story. Looking further into the tale of Noah, we recall that the deluge was an instance of superior intervention with the design of purging the Earth of evil, an apocalypse from which only a small, representative selection of life would be saved:

> The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them.' But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.\(^2\)

Similarly, a purgative event is at the centre of Echeverria's story: Lent, a period of fasting originally destined to mark Jesus's forty days in the wilderness, but which has

evolved more into a test of moral fibre and vigil of spiritual purity than an occasion of simple commemoration. Moreover, if humankind is incapable of fulfilling its religious obligations during this period of its own volition, the Almighty will intervene to ensure that tradition is duly respected, or so it would appear according to the rhetoric of the clergy reported in *El matadero*.

Throughout this particular season of Lent in Buenos Aires, the Church has issued a prohibition upon the consumption of beef, a restriction which is unquestioningly accepted by most of the population. In one highly revealing paragraph, in which the effect of the prohibition upon the slaughterhouse is described, Echeverría exposes the link between Rosas's federalism and Catholicism, demonstrates the blind obedience of the typical *porteños*, and hints at the conflict between official religion and dissident creeds:

Los abastecedores [...] buenos federales, y por lo mismo buenos católicos, sabiendo que el pueblo de Buenos Aires atesora una docilidad singular para someterse a toda especie de mandamiento, sólo traen en días cuarentinales al matadero, los novillos necesarios para el sustento de los niños y de los enfermos dispensados de la abstinencia por el Bula, y no con el ánimo de que se harten algunos herejones, que no faltan, dispuestos siempre a violar los mandamientos carníficos de la iglesia, y a contaminar la sociedad con el mal ejemplo. (p. 92)

The very next section opens with the words, 'Sucedió, pues, en aquel tiempo, una lluvia muy copiosa', the prelude to a period of flooding. Bearing in mind Echeverría's earlier reference to Noah's ark, the image of cataclysm it conjures, and our knowledge of its alleged cause, it seems only natural to link the profane conduct of the heretics to the fate which has befallen the city. Indeed, this is the interpretation reached by the devout population and the representatives of the Church:

Parecía el amago de un nuevo diluvio. Los beatos y beatas gimoteaban haciendo novenarios y continuas plegarias. Los predicadores atroaban el templo y hacían crujir el púlpito a puñetazos. Es el día de juicio, decían, el fin del mundo está por venir. La cólera divina rebosando se derrama en inundación. ¡Ay de vosotros, pecadores! ¡Ay de vosotros, unitarios impíos que os mofáis de la iglesia, de los santos, y no escucháis con veneración la palabra
de los ungidos del Señor! ¡Ay de vosotros si no imploráis misericordia al pie de los altares! Llegará la hora tremenda del vano crujir de dientes y de las frenéticas imprecauciones. Vuestra impiedad, vuestras herejías, vuestras blasfemias, vuestros crímenes horrendos, han traído sobre nuestra tierra las plagas del Señor. La justicia del Dios de la Federación os declarará malditos. (p. 92-93)

Thus, society is not simply divided according to political allegiance, nor religious persuasion, as both are inextricably interwoven with the result that unitarianism is rigidly equated with apostasy and federalism with the Catholic faith. Since political dissidence is more than a crime against the worldly regime, the unitarians can expect to face the rage of the Almighty as well as that of their mortal adversaries. Of course, such extreme rhetoric would have constituted little more than an excuse to extend the already harsh repression of Rosas's enemies; the words of the clergy must have inspired an increased hatred amongst the general populace towards those who did not share their convictions, playing on the fear aroused in uneducated minds by calamitous weather conditions, and probably inciting the faithful to exorcise their terror through the abuse of alleged non-believers.

One effect of the flood is that the city is totally cut off from the surrounding countryside, so even the cattle required to nourish the young and sick are unable to reach the slaughter yard. The prices of other foodstuffs soar and deaths occur through malnutrition. Amongst those unfortunate enough to meet their end at this time were 'unos cuantos gringos herejes', who had committed the sin of 'promiscuación', the mixing of meat and fish during a period of abstinence, by consuming 'chorizos de Extremadura' manufactured from a blend of ham and cod. Inevitably, the foreigners' demise is attributed to this transgression of religious probity rather than any more rational explanation, such as food poisoning (although undiscovered at the time Echeverría was writing, I speculate that botulism would have been a fitting cause, deriving its name from botulus, the Latin for sausage).

The unsalutary consequences of the meat shortage soon bring men of science into conflict with the doctrines of the Church.
Algunos médicos opinaron que si la carencia de carne continuaba, medio pueblo caería en sincope por estar los estómagos acostumbrados a su corroborante jugo; y era de notar el contraste entre estos tristes pronósticos de la ciencia y los anatemas lanzados desde el pulpito por los reverendos padres contra toda clase de nutrición animal y de promiscuación en aquellos días destinados por la iglesia al ayuno y la penitencia. (p. 95)

This rift between the representatives of reason and those who defend the more absurd beliefs of the Church is an obvious reflection of the general challenging of religious doctrines initiated during the Renaissance period, consolidated in the thought of the Enlightenment and epitomized by the rise of science. In the modern world, the Catholic clergy were no longer in the privileged position where the veracity of their pronouncements went unquestioned. In Argentina under Rosas, on the other hand, the bonds between Church and State resembled conditions in Europe prior to the Reformation. Official religion and government are almost synonymous in this society and those occupying positions of power in either estate can choose which religious taboos to adhere to and which to ignore, with apparent impunity.

When the flood begins to subside, some fifty cattle finally reach the slaughterhouse, a minute number, we are told, for a population accustomed to the consumption of 250 to 300 head per day. The first steer to be killed is offered as a gift to Rosas. Echeverria employs irony to expose the hypocrisy of the staunchly Catholic dictator in accepting the offering, thus overruling religious sanction to partake of the consumption of beef during Lent:

Es de creer que el Restaurador tuviese permiso especial de su Ilustrisima para no abstenerse de carne, porque siendo tan buen observador de las leyes, tan buen católico y tan acerrimo protector de la religión, no hubiera dado mal ejemplo aceptando semejante regalo en dia santo. (p. 98)

This type of pharisaism, in which the priesthood also indulge, leads the author to conclude explicitly that religious tradition is nothing other than an instrument for social and political control, portraying the Rosas administration as a totalitarian regime with the ultimate ambition of commanding every aspect of individual life,
reducing humankind to 'una máquina cuyo móvil principal no sea su voluntad sino la de la iglesia y el gobierno' (p. 96). Perhaps, Echeverría speculates, the day will come when permission will be required to go for a walk, talk with a friend, or even breathe. Already, it would seem, this unhappy moment is almost upon the people of Buenos Aires, in open contradiction of the ideals of liberty and democracy which sustained them during the independence struggle.

The theme of religion as an integral part of the system of government and social regulation is also picked up by Már mol in *Amalia* (part IV, chapter 5, 'Así fue', pp. 271-76). This chapter does nothing to move the novel's plot forward, functioning principally as an exposé of the religious atmosphere under the rule of Rosas and to prepare the reader for what is about to follow, coming immediately before the episode of the abbess and her congratulatory letter to the dictator. Már mol opens by asserting that even the spiritual realm of religion has been unable to escape the flagitious ethos of the times, with the result that all the most noble values of Christianity have been swept aside in favour of blind fanaticism, with Rosas effectively displacing God as the object of the people's adoration. Rather than a sincere return to religious fundamentalism, therefore, the attitude of the regime is portrayed as a cynical insult to the authentic tenor of Christian doctrine and to the Almighty himself, with the calculated design of turning the naturally fervent disposition of the people into increased political power:

Rosas quiso despojar a la conciencia de los hombres que lo sostenían en el mando, de toda creencia que no fuese la de su poder; de otro temor que a su persona; de esperanza alguna que no fuese la que su labio prometía; de otro consuelo que el que ofrece al crimen la repetición del crimen. Y para eso era preciso insultar a Dios, la religión, y la práctica de ella, a los ojos de esa multitud fanática y apasionada, cuyos sentimientos rudos explotaba. (p. 271)

The pulpit and even the sacrosanct space of the confessional have become instruments of official propaganda (p. 272). As many corrupt priests were willing to do the dictator's bidding, the status of the Church was assured under the regime, but at the price of its emasculation. The true power derived from autonomy had
vanished, substituted by false prominence contingent upon a disposition to servility and sycophancy. There could be no doubt that any departure from this attitude would meet with the swift retribution dealt out to all who challenged the will of Rosas. Mármol demonstrates this point through reference to the fate of the Jesuits when they dared to resist the politicization of religion:

Los Jesuitas fueron los únicos sacerdotes que osaron oponer la entereza del justo, la fortaleza del que cumple en la tierra una misión de sacrificio y de virtud, a la profanación que hizo al altar la enceguecida pretensión del tirano.

El templo de San Ignacio, fundado por ellos durante la dominación española, y de donde fueron expulsados después, fue velado por ellos en 1839, y cerradas sus puertas a la profana imagen con que se intentaba escarnecer el altar. Ellos le pagaron más tarde al dictador esta resistencia digna de los propagadores mártires del cristianismo en la América, pero ellos recibieron el premio en su conciencia; y más tarde lo recibirán en el cielo. (pp. 274-75)

The Company of Jesus had returned to Argentine soil as recently as 1836 at the express invitation of Rosas, having been expelled by the colonial authorities some seventy years earlier. It was not long, however, before they fell foul of the regime on account of their persistent refusal to preach rosista doctrine from the pulpit and to place portraits of the dictator upon their altars. By 1843, Rosas had turned wholly against the Jesuits and they were again driven from Buenos Aires, an exclusion which eventually extended to the other provinces as well.

According to Mármol, Rosas was the latest in a long line of caudillos who had misappropriated religion for personal gain, but by far the worst for the magnitude of his sacrilege. Having described these charismatic figures as 'Atilas argentinas', he writes:

Tomaron el nombre de los pueblos. Entendieron que Federación era hacer cada uno lo que le diera la gana; y cada uno hizo lo que Artigas, López, Bustos, Ibarra, Aldao, Quiroga y Rosas.

Y entre todo lo que hicieron, pocos de ellos dejaron de convertir la religión en instrumento de su ambición personal.
Rosas fue el último de todos que se valió de ella, pero el primero, sin disputa, en la grandeza de su crimen. (p. 274)

Már mol condemns the regular compliments paid to the dictator by the priesthood, considering that the clergy's role in society should not include taking sides in the political struggle and issuing statements of congratulation for victories over dissident elements. He perceives that such activities are fundamentally alien to the founding traditions of Christianity, asserting that Jesus never involved himself in the politics of Judea, nor did his followers send greetings to the Roman emperors to mark success in battle (p. 274). Furthermore, there can be no excuse for the conduct of the Argentine ecclesiastics; not even fear is accepted as a valid explanation of their inclination to comply with the dictator's will:

'Tienen miedo', decían para disculparlos. ¿Miedo! El que viste el santo hábito del religioso no conoce ese sentimiento. [...] El miedo es un crimen en el varón apostólico, cuando se trata de defender la religión y la moral; cuando se trata de resistir al crimen o a la tentación del demonio. El hijo de la iglesia debe morir antes que claudicar de los santos principios que profesa. (p. 275)

And so he continues, evoking the bravery of the archetypal Christian missionary when confronted by hostile terrain and wild animals, as if to shame the Argentine clergy for their pusillanimity. Elsewhere in the novel, the priesthood are attacked through the figure of 'el Cura Gaete', who maintains close contact with Rosas's semi-official paramilitary death squad, the mazorca, and sees no contradiction between carrying an instrument of death and his status as a man of the cloth, at one point describing his favourite weapon as 'este puñal federal [...] que me ha dado la patria como a todos sus hijos para defender su santa causa' (p. 267).³

³ The mazorca was the armed wing of a political organization known as the Sociedad Popular Restauradora, established in 1834 as a means of preserving Rosas's influence during the period he was out of office. Whilst he was in government, the society was neither an official organ of the State nor strictly a private association, but rather a semi-autonomous club of fanatical rosistas. The mazorca was essentially an extreme faction within the society, an unofficial secret police force, specializing in the intimidation and execution of political opponents. During the most violent periods of oppression, members of the mazorca took it upon themselves to watch, persecute and murder suspected unitarians. As many observers have recorded, the derivation of the term mazorca can be attributed to the
Sarmiento also raises the issue of religious hypocrisy in *Facundo*, striving to convince the reader that Juan Facundo Quiroga's flaunted adherence to Catholic values was nothing but a facade (pp. 198-201). Firstly, he traces the events which led Facundo to adopt 'Religiòn o Muerte' as his battle standard, seeing the origins of this development in the contentious decision of the porteño government during the 1820s to grant the right of religious freedom to the many foreigners resident in the city. According to Sarmiento, this caused little disturbance in Buenos Aires itself, for the measure was even supported by the more liberal of the clerics. In the interior provinces, on the other hand, the move was met with dismay and fierce opposition. Facundo Quiroga quickly took advantage of this backlash of religious fervour, wrapping himself in the mantle of the defender of the faith. Sarmiento then reminds the reader of a document he had transcribed earlier in the work, in which it is stated that Facundo 'nunca se confesaba, ni oia misa, ni rezaba, y que él mismo decía que no creia en la nada' (p. 200). Clearly then, in Sarmiento's eyes at least, the caudillo was nothing more than a charlatan who seized upon an aura of piety to lend some false respectability to his lustful quest for power.

* * *

Before proceeding to evaluate the British settlers' views on religion during the Rosas era and their strategies for the defence of their dissident beliefs, it is relevant to spend a few moments considering the impact of religious conditions upon the immigration process in general. Naturally, an atmosphere of intolerance might have proved some deterrent to the potential settler of non-Catholic faith; similarly, the quasi-deification of the dictator and the reverence of his image on the altar would certainly have appalled incomers of strictly Protestant persuasion, given that iconolatry was anathema to their creed. We must bear in mind that the most organization's methods: 'the word *mazorca*, meaning a head of maize, symbolized strength through union, but it really gained currency because its pronunciation sounded the same as "*mas horca*", more hanging'. (Lynch, *Argentine Dictator*, p. 215).
appealing type of settler in the eyes of reforming creole liberals was the representative of industrious, Northern European society, the Briton, the German, the Swiss and Scandinavian. As Protestantism is a major force within the culture of such people, extreme, unyielding Catholicism, coupled with political meddling in religious matters, hardly seems the recipe to attract the immigrant and nurture their success. A more liberal approach was deemed essential if the vision of a diverse, productive, multi-cultural Argentina was ever to become a reality. This is noted by Sarmiento in *Facundo*: 'La cuestión de libertad de cultos es en América una cuestión de política y economía. Quien dice libertad de cultos, dice inmigración europea y población' (p. 199). The same argument is developed more extensively by Juan Bautista Alberdi in his *Bases*.

Alberdi opens his treatise on the importance of religious tolerance by insisting that atheism would be no step forward; rather, a rich variety of beliefs should be encouraged, in this way preserving the desirable moral framework inherent in every creed. If Spanish America remains the domain of Catholicism to the exclusion of other faiths, however, there will be no progress and only stagnation:

> El dilema es fatal: o católica esclusivamente y depoblada; o poblada y próspera, y tolerante en materia de religión. Llamar la raza anglosajona y las poblaciones de Alemania, de Suecia y de Suiza, y negarles el ejercicio de su culto, es lo mismo que no llamarlas sino por ceremonia, por hipocresía de liberalismo.

> Esto es verdadero a la letra: -escluir los cultos disidentes de la América del Sud, es escluir a los ingleses, a los alemanes, a los suizos, a los norte-americanos, que no son católicos; es decir a los pobladores de que más necesita este continente. Traerlos sin su culto, es traerlos sin el agente que les hace ser lo que son, a que vivan sin religión, a que se hagan ateos.4

The need to guard against atheism is central to Alberdi’s argument. Later in the *Bases*, he asserts that religion ‘debe ser hoi, como en el siglo XVI el primer objeto de nuestras leyes fundamentales’ (pp. 292-93). He contends that faith provides

4 Mayer (ed.), *Las 'Bases' de Alberdi*, pp. 258-59. Further page references will be cited parenthetically.
invaluable support to humankind and is the essential force which binds society together. Thus, one of the aims of the ideal Argentine constitution must be to nurture religious belief in a manner which offers equal countenance to the traditional Catholicism of the region and other creeds:

Ella [nuestra politica moderna americana] debe mantener y proteger la religión de nuestros padres, como la primera necesidad de nuestro orden social y político, pero debe protegerla por la libertad, por la tolerancia y por todos los medios que son peculiares y propios del régimen democrático y liberal, y no como el antiguo derecho indiano por exclusiones y prohibiciones de otros cultos cristianos. Los Estados-Unidos y la Inglaterra, son las naciones más religiosas de la tierra en sus costumbres, y han llegado a ese resultado por los mismos medios precisamente que deseamos ver adoptados en la América de Sud. (pp. 293-94)

Although Alberdi only specifies tolerance towards 'otros cultos cristianos' in the above quotation, thus overlooking other faiths, we may conclude from the moderate tone of his argument that the notion of religious liberalism should be broad enough to embrace any belief system which offers a solid moral code to its adherents.

* * *

How then did the early settlers themselves perceive the religious ambiance of Rosas's Argentina, and how far did they move towards establishing their 'cultos disidentes' in the evolving nation? If we take some time to examine the early Scottish community in the region, the incomers' staunch adherence to their native faith will be revealed, along with some evidence which suggests that the actual practices of rosista society were not quite as hostile towards Protestant settlers as the testimony of the regime's opponents might indicate.

Recalling the history of the Monte Grande colony, we remember that the first Scottish settlers quickly determined their need for a man of religion and letters to provide spiritual guidance and education amongst their community. After arriving at the colony, the Rev. William Brown soon set in motion steps towards the establishment of the first proper Presbyterian church in South America. As James
Dodds records, plans for this project were underway even before the collapse of the colony. At a meeting in the city of Buenos Aires on 22 December 1828, leading members of the Scots community nominated a committee to direct the project. At the next gathering on 6 February in Jefferies Hotel, it was proposed that two rooms of the Rev. Brown's city residence in Calle México be employed as a temporary chapel. One week later this plan was finalized, and Brown was allocated a monthly rent of $45. This arrangement soon proved inadequate due to the rapid growth of the congregation. In response to the need for more ample premises, a fund was launched to finance the construction of a purpose-built church. On 10 May 1829, the local Kirk Session issued a public statement on behalf of the Scottish Presbyterian community in Buenos Aires, with the intention of eliciting contributions from their kinsmen at home. This document, which Dodds reproduces, is a source of significant, though rather imprecise, details of the English-speaking community in Argentina:

the great body of foreigners speaking the English language, whether British or North Americans, have arrived within the last five or six years, and they now amount to no fewer, it is thought, at a moderate estimate, than six or seven thousand. Of these a great proportion is Scotch, consisting of tradesmen and labourers of every description, originally belonging to various agricultural and mining associations. (p. 143)

Later in the same statement, it is suggested that 'the Scotch form upwards of one-third of the whole foreign population speaking the English language', thus justifying the claim that their present place of worship, which could accommodate around 100 people, was entirely insufficient for the community (p. 145).

By 5 January 1830, members of the committee were able to report the initial success of the appeal and expressed confidence in securing adequate donations for the project from Britain (pp. 164-67). On a local level, however, the fund-raising campaign encountered certain difficulties, since the Episcopalian British Church had

5 Dodds, Records of the Scottish Settlers in the River Plate, pp. 136-47. Further page references will be cited parenthetically.
already gathered subscriptions from many potential donors for the construction of their building, on the understanding that it would also be made available for Presbyterian worship. The Episcopalians did not keep their side of the bargain, but the Argentine-British community were understandably reluctant to give money to a further appeal. The Episcopalian Church had also received official support from the British government and the Scots sought a similarly privileged status. This time, the British authorities were unwilling to assist, and only after a long and acrimonious dispute were the Presbyterians finally granted equal treatment in 1838 (p. 184).

Despite these many problems, the building fund soon amounted to $40,000 and a site for the church was purchased (p. 176). On 25 February 1833, the foundation stone of the new kirk was laid at a ceremony addressed by prominent members of creole society, including Felipe Arana, then president of the House of Representatives and later Rosas's foreign minister, Manuel Garcia, the Minister of Finance during Rosas's first governorship, Tomás Guido, a former Minister of Government and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Brazilian court, and General Pacheco, a leading figure in the military (p. 176). The building made rapid progress until a construction problem caused the roof to crack, bringing a delay and extra expenditure. At last, on 25 April 1835, the church was inaugurated with a special service (p. 184).

The accounts of the early church are meticulously reproduced by Dodds, the list of subscribers providing an impromptu census of the more affluent members of the Presbyterian community and their respective generosity. The St. Andrew's Scotch Presbyterian Church, as was its official title, remained under the charge of the Rev. Brown until his retirement to Scotland in 1850. In addition to his role in the religious life of the community, Brown was instrumental in the founding of the St. Andrew's Scots School in 1838. Tireless efforts to advance the condition of the Argentine-Scots took their toll on Brown's health and, in 1849, he resolved to travel to his homeland to recuperate, with every intention of returning to Buenos Aires within a few years. Circumstances overtook these plans, and Brown spent the remainder of
his days in Scotland. The offer of the Chair of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of St. Andrews contributed to this decision, a post which he occupied until his death in 1868. Brown's successor in Buenos Aires was the Rev. James Smith, who presided over the establishment of another Scots church in the post-Rosas era, St. John's, at Quilmes.

In addition to providing an historical overview of the establishment of the Scots church in Buenos Aires, Dodds transcribes two documents which give an insight into the settlers' perception of both their own faith and, perhaps, of the prevailing religious atmosphere of the early Rosas era. The first is the text of a sermon delivered by Rev. Brown at the opening of the temporary chapel in Calle México on 14 March 1829 (pp. 148-63); the second consists of a speech given by Peter Sheridan, a leading member of the Argentine-Scottish community, at the laying of the foundation stone for St. Andrew's Church (pp. 178-79). We need not excessively concern ourselves here with the theology of Brown's sermon, entitled 'The zeal of God which is not according to knowledge', but confine our analysis mainly to the light it sheds upon the spiritual and ethnic identity of the settlers, as well as to what it might imply about the wider religious context of the time. Brown opens by making a distinction between true religious devotion, based upon a profound understanding of Christianity, and the facade of fanaticism, easily appropriated but of little spiritual value. He sets himself the task of imparting three related lessons throughout the sermon, which are summarized as follows:

I. That it is quite possible to be very zealous for God while we are so ignorant of His true character, and the way He has appointed of obtaining access to His favour, as still to be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

Unfortunately, little record of Brown's life remains in the archives of the University of St. Andrews, aside from the periodic appearance of his name in the minutes of Senate meetings and a few traces of his undergraduate career, such as the fact that he was joint recipient of the Gray Prize in 1817. In Brown's obituary in The Scotsman (reproduced by Dodds, pp. 202-03), some details of his influence in St. Andrews and beyond are noted: 'Under his direction the Divinity Hall at St. Andrews was for many years a leading centre of intellectual activity, and he was one of the first who laid the foundation of the Liberal party in the Church, particularly in the direction of philosophical speculation'. In the same notice it is stated that 'he published almost nothing from a fastidious dread of print.'
II. That instead of being deluded by the appearance of religious zeal into the persuasion that those who are actuated by it are true believers, and resting on Christ for salvation, as the end of the law for their righteousness, our Christian discernment and anxieties ought to be sharpened and awakened to the inquiry, whether they are zealous of God according to knowledge.

III. That the greater the zeal manifested, and the more nearly those actuated by it are connected with us in the relations of life, the greater ought to be our solicitude, as men and as Christians, to see them grounded and settled in the faith of the Gospel, and the more strenuous and unceasing exertions for effecting it. (cited by Dodds, pp. 149-50)

On first reading these statements, I immediately thought of the blind fanaticism of both the clergy and the multitudes portrayed in *El matadero*. Although Brown's sermon was delivered just prior to the rise of Rosas, could his words in fact be a coded allusion to the more extreme instances of creole Catholicism, such as the obsessive crusade of Facundo Quiroga? Certainly, on the basis of our reading of Echeverría's text, we can reasonably infer that the majority of those carried along on the wave of zealotry emanating from the pulpits had little appreciation of the tenets of Christianity as a member of the Scottish community would define them; their trepidation before the purported manifestation of the Lord's wrath, the deluge, indeed suggests that they were 'ignorant of His true character' and wholly unacquainted with the 'freeness of Divine grace' to which Brown has already made reference in the very first sentence of the sermon. To the faithful in *El matadero*, the Almighty is not the benevolent, loving deity of the Gospel, but an awe-inspiring, authoritarian figure more in keeping with the Old Testament tradition. The second of the minister's lessons constitutes a warning to his congregation to be aware of the hypocrisy frequently concealed beneath the pious pronouncements of religious fanatics, and never to accept outlandish assertions of faith at face value. This sceptical approach to religious mania is echoed in *Facundo*, where Sarmiento asserts the following conviction: 'cuanto más bárbaro y por tanto más irreligioso es un pueblo, tanto más susceptible es de preocuparse y fanatizarse' (p. 201). Thirdly, and perhaps most
significantly within the context of the present study, Brown lays the foundations of a reforming mission, urging his flock to turn their efforts towards enlightening those possessed by false zeal. Might the role of the conscientious incomers then be to educate the creole community, guiding their new neighbours along the path to spiritual improvement, a task well within the bounds of the immigration ideal?

The rest of Brown's sermon is loaded with references to the superior morality of Presbyterianism, especially the brand of the Scottish church, over all other forms of Christianity. Furthermore, he perceives the link between Presbyterianism and the Scottish identity to be innate; these two notions are indivisible in Brown's view, an attitude, of course, which conveniently overlooks the strong Catholic tradition dominant in some parts of his native land. An intense pride in the Scottish heritage, grounded in his own enthusiasm for elevated moral values and appropriate for his nostalgic expatriate audience, colours the minister's words:

That zeal of God is eminently characteristic of us as a nation, the most prejudiced and careless observer cannot fail to acknowledge. Our history, our institutions, our habits, the general opinion entertained respecting us, furnish numerous and unequalled proofs of it. That form of religious worship which after the manner of our fathers we celebrate is almost identified with our name. The frequent and protracted struggles in which we have been compelled to engage, in order to rescue it from the grasp of despotism and intolerance, the national sacrifices of blood and treasure with which, from time to time, we have redeemed it as our national ark from the unhallowed lands of our enemies, the very costliness of the ransom with which we have thus purchased its deliverance, independently of its own intrinsic value altogether, have so enhanced it in our estimation and riveted it in our attachments, that we have neither love nor admiration to bestow on any other. As the mother fondly prizes her beloved son on returning to her in safety after many perils and disasters, so Scotland cherishes this her national form of religion. And this attachment is displayed not only in the resistance which she has always opposed to the admission of any other form; the deep seat it has secured in her affections is proved also by the vast influence which it exercises over her public mind, and by the moral habits and religious regularities which it has established amongst her people, so marked and general as to be deemed characteristic of them; whatever is distinctively honourable in our morality, whatever is solemn and devout in our sacred observances, whatever is pure and sound in our creed, is the homage of our nation's zeal and our nation's love to that
aspect of Divine truth in which she has arrayed herself, and wooed our regard through the medium of Presbyterian institutions. (pp. 150-51)

He later refers to the 'wisdom of our reformers, in stripping religion of all adventitious accompaniments and appendages', a further assertion of its superiority over the native Catholicism of Argentina.

The major purpose of Brown's sermon seems to be to invigorate the faith and Scottish identity of his congregation, setting forth a compelling justification of both Presbyterianism and the national essence which the former, according to his analysis, has largely defined. Recalling Alberdi's words on the desirability of preserving the native religious practices of the immigrant, it certainly appears that the Scots' were well-equipped with the strength of conviction to adhere unwaveringly to their faith, regardless of the trials to which they may be exposed. Brown closes his lesson with a further plea for community solidarity mediated through the church, an entreaty which foreshadows the cohesive role played by the Scots' religious institutions during the years following the collapse of the Monte Grande colony and, indeed, right up to the present day. Even now, the various Presbyterian churches tend to act as a focal point for the cultural life of the widely scattered Argentine-Scots. Brown concludes:

Finally, my brethren, it is well that our nationality as Scotsmen should seek its gratification in maintaining and cherishing the remembrance of what of our country is most worthy of remembrance; that it should draw us hither from Sabbath to Sabbath to enjoy the weekly pleasure of witnessing something of the semblance of Scotland in her Sabbath-day attire, of renewing the recollection and impression of those truths and feelings which this day's stated observance and solemnities accustomed us to cherish and revere ere our separation and estrangement from them had withered their freshness, and the blight of evil communication had despoiled their innocence. (p. 163)

Quite what the minister means by 'evil communication' is difficult to ascertain, though it could entail excessive contact with the creole community to the point that their habits and customs might begin to erode the Scots' distinct character. If this is
the message which Brown is trying to convey, then his selection of the word 'evil' is indicative of a rather hostile and intolerant approach to the local society in which his congregation is immersed, an attitude consistent with the perpetuation of the British settlers' aloofness that we noted in earlier chapters of this study.

