

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
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Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
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Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
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**A Vanished Arcadia: being some  
account of the Jesuits in Paraguay  
1607-1767**

R. B. (Robert Bontine) Cunninghame Graham

## Imprint

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## Preface

*Historicus nascitur, non fit.* I am painfully aware that neither my calling nor election in this matter are the least sure. Certain it is that in youth, when alone the historian or the horseman may be formed, I did little to fit myself for writing history. Wandering about the countries of which now I treat, I had almost as little object in my travels as a Gaucho of the outside 'camps'. I never took a note on any subject under heaven, nor kept a diary, by means of which, my youth departed and the countries I once knew so well transmogrified, I could, sitting beside the fire, read and enjoy the sadness of revisiting, in my mind's eye, scenes that I now remember indistinctly as in a dream. I take it that he who keeps a journal of his doings, setting down day by day all that he does, with dates and names of places, their longitude and latitude duly recorded, makes for himself a meal of bitter-sweet; and that your truest dulcamara is to read with glasses the faded notes jotted down hurriedly in rain, in sun, in wind, in camps, by flooded rivers, and in the long and listless hours of heat — in fact, to see again your life, as it were, acted for you in some camera obscura, with the chief actor changed. But diaries, unless they be mere records of bare facts, must of necessity, as in their nature they are autobiographical, be false guides; so that, perhaps, I in my carelessness was not quite so unwise as I have often thought myself. Although I made no notes of anything, caring most chiefly for the condition of my horse, yet when I think on them, pampa and cordillera, virgin forest, the 'passes' of the rivers, approached by sandy paths, bordered by flowering and sweet-smelling trees, and most of all the deserted Jesuit Missions, half buried by the vigorous vegetation, and peopled but by a few white-clad Indians, rise up so clearly that, without the smallest faculty for dealing with that which I have undertaken, I am forced to write. Flowers, scents, the herds of horses, the ostriches, and the whole charm of that New World which those who saw it even a quarter of a century ago saw little altered from the remotest times, have remained clear and sharp, and will remain so with me to the end. So to the readers (if I chance to have them) of this short attempt to give some faint idea of the great Christian Commonwealth of the Jesuit Missions between the Paraná and Uruguay, I now address myself.

He who attacks a subject quite fallen out of date, and still not old enough to give a man authority to speak upon it without the fear of contradiction, runs grave risk.

Gentle, indulgent reader, if so be that you exist in these the days of universal knowledge and self-sufficient criticism, I do not ask for your indulgence for the many errors which no doubt have slipped into this work. These, if you care to take the trouble, you can verify, and hold me up to shame. What I do crave is that you will approach the subject with an open mind. Your Jesuit is, as we know, the most tremendous wild-fowl that the world has known. 'La guardia nera' of the Pope, the order which has wrought so much destruction, the inventors of 'Ciencia media',[1] cradle from which has issued forth Molina, Suarez, and all those villains who, in the days in which the doctrine was unfashionable, decried mere faith, and took their stand on works — who in this land of preconceived opinion can spare it a good word? But, notwithstanding, even a Jansenist, if such be left, must yet admit the claim of Francis Xavier as a true, humble saint, and if the sour-faced sectary of Port Royale should refuse, all men of letters must perforce revere the writer of the hymn.

But into the whole question of the Jesuits I cannot enter, as it entails command of far more foot and half-foot words than I can muster up. Still, in America, and most of all in Paraguay, I hope to show the Order did much good, and worked amongst the Indians like apostles, receiving an apostle's true reward of calumny, of stripes, of blows, and journeying hungry, athirst, on foot, in perils oft, from the great cataract of the Paraná to the recesses of the Tarumensian woods. Little enough I personally care for the political aspect of their commonwealth, or how it acted on the Spanish settlements; of whether or not it turned out profitable to the Court of Spain, or if the crimes and charges of ambition laid to the Jesuits' account were false or true. My only interest in the matter is how the Jesuits' rule acted upon the Indians themselves, and if it made them happy — more happy or less happy than those Indians who were directly ruled from Spain, or through the Spanish Governors of the viceroyalties. For theories of advancement, and as to whether certain arbitrary ideas of the rights of man, evolved in general by those who in their persons and their lives are the negation of all rights, I give a fico — yes, your fig of Spain — caring as little as did ancient Pistol