Leaving Brown's sermon to one side, let us now consider some of the ramifications of the speech made by Peter Sheridan at the laying of the kirk's foundation stone. Before beginning our interpretation, it is necessary to recall that amongst the audience were a number of influential local dignitaries, as this may account for some of Sheridan's remarks. We should also remember that the occasion took place in 1833, that is to say, after the end of Rosas's first governorship of Buenos Aires and during the short rule of Juan Ramón Balcarce. It is safe to assume, however, that Balcarce's influence upon the course of affairs was so fleeting that the essence of porteño society would have differed little from that during the direct rule of Rosas. Thus, the contrast between Sheridan's complimentary reference to an ambience of religious tolerance and the evidence we have already accumulated of bigotry around this time cannot be convincingly explained by the mere fact that he spoke during the dictator's personal interregnum. Alternatively, I would like to suggest that Sheridan's words could reflect an acute awareness of his listeners' status; his eagerness to flatter the young Argentine nation may even reveal conditions wholly the inverse of those which he painstakingly praises, his deferential attitude constituting nothing less than an insurance policy against the very real threat of official hostility:

Thus have we, in a Roman Catholic country, laid the foundation stone of the Scotch National Church, encouraged and countenanced in our work by the special attendance of eminent and illustrious citizens of this Republic, thereby showing us that the privilege by which we assembled here this day was not a concession of cold political expediency but an emanation from the pure and holy spirit of religious toleration. (cited by Dodds, p. 178)

Are we to believe that the presence of these 'illustrious citizens' could not also have been the product of 'cold political expediency', their presence only attributable to the
desire to maintain a pretence of self-interested amicability, or even to simply watch over the potentially factious activities of the heretic Scots? Perhaps I am guilty of cynicism, but, when confronted with such imposing rhetoric, I tend to suspect the motivations of its author, much in the same way as the Rev. Brown regarded ostentatious expressions of religious zeal as highly dubious.

Of the settlers' private accounts of the Rosas era featured in the present study, there is virtually no mention of religious matters in the papers of the Gibson family, but there are several references within Jane Robson's account which permit us a small insight into the incomers' attitudes. Perhaps the silence of the Gibsons' correspondence on this topic is indicative of a lack of interest; we should note, however, that business matters were always of principal importance in the brothers' letters and that even their observations on politics were largely motivated by concern for their effect upon commercial conditions. As religious belief probably seemed far removed from such practical matters, its written discussion might never have entered the Gibsons' minds. Moreover, the institutional activities of the Scots church in Buenos Aires, and even of those later built to the south, must have appeared rather remote when dwelling on the isolated estancia of Los Yngleses. Of course, this need not imply that religion was of no significance in the Gibsons' lives, nor that they lacked personal faith. It may be instructive to record that the most profound manifestations of piety are often found divorced from the stiff formality of religious institutions. When we read Facundo, for instance, Sarmiento tells us that the purest form of devotion he ever witnessed took place on an isolated estancia in the hills of San Luis, far from the influence of the ceremonious Church. The proprietor had constructed his own little chapel, a bastion of true communication between man and God, liberated from the intervention of the priesthood. Sarmiento describes the estanciero's act of worship and the deep emotions aroused by his apparent sincerity:

Había edificado una capilla en la que los domingos por la tarde rezaba él mismo el rosario, para suplir al sacerdote, y al oficio divino de que por años habían carecido. Era aquel un cuadro homérico: el sol llegaba al ocaso; las majadas que volvían al redil hendían el aire
con sus confusos balidos; el dueño de casa, hombre de sesenta años, [...] hacia coro, a que contestaban una docena de mujeres y algunos mocetones [...]. Concluido el rosario, hizo un fervoroso ofrecimiento. Jamás he oído voz más llena de unción, fervor más puro, fe más firme, ni oración más bella, más adecuada a las circunstancias, que la que recitó. Pedía en ella a Dios lluvias para los campos, fecundidad para los ganados, paz para la República, seguridad para los caminantes... Yo soy muy propenso a llorar, y aquella vez lloré hasta sollozar, porque el sentimiento religioso se había despertado en mi alma con exaltación y como una sensación desconocida, porque nunca he visto escena más religiosa; creía estar en los tiempos de Abraham, en su presencia, en la de Dios y de la naturaleza que lo revela. (pp. 70-71)

Whilst I have no reason to believe that the Gibsons went to such lengths to express their faith, there is some evidence which suggests that the brothers did maintain at least a private, low-key involvement with the Presbyterian churches; in 1854, for instance, Thomas Gibson's name appeared on a list of those who made donations for the establishment of the new church at Quilmes, his gift consisting of some $500 (Dodds, p. 247). Thomas also subscribed $200 to the testimonial appeal set up in 1860 to acknowledge the services of the Rev. Francis Gebbie, a temporary minister who had occupied the post at St. John's during the Rev. Smith's lengthy visit to Scotland (Dodds, p. 261).

The Robson family, on the other hand, had a long-standing and prominent involvement in the Scots churches. Their name appears many times throughout the records reproduced by Dodds, both as generous subscribers to appeal funds and as frequent participants in the various governing committees of the church. Jane herself makes only passing reference to matters of religion, but these are sufficient to reveal her profound faith and the comfort she found in it. Of course, even the title of Jane's memoirs, _Faith Hard Tried_, provides some indication that she perceived religious belief as a central element of her personal identity. On one occasion, having fallen from her horse whilst pregnant, Jane fell 'very, very ill' (p. 241). Her husband left to get help, but, in the interval, Jane's baby seems to have arrived stillborn. Alone in
this desperate situation, with only the company of her other small child, Jane understandably turns to the Lord for consolation:

With my little dead baby beside me, I made a vow to my God that if I were spared to do so, I would go to any woman in a similar situation, never mind who it was or how far away. I have kept that vow and many are the times that I have been called upon to fulfill it. In those undertakings I have always asked my God to be with me and help me, and I know he has, as I have often felt that he was very close to me. (p. 241)

Jane is also quick to offer thanks to God when saved from some crisis or dilemma. When her ungrateful house guests robbed her and set fire to her home, Jane's first thought on learning that her baby had been rescued from the conflagration was to direct gratitude to the Almighty, consciously suppressing the natural impulse to think only of her child and the benevolence of the passer-by:

At last I was in sight of the burning mass. The children on seeing me came running and close behind them a man whom I thought was a stranger. In his arms he had my baby. I threw myself from my horse and snatching my little one to me I felt overpowered with joy and thankfulness. But this was not the time to give way to my feelings. I reverently thanked my God from a heart full of gratitude that he had spared my baby. (p. 244)

Now turning to the more material aspects of religion, Jane briefly tells us of the establishment of the Scots church at Chascomús, a development in which she seems to have played some personal part, probably in common with most members of the Scottish community in the district. She reveals the characteristic determination of the settlers by hinting at the sacrifices they had to make to secure their own church, as well as through exposing their resolve to reach the new building in adverse weather conditions in time for its opening ceremony:

In 1857, our Church, St. Andrew's, was opened by the Rev. James Smith D.D. It was very wet and had been so for many days previously; the camp was in a very bad state for driving. We had a large carriage and a great many of us went, but at times it seemed doubtful if we would manage to get to the Church at all. We had nine leagues to travel, pantanos [marshy areas] to cross, and sometimes it seemed impossible for us to proceed, even with the many strong
horses we had. However, with patience and much bumping and rough tossings, we at last arrived. It was worth the trouble, as we were one and all interested in the ceremony we had come to witness, for at last we had our Church. It had cost us some trouble, I suppose, and we all had in one way or another to deny ourselves something. I think we all felt it was worth it on this day, when our Church was completed, and we had met to rejoice, and knew it was a good work well done. (p. 248)

St. Andrews, built during the winter of 1857, became known as the Rancho Kirk, on account of the building's construction. According to Dodds, it 'was a lowly thatched cottage, with smoothly plastered, white-washed walls, with brick paved floor, and well lighted by three windows on each side' (p. 271). Jane's allusion to the sacrifices required to finance its construction is confirmed in Dodds's account, where he records that in order to accumulate sufficient funds, every settler who owned sheep agreed to 'pay annually the value of ten sheep per thousand of their possessions' (p. 271). He claims that this unconventional method proved successful, for within a few years, 'a goodly sum was soon deposited in the Provincial Bank of Chascomús' (p. 271). Dodds also gives further details of the difficulties encountered in executing the church's opening ceremony, again testifying to the persevering, dauntless spirit of the Scots community and their clergyman:

Preparations had been made for opening the church for public worship on the second Sunday of November 1857, but the weather proved unfavourable, for it rained almost incessantly for two days. We can remember the Rev. Smith's arrival (on Saturday) at Adela on horseback, amidst the driving rain, after a ride of twenty-four leagues, from the Estancia Viamont, accompanied by a guide, and clad in the picturesque uniform of oilskin and sou'-wester, supplied by Mr. Henry Bell, his kind host, who had failed to dissuade him from undertaking the journey on such a day. It rained all Sunday, and the opening of the church took place on Monday, with a fairly good congregation, as all the people knew that 'no Sunday shower ever kept Mr. Smith at home in that important hour'. (p. 272)

* * *

What conclusions can we now reach having reviewed the representation of religion in our selection of creole and incomer writings? We have observed that religious
tolerance was the norm in Buenos Aires during the period of unitarian rule in the 1820s, but that this condition contrasted with the oppressive narrow-mindedness prevalent in the interior provinces, as embodied in the figure of Facundo Quiroga. When Rosas came to power, therefore, his apparent passion for Catholicism was not particularly innovative, but rather marked the return to the porteño environment of a trend of bygone years, a current of fanaticism which had endured in other parts of Argentine territory. Like Karl Marx a few years later, Rosas seems to have appreciated that religion was 'the opium of the people'; by administering liberal doses of ultra-Catholic rhetoric to the common masses, the dictator perceived that he could mobilize the ranks of the proletariat in support of his regime. The fact that historical events bear out a record of reasonable tolerance, at least towards British Protestants, is probably indicative of the insincerity of Rosas's own beliefs, for had he been truly convinced that such people were abominable heretics, surely he would never have permitted them to build their places of worship unhindered. Moreover, it is highly possible that the picture sketched by Echeverría and Mármo has been subject to authorial exaggeration, for it suited the political purposes of both authors to portray the intolerant conduct of the regime in an extreme manner.

The British settlers themselves, especially the early Scots, fulfilled an important requisite of the immigration ideal, as set out by liberal creole thinkers, when they brought with them, and assiduously preserved, the religious practices of their homeland. If we think back to the words of Alberdi, the settlers' adherence to their faith was desirable on account of its centrality to their existence. As the distinctive religious beliefs of Protestant incomers were embedded in the very essence of these people, an essence which the creole liberals perceived as so worthy of imitation, the extinction of the settlers' religion might very well have led to the collapse of their entire cultural fabric. Thus, in the view of the advocates of immigration, the incomers' faith had to endure, if only to guarantee that all their other advantageous qualities were likewise preserved. The correlation between religious belief and overall character becomes plain if we recall the Rev. Brown's
sermon, in which Presbyterian virtue, Scottishness and an industrious, persevering nature were virtually synonymous and inseparable.

A second desirable consequence of the immigration of staunch Protestants goes some way beyond the ideology of the Generation of '37, and lies precisely in the challenge this process posed to the dominance of Catholicism, for only people with an unbending loyalty to their dissident faith, and a propensity to fight for its acceptance, could effectively stand against the power of the official Church. Whereas Alberdi and Sarmiento both imply that religious freedom is a prerequisite for Northern European immigration, one could equally argue that the opposite is true, with the proviso that at least some pioneering individuals were willing to meet adversity head on, settle in a Catholic country and stand up for their faith in the presence of hostility. If the determination of the early settlers was able to oppose institutionalized prejudice in this way, eventually overturning it, then Argentina could gradually become a truly liberal nation, with an ambience attractive to the further waves of immigrants required to bring about far-reaching reform in every corner of the expansive territory. The Scots certainly seem to have met the criteria of bold persistence, for official opposition, if it was ever encountered, did not noticeably afflict their efforts to follow their own form of worship and construct Presbyterian churches. In reality, however, the Rosas regime probably did not possess the political will to risk antagonizing the British incomers to any great degree, for, as we noted in the first chapter, amicable relations between Buenos Aires and London were worth conserving for commercial advantage.

For the full benefits of the immigration process to take root, however, the religious fervour imbued in the ordinary people by the Rosas dictatorship would have to dissipate. Until the common citizenry adopted an attitude of tolerance, the assimilation of the settler could never be fully realized. The intermarriage of creole and incomer, which was not unusual during the liberal 1820s according to the author of *Cinco años*, was obstructed at times of popular fanaticism. Our image of the Scots community during the Rosas era is that of a fairly self-contained ethnic group, with
little involvement, other than that necessary for day to day survival, in the activities of the local population. The religious barrier must certainly have contributed to this situation. Only once non-Catholic immigration had reached a sufficient scale to break down official prejudice, or political conditions were otherwise transformed, facilitating the gradual sweeping aside of popular bigotry, could full absorption of the Protestant settler become the accepted norm. Of course, by its very nature, this would be a lengthy process.
4

POLITICS, DICTATORSHIP AND CIVIL WAR

Perhaps, in light of the preceding chapters, one cannot really make a clear-cut distinction between the aspects of society we have examined so far and the realm of political activity, for every facet of life in the Platine region during the early decades of the nineteenth century appears to have been fundamentally affected by the routine upheaval associated with any shift in power, such was the polarization of the opposing concepts of government current at the time. In our own experience, living in a stable, Western European democracy, we tend to neatly segregate our daily existence from the political sphere, seldom considering that a change of government would impinge to any great extent upon the welfare of our community, the solidarity of our family or upon the right of each citizen to follow the dictates of their own conscience unmolested. Clearly, such assumptions could never have been made in the young Argentina, for the political struggle consisted of much more than a simple electoral battle between two sets of policy with superficial variations, but with a shared commitment to broadly preserving the status quo in terms of social organization. Rather, so wide and irreconcilable was the gulf between the unitarian and federalist views of society that their differences could never have been adequately summarized in one of our typical pre-election manifestos, but would have required several volumes worth of exegesis.

Hence, the divisions I impose upon this study may seem rather arbitrary and more compatible with my own context than that of the society investigated, but are necessary if only to give my enterprise some structure and prevent its degeneration into a rambling mishmash of ideas divorced from the intellectual impulse to categorize, rationalize and explain. Of course, the cultural studies approach that I have adopted seeks to break down some of the conventions of scholarly discourse, but, equally, others must remain for the sake of the traditional formulae of academic
inquiry. Thus, I defend my retention of tidy labels as chapter headings, even if I am then, as now, obliged to renounce their apparent exclusivity in the course of the argument.

I am sure that others might have organized the material in a variety of different fashions, even if they had chosen to work within a similar structure. The reader will probably concede that some of the information furnished in previous sections of this study could have been placed in the current chapter without appearing incongruous or compromising the overall project. This is especially true of my earlier excursions into Facundo, a text that is shot through with political messages and detail. It may surprise some readers, therefore, that I have chosen to elide Sarmiento's work from the present chapter; I do so on the grounds that little original remains to be said about this aspect of the book, and that its most salient points in relation to my wider study have already been covered. The author's immigration ideology, for example, which could easily have been analysed under the heading of politics, has been dealt with in chapter two.

Having indicated possible, and perfectly valid, deviations from the structure I have elected to pursue, I stand by the present arrangement on the grounds that each extract from our series of cultural artefacts has been situated according to my own perception of its overriding theme. Thus, on encountering a reference that embraces both religion and politics, for instance, I attempt to tune into its principal concern, so that it may be slotted into the most appropriate part of my analysis. Of course, this task of selection is highly subjective, in much the same way as are the accounts with which I work. In this particular fraction of my study, the textual representation of political matters will be examined in as much isolation as I can personally muster; at the same time, I remain conscious that such concerns cannot adequately be detached from the themes already examined - society, community, family, religion - with the result that overlaps become inevitable. Let us begin by addressing some relatively unequivocal references to the central topic of this chapter, briefly undertaking a comparative analysis of two representations of porteño politics during the period of
unitarian rule in the 1820s, noting, and seeking to elucidate, the stark contrast between the accounts.

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As we have already seen, the anonymous author of *Cinco años en Buenos Aires* paints a commendatory picture of most aspects of the city during the early 1820s, and his general attitude of approval extends to the political system. That said, he is not particularly enthusiastic about the republican ideal, for his own experience of monarchy has never led him to question its validity as a form of government: 'Las repúblicas no me inspiran mucha simpatía: he observado y gozado tanta libertad bajo el régimen monárquico constitucional de mi país que no concibo mejor forma de gobierno' (p. 149). Having opened with this almost obligatory mark of respect for his native Britain, he proceeds to introduce some of the leading figures on the political scene in Buenos Aires and to summarize the system within which they operate. Whilst not wishing to go into details, the author hints at the frequency of political disturbances ever since the porteños took their first steps towards independence: 'No tengo intención de relatar las diversas vicisitudes políticas por las que ha atravesado este país desde la declaración de la independencia; ocuparían estos detalles mucho más papel del que he decidido emplear en estas notas' (p. 154). Instead, he simply records a few significant events, such as the rise to power of Martin Rodriguez in 1820. Rodriguez, we are told, was not so much a brilliant man, as one who was solidly capable, and much of the success of his governorship should be attributed to Rivadavia:

El excelente gobierno de Rodríguez debió mucho a la hábil administración de Bernardino Rivadavia, que puede ser considerado el William Pitt de Buenos Aires. Desempeñó el cargo de ministro desde 1821, cesando en sus funciones al mismo tiempo que Rodríguez, pues la ley exige que los ministros renuncien al terminar su período el gobierno. (p. 155)
The greatest compliment that could be paid to Rivadavia, the author suggests, would consist simply of comparing the situation of Buenos Aires before and after his period as minister:

Su administración marca una época en los anales políticos del estado; Rivadavia será considerado como un hábil - más aún -, como un excelente ministro. Se dice que el sistema de Rivadavia será seguido estrictamente por sus sucesores: espero que así sea para el bien del país.

El señor Rivadavia era un hombre de ley. [...] En sus tres años de administración demostró una gran capacidad de estadista. (p. 156)

Even during the years of liberal reign, harsh punishments awaited anyone who took a stand against the legal authorities. The author records several instances of conspirators receiving the ultimate sentence, death by firing squad. A number of those who rebelled in opposition to the religious reforms implemented by Rivadavia suffered this fate, including a well-known citizen by the name of Urien, a relative of the minister himself. Notwithstanding his influential connections, Urien was executed along with a fellow dissenter, Colonel Peralta.

Near the end of his account of the political milieu, the author implies that a secure and harmonious future lies ahead for the port city. In January 1825, a celebratory atmosphere pervades Buenos Aires following the news of Antonio José de Sucre's victory over the Spanish at Ayacucho, the last great confrontation of the independence wars (pp. 163-68). The only ominous cloud on the horizon is the impending struggle to recuperate the Banda Oriental from Brazilian occupation, a conflict which played no small part in the collapse of the liberal order praised throughout the work. Given the advantage of hindsight, the Buenos Aires government should have heeded the following words of caution expressed on the very last page of *Cinco años*: 'A Buenos Aires le resultaría muy difícil expulsar a los brasileños por la fuerza, como muchos pretenden. Es de desear que la prudencia guíe sus determinaciones, y que si se ha cometido injusticia se postergue la venganza hasta el momento oportuno' (p. 182). Whilst it is easy for the dispassionate
Englishman to express this sentiment, he demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the bitter emotions of the porteños towards the Brazilian usurpation of the Banda Oriental.

In summary, Cinco años offers a mainly sympathetic account of the political system in the pre-Rosas era. The author gives a resounding vote of confidence to the unitarian authorities and seems to share their vision. If this work was indeed written by Thomas George Love, then his opinions must have undergone a radical transformation for him to later edit a distinctly pro-Rosas news-sheet such as The British Packet.1 Perhaps, in common with most of the foreign population, his political orientation was determined more by self-interest than true conviction. As we noted earlier, members of the Argentine-British community gave the impression of caring more for a secure political climate than for the methods of the regime which enforced stability. Anarchy, after all, was alien to their background and mitigated against prosperity.

In Travels in Buenos Ayres, J. A. B. Beaumont provides a rather different analysis of the unitarian administrations, considering their conduct towards his father's immigration scheme to be wholly dishonourable and treacherous. We have already read of the negotiations which took place between Barber Beaumont and representatives of the porteño government in London, and the agreement they reached, but the initial encouragement offered by the Buenos Aires authorities turned out to be worth no more than the bluff assurances of a confidence trickster. The enthusiastic reaction of Rivadavia and his colleagues when the scheme was first discussed lulled Barber Beaumont into a falsely optimistic security, inspiring him to make every exertion for the success of the project. He spared no expense in his preparations, purchasing a vast assortment of provisions to be shipped out to Argentina:

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1 During the mid-1840s, the British newspaper of Montevideo, Britannia, published scathing attacks on Love for the pro-Rosas sympathies demonstrated in The British Packet. For further details of the strained relationship between the two papers, see Graham-Yooll, The Forgotten Colony, p. 137.
Every thing that could be thought of to promote the success and comforts of the emigrants was provided: an abundance of ploughs and other agricultural implements of the most approved kind; a large flour mill, saw mills, forges, building materials, clothing, arms and equipment for companies of volunteers; a library, consisting of several hundred selected volumes; the education of the youth, and the moral and religious instruction of all, and support for the sick and infirm were provided. Even their amusements were regarded. (p. 113)

In February 1825, the first party of emigrants set sail from Glasgow, another from Liverpool and a third from London, numbering some 250 persons in all. Barber Beaumont received assurances from the Buenos Aires government that a tract of land had been surveyed and set aside for the colony. Meanwhile, plans for further settlements were being drawn up and the Rio de la Plata Agricultural Association was formed in London to oversee these projects. The Association purchased land in Entre Ríos, confident that generous offers of assistance from the local authorities and the newly signed Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between the governments of Britain and Buenos Aires ensured a warm welcome for the settlers. Unfortunately, news of the experiences of the first wave of emigrants did not reach members of the Association before they embarked upon the Entre Ríos scheme, otherwise they might have reconsidered their plans.

On arriving in Buenos Aires, Barber Beaumont's settlers were held within the city whilst the authorities deliberated their fate. Contrary to the declarations of the government, no land had been formally granted for the colony. Instead, it was proposed to send the new arrivals 'to an island in the River Negro, among the Patagonian Indians [Beaumont's italics]; a spot on which the Government of Buenos Ayres were desirous of establishing a military post' (p. 120). Eventually, the settlers were allowed to continue their journey to the site originally promised, but most of their supplies and equipment were impounded in Buenos Aires. On reaching their destination, the immigrants were met by an official who informed them that they could not take possession of the land as he had 'lost the grant out of his pocket' and, thus lacking the essential documentation, they were prohibited from proceeding with
the enterprise (p. 121). Abandoned without shelter or provisions, the majority returned to the city.

The porteño government refused to accept any responsibility for the collapse of the colony, suggesting instead that its failure resulted from the disembarkation of the settlers in Buenos Aires, where, it was alleged, they formed attachments within the existing British community and were persuaded to remain in the city. In order to avoid a repetition of the disaster, arrangements were made to transfer the next shipload of immigrants directly to the Entre Ríos property of the Agricultural Association. The government neglected its promises once again and detained the settlers in Buenos Aires for around six weeks; when the continuation of their journey was finally permitted, it was found that their supplies had been seized and pilfered. The few implements which remained in their possession were then misappropriated by the Entre Ríos authorities on reaching the province. Without the means of constructing dwellings and working the land, the settlers were again compelled to return to Buenos Aires and join the British community there.

Inevitably, the unitarians' failure to deliver the many promises they had made leads Beaumont to a critical assessment of their actions. In addition to the deception of the immigrants, he accuses Rivadavia and his colleagues of employing 'tricks and extortions' to frustrate foreign mining ventures which they themselves had promoted (p. 129). It would seem that the guarantee of the Buenos Aires government was worthless and all enterprises involving the authorities were doomed to bankruptcy. Beaumont reflects upon the fate of other projects:

Mr. Jones describes a company at Buenos Ayres, which commenced a settlement in the Entre Ríos province, just when the Rio de la Plata Agricultural Association was formed, and which, after expending £15,000 on the project, were driven out by the natives of the province. Then there was an association for bringing over milk-maids from Scotland [this seems to be an inaccurate reference to the Monte Grande scheme]; but the lasses soon made associations for themselves, to the prejudice of the original company; - then a building society - a company of pilots - and a vast many other joint-stock projects, for deepening rivers, and making canals and harbours,
every one of which, I believe, failed, with great loss to the adventurers. (p. 131)

In summary, Beaumont sees the Platine region as a land of great natural opportunities burdened by an incompetent and deceitful government. This analysis is never clearer than in his preface to *Travels in Buenos Ayres*:

In bringing a remote country under consideration, as suited for the employment of European capital and enterprise, it is the bounden duty of the narrator to set forth not merely the natural advantages and capabilities which the country may possess, but the local obstructions, of whatever kind, which are likely to defeat the calculations of the capitalist and emigrant. The neglect of this salutary rule has been productive of immense sacrifices and disappointment to those who have ventured property and their persons in Buenos Ayres. The writer of these pages and his friends have been considerable sufferers from partial representations; they have themselves largely contributed to draw the attention of the British public to the advantages of Buenos Ayres for agricultural emigrants: but he has now seen the country, and the Acts of its Government, with his own eyes - he has bought his experience at a high price; and he thinks it a duty which he owes to his countrymen and the public, to offer them the benefit of that experience. The natural capabilities of the country are of the first order, and these must endure; but the obstructions to their present development, owing to moral and political causes, are such as to demand serious attention.

These lines distance Beaumont's work from the wholly favourable presentation of Buenos Aires contained within *Cinco años*. Indeed, the earlier work could well be one of those which he implies has failed to fulfil the duty of relating a balanced account of the Argentine situation. Furthermore, in contrast to the optimistic tone of *Cinco años*, he perceives that the situation is not likely to improve in the near future, despairing of the very real divisions between the supposedly united provinces. The government of Buenos Aires, Beaumont asserts near the end of his account, is more likely to be at war with its immediate neighbours than to enjoy their support in the struggle against the true enemy, Brazil (pp. 239-40).

The Indian question is an additional worry to Beaumont; interestingly, though he makes no explicit statement in their favour, he hints that the indigenous people have legitimate grievances against the porteños which might understandably
explain their hostility, an unusually enlightened perspective for one writing at this time:

With the oppressed Indians, a war of extermination has been for some time carried on by the Buenos Ayreans, and in return, of the assassination of the Buenos Ayreans by the Indians. The Buenos Ayreans, year after year, extend their frontier into the Indian territory; and, not choosing to pay the price demanded by the Indians in silver, they fix their own price in blood. The aborigines may probably be dispossessed of their inheritance, in the end, but their incursive hostility is likely to continue for many years. (p. 244)

By describing the Indians as 'oppressed', Beaumont evokes a certain sympathy for their position; similarly, it is the porteños who are to blame for the resultant bloodshed, by 'choosing' to deny compensation to the autochthonous tribes. Whether his attitude is the product of a true solidarity with the Indian cause, or merely provides a further pretext to attack the Buenos Aires authorities, who have become his personal anathema, we cannot gauge. What is certain, however, is that Beaumont's stated view of the Indian predicament is at odds with the positivistic beliefs of most liberal Argentine politicians, namely that the indigenous people were a subhuman and irredeemably savage race whose extermination was both desirable and a prerequisite for national progress.

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Through mention of the racialist opinions of the creole liberals, we arrive at an issue of particular prominence in their literary denunciations of the Rosas regime. Looking first at El matadero, we will observe that the racial characteristics of the slaughterhouse mob are highlighted in a fashion which plainly suggests their inferiority to the author and the fellow members of his class.

Echeverría's intention to discredit the Rosas dictatorship through the pages of El matadero is clear, but rather than simply indulge in political obloquy, he chooses to attack the dictatorship by means of reviling the social sector which constituted its popular powerbase. In spite of the repressive methods of his regime, Rosas enjoyed
genuine support amongst the two extremes of society, the wealthy cattle-ranching elite and the lowest class of menial workers. It is this latter group which Echeverría singles out for treatment in *El matadero*, depicting its members as the repugnant manifestations of all that is barbaric. The central theme of the story is one of conflict between the civilized, bourgeois element to which the author belongs and the savage, vulgar society of the masses. David Viñas observes this leitmotif in both *El matadero* and *Amalia*, summarizing the ideology of these works as 'la "masa" contra las matizadas pero explícitas proyecciones heroicas del Poeta'.

Echeverría constantly draws attention to the racial features of the despicable rosistas of the slaughterhouse, incorporating into the narrative the two ethnic groups most representative of the social stratum he abhors, the mestizo and the negro. The former is present in the person of the butcher, who even sports the traditional garb of the rural gaucho in this urban environment: 'el carnicero con el cuchillo en mano, brazo y pecho desnudos, cabello largo y revuelto, camisa y chiripá y rostro embadurnado de sangre' (p. 100). The carnicero is portrayed as a predatory character, surrounded by an unsavoury assortment of offal collectors, who pick over the bloody remnants of his trade like a pack of scavengers at the site of a lion's kill. This group is composed of the other racial element condemned by Echeverría, 'negras y mulatas achuradoras, cuya fealdad trasuntaba las harpías de la fábula', as well as a gang of youths and 'algunos enormes mastines' (p. 100). The repellent mass seem to have found their natural habitat in the nauseating conditions of the slaughterhouse, grovelling amongst blood and entrails. The picture that Echeverría paints induces powerful emotions of loathing and disgust in the reader, the mob breaks every prohibition in the unwritten code of moral decency, revelling in their collection of animal innards, parts often considered unclean and improper for human consumption. They gleefully embrace the filth and gore, surroundings which have

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conditioned them to an indifferent acceptance of bloodshed, demonstrated most visibly by their utter lack of reaction when the child is killed by the broken lazo. The manner of the boy's death, decapitation, is significant, for it evokes the method of execution favoured by Rosas's personal death squad, the mazorca.

The mazorca are represented in *El matadero* by the figure of Matasiete, 'degollador de unitarios', who seems to be equally content cutting the throats of political dissidents as he is slaughtering the rogue bull after its recapture. Even the name of this character evokes his hideous nature; besides the definition of the term *matasiete* as bully, the word demonstrates an obvious link to the story's title and thus to the verb of slaughter, *matar*. On more than one occasion, a correlation is set up between the brute's cognomen and the *matambre*, a cut of meat typical to the Río de la Plata: '¡A Matasiete el matahambre!' (p. 104); 'los gritos de la chusma [...] proclamaba a Matasiete vencedor y le adjudicaba en premio el matambre' (p. 107). I interpret the association of the cut-throat with a characteristic delicacy of the region as emphatic of his *argentinidad*; whilst the link between a slice of beef and the national essence is not explicit in *El matadero*, this very connection is established elsewhere in the author's canon. In his *costumbrista* prose, *Apologia del matambre*, Echeverría writes:

> Griten en buena hora cuanto quieran los taciturnos ingleses, roast-beef, plum pudding, chillen los italianos maccaroni [...]. Voceen los franceses omelette souflée, omelette au sucre, omelette au diable; digan los españoles con sorna, chorizos, olla podrida, y más podrida y rancia que su ilustración secular. Griten en buena hora todos juntos, que nosotros, apretándonos los flancos, soltaremos zumbando el palabrón *matambre*, y taparemos de cabo a rabo su descomedita boca.³

Building upon this hypothesis, Matasiete's affinity to a motif of *argentinitad* may imply that his type is representative of creole society, his conduct in the novella being simply a routine manifestation of the common citizen's innate barbarity.

The link between Matasiete and the *matambre* can also be read as a comment upon the status of this character within the slaughterhouse hierarchy, which is, of course, a miniature version of *porteño* society itself. In the *Apología*, Echeverría depicts the *matambre* as the foodstuff of the great and brave:

> Con matambre se nutren los pechos varones avezados a batallar y vencer, y con matambre los vientres que los engendraron; con matambre se alimentan los que en su infancia, de un salto, escalaron los Andes, y allá en sus nevadas cumbres, entre el ruido de los torrentes y el rugido de los tempestades, con hierro ensangrentado escribieron: Independencia, Libertad. (p. 455)

This passage clearly refers to San Martín's bold crossing of the Andes in 1817, during the struggle to liberate Chile and Peru from Spanish colonialism. Through association with such intrepidity, the author establishes the credentials of the *matambre* as the food of victors and portrays it as symbolic of the best traditions of the republican ideal. In the degenerate value system of the slaughterhouse rabble, and hence that of *rosista* Buenos Aires, base instinct has displaced noble standards, rendering brutal Matasiete the embodiment of creole heroism and, therefore, a deserving recipient of the meat which once nourished more virtuous warriors.

At first glance, it would seem that the immigration ideology of the *Generation of '37* is of little significance in *El matadero*. Certainly there is no explicit statement of a pro-immigration posture, nor even easily discernible implications of the type which we will observe presently in *Amalia*. That said, a perceptive reading of the story can still reveal sufficient evidence to indicate Echeverría's views. Although the author avoids any concrete conclusions on how to resolve the apparent crisis of Argentine society, the reader can, through the exercise of straightforward logic, deduce that two fundamental changes must occur to remedy the situation. The first step is a prerequisite for progress, namely the removal of
Rosas and his kind from government. The dictator looms large, appearing as a titanic obstacle in the way of any reform. Indeed, the regime's authority seems so pervasive and absolute in the story that its removal could only bring a power vacuum, for every aspect of society operates under the watchful eye of Rosas. Presumably, the agenda of the younger generation could then effortlessly fill the political void, on account of being the only coherent alternative to rosismo. Secondly, in order to stabilize the new order resulting from this almost pachakuti-like inversion of the political system, the very composition of society would have to be transformed, possibly by fostering immigration from supposedly civilized nations. As Echeverría sets out to discredit rosista society in El matadero by portraying the masses as irredeemably barbaric, we can infer that the only way forward is to alter radically the base elements of the community. In combination with popular education, the most obvious means of effecting such social change is through the dilution of retrograde characteristics by integration with people of a desirable genetic and cultural heritage.

Liberal, Europeanized values are personified in El matadero by the character of the young unitarian, who functions as an archetype of the anti-Rosas opposition. Attention is drawn to the physical characteristics of this rather proud and effeminate youth through the employment of adjectives such as 'pálido' (p. 111) and 'pelada' (p. 113), terms which are in stark contrast to the image of the swarthy, unkempt mob. He is further distanced from the crowd by his U-shaped beard, a symbol of the unitarian subculture, his failure to wear the prominent federalist moustache, and his lack of divisa and luto.4 This reckless young man makes no attempt to conceal his political sympathies, despite the risks of candidness during the Rosas era, his self-confidence rendering him apparently immune to the imminent likelihood of

4 On 3 February 1832, Rosas decreed that all public servants should display henceforth a scarlet emblem, la divisa, bearing the inscription Federación o Muerte, a custom which rapidly spread to all levels of society. After the death of the dictator's wife, the divisa was supplemented by a black ribbon as a symbol of mourning, the luto federal. As they became compulsory, the use of such devices did not always reflect the wearer's true sympathies and failure to comply could result in persecution. By 1840, all but the most rash antimostas had adopted the divisa punzo as part of their everyday attire, although bold dissidents would indicate their nonconformity by choosing only small, token ribbons.
reprisals. He is described as fearless, 'muy ajeno de temer peligro alguno', and seems to place absolute faith in the ability of his pistols to save him from the clutches of the slaughterhouse rabble (p. 109). Through these weapons, he is associated with European technology and is distanced, therefore, from the butchers with their primitive, bladed arms. He is further identified with the Europhilia of the creole liberals through his use of a 'silla inglesa', an English-style leather saddle, as opposed to the flexible, sheepskin-covered recado favoured by the gaucho. However, even his pistols fail to deter the mob and he is captured by the 'degollador de unitarios': 'Matasiete, dando un salto le salió al encuentro, y con fornido brazo asiéndolo de la corbata lo tendió en el suelo tirando al mismo tiempo la daga de la cintura y llevándola a su garganta' (p. 110). This minor victory of creole bravado over European weaponry can perhaps be read as the most subtle of hints that the author recognized the gaucho's skills and acknowledged their potential superiority, in certain spheres of activity, to more advanced techniques.

The unitarian, for his part, mocks the crowd for the en masse nature of the attack: '¡Qué nobleza de alma! ¡Qué bravura en los federales! Siempre en pandilla cayendo como buitres sobre la victima inerte' (p. 110). His comparison of the mob with vultures reinforces the image of their scavenger-like behaviour, previously displayed within the slaughterhouse itself. No longer are such deplorable activities contained within their natural environment, namely the matadero, but have burst out into the wider society, symbolizing the conversion of Argentina into a place of carnage of grand proportions. The breakout of the savage rabble into the city streets is a direct result of the rogue bull's escape, plainly indicating that neither animal instinct nor barbaric conduct were far from everyday reality in Buenos Aires during the rule of Rosas.

Enrique Pupo-Walker has suggested that the crowd's pursuit and apprehension of the bull can be equated with that of the unitarian. In my reading of *El matadero*, this comparison can be made on at least four levels, though there is a subtle difference in the final outcome of the two episodes. Firstly, the young man's response to his capture clearly reflects the reaction of the bull to its confinement within the slaughterhouse. Both struggle to break free, but both are only liberated in the final release of death. This comparison is made explicit by the description of the unitarian as 'furioso como toro montaraz' (p. 111). A second correlation between the two cases is that Matasiete assumes the role of butcher in both, though he is ultimately deprived of his intention to cut the unitarian's throat. Thirdly, the mob gain sadistic pleasure from their abuse of the young man, in much the same way as they derive frenzied excitement from the pursuit of the bull. Finally, the quest to locate the animal's testicles and receive confirmation of its masculinity is a defilement equatable with the treatment dealt out to the unitarian on the orders of the *juez del matadero*. The slaughterhouse overseer commands the rabble to tie down the young man and lower his trousers: 'Abajo los calzones de ese mentecato cajetilla y a nalga pelada denle verga, bien atado sobre la mesa' (p. 113). Despite the fairly obvious homosexual connotation of this statement, the violation of the young man's dignity is in fact the prelude for a brutal form of torture practised by the *mazorca*. Juan María Gutiérrez, the historian of the Generation of '37 and biographer of Echeverría, once noted:

> Esta sociedad que comúnmente se llama de la Mazorca, tiene por objeto el introducir por el flanco de la retaguardia del enemigo unitario el sabroso fruto del que ha tomado el nombre, así es que toda aquella gente que recela este fracaso ha dado en usar el pantalón muy

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ajustado, disfrazando con el nombre de moda una prevención muy puesta en orden y razón.  

The ramifications of these similarities are quite apparent; not only do they indicate the crowd's complete lack of regard for any form of life, either human or animal, but the maltreatment and subsequent slaughter of the bull prepares the reader for the ultimate consequence of the unitarian's capture. Through this symmetry of structure, the author gives due notice of the inevitability of the young man's death. The only unexpected twist is that, whilst the bull is clearly slaughtered by Matasiete, the unitarian's demise does not result directly from the abuse to which he is subjected, but is brought about by a spontaneous internal haemorrhage. The mob is thus robbed of its power and denied the ultimate satisfaction of murdering the young man at its own agenda, a development which further insinuates the superiority of the prisoner over his captors.

The brutal molestation of the unitarian only reinforces the Manichean social and political schisms evident throughout the story. Echeverría demonstrates little affinity here to the conciliatory approach advocated in the *Dogma socialista*, where he seeks to disestablish old party allegiances. In *El matadero*, on the contrary, the antagonism between the unitarians and the federalists runs deeper than a conventional political conflict, becoming one of class, a struggle to the death between the Europeanized elite and the vulgar masses. The cast of the work is thoroughly intemperate, quite different from the moderate tone of the *Dogma socialista* or *Ojeada retrospectiva*. Perhaps this ideological inconsistency within Echeverría's writings can be resolved through reference to the works' respective historical contexts; whilst the novella is roughly contemporary with the worst oppression of the period around 1840, the basis for the *Dogma* was formulated before these events and the *Ojeada* was written later, some years after Echeverría had settled into secure exile in Montevideo. On a personal level, *El matadero* dates

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7 Juan María Gutiérrez, 'Buenos Aires de fiesta en 1835', *Historia*, 9 (Buenos Aires, 1963), 148-50 (p. 149). In this context, of course, the *maizorcas* is a cob of corn.
from the time immediately prior to the author’s enforced emigration, making it only natural for him to adopt an uncompromisingly hostile approach to the regime which had marginalized his kind. In his foreword to *El matadero*, Juan María Gutiérrez has suggested that fear and anger were probably coursing through Echeverría’s veins as he wrote the story, emotions disclosed by both the harsh tone adopted and the unsteady handwriting of the original manuscript:

El poeta no estaba sereno cuando realizaba la buena obra de escribir esta elocuente página del proceso contra la tiranía. Si esta página hubiese caído en manos de Rosas, su autor habría desaparecido instantáneamente. El conocía bien el riesgo que corría; pero el temblor de la mano que se advierte en la imperfección de la escritura que casi no es legible en el manuscrito original, pudo ser más de ira que de miedo. Su indignación se manifiesta bajo la forma de la ironía.

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As Viñas (and other critics) have noted, the ideological current running throughout *El matadero* is broadly similar to that of José Mármol’s *Amalia*. Whilst Echeverría’s story was more a personal vituperation against the regime, never published until long after both the author’s death and the fall of Rosas, *Amalia* was specifically designed as a propaganda piece to promote Urquiza’s campaign against the dictator, its first instalments appearing in a newspaper founded with the same purpose. The novel’s

8 When conditions became too dangerous for Echeverría to remain in the city, he first retired to his family’s rural residence, Las Talas, in the province of Buenos Aires. Soon, however, he was obliged to flee from Argentina altogether, crossing the Rio de la Plata in August 1840, settling first in Colonia del Sacramento, then moving to Montevideo. He viewed his exile with extreme despondency: ‘No hay cosa más triste que emigrar […] Salir de su país violentamente, sin quererlo, sin haberlo pensado, sin más objeto que salvarse de las garras de la tiranía, dejando a su familia, a sus amigos, bajo el poder de ella y, lo que es más, la patria despedazada y ensangrentada por una gavilla de asesinos, es un verdadero suplicio, un tormento que nadie puede sentir sin haberlo por sí mismo experimentado. La emigración es la muerte: morimos para nuestros allegados, morimos para la patria, puesto que nada podemos hacer por ellos’. Echeverría, ‘Pensamientos, ideas, opiniones y párrafos autobiográficos’, in *Antología*, pp. 556-563 (pp. 558-59).


10 The first extracts of Mármol’s novel began to appear in *La Semana* in 1851. The newspaper closed after Rosas’s defeat at Caseros, before publication of *Amalia* was complete. The work as we know it was published in 1855.
plain ideological intent renders it of particular consequence in our study of the textual representation of contemporary political circumstances.

The opening scene of Mármol’s masterpiece records the atmosphere of terror that gripped Argentina during 1840. The Rosas administration is under threat from the unitarian rebel Juan Lavalle, who, with the support of France and the Uruguayan caudillo Fructuoso Rivera, is plotting the tyrant's downfall. The dictatorship's unease shows itself in increasing oppression and brutality. The narrative opens with the attempted emigration to Montevideo of a group of antirosistas on the night of 4 May. Oblivious to the fact that they have been betrayed and that the regime has received news of the plan, the potential émigrés make towards the river to board a waiting boat to safety. Members of the mazorca are lying in ambush, and four of the five aspiring exiles are killed in the struggle. This episode sets a standard of close correspondence between the fictional Amalia and historical documentation. Those who die were actual dissidents, killed in an almost identical attempt to leave the country on that very date.11 Mármol preserves their true identities in the text, but then diverges from historical record by appending Eduardo Belgrano to the group. Eduardo's heroic contest with the mazorca thugs and subsequent salvation at the hands of his enigmatic friend, Daniel Bello, serves to create a narrative possibility from the tragedy of the massacre. Mármol's fiction relates the elaborate web of subterfuge woven by Daniel to safeguard Eduardo, as well as the efforts of the regime to identify and apprehend the lone escapee. Institutionalized brutality is a central motif in Amalia, leading some critics to view the novel as little more than a weakly fictionalized treatise upon the atrocities of the Rosas regime.12 I believe that

11 In Argentine Dictator, Lynch records: 'On 4 May a group of men with reason to believe they were on the mazorca's list attempted to escape to Uruguay. They were Colonel Francisco Lynch, Carlos Masón, José María Riglos and Isidoro Oliden, and they had arranged to have a boat ready at night in a place near the British minister's house. But they were watched and as they approached the embarkation point they were surrounded by a mazorca squad and their throats were cut' (pp. 227-28).

12 Jean Franco, for instance, having already condemned the plot as 'slight', writes in disparaging terms of the principal tale of romance within Amalia: 'The star-crossed lovers are of little interest, being conventional elements in a novel in which the political denunciation and the relation of the atrocities of the Rosas regime occupy the foreground'. Spanish American Literature since Independence, p. 47.
this approach tends towards over-simplification, as Mármol's text can also be read as one which lays the foundations of a new, liberal Argentina.

The characterization of the novel's principal figures is probably the strongest point of Mármol's narrative art, each of them functioning as a representative symbol of their class and political orientation. Furthermore, the social interactions of the major characters can be seen to imply the author's concept of an ideal Argentina. Conciliation between traditionally opposed elements is an important theme in Amalia, reflecting the synthesis of ideologies proposed by the Generation of '37. In the Ojeada retrospectiva, Echeverría defined the new intellectuals as the generation 'que unitarizaban los federales y federalizaban los unitarios'. Although Mármol was too young to have been a member of the original Asociación de Mayo, he appears to have shared this belief in compromise and reconciliation. Underlying the dichotomy of unitarios y federales, of course, was the parallel breach between Buenos Aires and the rural provinces. Both issues are addressed in Amalia in an attempt to promote the unification of society and nation.

The first of these divisions is broken down through the friendship of Daniel Bello and Eduardo Belgrano, both of whom represent the new generation, but are the products of very different political backgrounds. Daniel is the son of a loyal federalist by conviction:

Don Antonio Bello era un hombre de campo, en la acepción que tiene entre nosotros esa palabra, y al mismo tiempo hombre honrado y sincero. Sus opiniones eran, desde mucho antes que Rosas, opiniones de federal; y por la Federación había sido partidario de López primeramente, de Dorrego después y últimamente de Rosas; sin que por esto él pudiese explicarse la razón de sus antiguas opiniones; mal común a las nueve décimas partes de los federalistas, desde 1811 en

13 Juan Carlos Ghiano has noted this trend: 'Las caracterizaciones de los personajes se ajustan a las contrapuestas concepciones de la sociedad argentina que maneja el narrador, nunca preocupado por ocultar su parcialismo político. [...] Si Amalia y Eduardo representa a la patria mejor; Rosas, sus espías, mashorqueros y funcionarios encarnan los aspectos feroces de la Federación'. Prologue to Amalia (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1991), p. xxxv.

14 Echeverría, Ojeada retrospectiva, in Antologia pp. 273-344 (p. 277).
que el coronel Artigas pronunció la palabra de federación para rebelarse contra el gobierno general, hasta 1829 en que se valió de ella Don Juan Manuel de Rosas para rebelarse contra Dios y contra el diablo. (p. 25)

His father's credentials prove invaluable, as they provide Daniel with a passport to the highest levels of rosista society, placing him above suspicion for a long period and enabling him to gather intelligence in his bid to prevent Eduardo's arrest. Eduardo, on the other hand, hails from a family of similarly high class, but from the opposite side of the political divide. His uncle, we are told, was General Manuel Belgrano, a highly respected figure of the independence movement and a supporter of the unitarian cause in later years. This is a further instance of the ever present blend of historical fact with invention; the fictional Eduardo is given an impeccable background that establishes his connection to a leading member of the emancipation process, asserting his place at the heart of the evolving Argentinian consciousness. Thus, he is associated with the project of nation building, his person representing a key component in the construction of the national identity, that of republican idealism. In spite of the differing allegiances of their families, Eduardo and Daniel have become friends, symbolizing the pursuit of an accord which will condemn old breaches to the history books.

Following the rescue of Eduardo from near certain death at the hands of the mazorca, he is escorted to the house of Amalia, a widowed cousin of Daniel. This development opens the way for the second symbolic conciliation, namely the love affair which develops between the dissident and his hostess. Their romance represents the breakdown of the old rivalry between the port city and the rural hinterland, since Eduardo is clearly associated with Buenos Aires, whereas Amalia hails from the western province of Tucumán, being described as 'la poética tucumana' (p. 14).

Throughout the novel, Márnmol indicates his accordance with the proposals of Echeverría, Alberdi, et. al. to effect a radical transformation of Argentine society. Whilst stopping short of a detailed prescription for social improvement, he reiterates
the young intellectuals' regard for values such as European civilization and education. The latter is a decisive factor in setting the principal characters of the work apart from the barbaric *rosistas*. The leading figures of the regime are not all portrayed as fools, however, and Rosas himself is credited with a shrewd, if untutored, intellect. The native cunning of the dictator is particularly evident in his dealings with the British ambassador, Mandeville. In essence, the novel can be seen as a contest of guile between two well-matched opponents, Daniel Bello and Rosas. Daniel has the slight edge, a fact that can perhaps be partly attributed to his greater education. In matters of academic learning, there is no comparison between Daniel and the dictator; the younger man speaks French and English and is able to interpret doña Marcelina's quaint mode of speech, cluttered with allusions to Classical literature and mythology, a feat which Rosas could never hope to match (pp. 354-55).

In an earlier reference to education, don Cándido Rodríguez, Daniel's old teacher, says to his ex-pupil:

> En los treinta y dos años que he ejercido la noble, ardua y delicada tarea de maestro de primeras letras, he observado que sólo los tontos adquieren una forma de escritura hermosa, clara, fácil, limpia en poquisimo tiempo; y que todos los niños de grandes y brillantes esperanzas, como tú, no aprenden jamás una escritura regular, mediana siquiera. (p. 78)

Don Cándido's comments acquire significance in light of the widely known fact that Rosas's only academic attributes were elegant handwriting and good spelling. William MacCann, a British traveller in Argentina, records a conversation with the dictator on the subject of his education:

> He told me that his education had scarcely cost his parents a hundred dollars, for he only went to school for one year; and his master was accustomed to say to him, 'Don Juan, you need not trouble yourself

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15 In *The Invention of Argentina*, Shumway makes reference to Rosas's 'near-perfect orthography' (p. 119).
about books: learn to write a good hand; for your life will be spent on an estancia... don't tease yourself about learning.16

Mármol's vision of Argentina, as presented in Amalia, incorporates widespread foreign participation in the country, insinuating a favourable attitude towards immigration. In general terms, the foreigner is depicted as a beneficial influence, with the singular exception of Mandeville, a figure lifted directly from historical record. Mármol presents the British ambassador as a rather insincere character, whose compliance to the dictator's wishes verges upon the sycophantic. Throughout Amalia, the envoy is anxious to ingratiate himself with Rosas, though he is constantly outmanoeuvred by the more astute tyrant. Rosas, for his part, regards Mandeville in a contemptuous manner, referring to him as 'el gringo', a not altogether flattering term (p. 38). The ambassador is portrayed as a mere pawn in the regime's attempted manipulation of the British government, becoming the dictator's tool to bring pressure upon France to lift her naval blockade of Buenos Aires, which had been in place since 1838:

Instrumento ciego, pero al mismo tiempo poderoso y con medias efíacas, Rosas vio en él su primer caballo de batalla en la cuestión francesa: y, en obsequio a la verdad histórica, es preciso decir que, si Rosas no sacó de él todo el provecho que esperaba sacar, no fue por omisión del Señor Mandeville, sino por la naturaleza de la cuestión, que no permitía al gabinete de San James obrar según las insinuaciones de su ministro en Buenos Aires, a pesar de sus comunicaciones informativas sobre la preponderancia que adquiría la Francia en el Plata, y sobre los perjuicios que infería al comercio isleño la clausura de los puertos de la república por el bloqueo francés. (p. 51)

The first meeting between Rosas and Mandeville reported in Amalia amply demonstrates the Englishman's submission to the tyrant's will (Part one, chapter VII, pp. 50-61). Rosas asks when Mandeville intends to despatch 'el paquete', the envoy's latest communiqué to Britain. He replies that it will be sent the next day, but

immediately offers to delay its departure if modifications are required by the regime. The dictator then patronizes Mandeville, informing him that the contents of his report are inaccurate, and effectively decrees the information which should be forwarded to the British government. The envoy makes little protest at this highly unethical exploitation of the channels of diplomatic communication for the purposes of political propaganda, an attitude which could be interpreted as neglect of his ambassadorial responsibility. On the other hand, he may simply be appeasing Rosas and playing the role of the conscientious diplomat, preserving smooth relations between the two countries. The latter analysis is supported by the actual lack of decisive measures on the part of the British government to assist Rosas, an omission which leads the dictator to take issue with Mandeville's empty rhetoric later in the novel. Rosas accuses the envoy of deceiving him into thinking that Britain would intervene in Argentina's favour in the dispute with the French:

- Hace año y medio que me estás usted prometiendo, a nombre de su gobierno, mediar o intervenir en esta maldita cuestión de los franceses. Y es su gobierno, o usted, el que me ha engañado.

- Excelentísimo Señor, yo he mostrado a Vuestra Excelencia los oficios originales de mi gobierno.

- Entonces será su gobierno el que ha mentido. Lo cierto es que ustedes no han hecho un diablo por mi causa. (p. 222)

At this point in the novel, Rosas expresses concern at the strong position of his unitarian opponents and, in a premonition of his eventual demise, suggests that he may soon require British assistance to flee Argentina. Predictably, Mandeville agrees to make the necessary preparations, only for the dictator, in a fit of pique, to contradict his previous position and dismiss the need for outside intervention.

The British ambassador's exaggerated diplomacy persists even in the presence of overtly anti-European sentiment. During the celebrations to mark the
anniversary of 25 May, 'el diputado Garrigós', an apparently rabid federalist, makes the following toast:

Bebamos [...] por el héroe americano [Rosas] que está enseñando a la Europa que para nada necesitamos de ella, como ha dicho muy bien hace muy pocos días en nuestra Sala de Representantes el dignísimo federal Anchorena; bebamos porque la Europa aprenda a conocernos, y que sepa que quien ha vencido en toda la América los ejércitos y las logias de los salvajes unitarios, vendidos al oro inmundo de los franceses, puede desde aquí hacer temblar los viejos y carcomidos tronos de la Europa. (p. 158)

The toast, which is described ironically as 'esa amable y lisonjera salutación a la Europa y al trono', meets with the enthusiastic approval of the assembled rosistas who promptly drink their glasses dry (p. 159). Even the British envoy, whose own homeland would be included in this uncomplimentary description of Europe, implies his acceptance of Garrigós's words by emptying his glass. It might appear, therefore, that Mandeville's accordance with the federalist position on this occasion is in clear contradiction with his role as defender of British interests. One must assume that a scrupulous ambassador would not give even his tacit assent to such xenophobic rhetoric.