for 'palabras', and holding that the best right that a man can have is to be happy after the way that pleases him the most. And that the Jesuits rendered the Indians happy is certain, though to those men who fudge a theory of mankind, thinking that everyone is forged upon their anvil, or run out of their own mould, after the fashion of a tallow dip (a theory which, indeed, the sameness of mankind renders at times not quite untenable), it seems absurd because the progress of the world has gone on other lines — lines which prolonged indefinitely would never meet those which the Jesuits drew. All that I know is I myself, in the deserted missions, five-and-twenty years ago often have met old men who spoke regretfully of Jesuit times, who cherished all the customs left by the company, and though they spoke at secondhand, repeating but the stories they had heard in youth, kept the illusion that the missions in the Jesuits' time had been a paradise. Into the matter of the Jesuits' motives I do not propose to enter, holding that the origin of motives is too deeply seated to be worth inquiry until one has more information about the human mind than even modern 'scientists' seem able to impart. Yet it is certain the Jesuits in Paraguay had faith fit to remove all mountains, as the brief stories of their lives, so often ending with a rude field-cross by the corner of some forest, and the inscription '*hic occisus est*' survive to show. Some men — such is the complexity of human nature — have undergone trials and persecutions for base motives, and it is open for anyone to say the Jesuits, as they were Jesuits, could do nothing good. Still, I believe that Father Ruiz Montoya — whose story I have told, how falteringly, and with how little justice to his greatness, none knows better than myself — was a good man — that is, a man without ulterior motives, and actuated but by his love to the poor Indians with whom he passed his life. To-day, when no one can see good in anything or anybody outside the somewhat beefy pale of the Anglo-Saxon race, I do not hope that such a mere dabbler in the great mystery of history as I am myself will for an instant change one preconceived opinion; for I am well aware that speeches based on facts are impotent in popular assemblies to change a single vote.

It is an article of Anglo-Saxon faith that all the Spanish colonies were mal-administered, and all the Spanish conquerors bloodthirsty butchers, whose sole delight was blood. This, too, from the mem-

bers of a race who . . . ; but 'In the multitude of the greyhounds is the undoing of the hare.' Therefore, I ask those who imagine that all Spaniards at the conquest of America were ruffians, to consider the career of Alvar Nuñez, who also struts through his brief chapter in the pages of my most imperfect book. Still, I admit men of the stamp of Alvar Nuñez are most rare, and were still rarer in the sixteenth century; and to find many of the Ruiz Montoya brand, Diogenes would have needed a lantern fitted with electric light. In the great controversy which engaged the pens of many of the best writers of the world last century, after the Jesuits were expelled from Spain and her colonial possessions (then almost half the world), it will be found that amongst all the mud so freely flung about, the insults given and received, hardly anyone but a few ex-Jesuits had any harm to say of the doings of the Order during its long rule in Paraguay. None of the Jesuits were ever tried; no crimes were charged against them; even the reasons for their expulsion were never given to the world at large. Certain it is that but a few years after their final exit from the missions between the Uruguay and Paraná all was confusion. In twenty years most of the missions were deserted, and before thirty years had passed no vestige of their old prosperity remained.

The semi-communism which the Jesuits had introduced was swept away, and the keen light of free and vivifying competition (which beats so fiercely upon the bagman's paradise of the economists) reigned in its stead. The revenues declined,[2] all was corruption, and, as the Governor, Don Juan José Vertiz, writes to the Viceroy,[3] the secular priests sent by the Government were brawlers, drunkards, and strikers, carrying arms beneath their cloaks; that robbery was rife; and that the Indians daily deserted and returned by hundreds to the woods.