Two factors, however, may redeem Mandeville from condemnation as an outright rosista. Firstly, studying the situation from an historical perspective, Mandeville could ill afford to antagonize the regime, given the precarious position of British subjects in Argentina at the time. As we learned earlier, there was widespread fear amongst the region's British community that, in the event of hostile relations between their native government and Rosas, they would become victims of persecution. The settlers realized that the dictator was a useful ally, but a dangerous enemy. In uncertain times, therefore, the ambassador's primary concern had to be the safety of the British residents. Rosas himself was not above reminding the envoy of this duty in blunt terms, as he demonstrated in 1842. At this point, Mandeville was attempting to negotiate a peace treaty between the Buenos Aires regime and Fructuoso Rivera, the commander of the Uruguayan Colorados, an initiative which
Rosas regarded as betrayal. H. S. Ferns records that during a meeting with Mandeville, the dictator warned that 'should anything happen to me, I will not answer for the life of any foreigner in the country'. It is not unreasonable to suppose that confronted with this thinly veiled, albeit ambiguous, threat to the well-being of foreign citizens, the British representative felt obliged to preserve amicable relations whenever possible. Indeed, even in _Amalia_, there is an acknowledgement that Mandeville's foremost responsibility is to his government and people when Daniel Bello states: 'Un ministro inglés no puede ser buen ministro inglés, sino en cuanto represente fielmente a la Inglaterra' (p. 10). A second explanation for Mandeville's behaviour emanates from Mármol's characterization of the British envoy. Throughout the novel, he is portrayed as a rather superficial figure, incapable of grasping intricate concepts and excessively preoccupied with etiquette. In this light, it is quite possible that Mandeville has failed to fully understand Garrigós's toast and merely bases his response upon the actions of those around him, not wishing to appear out of place.

The episode that typifies Mármol's presentation of Mandeville, and also has significant implications for the analysis of the author's attitude towards foreign involvement in Argentina, occurs in the contrasting descriptions of the visits of Daniel and Eduardo to the ambassadors of Britain and the United States. The young dissidents call upon both envoys in order to assess their positions with respect to antirosista exiles, with the particular motive of finding temporary sanctuary for Eduardo until his emigration to Montevideo has been arranged. Mandeville greets his visitors with the greatest formality and courtesy, a rather predictable welcome given his mistaken belief that Daniel is an influential supporter of the regime. True to form, the envoy denies any involvement in the escape of refugees, a posture which clashes sharply with the openly sympathetic position of the representative of the United States, Mr. Slade. Slade's welcome of Daniel and Eduardo is as relaxed and

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17 Ferns, _Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century_, p. 259.
unceremonious as Mandeville's was effusive and pretentious, reflecting a more informal interpretation of diplomatic protocol:

El señor Slade estaba acostado en un sofá de cerda, en mangas de camisa, sin chaleco, sin corbata, y sin botas; y en una silla, al lado del sofá, había una botella de coñac, otra de agua, y un vaso. [...] El señor Slade se sentó con mucha flem, dio las buenas noches, hizo señas al criado de poner sillas, y se puso las botas y la levita, como si estuviera solo en su aposento. (p. 407)

The American envoy has no hesitations in granting asylum to Eduardo, as he is merely the latest of many dissidents to seek refuge in the embassy. Slade even indicates his willingness to defend his guests with force should Rosas's henchmen attack the house. When asked what actions he would take if challenged by the regime, Slade replies:

-Yo soy muy amigo del General Rosas [...]. Si el me pregunta quiénes están aquí, yo se lo diré. Pero si manda sacarlos por fuerza, yo tengo aquello, y señaló una mesa donde había un rifle, dos pistolas de tiro, y un gran cuchillo, y allí tengo la bandera de los Estados Unidos, y levantó su mano señalando el techo de la casa. (p. 408)

In a footnote, which again reveals the novel's close correspondence to historical events, Mármol defends Slade against the accusation that he sold protection to the asylum seekers for his own profit, asserting instead that he simply collected a subscription from the refugees to meet any expenses incurred (pp. 408-09). Clearly then, Mármol suggests the benevolence of the United States through the character of Slade. In addition to this implication, the novel also contains a much more direct expression of approval of North American society. In response to Slade's amiable approach, Daniel Bello asserts, 'Es usted el tipo más perfecto de la nación más libre y más democrática del siglo XIX', to which Slade adds, 'Y más fuerte' (p. 408). Daniel's statement reflects the growing esteem in which the Generation of '37 held the United States, a trend which corresponded to their increasing disenchantment with Europe, partly motivated by the failure of the French blockade to bring down the dictator.
Mármol’s desire to construct an Argentine nation encompassing the best aspects of civilized European society is promoted through the laudatory presentation of other foreign characters in the work. In stark contrast to the damming characterization of Mandeville, is the portrayal of Mr. Douglas, ‘el buen escocés, contrabandista de emigrados’ (pp. 187-88). Douglas is the captain of a small boat, in which he ferries antirosista dissidents across the Rio de la Plata from the persecution of Buenos Aires to the safety of Montevideo. This courageous defiance of the authorities sets Douglas apart from the undignified compliance of the British envoy, an Englishman. It would be too great a conjecture, however, to suggest that Mármol intended this contrast to be read as a discriminatory judgement upon the relative merits of the Scots and the English, as elsewhere in the novel Douglas is referred to as ‘el inglés’ (p. 421). Whilst this term tends to be employed carelessly in Argentina to describe any native speaker of the English language, regardless of nationality and sometimes even including citizens of the United States, it seems likely that Mármol would have been more circumspect in his choice of words had he wished to make a clear distinction between the English and the Scots.

Douglas’s importance in the novel owes less to his precise nationality than to the vital role he plays in the escape of the émigrés. He becomes a symbolic bridge between the barbarism of Rosas’s Argentina and the apparently civilized society of Montevideo, personifying the transition from regressive dictatorship to liberal democracy sought by the Generation of ’37. The fact that a foreign character is chosen to represent the link between the deplored present and desired future states of Argentina is particularly significant, as it suggests that only through outside involvement can the transformation be achieved. Douglas resembles the new generation’s concept of the ideal immigrant, that is, a fully integrated member of the local community who makes a contribution to the moral improvement of the nation. He is far removed from the typical image of the aloof British expatriate who looks down on local culture as inferior to his own. Douglas seems willing to mix with
creole society and even speaks fluent Spanish, albeit with a British accent.¹⁸ He rejects the characteristic insularity of the contemporary British community in Argentina, an attitude encapsulated in the following quotation from the document sent by Ouseley to Lord Aberdeen in 1845: 'As a proof of the superiority of their character, they maintain their distinctive British habits and institutions, in spite of the many untoward influences to which they are exposed'.¹⁹

Douglas is not the only foreigner to risk his life to save others during the oppression; Mármol pays warm tribute to all the contrabandistas de hombres, emphasizing the importance of their activities and asserting their unstinting trustworthiness:

Los más notables personajes de la emigración activa fueron salvados de Buenos Aires en las balleneras contrabandistas; y la juventud casi toda no salió de otro modo que como salió Paz, Aprelo, etc.; es decir bajo la protección de hombres como Mr. Douglas. Y hay que recordar un hecho bien explicativo por cierto; y es que cuando la delación era tan pródigamente correspondida, y cuando no pasaba un día sin que las autoridades de Rosas la recibiesen de hijos del país en todos esos extranjeros, italianos, ingleses, norteamericanos, poseedores del secreto y de la persona de los que emigraban, sin ignorar la alta posición que muchos tenían en la sociedad, lo que habría importándoles una altísima recompensa de parte de Rosas, no hubo uno solo que vendiese el secreto o la confianza que se depositaba en él. (p. 363)

In this way, Mármol acknowledges the supposed moral superiority of foreign races over creole society. Throughout Amalia, there are a number of references which indicate that the author had a considerable knowledge of, and a profound respect for, the nations perceived as civilized by the Generation of '37. At one point,

¹⁸ During the episode in the café Don Antonio in Montevideo, Douglas demonstrates his awareness of local events in conversation with Daniel. When eavesdropping on a conversation at a neighbouring table, Daniel asks Douglas if he knows who is being referred to as 'el viejo', to which the Scotsman instantly replies 'Rivera' (p. 187). In the same scene, the narrator informs us that Douglas 'entendía y hablaba perfectamente el español' (p. 187), having revealed in an earlier passage that he spoke 'con una franca acentuación inglesa' (p. 168).

¹⁹ Cited by Wilbur Devereux Jones, 'The Argentine British Colony in the Time of Rosas', p. 93. See also pp. 40-42 of the present study.
Amalia asks Daniel if he possesses 'el don de segunda vista como los escoceses', an allusion which suggests that Mármol possessed some understanding of Highland mythology (p. 127). Along similar lines, Daniel Bello later asserts that 'los escoceses viven en un país de hielo y andan desnudos hasta medio muslo', a reference to traditional Scottish dress (p. 208). Foreign articles themselves are habitually associated with the civilized spaces of the novel, most notably in the description of Amalia's opulent home, which contains items such as 'un tapiz de Italia', 'una cama francesa', 'una colgadura de gasa de la India' and 'dos grandes jarras de porcelana francesa' (pp. 19-20). Doris Sommer has noted the 'passion for (imported) luxury that is practically synonymous with civilized virtue' in Amalia, an enthusiasm which is the converse of the values of rosista society.

The difference between the light, luxurious atmosphere of Amalia's home in Barracas and the dictator's residence could scarcely be greater. Dark and spartan, Rosas's dwelling is compatible with the typical mien of those who frequent it:

Un imenso patio cuadrado y sin ningún farol que le diese luz, dejaba ver la que se proyectaba por la rendija de una puerta a la izquierda, que daba a un cuarto con una mesa en el medio, que contenía solamente un candelero con una vela de sebo, y unas cuantas sillas ordinarias, donde estaban, más bien tendidos que sentados, tres hombres de espeso bigote, con el poncho puesto y el sable a la cintura, y con esa cierta expresión en la fisonomía que da los primeros indicios a los agentes de la policía secreta de París o Londres, cuando andan a caza de los que escapan de galeras, o de forajidos que han de entrar en ellas. (p. 33)

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20 In his anthology, *Strange Scottish Stories* (Norwich: Jarrold, 1981), Robert Owen writes: 'The gift of prophecy, or Second Sight as it is commonly called in the Highlands, is popularly believed to be a faculty of prophetic vision. A person possessing this gift is supposed, without any previous knowledge, to see into the future at a distance of both time and place and consequently can foretell death or accident and many other events. [...] The Second Sight is, in every case, regarded as troublesome to the possessor. The vision of coming events is attended by a "nerve-storm" which leaves the subject of it in a state of complete prostration. Hence, it is not an enviable gift. The Second Sight may excite the surprise and incredulity of the learned, but of its existence, even in some Highlanders to the present day, there is not the shadow of a doubt in the minds of many' (pp. 7-8).

The sinister description of Rosas's abode and its inhabitants not only suggests the mysterious and threatening aura that characterizes the regime, but also contrasts with conventional expectations of the ambience surrounding a powerful leader. Instead, it is the opposition subculture which is attributed with the trappings normally associated with high society and power. This inversion of values can be interpreted as a comment upon the perceived leadership qualities of the antirosista dissidents, marking them out as the natural governing class. The rather elitist belief in their own superiority is one of the less endearing aspects of the ideology of the Generation of '37, and that of creole liberals in general, demonstrating that their idea of a democratic system was an exclusive oligarchy. This situation has led Nicolas Shumway to describe the new generation's favoured style of administration as 'a government for the people but not by the people', noting that 'far from the radical democracy of [Bartolomé] Hidalgo and Artigas, their concern for the people bore an odd resemblance to the paternalistic, autocratic rule of Rosas'. Clearly, this is borne out in the contradiction between the democratic ideals embraced by the young intellectuals and their apparent contempt for the common citizenry, as demonstrated most forcefully in El matadero.

Returning to the Europhilia of the new generation, Mármol's attraction to all things foreign is further reinforced by a number of passing references to citizens of advanced European nations. Notable amongst these is Daniel Bello's demonstration that the worst excesses of the dictatorship were not directed solely against the creole population. In the course of his meeting with leaders of the unitarian opposition in Montevideo, Daniel presents a list of the latest incarcerations in Buenos Aires which includes 'S. Hesse (inglés)' and 'Chapeaurouge (hamburgués)' (p. 177). By recording the persecution of these representatives of civilized society, Mármol emphasizes the gulf between the attitude of the regime and that of the Generation of '37 towards the

22 Shumway, The Invention of Argentina, p. 151.
foreign community. Later in the novel, we find further comment upon the all-inclusive nature of the oppression:

El antiguo federalista de principios, siempre que fuese honrado y moderado; el extranjero mismo, que no era, ni unitario, ni federal; el hombre pacífico y laborioso que no había sentido jamás una opinión política; la mujer, el joven, el adolescente, puede decirse, todos, todos, todos estaban envueltos, estaban comprendidos en la misma sentencia universal: o ser facinerosos o ser víctimas. (p. 335).

If we accept that Mármol looked favourably upon the notion that Argentina could be transformed through European immigration, which elements of the existing society did he perceive as most in need of metamorphosis? The autochthonous population is absent from the novel, and the gaucho appears only on the margins, even then in a form that bears little resemblance to the stereotypical barbarian of the pampa. Daniel Bello's servant, Fermin, is attributed with the traditional skills of the country inhabitant, such as the ability to establish the number of a group of riders and their identities from the tracks they leave behind (pp. 318-319). Fermin, however, is held in high regard by his master and is described as 'buen gaucho', an esteem which reclaims a place for the rural outcast in Mármol's liberal agenda. The sympathetic portrayal of this acquiescent gaucho suggests that his type could play a useful role even in a future, civilized Argentina. His rank, however, is that of a servant, presupposing the later transformation of the gaucho into 'the quiet, obedient, industrious paisano'.

Rather than attacking the Indians or the gauchos, therefore, Mármol berates an often forgotten ethnic minority as the personification of barbarism. The modern view of Argentina as one of the most Europeanized nations of Latin America frequently leads to an under-appreciation of the Afro-Argentine community, which composed a significant segment of the population during the early nineteenth century. Statistics show that blacks constituted 29.5 percent of the total population of

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Buenos Aires in 1810. Most of these people were slaves, some of whom were granted freedom in return for military service during the struggle for independence. Black army units, however, were often exposed to the greatest dangers, being considered more dispensable than their white counterparts. The slave trade was abolished in 1812 and the ley de libertad de vientres of 1813 decreed the emancipation of slave children upon their coming of age or at marriage. The Afro-Argentine population declined throughout the nineteenth century as the result of a combination of factors. In addition to the heavy death toll amongst blacks serving in the military, it has been suggested that poor and unsanitary standards of living, exacerbated by the end of slavery, also contributed to the gradual disappearance of the negro sector:

Mortality rates in the 1820s were much higher among the coloureds than among the whites, and much higher among the free coloureds (59.96 per cent) than among slaves (17.25 per cent). Living conditions worsened for the black when he obtained his freedom, for while the slave was an investment, to be guarded as a servant or skilled worker, the free coloured had no one to care for him. Infant mortality was higher among coloureds, who had very inferior living conditions, and higher among males than among females, which favoured mestizaje.

Miscegenation, therefore, diluted the genetic characteristics of the black population. This factor, combined with the racial prejudices which encouraged people to "pass for white", largely explains the apparent extinction of the Afro-Argentines and their resultant exclusion from the modern perception of Argentina. During the Rosas era, however, the blacks were anything but inconspicuous, enjoying unsurpassed prominence under the regime. On the whole, members of the

25 Slatta, Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier, p. 34.
26 Lynch, Argentine Dictator, p. 121.
27 Lynch, Argentine Dictator, p. 121.
negro community were loyal and enthusiastic *rosistas*, a fact which accounts for Mármol's hostile portrayal of the blacks in *Amalia*. A common fear amongst the opponents of the regime was that of betrayal by their servants. This first becomes evident early in the novel when Daniel takes the injured Eduardo to Amalia's house and warns her, 'no despiertes a los criados' (p. 13). Shortly afterwards, Daniel implores his cousin to dismiss any employees in whom she does not have total confidence and establishes a specific link between the servant class and the regime:

> En el estado en que se encuentra nuestro pueblo, de una orden, de un grito, de un momento de mal humor se hace de un criado un enemigo poderoso y mortal. Se les ha abierto la puerta a las delaciones, y bajo la sola autoridad de un miserable, la fortuna y la vida de una familia reciben el anatema de la Mashorca. (p. 18)

The plainest manifestation of this relationship is the network of coloured spies operated by the dictator's sister-in-law, Maria Josefa Ezcurra, who utilizes one of her agents to observe Amalia. Later in the novel, the blacks are described as 'los principales órganos de delación que tuvo Rosas' and are depicted as ardent supporters of the regime and the spiteful enemies of decent people:

> El odio a las clases honestas y acomodadas de la sociedad era sincero y profundo en esa clase de color; sus propensiones a ejecutar el mal eran a la vez francas e ingenuas; y su adhesión a Rosas leal y robusta. (p. 365)

Passages of this type have led Sommer to accuse Mármol of 'unproblematicized and flagrant racism', a charge which seems rather harsh given the modern perception of racism as an illogical bias which must be condemned as repulsive and wholly unacceptable.\(^{28}\) The design of racial hierarchy running throughout the works of the Generation of '37, in which the Northern European races are regarded as morally and intellectually superior, was not the product of irrational bigotry, but was based upon a reasoned admiration for the advanced capacity and progressive ideology originating from nations such as France, Britain, and Germany.

\(^{28}\) *Sommer, Foundational Fictions*, p. 105.
In the case of *Amalia*, Mármol's allegedly racist rhetoric stems not from immoderate
discrimination, but from his justifiable contempt for the perfidious actions of
servants during the Rosas era, who routinely betray the trust of their employers and
generally happen to be black. This reading is sustained by the disparaging treatment
meted out in the novel to all who collaborate with the dictator, even Mandeville, a
white representative of developed Europe. Moreover, Mármol is careful to set the
mulatto population apart as superior to either pure-bred blacks or whites, hardly the
notion of a callous racist. After describing the common treachery of the servant
class, Daniel Bello, the standard-bearer of the new generation, states:

Sólo hay en la clase baja una excepción, y son los mulatos; los negros
están ensoberbecidos, los blancos prostituidos, pero los mulatos, por
esa propensión que hay en cada raza mezclada a elevarse y
dignificarse, son casi todos enemigos de Rosas, porque saben que los
unitarios son la gente ilustrada y culta, a que siempre toman ellos por
modelo. (p. 18)

Whilst there is undeniably a current of colour prejudice in the novel, we may
understand it on a cultural level rather than link it to blatant racism. In a dialectic
which permeates Western thought, the respective images of light and darkness
symbolize the struggle between good and evil, progress and underdevelopment,
knowledge and ignorance - parallel dichotomies to that of *civilización y barbarie.*
This concept, of course, is evinced in the traditional division of history into periods
such as the Dark Ages and the Enlightenment. From this perspective, the vinculum
between icons of light and the liberal principles of the new generation becomes self-
evident, rendering it unsurprising that Mármol portrays *antirosista* society as a
beacon of resplendent luminosity in contrast to the Cimmerian dictator and his
shadowy allies.

* * *

In the two literary works by creole authors analysed so far, we have observed the
political atmosphere of *rosista* Argentina at a time of major turbulence and from a
particular perspective, that of the marginalized, liberal dissident. As we have seen, the years around 1840 marked a period of intense oppression in response to the difficulties encountered by the regime on both the domestic and international fronts. The threat posed by Lavalle's unitarian rebels was very real; at times it seemed that they were poised to launch a final attack against Buenos Aires, only for differences within the opposition movement to result in fatal hesitance. The French blockade of the port city was another serious impediment, for it damaged the lucrative import-export business which formed a major part of the economy. Naturally, the views put forward by Mármol and Echeverría are deeply coloured by their political bias, as are official documents compiled by the regime; would it not be enlightening, therefore, to examine a textual record of this period written without a preconceived ideological intent? Of course, it is nigh on impossible for any account to be truly objective, as everyone has opinions, morals and remembered experiences which impinge upon their perspective; we can, however, seek testimonies in which such factors are subdued rather than flaunted. In the present case, we are fortunate to have access to a series of letters written by Robert Gibson in the city of Buenos Aires to his brother George at the remote Los Yngleses or San Borombón properties around the period in question, a body of correspondence that permits us the viewpoint of a writer not steeped in Argentina's political traditions, and who considers himself more as an observant outsider than a participant in the events related. Although we will notice the gradual evolution of a partiality in Robert's letters, it is fairly clear that his shift towards Rosas's opponents was motivated by his concepts of morality and decency, as well as by financial interests, rather than by any pre-existing political prejudice.

The first topic which concerns Robert in this sequence of letters is the attempt by Fructuoso Rivera, the former president of Uruguay, to overthrow the legitimate government of Manuel Oribe. Rivera had been elected first constitutional leader of the República Oriental in October 1830, in spite of his shady past as a partisan of Brazilian attempts to annex the territory to their domain. When Oribe succeeded Rivera in 1835, it soon became obvious that the new president was the
antithesis of his maverick predecessor. Grandson of the first colonial governor of Montevideo and a member of one of the most distinguished families in Uruguay, Oribe quickly asserted his distance from the populist Rivera. Early in 1836, in an effort to unite the country behind a single authority, Oribe abolished the role of Comandante General de la Campaña, the post then occupied by the former president. The new government also began investigations into alleged financial irregularities under Rivera's administration. Infuriated by the erosion of his position, Rivera plotted to bring down Oribe and retake power by unconstitutional means.

In the first of his letters on this subject, Robert Gibson reflects upon Rivera's recent declaration of revolt, and cites this action as 'further proof (if indeed proof were wanting) of the futility of thinking these people are in a state to govern themselves by constitutions and laws'. This assertion certainly insinuates the distance which Robert perceived to separate him from the region's customary turmoil, and suggests the rather condescending attitude of the archetypal British expatriate when confronted by the vicissitudes of foreign society. In the same letter, he moves on to give his forecast of the likely development of the conflict:

my opinion is that the legal Govt., although opposed by Rivera who has undoubtedly great influence amongst the people of the campaña, stands a good chance of winning the day from the assistance and countenance of this Govt. [that of Buenos Aires] and the others of the confederation. Rosas will no doubt make great exertions one and another to put down Rivera who has all along given protection and countenance to the Unitarians from this side.

The first major clash between the government and rebel forces occurred at Carpinteria in September 1836, resulting in a convincing victory for Oribe. From the contents of Robert Gibson's next communication, it seems that his prediction of

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29 Oribe's grandfather was Mariscal Jose Joaquin de Viana. According to some accounts, a link can be traced between the Viana line and Rodrigo Diaz, Spain's legendary Cid. See, for example, Jose de Torres Wilson, Oribe: el Uruguay en la lucha de los imperios, 2nd edn. (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Planta, 1986), p. 12.

30 Robert Gibson to George Gibson, Buenos Aires, 23 August 1836, National Library of Scotland, MSS 10326. Henceforth, references to this collection will be cited parenthetically, quoting the date of authorship.
Rivera’s defeat is about to be realized: ‘The news from the Banda Oriental is that Raña an officer of Rivera has gone over to the Govt. side with about 750 men, which it was supposed would soon decide the business’ (20 October 1836). Rather than abandon his campaign, however, Rivera retreated to Southern Brazil, where he sealed a pact with the farroupilhas, the rebel separatists who were fighting for the independence of Rio Grande do Sul. His exile brought a period of relative calm, but soon Robert Gibson writes:

According to all accounts there is every probability of a renewal of disturbances in the Banda Oriental. Armed parties are said to be rising in a great many different places, and Rivera is said to be again advancing towards the centre of the province at the head of a considerable force. As yet, however, nothing certain is known. (3 March 1837)

From his Brazilian sanctuary, Rivera planned the next phase of the operation. Early in 1837, he began to make sporadic forays into Uruguayan territory in preparation for a full-scale invasion later that year. On 22 October, Rivera’s followers clashed with the government army at Yucutujá, winning a major victory. After a long series of encounters, some favouring the insurgents, others the authorities, Rivera inflicted a heavy defeat upon the government army, commanded by Ignacio Oribe, at Palmar in June 1838. As the victorious rebels marched towards Montevideo in the following months, French naval forces intervened in their favour, blockading the capital’s port. As Oribe was an ally of Rosas and Rivera supported the unitarian opposition, the interference of the French in the Uruguayan conflict came as no great surprise given their ongoing dispute with the porteño dictator. Since defeat now seemed inevitable, the Montevidean government came under increasing

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31 Raña’s defection to the government army is recorded by Alfredo Lepro in his classic biography of Rivera, *Frucluoso Rivera, hombre del pueblo: sentido revolucionario de su vida y de su acción* (Montevideo: Editorial Ceibo, 1945). Lepro notes that Rivera argued with Colonel Raña during the retreat northwards after their defeat at Carpintería ’y este se entrega al gobierno con sus quinientos hombres’ (p. 193) Rivera soon had his revenge: ‘A Raña, el desertor, lo ha de matar poco tiempo después en Cagancha la lanza que maneja el herculeo brazo de Marcelino Sosa y cuentan las tradiciones orales llevadas de años en años, que Rivera hizo desfilar sus caballerías ante el cadáver para que todos apreciaran el fin de un traidor’ (Lepro, p. 193).
pressure to negotiate an armistice. Oribe gradually realized that his position was no longer tenable and he resigned under protest in October 1838, but continued to assert his rightful claim to the presidency, which he would now try to recoup with the aid of Rosas. The rhetoric of his resignation statement provided ample justification for this campaign:

El Presidente Constitucional de la República, al descender del puesto a que lo elevó el voto de sus conciudadanos, declara ante los Representantes del Pueblo, y para conocimiento de todas las naciones, que en este acto sólo cede a la violencia de una facción armada, cuyos esfuerzos hubieran sido impotentes si no hubiera encontrado su principal apoyo y la más decidida cooperación en la marina militar francesa, que no ha desdado aliarse a la anarquía para destruir el orden legal de esta República.32

Until 1839, the conflict receives only passing attention in the Gibsons' letters as it has yet to have an impact on their own lives. Early that year, however, the civil disruption in the Banda Oriental escalated to assume international dimensions. Not content with the domestic victory, Rivera declared war upon Rosas on 10 February 1839 with the support of the French. This is the date in Uruguayan history which marks the beginning of the so-called Guerra Grande. In spite of the storm clouds gathering on the horizon, Robert Gibson considers that there is little imminent threat to Rosas's position on account of the dictator's authoritative style of leadership: 'If the people of the country would not now follow him from love, they would do so from fear' (1 February 1839). Nevertheless, the combined pressures of the French blockade of Buenos Aires and Rivera's hostility soon led to the neglect of Argentina's internal affairs. At this time, the Gibsons encountered difficulties in securing the required official approval for a land transaction, not because of any deliberate attempt to hinder their activities, but simply as a result of Rosas 'having been so much taken up with the late important events' (29 April 1839). In the same letter, the ever more

32 Quoted by de Torres Wilson, Oribe, p. 105.
substantial implications of the conflict are reflected in the greater detail of Robert's account of recent developments:

The Banda Oriental has declared war against Buenos Ayres it is said at the instigation and urgent reclamation of the French agents in Montevideo, such being the condition upon which the French assisted Rivera, viz. that he should immediately upon getting into Montevideo declare war against Rosas. The Corrientes Govt. were also seduced to join the Orientales against Rosas and were coming down against Entre Ríos when they were met by the Argentine forces under Echagüe Governor of Entre Ríos and completely defeated with a loss of about 2,000 men and officers killed (including the governor of Corrientes) the remainder (of 5,000) being almost all taken prisoner or wounded. Fructos Rivera has not yet moved from the Banda Oriental.

This extract refers to the revolt of Berón de Astrada, governor of the province of Corrientes, against the federal authorities. On 28 February 1839, Astrada declared war on Buenos Aires, but his rebel forces were roundly defeated by the combined armies of Pascual Echagüe and Justo José de Urquiza at Pago Largo on 31 March, the bloody battle related by Gibson. The figure of 2,000 killed seems to be a somewhat exaggerated estimate and is probably a repetition of the inflated tally disseminated by rosista propagandists. John Lynch, for instance, proposes that the death toll was around 400, whilst Manuel Gálvez suggests that 800 corrientinos died and 400 were captured. 33

By October 1839, the outlook is no longer so favourable to the regime, for though Echagüe is marching rapidly towards Rivera's stronghold of Montevideo, the forces of Juan Lavalle are pushing towards Buenos Aires. Robert Gibson notes:

I told you in my last that Lavalle had landed in Entre Ríos at the head of 800 or 900 men, after having been a considerable time in Martin Garcia with the French troops there, and ultimately assisted by them in his landing, viz. by vessels etc. etc. Since then he has routed 1,600 men sent against him and is said to be carrying everything before him, a reaction having taken place (at least so they say) in Corrientes, which indeed is extremely probable now that Echagüe is in the Banda Oriental and Lavalle ready to support any demonstration against the

existing government of Corrientes which may be said to have been put there by Echagüé at the point of the sword. In the meantime, Echagüé is within 12 or 14 leagues (c. 39-45½ miles) of Montevideo at the head of, it is said, 5,000 men. (23 October 1839)

In the same letter, Robert goes on to describe the preparations being made within Montevideo to protect the city from the impending attack:

The French have landed about 500 men with artillery for the defence of Montevideo, and their consul has called upon French residents to take up arms for the defence of the city against the common enemy, for so they call Echagüé's force, which although it goes under the pretence of restoring the legal government of the Banda Oriental is looked upon by the French as the army of Rosas. About 500 French residents have armed accordingly and more are expected to do so. It is even said that some more foreigners such as Germans were also arming for the same purpose.

Later in this letter, Robert Gibson anticipates an imminent battle between Echagüé and Rivera. He suggests that a win for Rivera would prove decisive, but that should Echagüé emerge victorious then Rivera would have 'the means of recovering himself soon'. Gibson criticizes Rosas for not sending Oribe to lead the invasion on the grounds that the present force 'has every appearance of being nothing else but an Argentine army coming to lay down the law to the Orientales'. A recent attempt has been made to remedy this error: 'Oribe only left this lately with 400 men (enlisted here) for Entreríos on his way to the B. [anda] O. [riental], but to get there he will have to fight Lavalle in Entreríos who I expect will beat him'. In fact, Oribe avoided this encounter and Lavalle was engaged by Juan Pablo López, the pro-Rosas governor of Santa Fe. Lavalle's unitarians were routed, but the general managed to escape to Corrientes with the remnants of his army. This setback to the unitarian campaign was not foreseen by Robert Gibson, who considered it likely that Lavalle 'will carry all before him in Entreríos and Corrientes, and then come over into Santa Fe, and then down into the province [of Buenos Aires].

At this point, Robert is becoming increasingly frustrated by the economic implications of the French blockade of Buenos Aires and begins to express hope of
Rosas's defeat, believing that all would be resolved if the dictator was to fall. He writes: 'I hope that if this is the way the blockade is to be raised, that it will be done quickly and with as little fighting as possible' (23 October 1839). He expresses confidence that the southerly location of the Los Yngleses and San Borombón properties will be far removed from the worst of any combat and that the people there have little to fear. In contrast, one of the Gibsons' Scottish compatriots found himself in a much less secure situation:

Poor Captain Campbell who bought an Estancia in Entrerios in preference to this province, as being in his opinion less likely to be disturbed by revolutions, has got into the very hottest of it, the battle lately fought there by Lavalle having been fought on his very ground. (23 October 1839)

Although Robert's prediction that the family estancias would be safe from any engagement between Rosas and Lavalle proved correct, he was unable to forecast the disturbance which would be caused by a separate uprising in the southern portion of Buenos Aires province. At this time, George Gibson was residing at the San Borombón property, having left the Los Yngleses estancia in the care of the youngest of the brothers, Thomas. As communications in rural areas were very poor, George still relied on letters from the distant city for news of the nearby rebellion:

Since the date of my last we have had an attempt at a revolution in the south, some of the particulars of which you will have seen in the Gazette [La Gaceta Mercantil, a pro-Rosas newspaper] which I send you by packet. It broke out at Dolores on the 29th and immediately afterwards at Chascomús. (Robert Gibson, 23 November 1839)

Although there is some evidence to link the southern conspirators to the wider unitarian campaign, the uprising was essentially a response to the economic hardships resulting from the French blockade. The estancieros of the south were more financially vulnerable than their counterparts near to the city, as their cattle lost weight on the long drive north to the mataderos of Buenos Aires. Like Robert Gibson, they perceived that the most likely means of lifting the blockade was to oust
the stubborn Rosas in favour of a governor prepared to negotiate with the French. Few of the revolutionaries were natural unitarians; indeed, most were previously loyal federalists, and could even count amongst their number Gervasio Rosas, the younger brother of the dictator. Such factors, however, did not shield the conspirators from savage treatment in the official press; the regime circulated propaganda describing the insurgents as 'los viejos unitarios de Dolores y Monsalvo encabezados por el hombre desnaturalizado don Gervasio Rosas'.

Robert Gibson estimates that the rebels amassed an army of around 3,000 to 3,500 men from the local population and also received the support of some renegade government forces in the area: 'They were joined by the officer and troops stationed at Salado (about 300 men), the troops at Atalaya, without their officer, and they counted upon an officer called Granada joining them with his force, about 600 or 800 veterans' (23 November 1839). In the event, Granada did not defect to the rebels; instead, with the assistance of Prudencio Rosas, another brother of the dictator, he ambushed and routed the insurgents near Chascomús. The remnants of the rebel army took flight, many escaping to Montevideo aboard vessels stationed at the mouths of the Salado and Tuyú rivers by prior arrangement with the French navy. Despite the close proximity of Los Yngleses to the scene of the battle, Robert remains confident that no harm will have come to his younger brother:

I don't think anything will have happened to Thomas or our own people at the Estancia, as the chasque [messenger] who came up to the owner of the Zumaca [a vessel which ferried some of the defeated rebels to their Uruguayan exile] said that the people were in the greatest order, that no excesses had been committed by them, and he also said that Don Manuel Rico who commanded the force, had paid for some animals which they had got at an Estancia to take on board with them. (23 November 1839)

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34 Cited by Gálvez, *Vida de don Juan Manuel de Rosas*, p. 364.
Although the residents at Los Yngleses were never physically endangered by the uprising, Thomas Gibson's own account of events suggests that they had to endure considerable disruption:

The insurgents gave battle at Chascomús, and, being defeated, retreated to the coast and encamped upon our place. Here they remained three or four days, getting or taking over 40 steers per diem. Report reached them that the Government army was on their track, and they moved on to A jó creek, whence they embarked for Monte Video. We, however, anticipating an action and all its consequent disorders, left the head station by night and travelled down to an isolated corner of the estancia, taking with us a bullock cart which served as house and store-room. A few days later we heard of the flight of the insurgent army, and returned to the head station. On the same afternoon the whole eastern horizon became serrated by the Government army, 3,200 strong, including 400 Indians, the infantry of course mounted; they brought immense troops of spare horses, and had one or two pieces of artillery. The General, Don Prudencia [sic] Rosas, and his staff, accepted the offer of our house, and the army encamped about the steading. They slaughtered 120 steers upon arrival, the General apologising for not being able to save the skins, as the soldiers needed carne con cuero on the successful termination of the campaign. They remained with us two or three days, consuming over 60 steers per diem.  

Thomas makes no mention of receiving financial compensation for the substantial plundering of his stock and we must assume that he had little option but to tolerate the situation. Given the immoderate atmosphere of the time, failure to cooperate with the government forces would have probably led to accusations of complicity in the rebellion. This would have indeed been an unwise risk in light of the severe punishments meted out to captured dissidents. Robert Gibson lends his testimony to the typically draconian oppression which followed the uprising:

Pedro Castelli, one of the principal movers in the affair, was taken in the Montes Grandes (to the south of us) and shot, and his head was taken off and sent to Dolores. The whole business may be said to be at an end now. A number of people have been brought into town,

35 Cited by Herbert Gibson, *The History and Present State of the Sheep-Breeding Industry*, pp. 27-28. 'Came con cuero' is a type of barbecued beef which is considered a delicacy. The meat is cooked whilst still attached to the hide, imparting a distinct flavour.
concerned in it. What their fate will be 'quien sabe'. Rosas surely can't shoot them all... (23 November 1839)

Historical accounts of the rebels' fate vary considerably. John Lynch, for instance, also tells of Pedro Castelli's arrest and decapitation on the express orders of Rosas, adding that 'excesses were committed by the government troops in the south, following their victory'.\textsuperscript{36} Manuel Gálvez, on the other hand, whose pro-Rosas bias is apparent, depicts the dictator as a man who reacts with great magnanimity towards friends who have cruelly betrayed him, asserting that no executions took place and that those who were imprisoned were released after serving relatively short sentences.\textsuperscript{37} The true extent of the retributions is difficult to establish, but, on balance, it seems that the authorities responded with comparative restraint. There is certainly no evidence of the frenzy of retaliation that might have been expected of an absolute ruler. In all probability, a rebellion which had originated amongst a traditionally rosista sector of society had indeed shaken the regime and prompted a cautious reaction, the dictator not relishing the prospect of further conflict with his most natural allies.

At no stage in Robert Gibson's account of the revolution is there an explicit indication of his own political allegiance. His letter gives a fairly restrained version of events, offering just a hint of growing impatience with the regime. Some evidence would suggest, however, that Thomas Gibson may have assisted the rebels in their flight to exile. As we have already observed, the insurgent army fled through the Gibsons' property en route to the coast. Given that many of the leaders of the rebellion owned lands close to Los Yngleses, and were thus known to the Gibsons, it seems quite possible that Thomas would have felt some obligation to help his beleaguered acquaintances. This is the conclusion reached in a brief summary of the Gibson family history appearing in \textit{The Standard} of 1 May 1930. In this article,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Lynch, \textit{Argentine Dictator}, p. 227.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Gálvez, \textit{Vida de don Juan Manuel de Rosas}, p. 365.
\end{itemize}
Thomas is described as 'the unwilling host of General Prudencio Rozas with his Federal Army', and we are told that he earlier 'sped from the Rincón del Bote... many neighbours and friends'. Of course, this does not necessarily imply that he was a partisan of the rebel cause; viewed from a different angle, his actions may be interpreted as nothing other than those of a good friend and neighbour.

Robert's account of the uprising ends on an uneasy note as he bluntly indicates the likely outcome of continued hostilities with the French:

This outbreak to the south, where Rosas considered himself strongest, must have alarmed him not a little... He must now see the necessity there is for settling with the French immediately, as, if the blockade continues much longer, the discontent of the people will again break out, and if it does so it will probably be in such a manner that he will not be able to put it down. (23 November 1839)

This letter contains a final reflection upon the whole unfortunate episode, which indicates the full implications of the French intervention for the people of Buenos Aires: 'If the blockade continues much longer we must have another rising again; the discomfort is such as you have no idea of'. The 'discomfort', however, was set to continue for some time yet. At this point, Rosas was in no way disposed towards settling with the French, especially as his enemies were gaining the upper hand in the Banda Oriental. On 29 December 1839, the forces of Echagüe and Rivera clashed at Cagancha, and the federal army was driven back into Entre Ríos. Rivera's victory was a major boost to the unitarian campaign to depose Rosas. As Lavalle advanced towards Buenos Aires early in 1840, the regime responded with a ferocious campaign of defamation in the pages of the official press. The unitarians are 'salvajes, perversos, traidores, sabandijas'; Lavalle is depicted as 'vil, traidor, asesino, bestial, malvado'; Rivera is condemned as 'pardejón, perverso y mulato', whilst the French are denigrated as 'cobardes, incendiarios, piratas'. The mounting

38 'Old British and American Firms', The Standard (Buenos Aires), 70th anniversary issue, 1 May 1930.

39 Gálvez, Vida de don Juan Manuel de Rosas, p. 369.
atmosphere of fanaticism and hatred appalls Robert Gibson, who, for the first time, openly declares opposition to Rosas:

The Gaceta [La Gaceta Mercantil] begins to vomit forth its venom against Lavalle. It is a sure sign that things are not going as Rosas would have liked them... The storm now threatens Rosas on all sides, and I suspect not all his talent (and he is undoubtedly clever) will be sufficient to carry him through with success. He must fall, and the sooner the better. He has through his obstinacy in the affair of the Blockade, brought distress and ruin upon many of the Country... and his bloodthirsty persecution of all those who dared to think for themselves will ever be a damnable stain on his memory. (16 May 1840)

Rosas, of course, was to avoid this fate for quite some time. In the latter part of 1840, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Felipe Arana, entered into negotiations with the French representative, Baron de Mackau, finally signing a peace treaty on 29 October. Thus, the French blockade was lifted.

The end of the conflict with France restored a measure of prosperity to Buenos Aires and its province, but other aspects of rosismo continued to prejudice the Gibsons' operations. Throughout the Rosas era, there was an acute lack of manpower in rural areas due to the conscription of a high proportion of the adult male population into the militia. Press gangs constantly roamed the pampa in search of recruits, and landowners were virtually powerless to impede the commandeering of their work-force. Only the estancias of those with influential contacts in the regime would be saved the visit of the recruiting teams. The corrupt nature of the system has been noted by John Lynch: 'estancieros and peons were completely at the mercy of local military commanders, who spared their friends and exacted unfair levies on others'. Shortage of labour was a constant problem for the Gibsons at this time, especially during the sheep shearing season. During 1845, however, Rosas's closure of the Rio Paraná to foreign shipping, and the resulting conflict with the

British and French governments, brought an unlikely benefit to the proprietors of Los Yngleses.

As relations between London and Buenos Aires deteriorated, the British envoy to Argentina, William Gore Ouseley, retreated to Montevideo in July 1845, advising his countrymen to do likewise. Ouseley's decision left the remaining Argentine-British community without the protection of official representation and, effectively, at the mercy of Rosas. Those living in remote areas were considered to be at particular risk of persecution at the whim of local officials. Nevertheless, Thomas Gibson chose to remain at Los Yngleses and, in the words of Herbert Gibson, 'trust to the chivalry of the Argentine commander in the south, to leave him in peace' (p. 257). His courageous decision was soon to bring its own rewards.

Suffering an acute shortage of manpower at this time, most of the Los Yngleses herds and flocks were wandering untended and unbranded. In such conditions, animals were likely to be lost or stolen, so Thomas resolved that action was required to muster and brand the stock. He sent word to Robert in Buenos Aires, asking him to ride to the military garrison at Dolores to solicit the loan of a working party to assist with the daunting task. When Robert placed the request before him, the commander of the post, Colonel Delfer Del Valle, replied: 'For your brother who remained at his estancia when his minister advised him to leave the country? Most willingly!' (Herbert Gibson, p. 257). Robert Gibson was permitted to choose as many men as were required, selecting those who had a good knowledge of the terrain around Los Yngleses. A short time after this act of generosity, Del Valle seems to have fallen foul of the regime; according to one account, the Gibsons, 'on riding into Dolores... saw to their sorrow, the head of this friend impaled on a stake'. 41 Herbert Gibson, however, asserts that Del Valle's death was the product of natural causes, but that the authorities denied him a decent burial:

41 'Old British and American Firms'.

He died of a fever, and it is reported that his body remained for some time sewn up in a horse hide before a charitable man was found sufficiently courageous to bury it. Such were the times of terror under which the South groaned in the 'forties'. (p. 258)

Whichever version may be true, we can only speculate the cause of Del Valle's fall from grace.

Two years after this incident, Thomas Gibson narrowly avoided a similar fate. At this time, the export of foodstuffs to Rosas's enemies in the Banda Oriental was strictly prohibited and punishable by death. From 1843 onwards, one of the principal activities of the Gibson brothers was the 'boiling down' of sheep carcasses to yield fat for both culinary and industrial use. Two grades of fat were produced: sebo, which was deemed suitable for human consumption, and graza (tallow), a less refined product, most of which was exported to Europe for the greasing of machinery and the manufacture of candles. In 1847, Thomas Gibson obtained an export permit to send a consignment of graza to Europe via the port of Montevideo. In error, the word sebo was entered in the documentation and Thomas was arrested on the charge of attempting to export edible produce. He was taken to Buenos Aires as a prisoner, but was released after only a few days of confinement on the intercession of Gervasio Rosas. One must assume that Juan Manuel had now forgiven his brother's role in the southern rebellion.

The episode of Thomas Gibson's arrest clearly demonstrates the extent to which political matters interfered with business during the Rosas era. This was again apparent in 1848, when the authorities renewed the Gibsons' permit for 'boiling down' at Los Yngleses. The licence was granted 'with the express condition that this work shall not be administrated nor served by any person or persons who are savage Unitarians' (Herbert Gibson, p. 32).

42 On his detention, Thomas Gibson sent a rather cryptic note to Robert in Buenos Aires explaining his plight: 'Have been today arrested by the Juez because I embarked grease wt. permit for talw. and sent to town wh. I protest against on stamped paper', National Library of Scotland, MSS 10327.
Through consideration of the Gibsons' letters and associated documents, we can draw certain conclusions on their opinions of the Rosas regime, which may be extended to the Argentine-British community as a whole. As we noted earlier, Robert Gibson's interest in national events intensifies, naturally enough, when political developments begin to affect his own experience. Even then, he pursues a predominantly dispassionate tone until exposed to the full extremity of the dictatorship during the latter part of 1839 and early 1840. A note of irritation begins to impinge upon Robert's description of the southern uprising, finally giving way to outright hostility in the following months, a change with which we can easily sympathize. He is clearly exasperated by the dictator's failure to heed the hardships which catalyzed the revolt and by the subsequent oppression. Presumably, his anger is further provoked by the disruption experienced by Thomas at Los Yngleses and by the persecution of family acquaintances in the wake of the rebellion. The reader will have noted that I make only passing reference to the period after 1840; this can be attributed to the fact that political comment is all but absent from the brothers' later correspondence. After the lifting of the French blockade, there followed a period of relative calm, during which business affairs dominate the epistolary conversations between Robert, George and Thomas. Their letters from this era are filled with details of everyday life, the livestock market and land transactions, with only the occasional interspersion of national news. This shift in emphasis provides further evidence that political events themselves were of little interest to the early British settlers, provided that there was no significant intrusion in their existence or obstacle to their prosperity (Thomas Gibson's arrest, for example). Of course, there were occasions when the sheer brutality of the Rosas regime offended the incomers' sensibilities, as Robert Gibson's letter of May 1840 would suggest.

* * *

Specific references to politics do not abound in Jane Robson's life story, but there are a handful which merit attention in this study. Early in her tale, Jane recalls the civil
war of 1828 to 1829 and the disruption it brought to her childhood. Her description leaves little doubt as to the gravity of the situation and reiterates the circumstances which forced the Monte Grande colonists to disband their settlement and flee:

At this time the country was more and more unsettled. Rosas was outside, and Lavalle in Buenos Aires. There were bands of Indians wandering about who were Rosas' men. Lavalle's soldiers were also wandering about, stealing, murdering, and causing the greatest alarm. It was well named 'The Reign of Terror'. It became so terrible that all the families who possibly could went into the town for more safety. (p. 226)

Jane then goes on to relate the story of the assault upon the Rodger property by the band of brutal *rosistas* who killed the family's dog, an episode which I have already discussed in chapter two.

The next mention of the routine political turmoil that affected Jane's life consists of a passing reference to the rebellion in the south of the province, the details of which we have recorded in relation to the Gibsons' letters. It seems that some degree of amnesia enters Jane's account at this point, for her words imply that the uprising took place either during 1840 or some time later. This can be deduced from the fact that she has already asserted that 1840 was the year of her marriage to Hugh Robson, and yet she had clearly wed her husband by the outbreak of the southern revolution:

The country at this time was again very unsettled, and a revolution broke out in Chascomus, so all the English speaking people went into the city, amongst them my husband's relatives. They tried to persuade me to go also, but I said, 'No, I will remain with my husband and help him, if we must flee, we will go together'. (p. 237)

We already know from Robert Gibson's account that the uprising had been put down in the last months of 1839, a fact that can be verified in any history of the period. What then does Jane's confusion mean? Whilst we may not expect her to be mistaken about the date of her marriage, this is the only logical explanation of the discrepancy, unless, of course, her words refer to another minor disturbance subsequent to the main uprising and neglected in historical accounts. The latter scenario is barely
plausible, so we must sensibly attribute Jane's forgetfulness to the fogginess of memory brought on by her advanced age. In any case, her recollections seem to regain full clarity when recording the impact of the rebellion upon her personal fortunes:

Hugh went to help his sister to go to town, and while he was away the revolutionists came and took all our horses, leaving me only one out of sixteen. They took my favourite riding horse, so I followed them for six leagues (c. 19½ miles) trying to get my horse back. The captain said he would try and see if it could be returned. After a weary day and a lot of patience I did get my horse, to my keen delight. I was determined to have my favourite back, if perseverance and worrying could do it. (p. 237)

In addition to the tribulations brought by upheaval in local politics, Jane had to endure the hardships arising from Rosas's quarrels with foreign powers. The Anglo-French blockade of the mid 1840s served only to make her already difficult life worse to bear, as the purchasing power of her hard earned cash diminished. The blockade could not have come at a less propitious time for the Robsons, as they appear to have been both overworked and financially stretched as a result of a recent move:

In 1843 we came to 'Los Sauces' [...], where we had 21,000 sheep on thirds and also a large dairy. My life seems to be made up of fresh starts after failures; it wanted a strong heart to battle with it. I had to work night and day, for at night there were animals to look after and collect, housework, sewing and washing to do, for I had no woman to help me. We had, of course, peones for the outside work, but they were so untrustworthy and would go off on a drinking bout or amuse themselves in their own fashion and were so much trouble to look after, that they were worse than useless.

This period was the time of the French and English blockade, and all imported things were at fabulous prices, indeed, all living was very expensive, tea at 10 dollars a pound, salt 6 dollars a pound. This made it very difficult for us to make ends meet, though I worked as perhaps no woman has ever done - I even killed animals for our meat. (pp. 240-41)
Once again, therefore, we encounter the recurrent themes of Jane's heroic struggle against adverse circumstances beyond her control and the idle nature of the typical Argentine.

If we now broaden our view of the political realm to include not only major events of national importance, but also the workings of local government and the administration of justice, then Jane's account becomes rather more eloquent. She relates several episodes in which the figure of the alcalde appears, each one of which reveals Jane's disposition towards fair play and her desire to see justice done, values that often leave her despairing of the bias and incompetence displayed by the local law officers. On only one occasion does the alcalde seem to have reached the right decision and meted out due punishment to a criminal, the drunken Irish assailant of Jane's neighbour, 'McC': 'The alcalde came and took the man to prison, and I heard that after a long term of prison he was sent on to a ship, no doubt he was kept in order there, and trained' (p. 239). Every other instance of Jane's involvement with the law proves unsatisfactory. In 1860, we are told, she forcefully apprehended a neighbour who had been stealing her family's animals, only for the local representative of justice to 'simply let him go free' (p. 249). At another time, Jane rescues a badly injured Irishman from a knife fight, just to have to make further efforts to save him from undeserved arrest:

I bound his wounded hand up in my large neck handkerchief and rode off with him to our house. We had no sooner got in safely when I saw the alcalde and two soldiers coming. I went to the door and stood with a hand on either side waiting for them. They came with much bluster and said they had come for the man and would take him away bound like a pig. I said, 'You will not have him and don't dare to put a foot in my house. The man is seriously wounded, if you took him and he died, his death would be at your door. I will be responsible for him appearing before the Justice'. (pp. 255-56)

Thus, Jane undermines the authority of the alcalde in the presence of his underlings. The affront to this man's dignity becomes even greater when Jane pre-empts him by presenting her version of the case to the judge before the alcalde receives his
hearing, with the result that her wounded charge is set free. It would appear that there was no guarantee of impartiality within the Argentine legal system at this time, for the offended officer simply turned his position into an instrument of revenge: 'The alcalde was furious, and after this he never lost a chance of doing us harm if he could' (p. 256). Presumably, his hostility was just another of the many obstacles which Jane and her family had to face on a daily basis.

The slow pace of the legal process was a further irritation to the Robsons, especially when Jane required the signature of the local judge upon a document. Frustrated by a long delay in the completion of this simple task, Jane sets out to resolve the matter in her own inimitable way, presenting herself in person before the magistrate. In doing so, Jane breaks with a tradition that she regarded as illogical, namely that women were excluded from the inner sanctum of the law offices. Rather than peaceably accepting this barrier, she rebels against the norm, bursts into the judge's room and demands his immediate attention:

He at once made excuses and said he had not my paper there. I turned, and among a whole lot on the table I saw my paper and recognised the signature. I pulled it out and confronted him with it. He was very angry and talked a great deal, but I came off victorious for he signed the paper. I think he was glad to do so and be rid of me. (p. 260).

As well as revealing Jane's individual temerity, this episode is further proof of the settler's ability to get things done, to act when the conventions of local society decree passivity. The incomers' natural reluctance to be bound by ingrained customs, especially when their different outlook pointed to a more efficient course of action, is a clear attribute if they were to bring the radical transformation of society sought by their proponents. Blind tolerance of old ways was not for Jane and her compatriots; they adhered to the dictates of the conscience, doing as they saw fit, oblivious to external pressures.

* * *
Having explored these diverse representations of politics, civil war and dictatorship, we can now indulge in some final reflections upon the status of each of the textual traces considered. We began by examining two very different perceptions of the political climate of the 1820s; the contrast between these accounts underscores an essential theme of this study, namely that authorial partiality enters every document that pretends to realism, obliging the serious reader to appraise the writer’s likely motives as part of the critical task. Both Cinco años and Travels in Buenos Ayres are relatively crude in their means of eliciting the sympathy of the readership, plainly stating the attractions or aberrations of porteño society, addressing us directly, leaving nothing unsaid and permitting us little room to exercise our own discretion. These accounts are guidebooks par excellence, blatantly aspiring to authority; there is no place for aporia in such overtly magisterial works. The texts with a fictional component, on the other hand, employ more elaborate, though not always subtle, strategies to realize the same goal, unashamedly shaping our opinions, but in a judicious fashion. The literary works steer the reader towards a certain interpretation, but seldom tell us explicitly how to think; instead, much of their ideological potency hangs upon the reaction the narrative evokes as it sets about offending our sensibilities, arousing our passions and kindling a moral response.

We have already observed that Echeverria courts the negative emotions of the readership in El matadero by revealing the coarse brutality and repulsive behaviour of the common masses. The description of the slaughterhouse community provokes disgust in a highly cogent fashion, as if the author crafted his words to have maximum impact on both the emotional and physical reflexes of the reader, promoting not only shock, but queasiness too. In Amalia, Mármol moves a step further than Echeverria towards reconstructing Argentina, building onto the horrors of rosista society a matrix of implications that reveal his vision for the future. The reader is gradually drawn to hunger for this transformation, willing the success of the admirable hero, Daniel Bello, and fervently hoping that the romance between Eduardo and Amalia will be allowed to blossom. Instead, both aspirations are cut
short in the fierce struggle at the end of the novel, with Daniel and Eduardo dying at the hands of the dictator's lackeys. Of the trio, only Amalia seems to survive, spared to endure the pain of mourning the two young men she clearly adored. Exposed to such drama, how can we feel anything but hatred for the regime which brought this tragic conclusion?

Following our excursion into the high passion of the fictional realm, we returned to terra firma, viewing the political scenario through the cool gaze of Robert Gibson. Emotion is restrained in his letters, judgement reserved until the practical consequences of rosista policy begin to injure his family's interests. Only once his patience has been tried by concrete obstacles does Robert permit sentiment to enter the equation, finally taking a moral stand under the influence of personal tribulations. Jane Robson, on the other hand, is quick to let her opinions be known, though this tendency may well have been facilitated by the passage of time; when she narrated her account, after all, the prudent reticence to comment whilst living under the jurisdiction of a vengeful tyrant had long ceased to be a factor. In any case, Jane's ebullience probably indicates that she was always outspoken, an assumption supported by her apparent readiness to defend her beliefs and values, even at the risk of causing offence. Perhaps the regime's fairly respectful approach to the British settlers would have accorded Jane a degree of impunity during the Rosas era, at least so long as she troubled only its local representatives, acted on her own behalf and remained neutral in the political struggle. At no point does she take sides in the unitarian/federalist debate; rather, her concern is not for the conventional stuff of politics, but for the impact of unrest on everyday life. Indeed, Jane's story suggests that there was little to choose between the opposing factions from the viewpoint of one who regarded that all creole society was tainted by dishonesty, corruption and cruelty. That said, certain features of her account have more in common with the ideologically motivated texts than the predominant neutrality of Robert Gibson's letters, for she holds back nothing in her narrative, brazenly alerts the reader to the
moral deficiencies of nineteenth-century Argentina, and purposefully educes compassion through her recollections.
CONCLUSIONS

Before drawing together the various strands of this study into a final synopsis, let us pause for a moment to reflect upon the cast and methodology of the analysis so far. As I attempted to make clear in the very first pages of this thesis, one of my central intents was to transcend the restrictive boundaries imposed by tradition, to escape the received wisdom that there is a hierarchy of discourse, headed by a very special type of text, literature. Concomitant with this view of the literary work as the pinnacle, is the implicit notion that it is open to correct interpretation only by those initiated into the techniques of scholarly inquiry. A suitable analogy might be to equate the conventional view of literature with the engine of a modern automobile of one of the prestige marques, requiring an array of specialist equipment (critical concepts) available only to authorized agents (a privileged interpretive community) to reveal its complex inner workings, let alone to undertake even the simplest mechanical intervention (act of analysis).