All the reports of riches amassed in Paraguay by the Jesuits, after the expulsion of their order proved to be untrue; nothing of any consequence was found in any of the towns, although the Jesuits had had no warning of their expulsion, and had no time for preparation or for concealment of their gold. Although they stood to the Indians almost in the light of gods, and had control of an armed force larger by far than any which the temporal power could have

disposed of, they did not resist, but silently departed from the rich territories which their care and industry had formed.

Rightly or wrongly, but according to their lights, they strove to teach the Indian population all the best part of the European progress of the times in which they lived, shielding them sedulously from all contact with commercialism, and standing between them and the Spanish settlers, who would have treated them as slaves. These were their crimes. For their ambitions, who shall search the human heart, or say what their superiors in Europe may, or perhaps may not, have had in view? When all is said and done, and now their work is over, and all they worked for lost (as happens usually with the efforts of disinterested men), what crime so terrible can men commit as to stand up for near upon two centuries against that slavery which disgraced every American possession of the Spanish[4] crown? Nothing is bad enough for those who dare to speak the truth, and those who put their theories into practice are a disgrace to progressive and adequately taxed communities. Nearly two hundred years they strove, and now their territories, once so populous and so well cultivated, remain, if not a desert, yet delivered up to that fierce-growing, subtropical American plant life which seems as if it fights with man for the possession of the land in which it grows. For a brief period those Guaranís gathered together in the missions, ruled over by their priests, treated like grown-up children, yet with a kindness which attached them to their rulers, enjoyed a half-Arcadian, half-monastic life, reaching to just so much of what the world calls civilization as they could profit by and use with pleasure to themselves. A commonwealth where money was unknown to the majority of the citizens, a curious experiment by self-devoted men, a sort of dropping down a diving-bell in the flood of progress to keep alive a population which would otherwise soon have been suffocated in its muddy waves, was doomed to failure by the very nature of mankind. Foredoomed to failure, it has disappeared, leaving nothing of a like nature now upon the earth. The Indians, too, have vanished, gone to that limbo which no doubt is fitted for them. Gentle, indulgent reader, if you read this book, doubt not an instant that everything that happens happens for the best; doubt not, for in so doing you would doubt of all you see — our life, our progress, and your own infallibility, which at all haz-

ards must be kept inviolate. Therefore in my imperfect sketch I have not dwelt entirely on the strict concatenation (after the Bradshaw fashion) of the hard facts of the history of the Jesuits. I have not set down too many dates, for the setting down of dates in much profusion is, after all, an *ad captandum* appeal to the suffrages of those soft-headed creatures who are styled serious men.

Wandering along the by-paths of the forests which fringe the mission towns, and set them, so to speak, in the hard tropical enamel of green foliage, on which time has no lien, and but the arts of all-destroying man are able to deface, I may have chanced upon some petty detail which may serve to pass an hour away.

A treatise of a forgotten subject by a labourer unskilled, and who, moreover, by his very task challenges competition with those who have written on the theme, with better knowledge, and perhaps less sympathy; a pothor about some few discredited and unremembered priests; details about half-savages, who `quoi! ne portaient pas des haults de chausses'; the recollections of long silent rides through forest paths, ablaze with flowers, and across which the tropic birds darted like atoms cut adrift from the apocalypse; a hotch-potch, salmagundi, olla podrida, or sea-pie of sweet and bitter, with perhaps the bitter ruling most, as is the way when we unpack our reminiscences — yes, gentle and indulgent reader, that's the humour of it.

R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

Gartmore,  
March 30, 1900.