To extend the metaphor, other forms of writing, according to their traditional reception, could be likened to the tried and tested motor of an older, mass-produced vehicle, accessible to all who possess the most elementary knowledge (literacy) and a basic set of spanners (rational faculty).

My approach, therefore, has aimed to establish a level playing field, situating texts conventionally deemed to be of a literary nature on the same plane as travel writing, personal memoirs and private correspondence. I do not consider this project to be an act of terrorism against cultural value, but rather an attempt to redeem common sense as the guiding principle of critical activity, always bearing in mind

1 Academic specialists, in all fields, tend to devise their own idiom, often employing everyday words in new and highly particular fashions. Thus, they arrive at a kind of cipher disguised as standard English (or whatever language they work with), understandable only to initiated colleagues. It may be thought-provoking for us to reflect upon the following words of the Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano: 'I confess I get a pain from reading valuable works by certain sociologists, political experts, economists, and historians who write in code. Hermetic language isn’t the invariable and inevitable price of profundity. In some cases it can simply conceal incapacity for communication raised to intellectual virtue'. Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent, trans. by Cedric Belfrage (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 288. Galeano's comments could be equally applied to some of the more abstract veins of literary study.
the character of the texts with which I engage. To me, it seems rather inconsonant to obstinately impose the same paradigms employed in the analysis of experimental fiction upon the study of works whose function in the real world at the time of their production was abundantly clear and distinct. Certainly, the essential features of the texts read in the present study has facilitated such an approach, for all three 'literary' works were constructed with transparent ideological concerns foremost in the authors' minds. The "art for art's sake" ethos held little appeal for Echeverría, Mármol and Sarmiento when they addressed the very material and immediate issues of life under the Rosas regime. That is not to say that their texts lack creativity, simply that *ars poetica* was relegated to a place of secondary importance in the authors' priorities.

It is my aim not to make these statements blindly and without justification. We need only review our three texts designated as literary to realize that aesthetic concerns lagged some way behind ideological intent during their conception. Turning first to *El matadero*, the rhetorical violence of the novella undeniably betrays the author's bitter emotions to the extent that I never receive the impression that he is in tight control of the narrative process; rather, it would seem, Echeverría was carried along on a wave of hostile feeling, his pen probably struggling to keep pace with his racing mind (another explanation, perhaps, for his tremulous handwriting, as noted by Gutiérrez). This statement may appear to be at odds with my earlier allusion to the calculated manner in which he elicits the reader's horror, but the power of his words could equally be the result of diegetic talent at work precisely without premeditation. Indeed, it is conceivable that the sheer spontaneity of the authorial experience might have facilitated the unadulterated translation of Echeverría's emotions to paper, accounting for the story's profound effect. In the case of *Amalia*, the occasional fragmentation of the story-line, particularly the interspersions of non-essential contextual detail, such as the chapter on religion and the lists of incarcerated dissidents, would indicate that the ideological function of the novel takes precedence over any stylistic pretensions. Perhaps the episodic nature of
Mármol's narrative can be attributed to its origin as a serialized work, but this still
does not explain the digressions which serve little apparent purpose other than to
further expose conditions in Rosas's Argentina. When Sarmiento composed
Facundo, we know that impatience got the better of him; he began to write before
properly completing his research with the end result that the work was 'desordenado
y mal construido' and 'finished before it could be completely documented or fully
revised', definitely not the product of a tranquil and meticulous craftsman.

In light of such facts, why should we artificially constrain ourselves to read
these texts according to a special set of rules discrete from those applied to the
interpretation of other forms of written communication? However, I do not wish to
fall into dogmatism and declare any alternative approach invalid. Rather than
perceiving my focus upon the ideological aspects of the texts with a literary element
as the only acceptable method, I merely claim that an analysis along these lines is the
most rationally defensible strategy for their criticism.

Having clarified the view that no great distinction should be made between
our handling of the so-called literary texts and the other forms of discourse that enter
this study, let us now summarize what has been learnt by adopting such an approach.

From analysing all the textual traces brought together by breaking the bonds
of disciplinary convention, I am able to construct an image of the Rio de la Plata at a
particular phase of its evolution. More precisely, as the assorted discourses meet and
intersect one another at various thematic levels, I perceive that their points of

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2 John S. Brushwood develops a critique of Amalia's 'string of pearls' structure in Genteel Barbarism: Experiments in analysis of nineteenth-century Spanish-American novels (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1981). In a chapter entitled 'The Focus of Action: José Mármol's Amalia' (pp. 39-62), Brushwood argues that the novel displays no outstanding 'key moment' or climax and lacks symmetry: 'Clearly the asymmetry of Amalia is a narrative defect. It may be granted that, if the episodes of a serialized novel are read separately, the well-constructed episode is more important than the well-constructed novel. On the other hand, it is important to remember that Mármol wrote with posterity in mind, even though Amalia served the immediate purpose of encouraging Argentine exiles in their struggle against Rosas' (p. 61).

3 The first quotation is from Gálvez, Vida de Sarmiento, p. 154. On pp. 155-57 of his work, Gálvez lists a series of the 'errores graves' made by the author of Facundo. The second citation is from Bunkley, The Life of Sarmiento, p. 208.
convergence provide a unique insight into aspects of life in Argentina around the time of Rosas, a series of illuminating syntheses of creole and settler perspectives. Furthermore, our twin focus upon the local and the incomer, two elements of immeasurable importance in the region's development, opens an understanding of the nation-building process that forged modern Argentina, and more especially of the underrated contribution made to this task by the early British settler community.

In chapter two, we uncovered some persistent themes in the writings of both creole and settler authors around the topic of society, observing that life was lived at a slack pace in the region during that period, the general inactivity occasionally punctuated by an act of cruelty against either a human or animal adversary. We noted, however, that the incomer community operated according to a very different set of values, the British settlers demonstrating a propensity to industry, in conjunction with a disdain for the typical characteristics of local society. In fact, the lives and guiding principles of the early incomers served as a model to the creole liberals who sought to transform their compatriots, as Sarmiento's references to the Scottish and German colonies make plain. Moreover, the powerful bond of family within the settler community, if translated to the general population, could perhaps have served as a first line of defence against the destabilization of society by political vicissitudes, a significant step towards mollifying the impact of barbaric regimes.

All such qualities would indicate the conformity of the British settler to the pattern of the 'civilizing' immigrant. Paradoxically, however, some of the very traits which made the incomers admirable in the eyes of their creole advocates accentuated the one departure from the model - their disposition to remain culturally detached from the local population, and the attendant failure to integrate extensively on any plane. Scorn for many features of wider society, together with strong affinity to family and community alliances, mitigated against integration, especially on the marital level. But we cannot lay all accountability for this deviation from the ideal at the door of the settlers, for pre-existent factors within the creole community also contributed to the situation. The chief obstacle arising from local society was
religious prejudice, as we discovered in chapter three. Indeed, the fact that the author of *Cinco años* testifies to a considerable degree of intermarriage during the relative tolerance of the 1820s might suggest that the aloof demeanour of British settlers was not simply a feature of their national type, but partly a response to the bigotry which pervaded the young Argentina at times when a less enlightened ethos was dominant.

In the fourth chapter, we observed the fashion in which the undesirable political atmosphere of the Rosas period was concretely linked to the innate character of the common people in the texts of creole liberals, underlining the perceived exigency of racial and cultural diversification. In addition, our consideration of the two contrasting accounts of the political milieu of the 1820s revealed most visibly the impact of authorial subjectivity upon the depiction of reality, emphasizing that objective representation is an elusive quantity in any text. From appraising Robert Gibson's letters, we may surmise that detachment from the political debate was the most propitious course for the incomer, a path to be abandoned only when such issues intrusively rupture the calm of everyday life. This is again borne out in Jane Robson's account, for our narrator leaves political matters to one side, concerned only for their effect upon her personal fortunes or moral sensibilities. In the best tradition of her native land, Jane probably perceived the vagaries of ideological conflict as irrelevant to routine existence, unlike the typical Argentinian, to whom political allegiance was a central constituent of the personal identity, a natural enough attitude for the citizen of a young nation recently engendered through popular struggle. Whilst the incomers' lack of commitment may not have directly facilitated political change, neutrality on a grander scale could certainly have assisted the substitution of old factional loyalties with a new aura of harmony and national conciliation, another objective of the Generation of '37.

In summary, our multipartite excursion into the textual representation of Platine society around the time of Rosas has exposed the general compatibility of liberal creole thought with the beliefs and lifestyle of early British incomers, the two elements sharing a number of notions about the path which the evolving Argentine
The settlers, however, did not exactly perceive their role in society in the same manner as did their proponents, for there exists scant evidence to suggest that they considered their presence as part of a grand, concerted programme of modernization. Rather, the incomers seem to have felt that local society was that bit inferior to their own community, and so made every exertion to preserve their inbred values and culture for distinctly personal reasons. Regardless of the settlers' self-perception, the very fact that they took steps to defend their particular identity inadvertently realized some of the better outcomes of the immigration process. Although they did not conform to the liberal ideal in every aspect, the early Argentine-British community clearly embodied many of the characteristics of the reformative immigrant. On the epistemic level, the incomers represented the importation of well-developed commercial or agricultural practice; socially, they brought with them an appreciation of moral and assiduous conduct; in matters of faith, their adherence to non-Catholic Christianity posed a challenge to the official Church, thus advancing the cause of religious freedom.

Of course, British incomers were never present in sufficient numbers to bring about the radical transformation of Platine society, nor did their leaning towards separation facilitate such an enterprise. This should not detract from their achievements, however, for each of their small and persistent efforts in the right direction could one day have produced the desired product. My own image of the early settlers, instead of a detached elite concerned only with financial gain, consistent with the traditional view of the young Argentina as a virtual satellite of the British empire, is that of a protean incomer community endowed with a range of the best attributes of the Northern European immigrant, as set out in the ideology of the Generation of '37, a community which, given more favourable local conditions, could have played a much greater part in the evolution of Rio de la Plata society. To put it another way, the first British settlers were the living proof, albeit on a small scale, that creole liberal proposals to reform the region through immigration contained at least a degree of practical validity.
I was a little girl of four years old when I came to South America, and can only very faintly remember the voyage, which to my young mind seemed endless. My father, soon after he arrived, finding that things were not as had been represented to him, decided to strike out for himself and went to Cañuelas. At that time, Rivadavia was President and the country was in a most unsettled state. I remember, when we had settled in our new quarters, Father started by buying a milk cow which promptly returned to its previous owner some distance across the camp. Father got it back, but the same thing happened again and on each occasion he had to buy it over again, or at any rate pay something, such was the dishonesty of those amongst whom we lived.

At this time there was no fencing in the camp, so the animals would stray away for leagues if not watched and would mix with the others belonging to neighbouring owners, so Father had a brand made to represent a Scottish thistle and with this all our animals were branded, the sheep having a triangular piece taken out of the ear. I found my parents had to work very hard as they had very little money, so I determined to do something to help. One of the young women who had come out with us had a little baby, and was obliged to help make their living, and as the baby was too young to be entirely alone, I went each day to mind it, and thus commenced to earn money at the age of five years. One day while minding the baby, an aire struck me on the neck (this is a shock of bad air) and often causes great damage; it

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1 This text is a faithful reproduction of Jane Robson's account, incorporating only minor changes in punctuation when necessary for the sake of clarity. Any other editorial interpolations appear in square brackets in the main text or take the form of footnotes.

2 'Camp' is the term commonly employed by Anglo-Argentines (and Falkland Islanders, it should be noted) to describe open country, particularly that employed for the pasture of cattle or sheep. It is derived from the Spanish 'campo', meaning countryside or field.
will crack or shatter a mirror, glasses, etc. which are often found smashed from the
effects of an aire. My neck was very painful and I was ill and unable to look after my
little charge for some days, so my sister had to go in my place. She did not like this
and complained bitterly. Someone hearing this teasingly suggested she should chop
off the baby's head, so she promptly produced a weapon with which to do it.

About this time, my mother had a baby who died when a month old. This
became known, as my father had to go some leagues to get a little coffin, and the
neighbours (Italian and Spanish) came to the house playing guitars, dancing and
singing. Mother became alarmed at the wild noise they made. Taking the little dead
baby in her arms, my sister by the hand and I running beside her, we ran out by the
back of the house and made for some high thistles in which to hide. We had a dear
old faithful dog; he came with us, but kept growling and would try to bark so I had to
hold his mouth as we were in terror of our hiding place being discovered. Night
came on and still the noise went on. I became very sleepy and my head fell into
Mother's lap; I was awakened by feeling my face against the little dead baby's. It was
a weird position for us all. It now seemed quiet, so Mother said, 'Come Jean we will
go home now'. Very cautiously we peeped out and seeing and hearing no one we
approached our house, but what disorder met our eyes; the wretched people, not
finding anyone in the house, vented their displeasure by upsetting the things and
worst of all had taken everything and left us not a thing to eat. Poor Mother, I
remember her distress, and we children were hungry and frightened.

Father had gone quite early in the morning, and to be able to return home that
night, had borrowed a horse. When about two leagues from home he dismounted, the
horse immediately galloped off to its own home, leaving Father stranded. Night came
on and the only thing to do was to find his way home as best he could, but alas, the
thistles, or cardos, were high and he lost his way. All night he was wandering about,
and when in the morning he arrived, his face and hands were bleeding from the
espinas which were sticking into him. In trying to find his way, he had pushed
through the thistles. It was long before Mother could remove them all. Poor Mother
had been wild with alarm all night, not knowing what had happened to Father. This was such a wild uncertain life after leaving our peaceful Scottish home.

The terrible storms we had at times were sufficiently alarming to strike terror to the souls of grown persons, how much more so to little children. One day my sister and I were coming from the kitchen to the dining room, she carrying a kettle of boiling water. She was holding my hand as the wind was so high, and I suppose we felt safer holding hands. Anyway, I turned to close the door when a severe flash of lightning struck me. I fell to the ground and for some hours was quite unconscious; my clothes were burned and it was a narrow escape from death, one of the many I have had in my life. Fortunately, I was not carrying the kettle of boiling water, or worse might have happened to me. My sister was quite uninjured and suffered nothing worse than a great fright. I suppose it was a little time before I quite recovered, but I did, and was none the worse for my shock.

From this time, I remember little for a year or two. My parents must have prospered, as they appeared to possess a great many cows and we were very busy milking and making cheese and butter. We all had to work hard, and then the butter and cheese were taken into town (Chascomús) for sale.

One day my mother and Mr. W. went to town for this purpose, and to bring my eldest sister home from school (the only means of getting from place to place was on horseback). Well, on the return journey they had a most alarming and exciting experience. All went well until within two or three leagues from home. They were cantering along, my mother with my sister on behind her, when suddenly three horrible rough looking men came towards them, threatening and muttering, 'Let us kill them first', evidently intending to rob them. It occurred to my mother that it would be best not to appear at all alarmed, not an easy thing to do for she felt very frightened and with reason too. Mother turned and looked round as though she was

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3 Throughout the account, most of the friends and neighbours of the family are identified only by their initials, though there is often no apparent reason for preserving their anonymity.
expecting some companions, and spoke as if one was coming along. The men evidently thought that probably this one might have money, so they would get what they could from him and then settle with Mother and her companion, for they galloped off. Mother said, 'Now Mr. W., our only chance is to hide in the cardos', but he said, 'My horse will never face them'. Mother said, 'Then I will go first'. She was on a very fiery animal, so turning the horse and facing him towards the thistles she gave him some hard cuts with her whip. The horse made a tremendous jump and sprang right into the midst of the thistles. In her excitement, Mother had forgotten my sister, who was seated behind her, and the poor little girl fell off. As the way was somewhat cleared now and Mother's horse had given the lead, Mr. W.'s animal, after some persuasion, followed and they pushed their way a little distance, the horses and riders getting terribly scratched and torn. Very soon they heard the galloping of horses. It was their would-be murderers returning. At this moment, Mother remembered my sister and exclaimed, 'Oh, my God, my child'. Finding her gone she knew she must have fallen where her horse made his big jump, and not hearing her call she imagined she must have been severely hurt or killed. Her feelings were indescribable, that her poor little child was left to the tender mercy of those ruffians. Her first impulse was to rush back, never mind the consequences to herself, when she heard Mr. W. say in a low tone, 'I have the child'. He had picked her up. She was unconscious for a time, as much from fright as the fall, but soon recovered. Well, they remained scarcely breathing for fear they might be found, when they knew their lives would not be worth a moment's purchase. They could hear the men as they galloped past, vowing vengeance, and no doubt having been baulked and deceived into thinking there was someone whom they could have stolen money from, and finding their other prey also gone, they were in a fearful fury and rushed on full speed hoping to overtake them. Mother waited for some time, and then they went on through the cardos, picking places as best they could, hoping to find a way out, and knowing they dared not go back into the road or 'track' again. Then the sun set - such wonderfully glorious sunsets we had too: one wonders looking at the beauty of them
how mortals can have such hard and evil hearts - and darkness came on. After that it was still more hopeless. My father was at home, and as night came on he became very alarmed at my mother not appearing, knowing what bad characters were wandering about and that Mother had money with her. He kept walking about, I trotting after him. He did not go to rest that night but kept searching and calling. When morning at last dawned, to our unspeakable relief, the lost ones came, but in such a state, their faces and hands were covered in blood and the horses too were bleeding as the espinas of the thistles were sticking into them. They, poor things, had an awful night, trying in vain to find a way home. The first thing to be done was to try and remove the thorns, which Father did with the sheep shears by drawing them lightly over the skin - a primitive but effectual way. I often used this means afterwards in removing thorns from the cattle and horses.

My parents now moved to a place called 'San Vicente', some leagues nearer Buenos Aires. Moving from one part to another in those days was very hard and difficult work, and everyone who could was pressed into the service of helping, we children doing our little bit. It was slow progress across the camp, with no roads and every now and again pantanos to cross. The furniture and all our belongings were in bullock carts, and even when we arrived at our destination we probably had our house to build up. I often think now, with all things arranged so easy for moving, how much fuss people make of insignificant troubles.

One holiday there were a number of girls and boys gathered at our house. A fortune-teller called and commenced (I suppose for a fee of some kind) to tell fortunes. There was great fun and laughter going on. Someone discovered I was not there (I was making the butter) and called me and insisted on my joining the party. The man looked at my hand very gravely, but said nothing; he did not say, as he had to the others, what fate he saw predicted; at this they all said, 'What is Jean's fortune? Oh, she has asked you not to tell'. At this I was vexed and said, 'Yes, tell me, I do not mind'. The fortune-teller said, 'Could I open before you the book of life, the first look at it would kill you. You have a very hard life before you, such a life as few have
experienced, and you will feel at times that you cannot battle against it, but through all your many and varied trials you will come out successfully in the end. I often thought of the man's words, as they proved true.

It was a common thing for people to call at our house as they were travelling through the camp; houses were very far apart. There was a gentleman and his clerks who occasionally came and remained the night. I never liked this man, for one thing I thought him too free. I remember I was much disgusted one day when he said, 'No one would think you girls were Scottish with your white heads and black faces.' We all had very fair hair and our faces were very brown, from sunburn and being always in the air. I retorted, 'No one looking at your red nose would mistake it for anything but a brandy nose.' At this remark he was very angry, and the other men who had been listening to our conversation went outside and exploded with laughter, though they had to be careful not to let the big man know that the laugh was at his expense, for though he liked making rude, personal remarks he did not like others to retaliate, but I never deemed it necessary to study his feelings in the matter. I was always quick at replying, and many times both astonished and annoyed people with my sharp remarks.

My father now joined in partnership with a Mr. and Mrs. G., and they carried on a large dairy farm. Father imported some pigs from home, had quite a large business and did very well. Now I began to work very hard, and as I grew and my strength increased so my many duties became more numerous.

At this time the country was more and more unsettled. Rosas was outside, and Lavalle in, Buenos Aires. There were bands of Indians wandering about who were Rosas's men. Lavalle's soldiers were also wandering about, stealing, murdering and causing the greatest alarm. It was well named 'The Reign of Terror.' It became so terrible that all the families who possibly could went into the town for more safety. My father said that Mother must go with us children, but she said, no, if he could not go she would not leave him. So for a time we remained on, always in danger.
Then an alarming thing happened. It was a common thing for the men (those wandering ruffians) to come to the house and insist on searching it, pretending that they were looking for firearms, and would then steal anything they could lay their hands on. The climax came one day when Father and Mr. G. were away. We had an old peon, who had been a sailor and had lost his arm in one of the many fights and brawls with the Portuguese, I think. He was such a good, faithful old fellow, devoted to Mother and us children. He saw a party of men making for our house so he ran to the door and met them. One of the party dismounted, and drawing his sword commenced threatening and striking the peon. Mother rushed forward and the soldier sheathed his sword, but instead drew his gun and levelled it at her. She, in stepping back to avoid him, fell. In an instant our good dog 'Stout' jumped over to protect her, and stood growling and showing his teeth. The brute of a soldier slashed at him with his sword, cutting him to the backbone in three places. The dear old dog still stood his ground though the blood was pouring off him and on to my mother. I then helped to drag Mother up. At this moment a Mr. S., hearing the noise, came flying in, and the men turned their attention to him. He tried to keep their attention occupied until a band of Lavalle's soldiers which he had seen coming, could arrive, but the men sitting on their horses outside saw them also, and, knowing that they would be taken prisoner, gave a shout of warning. They were all on their horses in an instant and galloped off as hard as their horses could go. We afterwards found out that one of these men was an old peon of ours, who had been discharged for doing something wrong. In revenge (and also, no doubt, hoping to get something for himself) he had brought this band of ruffians as he knew that there was money and some valuables in the house, which they intended stealing. He would not have stopped at any crime to gain his ends and be revenged.

All this took place in a short time, but the horror of it was great. Mrs. G., who was in bed with her baby of a day or two old, was nearly dead with fright. My sister fainted, and my mother, though not injured was covered with the blood of our good brave dog, who was now lying dead on the floor. How sad we felt as we looked at his
poor torn body. Still, we were thankful that nothing worse had happened to us. From our house these men rode off to a neighbour's house, and presently we heard firing. Mother exclaimed, 'Oh, they have gone to Mr. R.'s and only the boys are at home', and so it turned out. One of the lads tried to protect their home and property, and the man, the leader of the gang, shot him down, poor boy. Then they stole everything they could carry and set the house on fire. I shall never forget the screams and terrors of that day; it was awful.

Father now said that Mother must go into town as it was too dangerous to remain, and after the terrible experience of that day she was quite ready to comply with his wishes, but only on the condition that he came as soon as he possibly could. The next thing was to get us into town safely. Here we had a piece of good fortune. A party of 300 soldiers halted close to our house, and an Officer and some men came to get water and help themselves to any milk we had, so Father, finding the Officer was a nice man, told him his difficulty. He at once said he would give him a pass and an escort, which he did. I shall never forget that journey of many leagues. We had only one cart, and that not a very big one. Into it twelve people were packed, for others as well as our family were thankful for any means to get to safety. Oh, the misery of the jolting and not being able to move one's limbs, so closely were we wedged in. There was no room for luggage, scarcely for the most ordinary necessities. We were comparatively safe after we had passed the camp, and at last we arrived in town, but only to find it full. It was with the greatest difficulty that Mother found a room. The next day Mother and I had to go to the river to get water, as it was very dear to buy and there were no horses or oxen to bring it. I was not feeling well. The river was far out so we had a long distance to go, and before we could return to the shore the water was up to my waist. Directly we reached home with our burden I took off my wet clothes and went to bed as by this time I was feeling very ill. Mother, who was not strong at the time as she had a little baby of two weeks old, also took a chill. The Doctor was called in and said I had measles and must not be in the bed with Mother and the baby. As soon as the doctor left, the
woman in whose house we were staying said we must leave at once, as she had a family and could not run the risk of having an infectious disease in her room. What was to be done? Mother could not look for rooms, so a kind friend who heard of our distress said he would see what he could do. After hunting for hours, he returned and said he had found a room but feared it was very damp, but we were thankful for any shelter. He carried me, and other kind friends our mattresses, and Mother was also helped. Thus we arrived at our new quarters. Mother was again taken with violent trembling, and although I was feeling very ill we piled all our clothes on her, and my sister and I had to nurse ourselves and the wee baby as best we could. Well, after a time we got better and things seemed a little brighter for us children. Mother worked very hard, even doing washing, ironing, sewing or anything to make a little money.

I must now tell you of something that happened, which shows how Mother returned good for evil. The woman who turned us out of her house was in great trouble as her two children developed smallpox and were very ill. It was a very bad kind and no one would go to help nurse them. My mother hearing this, went herself, leaving the baby in our care. She would just come for few hours, do what was necessary for us, and then return to the nursing. The children recovered, and none of us took the disease. Years after my parents did still more for this family. The husband failed in business, and they took them into our house and educated their boy.

Now to return to the time when my father came to join us in town. After we left the camp there was only my father and our old sailor servant. (I mentioned him as having lost an arm. He had been one of Whitelock[e]'s men, and often told us many curious tales of those adventurous times.) They had to undergo endless hardships and finally had to flee for their lives. Some soldiers found them and took everything they possessed, even their clothes, and left them tied hand and foot. My father thought they would starve to death, but the old peon cheered him by saying, 'This is not the first time I have been bound, I will get free', and sure enough he did, and loosened my father. Then, they thought, what were they to do, for they were
absolutely naked. Their only chance was to get to the camp and throw themselves on
their mercy, though they feared there was little chance of sympathy or help from that
quarter. It was the only alternative, however, so they went and pleaded for even a
few rags. Those they did get, but scarcely enough to cover their nakedness, and in
this state Father arrived in town. Now came a time of many privations, and Father
did any work he could get, and, as I said before, Mother was working hard also. At
last the Revolution came to an end and Rosas was in power.

People began to return to the camp and their homes, and our parents decided
to go also. They were feeling sad and anxious, as they did not know if they would
find anything left of their home. Alas, there was little indeed left. Everything that
would burn was gone, and there was nothing left but ashes.

We now had to start our life afresh, and very up-hill work it was. The first
thing to be done was to build our house, working literally day and night until it was
accomplished. Then Father hired cows, milked them, and made butter and cheese for
sale. Gradually we once more got cattle of our own. As I have said before, we had no
means of keeping our animals from straying to other camps except by watching them
constantly. Natives had a way of planting corn, and then, if one's cattle went into it,
they would charge heavily for damage done. Now I was very strong and the life I was
leading made me even more so each week. I was constantly on horseback and was as
fearless as the wind. Indeed, I did not know the meaning of fear, nor have I all my
life. Whatever the weather, sun or wind, rain or storm, I was out early in the morning
and home late at night. I was doing peon's work by looking after the cattle. I
remember sometimes, when we would go out in the cold winter mornings, the mud
would be hard from frost, but as soon as the sun rose it would melt and we would be
up to our knees in cold slush and mud, for we had neither stockings nor boots.

My eldest sister was not strong, so had none of this life, and was sent into
town to school. I began to feel that I would also like to be learning, and when Father
had half an hour to spare he would give me lessons, but these were very rare
occasions. I had evidently a good memory, for I never forgot anything I had learned.
Now came a seca [drought] for three years, and times were very hard with us again; there was no grass for the animals, and they became thin and weak and died. This meant ruin once again. A most curious thing happened at this time, it rained mice, at any rate so it was said, for we had a pest of them, and no one knew from where they had come if not from the sky. After a time I had the opportunity of having a few lessons at a house three leagues away, but as some days I could not go as there would be work needing my care and I had to remain at home, it was not very satisfactory, so my lessons had to be given up and for a time things went on as usual. One day I cried to my mother and said, 'Everyone can get some education but me and I shall grow up not knowing anything of books: I work day and night to get some education, but something always stops me'.

Now there was a Mrs. P. who had a school for little girls in her house, so Father said I might go and see what she would charge to take me for a time (I was only 12 years old). I went off, delighted, but Oh dear! my heart was very heavy when she told me her terms; I knew Father could not pay so much. Suddenly I thought Mrs. P. must have a great deal to do herself; so I said to her that if she would let me do the housework and look after the small girls I would work very hard for her and she could give me some lessons in return. She readily agreed to this. I would rise early and work very hard, but I feared I did not do enough and said so one day to Mrs. P. She put her hand on my head and said, 'God bless you, you are a great comfort to me'. I remained with her six months, and I may say that was all the education I ever had. My mother had a fall from her horse, and I was sent for as they could no longer spare me.