[Title Page](#) | [Preface](#) | [Notes](#)

## **Contents**

### **Chapter I**

Early history – State of the country – Indian races – Characteristics of the different tribes – Dobrizhoffer's book – Various expeditions – Sebastian Cabot – Don Pedro de Mendoza – Alvar Nuñez – His expedition and its results – Other leaders and preachers – Founding of the first mission of the Society of Jesus

### **Chapter II**

Early days of the missions – New settlements founded – Relations of Jesuits with Indians and Spanish colonists – Destruction of missions by the Mamelucos – Father Maceta – Padre Antonio Ruiz de Montoya – His work and influence – Retreat of the Jesuits down the Paraná

### **Chapter III**

Spain and Portugal in South America – Enmity between Brazilians and Argentines – Expulsion of Jesuits from Paraguay – Struggles with the natives – Father Mendoza killed – Death of Father Montoya

### **Chapter IV**

Don Bernardino de Cardenas, Bishop of Paraguay – His labours as apostolic missionary – His ambitions and cunning – Pretensions to saintliness – His attempts to acquire supreme power – Quarrels between Cardenas and Don Gregorio, the temporal Governor

## **Chapter V**

Renewal of the feud between the Bishop and Don Gregorio — Wholesale excommunications in Asuncion — Cardenas in 1644 formulates his celebrated charges against the Jesuits — The Governor, after long negotiations and much display of force, ultimately succeeds in driving out the Bishop — For three years Cardenas is in desperate straits — In 1648 Don Gregorio is suddenly dismissed, Cardenas elects himself Governor, and for a short time becomes supreme in Asuncion — The Jesuits are forced to leave the town and to flee to Corrientes — A new Governor is appointed in Asuncion — He defeats Cardenas on the field of battle — The latter is deprived of his power, and dies soon after as Bishop of La Paz

## **Chapter VI**

Description of the mission territory and towns founded by the Jesuits — Their endeavours to attract the Indians — Religious feasts and processions — Agricultural and commercial organizations

## **Chapter VII**

Causes of the Jesuits' unpopularity — Description of the lives and habits of the priests — Testimony in favour of the missions — Their opposition to slavery — Their system of administration

## **Chapter VIII**

Don José de Antequera — Appoints himself Governor of Asuncion — Unsettled state of affairs in the town — He is commanded to relinquish his illegal power — He refuses, and resorts to arms — After some success he is defeated and condemned to be executed — He is shot on his way to the scaffold

fold – Renewed hatred against the Jesuits – Their labours among the Indians of the Chaco

### **Chapter IX**

The Spanish and Portuguese attempt to force new laws on the Indians – The Indians revolt against them – The hopeless struggle goes on for eight years – Ruin of the missions

### **Chapter X**

Position of the Jesuits in 1761 – Decree for their expulsion sent from Spain – Bucareli sent to suppress the colleges and drive out the Jesuits – They submit without resistance – After two hundred years they are expelled from Paraguay – The country under the new rule – The system of government practically unchanged

### **Chapter XI**

Conclusion



## A Vanished Arcadia

### Being Some Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay 1607 to 1767

#### Chapter I

Early history — State of the country — Indian races — Characteristics of the different tribes — Dobrizhoffer's book — Various expeditions — Sebastian Cabot — Don Pedro de Mendoza — Alvar Nuñez — His expedition and its results — Other leaders and preachers — Founding of the first mission of the Society of Jesus

With the exception of the French Revolution, perhaps no event caused so much general controversy at the end of the eighteenth century as the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and Portugal and their colonial possessions. As no definite charges were ever brought, at least in Spain, against the members of the Company of Jesus (King Charles III. having kept the reasons *ocultas y reservadas* and the proofs *privilegiados*), curiosity is to some extent not satisfied as to the real reason of their expulsion from the Spanish possessions in America.

It is almost impossible to understand nowadays the feelings which possessed the average man in regard to the Jesuits from the middle of the last century till a relatively short time ago. All the really great work done by the Society of Jesus seemed to have been forgotten, and every vulgar fable which it was possible to invent to their prejudice found ready acceptance upon every side. Nothing was too absurd to be believed. From the calumnies of the Jansenists to the follies of Eugène Sue the mass of accusation, invective, and innuendo kept on increasing in intensity. Indiscriminate abuse and unreasoning hatred, mixed with fear, seem to have possessed all minds. Even Pascal confesses (in a postscript to the ninth Provincial

Letter) that 'after having written my letter I read the works of Fathers Barry and Binet.' If such a man as Pascal could be so grossly unfair as to write a criticism on works which he had not read, what can be expected from the non-judicial and uncritical public which takes all upon trust?