Shortly after this Father bought a piece of ground and built on it. He called it New Caledonia. It was close to the chacras, and when we had a windy or stormy day, I would be on horseback all day, just going into the house to snatch something to eat and out again. If there was anything hard to do Jean could do it. On one occasion I remember we had a lot of wild cows which had never been in a corral before. The excitement of driving them was very great. The peon would go one way,
I the other. The animals would come racing and kicking, and sometimes come full force into me and send me flying off my horse. I would laugh at this. It would often take from early dawn until late in the morning before we could get them in. I would often lasso them - I could use a lasso as well as any man. The animals would stray, and in order to find them I would stand on my horse and look through a little glass I had. I could see for miles across the flat camp. It was a common thing for neighbours to ask me, when they met me, if I could tell them anything of their straying animals. I was very well known, loved by some and feared (although I was young) by many, for I would have justice at any cost. Once there was dispute about the measurement of Father's camp, as they said they had measured it and it was not as much as Father claimed. He would have given in, but I stepped it out with my horse and found it was ours by right, and proved it to be so. After that the natives found that if they wanted to cheat they had to deal with me.

I was terribly hurt one day when I overheard Father say to someone how sorry he was that he had no son. I went to him afterwards and said, 'Do I not do the work of a man, and take a son's place? I have always tried to do so.' He took me in his arms and said that I did all a son could do, but that he did not like me having to do a man's work. I was comforted then, for though I worked in this way it did not trouble me, for I was big, healthy and strong. I did not know what it meant to be overtired or exhausted. I have often killed and skinned both sheep and oxen. I mention this to show how strong I was; there was no work on our farm which I could not, and did not do, when the occasion required it of me.

My parents now took in about seven orphan boys - at any rate, boys who had no one to care for them and look after them. It must be understood that at that time slavery had not been suppressed, and in some instances great cruelty took place, so that when kind people took and cared for these homeless little creatures, it was a great blessing for them. Those boys came under my care. Oh! what wild young

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4 Slavery had, in fact, been constitutionally abolished in a series of laws passed during 1812 and 1813, although the turbulent political climate made consistent enforcement difficult. By the time Jane refers
things they were, and what a lot of looking after they required. Father had a teacher
for them, but when they were outside it was like trying to get wild cattle in, to get
them under control and back to the house, so I had a whip, and used it too.
Sometimes my sister would come out and call me cruel. The boys would at once turn
on her and say it was no business of hers, and I could whip them if I liked.

In after years the same boys, grown to men, have come to me and made
themselves known, and many laughs we have had over the old days. Father now
bought 400 head of cattle from a Mr. T. five leagues away. He made a large potrero
(double ditch) and so shut the cattle in at night. One night a dense foggy mist came
in, and we found that the peon, whose work it was to collect the animals, had missed
more than half, and we knew that in all probability they would have wandered back
to their previous owner, but it was no use looking for them till morning. At dawn,
Father and Mr. S. went off, telling me to follow as soon as I had finished the milking.
As soon as I finished, I jumped on my horse (I had a good one and could make it do
anything I wished) and galloped off. Reaching the place, I found our cattle mixed up
with others; I could tell them by their head marks. I could see nothing of Father or
Mr. S. so I started separating them. (I was generally rather successful at this, for it
wants quickness and tact.) I went on for some hours, sometimes in high thistles. At
last I got them all back, after being nine hours in the saddle in the boiling sun, and I
had not even had a drink of water. When I arrived home my face and hands were
streaming with blood from the scratches and thorns of the thistles. It took Mother
some time to remove them all.

When father returned he said, 'Why did Jean not come? We waited for her at
Mr. G.'s where we had breakfast, and then the sun was too strong to start work'.
When he found that I had done the work of separating the cattle by myself, in the
heat of the sun, he said he could have cried. I said, 'Well, Father, I have cried many
to, therefore, no children should have lived in fear of being formally enslaved, but practice probably did
not match theory, with the result that orphans were still vulnerable to some form of comparable
exploitation.
times today when I was hot and tired and discouraged. I felt that by my strength of will I had done much that day, and I said to myself, I will not give in. I think it must have made a great impression on me, for from that time I never allowed myself to say, I cannot do a thing, if I could not manage one way, I would find another.

There grew up between my father and myself a perfect understanding. He put implicit confidence in me, and I was determined to live up to it and give him every reason to trust me. Whatever I did he appeared to know my motive at once, and looking back over the years now, I can say my father understood me better than any other human being ever has.

My sisters and I had some animals of our own. One day a man came to buy some cattle, and we agreed that ours should also be sold, but I wanted to keep one for which I had a great fancy. When the man began to pick the animals he intended taking, my father told him not to take my favourite cow as there was another exactly like it, perhaps a little better. The man, of course, thought mine was the best and that was why I wished to keep it back, so he insisted on taking mine. My cow had the hair cut off short at the tip of the tail, and while the man went in for breakfast I cut the other cows' tails just the same. When he came out to go on with his work he said, 'Which is the cow I have chosen?'. I was feeling so angry with him that I said, 'Just choose now, you see there is no difference'. He did choose and to my delight got the other cow not mine. I felt very pleased with myself - I had won the day and kept my pet cow.

About this time there was to be a grand procession in town, headed by the three Rosas brothers. They were fine looking men. A friend came and said she would like to take Christina and me to see it. I was delighted, needless to say, as more hard work than pleasure came my way, and this was a rare occasion. Mother gave each of us some money, to Christina 20 dollars and to me only 2 dollars. I made no remark but noticed the difference in the amount, and felt that sometimes I was treated as a child but when there was work to be done I had to be a woman. After seeing the procession and the wonders of the city, which to us country-bred girls was very
wonderful, we went to look at the shops. Christina spent her money and said to me, 'Now you spend yours', but I refused and said that I did not think it worthwhile. We had a little discussion about it, but I would not give in. When we arrived home I went to Mother and, handing her the two dollars, said, 'Thank you for the money you lent me'. I suppose this was rather sarcastic, but I felt keenly the difference made between the two of us. Mother smiled and said, 'Oh, you little miser'. Father looked up and said, 'Well, dear Jean, I glory in your independent, noble spirit'. This praise was sweet to me, and I have, I think, carried this spirit through life. However much I may have wanted a thing, if I could not provide it for myself I would go without it. I never asked even my parents to give me anything.

Two years after this incident I was thinking of getting married and wanted to provide bedding, etc. I had a good many lambs which I had reared, as the mothers had died. I clipped these and made mattresses of the wool. I also had sixteen young horses of which I was very proud, as I had brought them up entirely by myself. Though we worked hard, there were times of fun, dancing and merriment. On holidays people would come out to us, and often travellers passing through the camp would spend the night with us. This was a very hospitable country. It was understood that no one ever refused hospitality, and it was a nice break to the dullness and sameness of camp life for people to come and tell us all the news.

In the year 1840 I was married to Hugh Robson. He had come out with his parents as a little boy, among the other Colonists, in the good ship 'Symmetry'. I had many good offers, as the world counts them good, but I always resolved I would never marry a man richer than myself. Some would no doubt call this an odd and ridiculous idea. Perhaps it was, but I never regretted it, and my independent spirit had nothing to suffer from this cause. We were married at my father's estancia, 'New Caledonia', by Dr. Brown, on February 3rd at 12 o'clock. There was a very large gathering of Scotch friends; we had breakfast at one o'clock and at 3 p.m. we started for our new home, accompanied by Father, Mother and all our guests, a goodly number, and all on horseback.
I must mention my wedding dress. It was a very fine, white lawn, trimmed with embroidery - a very beautiful dress for those days - and undoubtedly prized by me as it had a history. I have mentioned before the old Irish peon we had when I was a child. He had not only lost his arm, but a great part of the flesh had been torn away from his left side, only leaving the skin over the heart (or so it appeared) which one could see distinctly beating. I often did him little services and he was very devoted to me, and when we were children he never went for his holiday or into town without bringing us some little offering. Some four years before my marriage he asked a mutual friend to buy a dress for me and sent it. I had no use for it just then so put it away carefully, and this was my wedding gown. Poor old fellow, he was a very faithful servant and most grateful for any kindness shown him.

Before leaving my old home my father called me to him and said, 'Jean, you have been a good daughter, I have never lifted my hand to you nor let any other do so, be as good a wife as you have been a daughter, God and his mercy be with you'. He gave me some animals, 10 cows, and, among other things, a cheese press, and said, 'Go Jean, and make your fortune'. He evidently thought I was capable of doing so.

Well now to return to the start for my new home, which was seven leagues away. We all rode along merrily till the last league, when there was a race to see who would get to the house first. There was tremendous excitement, all galloping their hardest, the first one to arrive was to be rewarded by a kiss from the bride. We danced all that night and at sunrise the party prepared to leave, but the fun was not yet quite over. On their return journey each house they came to with a Scotch resident (there were very few), they dismounted and danced and sang, Father and Mother being the leaders. Nearly all the Scotch families were connected in some way with my family, if only by ties of friendship, and are still, in many cases to the fourth generation. The natives, of course, thought the inglexes had all gone quite mad, not knowing that this was an old Scotch custom.
Our house was on McC.'s ground, but we soon found that it was too small, so my husband went away to find a more convenient place. That night a tremendous storm came on. I was up rounding and keeping our sheep together. A neighbour had a large flock of sheep which he did not look after properly. I could hear them coming and knew that they would mix with ours, so I called my help, a boy of 10 years old, to look after our sheep while I drove the others towards their home. While I was away the boy had let many of our sheep stray. The next day, when Hugh returned, he went to claim the sheep from the man he knew had them, but could only get part of them back. There was some mean trickery and we had to lose them - and this man was a relative.

The country at this time was again very unsettled, and a revolution broke out in Chascomús, so all the English speaking people went into the city, amongst them my husband's relatives. They tried to persuade me to go also, but I said, 'No, I will remain with my husband and help him, if we must flee we will go together'. Hugh went to help his sister to go to town, and while he was away the revolutionists came and took all our horses, leaving me only one out of sixteen. They took my favourite riding horse, so I followed them for six leagues trying to get my horse back. The captain said he would try and see if it could be returned. After a weary day and a lot of patience I did get my horse, to my keen delight. I was determined to have my favourite back, if perseverance and worrying could do it.

One of the many troubles we had to contend with was the soldiers coming and taking our horses. No one dared refuse them; the only thing to do was to hide them, and this I have done on more than one occasion. I have put my best horses in a bedroom as a place of safety - a queer stable, but in those days one had to do all sorts of things to protect one's property and outwit the army and those in authority. Had I resorted this time to this way of hiding my horse, I should not have had such a tedious long day, following the soldiers and begging that my own property should be returned.
One day my husband and I were working when a peon came rushing up, calling for help. A drunken Irishman had gone to McC.'s and stabbed him. My husband seized a saw and a stick and we rushed away as hard as we could. When we arrived McC. was lying in a pool of blood in the most terrible condition. He said, 'I am dying'. Between us we got him on to the bed, fearing he would die as we did so, for we did not know how badly he was injured, but I knew he was severely wounded. I was removing his clothes to find the wound and try to stop the flow of blood when there was a noise behind me at the door, and there was the villain. Not knowing that we had come, he had returned to finish his horrible deed and make sure he had quite killed his victim. My husband sprang at him, and then began a fierce struggle. The man was much bigger and stronger than Hugh, and mad with drink and baffled over his evil intentions. I soon saw that my husband would be overpowered by his fury. As they fell he attempted to get his knife from his back, where they always carry it. I felt I must help or my husband who was underneath would share the same fate as McC. I was holding the wounded man, but leaving him I sprang over them as they were lying on the ground, and seizing the first thing I could find, which was a spade, I held it over his head as if I was going to strike him. This frightened him for an instant, and Hugh managed to get uppermost. I called to the boy to bring some cow ties of raw hide, and I was in the act of bringing this round his body to tie his arms, when he gave me a most vicious kick in my stomach, which sent me reeling against the wall. The pain was very great and for the moment my senses seemed as though they were leaving me, but my determined Scotch blood was up and I dashed forward again, and this time, careful not to put myself in a position where he could kick me, I got one arm bound and then drew the lasso quickly round the other arm, after which we could bind his feet together. He had native spurs on, and he kicked the floor so violently that he smashed them to pieces, strong as they were. Leaving him I then turned to McC., as my husband was quite exhausted and could do nothing for a while. McC. was moaning feebly and whispered, 'It's no good, I am dying'. It was an awful gash, but something must be done, and as I tried to close it I thought there was
little hope of saving his life. I then burned some rag, using some of my own garments, and with this I stopped the bleeding. Then I bound him up and did what I could for him. My husband had to leave me to send the boy off for the alcalde. I felt very ill and must have fainted. When I recovered it was a ghastly scene as I had fallen in a pool of blood and was covered with it. Mr. McC. was quite delirious, and the man was cursing and vowing that when he was free, never mind how long it took, he would kill my husband. The alcalde came and took the man to prison, and I heard that after a term of prison he was sent on to a ship, no doubt he was kept in order there, and trained. I never heard or saw any more of him, though for many months after, he figured in my dreams each night, and I went over that horrible struggle again and again. McC. happily recovered from his wound, and after a time married an Irish girl, whose mother saw part of the struggle we had with McC.‘s would-be murderer. They lived in this same place and I still know and see their children’s children.

In 1841 we moved north. We had to cross the Maldonado river on our journey. We had with us some cows and 1,800 sheep, but when we arrived at the banks of the river the sheep would not pass, try as we would; the cows and three carts of luggage went on. I was on horseback helping to drive the sheep; it took us five hours to get those sheep over. This delayed us so much that night came on. We went on our way until ten o’clock when the moon went down, so there was nothing to do but wait till daybreak. It was the end of May, and very cold with sharp frost. We unsaddled, after having been riding for 18 hours, and I lay down with my saddle for a pillow. My brother covered me with his recado - for I had no wrap of any kind - as I had imagined we should reach our destination well before nightfall. I was so weary that, in spite of my hard bed, I slept. The next morning we started at daybreak. I was not well at the time and felt quite ill and unfit to face the heavy work before me.

In August my first child was born, a son. We remained two years at this place, and a terrible two years it was. Our stock was attacked by leech and we lost everything. One of the most awful storms that I ever remember having seen in my
long experience of this country’s severe storms, occurred in January 1842. The wind took everything before it; our sheep travelled many leagues, literally carried by the storm. Of course, we lost the greater part of them. One man estimated that his sheep had been carried by the wind for about 30 leagues. As he was returning from following them his horse fell dead under him from fatigue and cold. My husband, seeing the man, brought him into our house. He was almost frozen and it was some time before he could get warm, and this was during the hottest part of the year; it was a very curious and unusual storm. I have often experienced intense cold in the early morning before the sun gains power, but as it rises higher the heat is always very great. It is lovely in the camp in the spring when the sun rises and all is fresh and green.

On one of our moves, there was a lot to be done when we arrived, and I was working away putting up a shelter which was built principally of a sort of grass or reed. I had to keep going up and down the ladder, which was very tiring. I was not strong at the time, and was feeling overwrought. Presently a man came along - a man whom I felt would not do me a good turn - but I imagined that upon seeing a woman working, he might help me a little, so I asked him if he would hand up some of the reeds, but he simply laughed and refused. I felt so angry that I said something I would not have said at any other time. I said, 'For this may you die in the camp like a dog, with no one to help you in your time of need'. I felt at once that I ought not to have said it, for somehow these predictions of mine do come true, as it did in this case, for the man died out in the camp in a ditch.

In 1843 we came to 'Los Sauces', T. R.’s, where we had 21,000 sheep on thirds and also a large dairy. My life seems to be made up of fresh starts after failures; it wanted a strong heart to do battle with it. I had to work night and day, for at night there were the animals to look after and collect, housework, sewing and washing to do, for I had no woman to help me. We had, of course, peones for the outside work, but they were so untrustworthy and would go off on a drinking bout or
amuse themselves in their own fashion and were so much trouble to look after, that they were worse than useless.

This period was the time of the French and English blockade, and all imported things were at fabulous prices, indeed, all living was very expensive, tea at 10 dollars a pound, salt 6 dollars a pound. This made it very difficult for us to make ends meet, though I worked as perhaps no woman has ever done - I even killed animals for our meat.

One day I was out riding when my horse caught his foot in a vizcacha's hole and nearly fell. With a tremendous effort I pulled him up, but in doing so I hurt my back very badly and before I recovered from that my second baby was born. I was very, very ill. My husband went off to fetch my mother, but did not find her at home, and had many leagues to go before he could get a woman to come to me. Six hours elapsed before he returned. I was quite alone, except for my little three year old son.

With my little dead baby beside me, I made a vow to my God that if I were spared to do so, I would go to any woman in a similar situation, never mind who it was or how far away. I have kept that vow and many are the times that I have been called upon to fulfil it. In those undertakings I have always asked my God to be with me and help me, and I know he has, as I have often felt that he was very close to me. I have often been called to go to some sick person, and started off on a dark and sometimes stormy night and ridden from five to ten leagues. In the camp in those days there was no doctor, and as the ranchos were so far apart, women (and others too) had to suffer greatly, and but for the help of those who were near enough and could, or would, go to them, they came off very badly. I became quite used to being Doctor as well as nurse, and many daring things I did, things that had to be done on the instant, with a life at stake. Our remedies were most primitive, but I really think they were as good and effectual as the scientific ones of later days. I always think that having attended and doctored animals as a child and also having studied nature has taught me many lessons which I have found work with human beings. As I have said, when my baby was born I registered a vow that I would always help when I
could, and I was very soon called upon to do so. I was asked to attend to a Mrs. B. and very ill she was, poor thing. I was only a young woman then and this was my first patient. I cannot remember the numbers I have attended to in the years that have passed. Some were very poor and had nothing for sickness at hand. I have often torn and used the clothes I was wearing to supply some urgent need. I gained a sort of reputation that my patients recovered where there seemed little hope. It may have been a case of faith healing, the power of mind over body.

I had been married some four years and had a young sister staying with me. I had to go some leagues across the camp on business, so I took my sister behind me on my horse and my little child on my knee. We cantered along for some distance seeing nothing to alarm us, as one could see a great distance across the wide flat camp. Presently I happened to look round and saw a horseman, and from that distance he looked a rough looking fellow. I took no notice at first but increased my pace a little, then I found he did the same and it was evident that he was trying to overtake me. I whipped up my horse, and then it became a hard race. My sister was very frightened and kept telling me how he was gaining on us, and for a time he seemed to be. We raced like this for about a league, and then I saw a ranch and rode towards it and pulled up, thinking the man would go off as he might suppose I was remaining there, but I did not intend going in as probably there would be no one at home. I gave my horse time to get his breath and then started again. My horse was swift and strong and was as excited as we were, and galloped hard without stopping for a long distance. Just as the man was gaining on us we came to the house for which I was bound. We rushed in headlong and I was able to bang the door in his face. Today this must all seem ridiculous; why did we imagine the man meant mischief? but at the time the taking of life and property was held very lightly, and theft or even murder was committed just to gain a few dollars.

Around 1845 my husband and I were with a wedding party. The bridegroom was my husband's brother. All the party was on horseback, on their way to the newly married couple's home. We had travelled a long way and we all felt very thirsty.
Passing a pulperia, we stopped, and the man seeing we were a wedding party did not bring just a glass of what each one ordered, but the whole bottle. When we had finished my husband insisted on paying. The man charged for the whole bottle, although there was only one small glass taken out of most of them. There was lemonade, brandy, whisky, caña and orchula. After the bill had been paid the man took the bottles inside. I followed him inside and said, 'Are all the bottles paid for?'. He said, yes. 'Very well', I said, and seizing one in each hand I proceeded to water the floor with the contents. After emptying them all, to the intense disgust of the man, I told him that perhaps it might teach him to be honest next time and only charge for the amount drunk. The flies would now give him something to do, as the sweet stuff on the floor would attract them by the thousands. It was much better that they should benefit by it than this dishonest man. Needless to say, this caused the rest of the party much amusement and there was great laughter.

Now I come to about the year 1853. A man and his wife and child came to us one day and begged us to take them in. They had come out from town to stay with some relatives, but some misunderstanding arose and they parted. I felt sorry for them and took them in as the woman was unfit to travel. Four days after they arrived a baby was born, and I nursed it and looked after the mother. Time went on and they remained with us for six months, and we treated them as one of the family. What I am about to relate will show how they repaid us. We had been milking a great many cows, and making a lot of butter and cheese, in fact we had been doing very well and had saved a good deal of money, and we intended buying some land. I had put this money away in a chest for the time being. The man and woman knew of this hiding place, in fact they knew all that went on in the house, most unfortunately as it turned out for us.

One day I was going into Chascomús with my husband to take cheese and butter for sale. I had mounted my horse and was just starting off when I found it was very cold, so I returned to the house again and taking my baby, who was six weeks old (my boy John) up in his cradle, I carried him from my bedroom into the dining
room, and threw a heavy coat over the cradle; on thinking about it afterwards, I could not imagine why I had done so, but thank God I was led to do it. I fastened the doors, leaving the other children out at play, and, knowing I should not be absent very long, I left, feeling that no harm could come to them. We went into Chascomús and sold our cheeses, etc. When about half way home, on our return, I saw a black cloud just over where our house should be. I said to my husband, 'What a curious cloud', and then I exclaimed, 'My God, it must be our house'. While I spoke I thought I could see flames. I knew then that my fears were correct. I had a whale bone whip and I lashed my horse so furiously that soon there was little of the whip left. Oh, what a mad gallop that was, each instant seemed an age. On I flew, my good horse going his hardest. All the time I was picturing my little helpless baby in that burning house, as I knew the other children could run from the flames. Any mother must recognize the agony I was enduring.

At last I was in sight of the burning mass. The children on seeing me came running and close behind them a man whom I thought was a stranger. In his arms he had my baby. I threw myself from my horse and snatching my little one to me I felt overpowered with joy and thankfulness. But this was not the time to give way to my feelings. I reverently thanked my God from a heart full of gratitude that he had spared my baby, and putting the little one in the ditch, I ran to the burning house hoping that I might save some part of it, but it was hopeless; it was a mass of flames and nothing could be done. Here was a trial of faith. I had helped that man and his wife to the utmost of my power, and they had rewarded me by robbing my house and so that it should not be discovered had set it on fire and departed. I was loath to believe such base ingratitude, but it was so. In no other way could the house have taken fire except by some person deliberately causing it, as at that time there were no matches and only flint and steel were used to obtain a light, so no small child could do it. How differently the man who had saved my child returned a kindness I had once done him. I will now tell you about it.
Two years previously a man came to our house one day and begged us to help him, as the authorities were looking for him to make him serve in the army. I told him we were surrounded by soldiers who were helping with the shearing, and that it would not be safe either for him or ourselves to have him in the house. Then I thought of a shelter there was outside, and for three days I hid him there and took him his food. On the third night he rode away and we did not see him until two years after. He was passing and saw the flames, and thinking the house was quite empty he attempted to put out the fire. Getting on the roof he beat it till the thatch gave way, and then he discovered the baby. The fire was burning furiously in the room from which I had removed the baby. He forced the door open at last and got into the dining room and found the cradle just on fire. He pulled the baby out quite uninjured; the heavy coat which I had thrown over the cradle had saved it from catching fire at once, though the part which was unprotected was burned. The man took the baby and the cradle out (the same cradle one of my daughters still has and has used for all her children; it is a precious possession in the family). The first time the man came to our house, I saved him from a very unhappy fate, the next time he came he saved my child's life. When I cast my bread upon the waters, little did I think that it would return to me in such a manner. The man left and I have never seen him again, though I have often wished I could have shown him my gratitude. Only the part of the house composed of bricks was left standing, so all the rest had to be rebuilt.

We lived there for some years. Years of sorrow and happiness, for I found much joy in my growing family. My little boy James (he was about six years old) was very fond of catching and riding spirited horses. One day one of these ran away with him and threw him, poor little man; I saw it happen. He came to me and I tried to find out if he was hurt, but he did not seem to be or child-like he did not complain. In a day or two he began to fail and then became very ill. I did what I could and then sent for the doctor. When he came he said that my poor little boy was injured internally and nothing could be done. After some days of great pain, little James passed away. We took our boy into town and buried him in the English cemetery. I
was very grieved over my son's death and felt that I could not endure much more sorrow, but there was trouble awaiting me on my return. I found that the *estancia*, on which we had just spent a great deal of money in order to improve it, had been sold over our heads to a man I had helped - for whom I had done a lot. When his wife heard about it she said that she would be very angry with him if he did take it from us, so he said he would give it up. I was feeling very sore about the whole matter, and unsettled too, and was determined to look for fresh camp so that there would be no chance of it being sold. I must tell of a journey I had, seeking this camp, with my little son Hugh as a companion. We started at sunrise and rode for many leagues. We had to cross the Samborombón river, which was getting high and there was a lot of water in the camp, but at the place we passed, the horses could cross without swimming. Well, I looked at the camp I thought of buying, and practically decided to take it. On our return journey it got very stormy and a tremendous wind started blowing, which we had to face. We battled along, thinking that after we had crossed the river we had not far to go. We made for the part I thought best, but imagine my dismay - weary, hungry and night time coming on - to find it quite impossible to cross. I said to my boy, 'We must try somewhere farther down'. We struggled on and at last I thought I could see smoke, that meant a habitation of some sort and human beings. We made for it and found a man there. He told us we must go to a place some six leagues further down the river before it was safe to cross, and kindly said he would show us the way. When we reached the spot it looked terrible, the water was rushing along, and my boy said, 'Oh Mother, we cannot go over here, I feel so frightened and I have such a little horse that the water will come over me'. I said, 'Oh no, you keep close by me and your horse will swim high, you will be quite safe'. He had on a jersey which I thought I could seize and hold him up if necessary. We plunged in and waded a little distance, but the current was so strong and the water so deep that our horses were soon off their feet and were swimming. It was not a pleasant experience as we were very tired. Reaching the other side we had to go back the same distance we had come along the river bank. By this time it was quite dark.
and I had only the stars to guide me, and they were not very clear. I knew there should be a house about somewhere, and so there was for we soon saw a faint light and made for it. I clapped my hands and a man and a woman appeared. I asked for shelter and rest. The man said, 'Why, you must be a Rodger'. He came towards me and said, 'Come in'. I said, 'You must help me for I am so stiff that I cannot get off my horse'. So he and his wife helped me to get off my horse and carried me into the house. It was some time before I could move, for I was so numb and stiff from being so long in the saddle, and wet through besides, that my limbs seemed partially paralyzed. The man then turned to Hugh and said, 'Get off, and come in', but, poor little boy, he was in the same condition that I was, and was utterly incapable of moving alone. These kind people took us in, gave us dry clothing, warm drinks and refreshment, and made a big fire by which to dry our clothes. After a rest we were able to go on our way, and very grateful we were for this help in time of need.

Some time after this journey, I sold ten cows to a man. He was unable to pay the money down at the time but said he would be shearing shortly and that after selling the wool he would pay me. A month elapsed, and then someone came and told us that the man had sold his wool and gone off to some other part of the country with his family, and that he had already been gone three days on his journey. I said to my husband, 'I will follow him and claim my money'. He said, 'It is no use trying to catch him, if it is true that he has had three days start'. I went first to Chascomús with butter and cheese, and found the rumour was true, so I returned home and taking my son John with me I told my daughter to tell her father what I intended doing and so started on my seemingly rather hopeless journey. However, after riding hard we caught the runaway man and his family just stopping for the night. When the man saw me he was in a state of fright, and immediately began saying he had left the money for me with a friend, which I told him was false. When he found I was not to be put off, he gave me the money. By this time it was quite dark and my boy was rather nervous, for he said, 'Now, Mother, what can we do? This is strange camp'. I said, 'Don't fear, we will keep to the track as long as there is any, and afterwards we
will travel by the stars, or trust to Mr. Buchanan's horses as they will make for home' (for we had left our tired horses at Mr. Buchanan’s, and he had lent us others). We reached Mr. Buchanan's safely at midnight, and they gave us tea and refreshments. After a little rest and talk we proceeded on our journey homewards, reaching the estancia soon after sunrise. I had ridden close on 40 leagues in that day - or rather day and night - only resting that short time at Mr. Buchanan's, and I had used three horses to do it.