From Japan to the interior of Bolivia there is scarcely a country in which the Jesuits have not laboured assiduously, and in which they have not shed their blood freely without hope of reward, yet it would require much time and a lengthy catalogue to enumerate the list of satirical and calumnious works which have appeared against them in almost every language in Europe. Of these, perhaps the most celebrated is the well-known 'Monarquia de los Solipsos',[5] by Padre Melchior Inshoffer, an ex-Jesuit, who describes the company in the worst possible terms. It is interesting chiefly on account of the portraits of well-known people of the time (1615 to 1648), as Pope Clement VIII., Francisco Suarez, Claudio Aquaviva, and others, veiled under easily distinguishable pseudonyms. The object of the writer, as the title indicates, is to show that the Jesuits endeavoured to turn all to their own profit. In this, if it was the case, they do not seem to have been greatly different from every other associated body of men, whether lay or clerical. The celebrated Spanish proverb, 'Jesuita y se ahorca, cuenta le hace', meaning, Even if a Jesuit is hung he gets some good out of it, may just as well be applied to members of other learned professions as to the Jesuits.

The world has rarely persecuted any body of men conspicuous by its poverty, or if it has done so has rarely persecuted them for long. The Inquisition of Spain, violent against the wealthy Jews and comfortable Moriscos, took little notice of the Gipsies; but, then, 'Pobre como cuerpo de Gitano' was and is a common saying in Spain.

As in the case of the Templars, persecution only began against the Jesuits when it became worth while to persecute them. Ignatius Loyola, Francisco Xavier, and Diego Lainez, as long as they confined themselves to preaching and to teaching, were safe enough. Even the annals of theological strife, bloodthirsty and discreditable to humanity as they are, contain few examples of persecutors such as Calvin or Torquemada, to whom, ruthless as they were in their

savage and narrow malignity and zeal for what they thought the truth, no suspicion of venal motives is attributed.

Of the Jesuits' intrigues, adventures, rise and fall in Europe, much may be said in attack or in extenuation; but it is not the intention of the present work to deal with this aspect of the question. It was in Spanish America, and especially in Paraguay and Bolivia, where the policy of the Company in regard to savage nations was most fully developed, as it was only the Jesuits who ever succeeded in reclaiming any large number of the nomad or semi-nomad tribes of those countries.

Many excellent works in French, and the celebrated 'Christianismo Felice nel Paraguay' of the Abbate Muratori in Italian, certainly exist. But neither Father Charlevoix, the French historian of the missions, nor Muratori was ever in Paraguay, and both their books contain the faults and mistakes of men, however excellent and well intentioned, writing of countries of which they were personally ignorant. Both give a good account of the customs and regimen of the missions, but both seem to have believed too readily fabulous accounts of the flora and fauna of Paraguay.[6] The fact of having listened too readily to a fable about an unknown animal in no way detracts from the general veracity of an author of the beginning of the eighteenth century, for in all other respects except natural history Charlevoix keeps within the bounds of probability, though of course as a Jesuit he holds a brief for the doings of the Company in Paraguay. Muratori is more rarely led into extravagances, but is concerned in the main with the religious side of the Jesuits, as the title of his book indicates.

Many other French writers, as Raynal, Montesquieu, and Voltaire, have treated of Paraguay under Jesuit rule, but their writings are founded on hearsay evidence. A German, Father Dobrizhoffer, stands alone.[7] His delightful 'History of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay', is perhaps the most charming book dealing with the subject. A simple and easy style, a keen habit of observation, long acquaintance with the country, a zeal for the conversion of the infidel, not only to Christianity, but to a more comfortable mode of life, to which he adds a faith sufficient to move the Cordillera of the Andes, but at the same time restricted by a com-

mon-sense and veracity not always observable in religious writers, render Dobrizhoffer a personal friend after the perusal of his writings.