In 1857, our church, St. Andrew’s, was opened by the Rev. J. Smith, D.D. It was very wet and had been so for many days previously; the camp was in a very bad state for driving. We had a large carriage and a great many of us went, but at times it seemed doubtful if we would manage to get to the Church at all. We had nine leagues to travel, pantanos to cross, and sometimes it seemed impossible for us to proceed, even with the many strong horses we had. However, with patience and much bumping and rough tossings, we at last arrived. It was worth the trouble, as we were one and all interested in the ceremony we had come to witness, for at last we had our Church. It had cost us some trouble, I suppose, and we all had in one way or another to deny ourselves something. I think we all felt it was worth it on this day, when our Church was completed, and we had met to rejoice, and knew it was a good work well done.

In the year 1860 a man came to live next to us, and caused us much trouble. He would steal horses and cattle to change the mark, and would also steal the newly born lambs, and would stop at no mean act. One day my son John came to me and said, 'Mother, I am sure D. has stolen our animals, I can see the hide in his ranch, he and his companions are away, and I looked in'. I said, 'Saddle my horse and I will go and see', as I was determined this time to find out for myself and make an example of

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5 The so-called Rancho Kirk at Chascomús was built during the winter of 1857 and opened in November of that year. For further details of its establishment, see pp. 154-55 of the present study, or James Dodds, Records of the Scottish Settlers in the River Plate and their Churches (Buenos Aires: Grant and Sylvester, 1897), pp. 270-74.
him, for these thefts had gone on long enough. Telling John to call his father and ask him to fetch the alcaldé, I went to D.'s ranch. He was just coming towards it. I went up to him and said, 'You have a skin of ours which you have stolen'. He, of course, began to deny it, and then to use bad language. I said, 'We have sent for the alcaldé, and he will decide if you are a thief, and what is to be done with you'. He at once changed and began saying, 'Oh, you are a good woman and would not harm a poor Irish boy'. I said, 'You are young, and I think it a pity you should be a thief and lead this dishonest life; we will try and make an honest man of you'. At this he flew at me with some shears he had stuck in his belt. I drew my horse back a few steps, and then turning with my whip in my hand (it was a whale bone one with a lead handle). I said, 'Stand back or I will not answer for your life, and don't think I am alone, for someone is watching'. It was only my daughter but he thought it was a man. He then started pleading again, and said, 'I will give you a thousand dollars if you let this pass'. 'No', I said, 'for then I should be as bad as you are'. He then became desperate, and rushing into the house he came out again with a pistol, and jumping on to his horse which was close at hand was about to make off. I called out, 'Stop!'. He drew his pistol and pointed it at me. I gave my horse a kick and he made one bound alongside the man. My horse was a racer and well trained, knew what was expected of him and answered to my wishes. He threw all his weight against D.'s horse, and at the same instant I grasped D.'s pistol with my left hand and with my elbow in his chest and my foot on his horse's side (he had a small animal) I had complete power, and my hand was as strong as his. There we were, swaying and turning round and round. If I found he was getting the least power, I pressed my foot with all my weight into his horse's side, or rather kidneys, and it would sink down. My horse, thinking it was a race, would lean his whole weight against D.'s horse. The alcaldé now appeared. As we were struggling we had neared D.'s ranch, and he slipped off his horse and made for it as his came coming out [sic]. I called, 'Don't try to get away, it will be worse for you'. My husband and the alcaldé now came up, and to my great disgust, after all I had gone through to secure him, simply let him go free, so that he
left this part of the country. We saw nothing of him for 15 years, when he returned with his brother, who was as disreputable as himself. They again settled down close to us and once more caused great disturbance. They were two men who fought against each other and us, and the two D.'s were made of cat's-paws [i.e. were light-fingered]. For some years we had to keep a perpetual and careful watch on our cattle and property, and even then it cost us much annoyance and expense.

I have given the serious side of my life rather than the gay, though we had bright times mixed in with hard work. There is not much amusement in this country, except perhaps dancing, and that is done very often and it gives much enjoyment. My eldest son and my daughter E.'s birthday came within two days of each other, so they were kept up together. We used to have a gathering during the day, with sports, and in the evening we finished off with a dance. We were expecting my son Hugh on his birthday. He did not come as early as we expected, and my little boy John commenced to worry and think he would not come, as I had told them all that if Hugh did not arrive we would not have the dance. However, he did come, and John was in the highest spirits. I don't know why, but often in the midst of gaiety I have on more than one occasion had a foreboding of trouble. I had it now, and do as I would to cast it off I was quite unable to do so. John came to me and saw at once that there was something troubling me. He said, 'Mother, what is it? Are you sad because Jean is leaving you? I will take care of you, come now Mother, and see how I can take the ring'. They were running the sortija and he had carried off the ring three times; he was bounding about and leading the fun. Then came dancing and singing, and John sang the song with the words, 'Oh, say it is not here, the father calls thee home'. How often that song has returned to me, and how it made me feel when my dear lad sang it. After the dance our friends went home, only the family remaining, and the next day being Sunday, we were all going to Church. In the morning everybody was preparing to start for Church, some driving, others riding. John came to me with a

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6 The game of sortija enjoyed much popularity amongst the gauchos. The object of the game was to pass a lance through a small ring suspended from an archway whilst riding past at full speed.
gun and said, 'Mother, how do I load this?'. I said go to Mr. C. he will tell you, then I said, 'No, one hole will do'. I helped him to load it, little thinking at the time what was to happen. Just then someone came to me and asked me to go to Mrs. R. who was very ill, so I left, and my daughter said to John, 'You come and ride with me', but he said no, that he was not going to Church. This was most unusual as he always liked going, but this day he wanted to go with S., who had a new gun to try.

There had been a lot of rain and there was a lot of water in the camp. The boys took a tub and were punting about, and in doing so the tub upset and they fell into the water - guns and all getting wet. S. was trying to see if his gun would go off, but found it would not, so John said, 'Then mine is useless also, we will go home'. There was a boy in the garden, John and he started laughing and playing together, when a peon passed along and taking up John's gun he said, 'Take care I will shoot you both', and pointing it at them in fun, he pulled the trigger, when to his horror it went off. The shot passed over the lad's head but it struck my boy in the temple. He fell forward not uttering a sound. Oh, my God, how it came back to me afterwards, for I had helped him to load the gun with which he was shot, as the boys had not used the gun at all. I have already said I was at Mrs. R.'s. Suddenly I was alarmed by a boy calling and screaming, 'Mrs. Robson, John has been shot!'. I did not wait even an instant for an explanation, but dragging the boy from the horse he was on I leapt on it, bareback as it was, and I urged it to gallop back home as fast as it could. The R.'s came out, to see me tearing away and clinging to the horse's neck. They thought I was mad, and so I was, with terror. In this way I travelled two miles. How I did it I never knew nor how long it took. I was only conscious of travelling and finding my dear boy in a pool of blood when I arrived. I cried, 'My boy, my boy'. He looked at me and his breast rose three times but he was unable to speak. I bathed his dear face and head. He lived just four hours, then passed away to his God. He alone knew the trial I was passing through, my boy taken from me, my great comfort and joy. He was such a good, gentle lad, always ready to carry out my wishes, and I had thought how soon he would be able to ease me of much responsibility. But it was not to be, and at
the time it was hard to think it was for the best. My husband and daughter returned from Church to find this awful tragedy.

I cannot really remember what happened till my husband and daughter came and took me to Mrs. R., who had come to our house to see what had happened. An hour later her baby was born, and in looking after and attending to her, I was unable to give way to my own grief as I had to think of another. No doubt it was good for me, and in a way saved my reason, for, strong as I was, this shock nearly overcome me. The peon who had done the dreadful deed was told to go away, and never let either myself or family see him again. Some said they would have imprisoned him, but I knew he did not intend to hurt my boy. It was an accident. It proves how wrong it is to play with firearms, even if they are supposed to be unloaded. Mrs. R. was very ill, and caused me great anxiety in nursing her. The baby died, and I went with Hugh and J. and took the little thing into town. It was a terrible journey. At this time - 1868 - there was no burial ground in Chascomús, so we had to cross the Samborombón river. It was very swollen and the camps were full of water. At first we thought it would be impossible to cross, but, with our horses swimming in parts, we managed to reach the other side. It seemed as if one sad thing came on the heels of another, and I was kept busy going from friend to friend (not always friends either). I was helping Mrs. R. when a black woman, her servant, got a terrible gash in her side and was in agony. I believe it was done in a quarrel. They called me and when I saw the gash, two inches long, I thought it beyond my powers to do anything, so after I had bathed the wound I stitched it up with a silk thread and the next day she was taken into town (Buenos Aires). I was told afterwards, I had done my part of the doctoring so well that they let it remain and the woman recovered. Very shortly after this I was again called upon to be a Doctor. A peon was the worse for drink, and fell from his horse on to a bottle he was carrying. It broke, and cut his head very badly. When I came to bathe his head I found that numerous pieces of glass had cut right in. With the point of a knife I managed to remove all the splinters - it was not a nice task. It
was a good thing that I had strong nerves, for they were constantly being taxed to the utmost.

I have not mentioned that with the passing of the years, we had gradually bought a good deal of land around our house. For some time past things had not been quite so hard, and though I still kept control over the work, my duties were not so numerous. The country was a little more prosperous, though, alas, revolutions and disturbances still went on. I may mention that at this time no one thought of wearing blue as it was the rebels' colour, red being Rosas's colour. Well, my husband and I were going to ride some leagues to Church. I put on a blue dress, the only one I had then, I thought, suitable to wear. My husband said, 'Jean, don't think of wearing that dress, it is blue and not safe to do so, and you know we have to pass through the encampment of Rosas's soldiers'. I said, 'I am not afraid', but I knew all the time it was a risk, though as usual I would not see fear. We started, and after riding some distance we had to pass through the encampment of Rosas's soldiers which my husband mentioned. We had been riding briskly but pulled up to a walk. I did wonder then what effect my blue dress would have. My husband was nervous and said, 'Now what will we do?'. 'Do?' I said, 'Nothing, just ride on'. They looked at us and we saluted them. They did not attempt to stop us and they saw we were not alarmed. I must say I was a little relieved. From experience I always found it was best to put on a bold front with these gallant warriors. When we reached the house to which we went before Church, they were horrified to see me in my blue gown and begged me not to wear it again, but to buy another one.

I have just remembered about a ride I had into town. My husband was away, and I had to go in on very important business, my only companion being a man I did not altogether trust. Still, it was a case of having his company or going alone. I did not fear that he would harm me, but I had a good deal of money and a watch of my husband's tied up in a bundle. It was a very windy day and it was very hard work riding against it, at times I had to hold my skirt. The man asked me several times to let him carry the bundle for me. I refused, but at last I gave in and gave it to him,
thinking that he could not do much as we were riding abreast, and my horse was a better and stronger one than his if he attempted to make off. Well, after a very trying ride of seven leagues we reached town and I went to a friend's house, while the man put up the horses. Then I asked him to go and do some business for me, giving him a hundred dollars with which to pay, as I had to go another way. I was very anxious to return home that day, and so wanted to get through my business quickly, which was unpleasant. I finished what I had to do and returned to my friend's, expecting to find the man there and waiting for me, but no, he had not come. Then I remembered that I had to get the watch mended, went to my parcel, and found the watch gone. Then I thought that the man had probably slipped it out as we rode along, and so it proved, he had not only taken that but had made off with the money I gave him. I waited and hoped he might return but at last it became so late that I had to go. I not only grieved the loss of the money, but the ingratitude of the man for we had done much for him. He went off to Montevideo, and I heard afterwards that he was very sorry he had treated me in that way. He said he had done many mean actions but none he regretted so much as his wicked behaviour to me. It was, I suppose, a sudden temptation to a man who had no moral courage to resist it.

Just as I was starting on my homeward journey I met a young lad who was driving to his home, and for some leagues our road lay in the same direction, so I asked him to let me ride with him for company. We rode until 10 p.m., and when we reached his mother's house he said to me, 'Come in Mrs. Robson and get some refreshment and a rest', but I knew his mother was no friend of mine so I said, 'No, thank you'. He then said, 'I will get you a cup of tea and someone to ride with you, or I will come'. Imagine my feelings when I heard the woman refuse me even this hospitality, though her own son had told her he was ashamed of her. I felt this unkindness intensely. I went on my way home, feeling very sad and weary, with a small boy to accompany me. I had befriended this woman in great need, and she repaid me with this ingratitude.
Time had gone on and there was no need for me to work as hard as formerly, but I was always busy and found pleasure in work which perhaps many would say was unnecessary, but if there was work to be done I felt I must do it.

Several of us went to the races one day. I remember this particular occasion very well as it was St. Patrick's day. There was ladies' side saddle races to be run, for a prize. My husband and I, with a young sister, and several others, set off in good spirits for we expected some fun and some interesting races. Well, some of the races were run and then it came to one between an Irishman and a native. They both had good hopes of winning and ran almost evenly. Just as they were coming to the winning post they both made a mistake and ran the wrong side of the boundary flags. The Irishman was first, but for some reason best known to themselves, the judges decided in favour of the native. At once, of course, there was a great discussion, some taking one side and some the other. I felt sure there would be a row. The Irishman had a young brother with him who had just come out to the country, and knew nothing of the character of the natives. Seeing the winner (the native) going off, he ran after him and seized him by the leg. Just as I reached him the native made a swipe at him with his knife, cutting his face. I then stood in front of him (while the soldiers who were supposed to be keeping order had not yet arrived on the scene). Two or three now tried to get at the boy, pulling me from side to side and stabbing at the boy under my arms. They would not hurt me, I knew, for I was on good terms with the natives. At last it got too much for me, for it had now become a free fight, so I called out to the English, 'Are you going to see your countryman butchered?'. Then they came. The Irishman who had been racing was now mixed up with the rest and a man attacked him. He put up his hand to defend himself, and his brutal assailant made a cut at him, slashing two fingers completely off and sending them flying through the air, and two others were cut through and just hanging. We were now surrounded by English people and they protected us while I got on my horse and took the wounded man on behind. I bound his wounded hand up in my large neck handkerchief and rode off with him to our house. We had no sooner got in safely
when I saw the alcalde and two soldiers coming. I went to the door and stood with a hand on either side waiting for them. They came with much bluster and said they had come for the man and would take him away bound like a pig. I said, 'You will not have him and don't dare to put a foot in my house. The man is seriously wounded, if you took him and he died, his death would be at your door. I will be responsible for him appearing before the Justice'. With that, after some more argument, they left. They kept our English friends in prison for two days, though they had really done nothing. On the second day they informed me I was to appear with my man. On my way in I took him to a doctor, who said he dare not do anything till after the man had been tried. On we went, and I got the first hearing, fortunately for me, and much to the disgust of the alcalde, who wanted to give his version of the affair. He had been delayed by a dispute with his English prisoners, who refused to be driven in front like cattle, but said they would follow. When he finally arrived, the Justice told him he had heard the true facts and that the man was not to blame and he was allowed to go free. The alcalde was furious, and after this he never lost a chance of doing us harm if he could. I was very glad I came off best, for the poor man had suffered enough by losing his fingers, and if he had been imprisoned as well it would have been hard indeed. That day we had started for the races and a little innocent amusement and it had ended with this horrid incident.

There was an old lady named Mrs. C. living not far from our estancia. I had known her all my life for she came out with us [i.e. on the Symmetry]. She was taken very ill and, after a time, died. I felt very sorry when I heard that they thought of burying her in the camp (for we had no burial ground in Chascomú in those days - none nearer than Buenos Aires). I said to my husband, 'We must take her into town'. He said, 'We cannot do that, the horses are so thin that they could not do the journey'. This was true as we had a long drought and there was no fodder for the animals. Now they had started the railway and the trucks were running along the line as far as Chascomú. A Mr. P. who knew the contractors said he would ask them to take the body on a truck. We put the coffin in a wagon driven by a man, Mr. P. went on
horseback and my husband and I were driving. In this way we crossed the camp for some way. When we got to the Samborombón river the horses in the wagon refused to cross. This delayed us a bit, so I said to my husband, 'You go and help the others and I will drive in front with our horses (as our horses did not refuse to cross) and the other horses will probably follow', which they did quite well. Soon after we came in sight of the newly made railway, and I saw in the distance that an engine and some trucks were about to start. I stood up and waved my handkerchief to attract their attention. They stopped for us, and when we explained what we wanted they at once very kindly agreed to take us. We got safely into town and took the corpse to a friend's house for that night, and the next day we went to the English cemetery where good Dr. Smith, lovingly called 'Padre', read the service, and we left our old friend Mrs. C. in the peaceful little English cemetery.

In 1867 my daughter Mary was married at the estancia 'Esperanza.' We had a very gay wedding, a lot of friends and relations coming from town. In the evening we finished up with a dance and all went very merrily. In one large room the elder ones were dancing, while in another the children were playing, romping and enjoying themselves in their own way. There was a large lamp in the children's room which was thrown over and smashed - how it happened no one seemed to know. I heard the crash and rushed in to find the flames going up almost to the ceiling. At once there was great confusion. The gentlemen ran for water, but I knew that was worse than useless. Running into my bedroom I seized the mattress. There was a little baby comfortably asleep on the bed, but I just rolled it, clothes and all, to one side. I ran back into the room and was just going to fling the mattress on to the flames when some of them dragged me back, probably fearing that I would do myself some harm. I was very angry for the fire was gaining some hold. I wrenched myself free and again seized the mattress and threw it on the flames. In doing so, I fell forward myself, but fortunately I was up again instantly and was not hurt. The fire was extinguished, and not much harm done after all, but it was a funny sight to see the gentlemen all running about with buckets of water in their white kid gloves. I wonder
why it did not occur to them that it was useless to throw water on burning oil. Our fright was soon over, and I don't think we took it as a bad omen for the newly wedded happy pair.

In those days we had no post and the only means we had of sending and receiving letters was by a messenger on horseback. As my family was becoming scattered, I felt this very much when I wanted to get news from some of them and it was impossible to do so. One day I was expecting my son Hugh to come and bring me news of my brother, who was living in Chascomús. All the previous day I had a sad foreboding and felt something was going to happen of a distressing nature. At night I had a strange dream. I dreamt I was trying to find my brother and kept asking if anyone could tell me where he was. Then I found myself in a yard and kept going round and round looking for him. It was a yard I had never seen before. When I awoke I was still thinking of my brother, and wondering if anything was wrong. My son Hugh arrived in the evening and seeing I was worried about something, he thought it best to tell his father the bad news he had. It was that in passing through Chascomús he had seen his uncle and he was very ill. My husband knew it was best to tell me, and said, 'We must start early the next morning to see him'. We started at sunrise, and when we arrived in Chascomús I saw the very yard of which I had been dreaming (at the time I did not know just where my brother was living) and this same yard was pointed out to me as being the place where he was living. It came as a shock to me. I dismounted from my horse and hurried in and was met by a woman. I said, 'I have come to see my brother'. She said, 'You cannot do that for he is dead and already in his coffin'. I felt very sad, for my brother was dear to me; he was our only brother and very much loved by us all. We took the dear boy into the English cemetery. In this country such a very short time is allowed between death and burial. So many times I have been to this burial ground with dear ones; it is so pretty and nicely kept.

On our return home I found that Mrs. R. was very ill and I had been asked to go to her, so without even taking the dust off me I started off again. For ten days I
nursed her, and then felt she needed other advice than the doctor who was attending to her, as he said that if her bodily health improved her mind would never be strong again. I had some trouble in persuading her father to allow me to take her into town, though her husband was anxious to do so. When he did give his consent, in a few minutes we had her in a coach and left. We arrived at the British Hospital. I went in first, and to my astonishment and disgust the Doctor informed me the hospital was not for women but only for men, and that he could not receive Mrs. R. I said he must, or I would tell everybody that they had refused to take in a sick woman when brought to the doors of the hospital, and what would the public think if I had to take her to a Spanish hospital. The Scottish and Irish people had collected money for 14 years for this hospital, and now they refused to take a sick woman in. The doctor then said he would take her but that it would be at his own risk, as he did not know what unpleasantness might arise and how his action might be questioned. We took her into a room, and her sister and I remained to nurse her, for there were no women nurses and this was the first woman patient that had been taken into the British Hospital. From that time to the present both sexes were received. After about a month Mrs. R. was able to leave, quite cured, and could again take up her home duties, so through my persistence I was the means of this hospital taking female patients.

One hears that the wheels of the law move slowly, and in this country I have experienced it more often than I care to think, besides which it is an expensive luxury. I can laugh now (though at the time it was anything but a laughing matter) when I think of a time in which I was kept waiting and waiting for a paper to be signed. At last I determined to close matters one way or another, and so decided to bear the lawyer in his den though I had been told that no woman went to an office where law matters were settled. I remarked, 'It is a funny place that women could not go'. When I arrived at the office I first came to a room where there were a lot of men waiting, and I could see through a door into an inner room where the Judge was engaged with a man. As soon as I saw the man prepare to leave, I walked in and
demanded the great man's attention to my business. He at once made excuses and said he had not my paper there. I turned, and among a whole lot on the table I saw my paper and recognised the signature. I pulled it out and confronted him with it. He was very angry and talked a great deal, but I came off victorious for he signed the paper. I think he was glad to do so and be rid of me. I did not mind that; I had gained my point and was able to return to my home. As I was on my way to the lawyer's office, a man who had really been the chief culprit in causing me a great deal of annoyance, made a rude remark and jeered at me as I passed. I said nothing, but the thought passed my mind, 'May you fall down dead'. It was banished from my mind as quickly as it came. I am thankful it did as things turned out. Someone came to me as I returned from business an hour later and told me that this man had fallen down dead where he stood.

We now bought land in the town of Chascomús and commenced to build a house. Here we had more trouble, for a man whom I will call 'Fox' made a bother as about the measurement of the land, saying that we were taking more than we were entitled to. I need not go into details, but I knew he was wrong and that the piece of land was legally ours. I called someone on my side, and he did on his. The morning we arranged to meet to settle the question was, I think, the coldest I have ever experienced; I was frozen. I had made little flags to mark the boundary. Well, sometimes right triumphs over might, and it was soon agreed that the land was ours. I will relate an incident in connection with this man 'Fox.' He and his family were Roman Catholics. One day 'Fox' was very ill and his life in danger. Some friends asked me if I was going to see him, and I said, 'No'. At last his wife sent for me and I went, for she and I were quite good friends, as we had always been, and the poor woman felt the wrong doing of 'Fox'. When I arrived, I found the wife in great distress. She told me her husband was passing away and that he had received the Host, and begged me to go into the room. I did so, and found him lying seemingly unconscious and faintly moaning. Round the bed, waiting for him to breathe his last, were twelve Irishmen. I went to the bedside and putting my hand on his chest gave
him a shake and said, 'Do you know who is speaking to you?'. No notice. I then repeated the shake a little harder. He opened his eyes and on seeing me gave a start of recognition and said, 'You, Mrs. Robson'. I said, 'Yes, it is'. He said, 'I have done you a lot of harm and now I am dying, but do me one favour, I feel starving, give me a piece of tobacco'. This was an odd request from a dying man. However, I turned to ask one of the men for some and one of them leaned forward and gave him a piece; he chewed it ravenously. I thought, 'This is strange, it looks more as if the man is starving', so I called for some soup and gave him a spoonful and he drank it down. There was a horrified exclamation from them all; how wrong to give him this, after he had received the last sacrament. I said, 'Oh, the charm was broken by the tobacco'. I remained an hour, giving him a spoonful of soup at short intervals, which was continued after I left by his wife. There was no wake this time, for 'Fox' recovered and lived for 16 years after this, and alas, to do me more mischief.

Our house was eventually finished in Chascomus, and very comfortable and roomy it is, and it is very nice having my children coming to see me. My daughter Euphemia and her little baby a fortnight old were staying with me; she had left her little family at home to be looked after. They were all well and happy till one evening when they were playing in a room with a fire, for it was cold weather. There was a kettle of boiling water on the fire. Whilst romping, one of the children pulled it down and the whole of its contents fell on a little girl (Nellie) who was near. There was great excitement and alarm, of course, and a boy was sent off for me. My daughter and I were sitting quietly when I heard a lot of talking and hurried out, for I was anxious that my daughter should not be alarmed. The messenger explained what had happened. I tried to keep it from my daughter but she became so agitated, fearing that something had happened to her children, that I told her. We started immediately for the house, and when we arrived it was a sad thing for the mother to find her little girl in such a state of suffering. Her poor little arm was very badly scalded. I dressed it as well as I could till the Doctor arrived and then took her home with us. I dressed it twice a day under the Doctor's orders. The poor little thing did
not like to see me coming, for, of course, I had to give her some pain. She would say, 'No, no, Granny, baa baa', which meant in her baby language, 'I want to go to sleep'. It was a mercy her face escaped scalding or she would have been terribly disfigured. As it is one arm is much marked and she can never wear short sleeves.

About 1881 I had gone out to the estancia for a few days to superintend some work I wanted done. Amongst other things there were some trees to be felled, and I told the peon who was doing them that I would go out and see it done. A Mr. G. and his little girl were there, and we were all standing watching the felling of the trees. Mr. G. was nearer the tree than I was. I saw it falling, and at the same moment Mr. G. saw it coming and ran to get clear of it. His little girl seeing him run dashed after him, thus taking her into the danger line. I made a rush to catch her and seizing her flung her away, and thus saved her, but there was not time for me to get away, and down the tree came, crash, on my head. They told me afterwards that it was some little time before the peon and Mr. G. could remove the tree to extricate me, and when they did they thought I was dead, for I looked so white and was quite unconscious. I had a terrible cut on the top of my head, and a handkerchief which I had tied on my head was buried in the wound. When I partially recovered my senses, the blood was rushing down my face. They tried to stop it with cold water, but this made me feel I was going mad, so I let it bleed, and as soon as I could get into the house I applied a cloth dipped in hot water. For some days I felt very ill and could only keep quiet. I had no Doctor, but cured the cut myself with applications of kerosene. I always date my deafness as from this time, for a great noise started in my head and I have never been free from it since, and shortly after I became deaf. This has been a great trial to me. None but those who are deaf can realize what a drawback deafness is. I do like to enter into all that is going on and enjoy the fun and brightness of all my young people. I returned to Chascomús as soon as I was able, and found my husband and Dr. R. playing chess. They were alarmed when they saw my bandaged head. I soon assured them that I was far on the road to recovery, and
after showing the Doctor my head I told him how I had cured it myself with a simple remedy.

I am nearly at the end of this record of my life. I have gone through many troubled waters, as I have related, and there are many I have not mentioned. When I settled in my house in Chascomús with every comfort around me, I hoped my life had settled into a calm and peaceful one, but there were still a few more battles to be fought and won.

For many years we had our services and Sunday School in a room at the Manse, but there arose reasons why this was not convenient and must be discontinued, so I determined to build a hall of my own. We commenced to raise money and I got up a subscription dance which proved most successful and was enjoyed by a large company. I was rather troubled and could not help thinking of a very disagreeable meeting which I had to attend the next day. I wished to erect a vault in our Scottish burial ground, and this had been strongly opposed by a great many of the members of the Church. I had been working hard for it. Well, this final meeting was held to settle it all. When it came to the holding up of hands, for and against, I was hurt to see many who had enjoyed the dance only the evening before, appearing against me. Amongst others there, were my good and life-long friends, Mr. and Mrs. B. Partially, I think, through Mr. B.'s help, the vote was given in my favour after all. I have built my vault, and many members of my family are resting in it, and when my end comes I hope to be taken there.

For some years now my life has run an even course - as smoothly as it could with a large family (amongst whom I have 60 great-grandchildren) and in whom I am always greatly interested and whose joys and sorrows are mine.

It is now 1908. On St. Andrew's day in the afternoon we had tea and games and prizes for the children at the Manse. In the evening we had a large dance at the Robson Hall, which was greatly enjoyed by us all. In the summer of this year we had a service in our Church, with the Holy Communion, followed by a ceremony of unveiling two memorial tablets - one to the memory of 'Padre' Smith and the other to
Mr. Ferguson, the minister who preceded our present one. Two of the oldest members of the Scottish community unveiled them, Mr. Brown was one and I the other.

I must mention before closing that there are many nights when I cannot sleep. I get up and write what I call my thoughts, but my friends call poetry. A friend was struck with, and much interested in, some lines I wrote on the death of our beloved Queen Victoria and asked to be allowed to send them home to King Edward VII, which she did. To my surprise and gratification I received a letter quite soon dated from Buckingham Palace acknowledging and accepting the lines. Needless to say it is a treasured possession.

On my 89th birthday I gave a dance at which my old friends and neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and my dear old friend Mrs. Buchanan, were present, and among the many guests were included my son and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and I look forward to our meeting again to see the young folk dance and enjoy themselves.
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