English is singularly barren in regard to the Jesuits in Paraguay. Father Falconer, an English Jesuit, has left a curious and interesting book (printed at Hereford in 1774), but he treats exclusively of what is now the province of Buenos Ayres, the Falkland Islands, and of Patagonia. As an Englishman and a Jesuit (a somewhat rare combination in the eighteenth century), and as one who doubtless knew many of the Paraguayan priests, his testimony would have been most important, especially as he was a man of great information, much education, an intrepid traveller, and, moreover, only entered the Company of Jesus at a comparatively advanced age.

It is in Spanish, or in Latin by Spanish authors, that the greater portion of the contemporary histories and accounts are to be found.[8] Literatures, like other things, have their times of fashion. At one time a knowledge of Spanish was as requisite as some tincture of French is at present, and almost as universal. Men from Germany, England, and Holland who met in a foreign country communicated in that language. In the early portion of the century Ticknor, Prescott, and Washington Irving rendered Spanish literature fashionable to some degree.

Later the historical researches of Sir William Stirling Maxwell drew some attention to it. To-day hardly any literature of Europe is so little studied in England. Still leaving apart the purely literary treasures of the language, it is in Spanish, and almost alone in Spanish, that the early history of America is to be found.

After the struggle for independence which finished about 1825, some interest was excited in the Spanish-American countries, stimulated by the writings of Humboldt; but when it became apparent that on the whole those countries could never be occupied by Northern Europeans, interest in them died out except for purposes connected with the Stock Exchange. Yet there is a charm which attaches to them which attaches to no other countries in the world. It was there that one of the greatest dramas, and certainly the greatest adventure in which the human race has engaged, took place. What Africa has been for the last twenty years, Spanish America

was three hundred years ago, the difference being that, whereas modern adventure in Africa goes on under full observation, and deals in the main with absolutely uncivilized peoples, the conquest of South America was invested with all the charm of novelty, and brought the conquerors into contact with at least two peoples almost as advanced in most of the arts of civilization as they were themselves.

When first Sebastian Cabot and Solis ascended the Paraná, they found that the Guaranís of Paraguay had extended in no instance to the western shore of either of those rivers. The western banks were inhabited then, as now, by the wandering Indians of the still not entirely explored territory of the Gran Chaco. Chaco[9] is a Quichua Indian word meaning 'hunting' or 'hunting-ground', and it is said that after the conquest of Peru the Indian tribes which had been recently subjugated by the Incas took refuge in this huge domain of forest and of swamp.

Be that as it may, the Chaco Indians of to-day, comprising the remnants of the Lulis, Tobas, Lenguas, Mocobiós, and others, are almost as savage as when first we hear of them in the pages of Alvar Nuñez and Hulderico Schmidel. These tribes the Jesuits on many occasions attempted to civilize, but almost entirely without success, as the long record of the martyrdom of Jesuit missionaries in the Chaco proves, as well as the gradual abandonment of their missions there, towards the second half of the eighteenth century.

Certain it is that at various places in the Chaco, in the quaint old maps the Jesuits have left us, one reads 'Mission de Santa Cruz de los Vilelas', 'Mission de la Concepcion de los Frontones', and others; but much more frequently their maps are studded with crosses, and some such legend as 'Hic occisi sunt PP. Antonius Salinus et Petrus Ortiz Zarate'. [10] It was only when the Jesuits encountered the more peaceful Guaranís that they met with real success.

What was the nature of their success, how durable it was, what were the reasons which caused the expulsion of the order from America, and especially from Paraguay, and what has been the result upon the remainder of the Indians, it is my object to endeavour to explain.

A long residence in the river Plate, together with two visits to Paraguay, in one of which I saw almost all the remnants of the Paraguayan missions and a few of those situated in the province of Corrientes, and in the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul, have given me some personal acquaintance with the subject.[11]

The actual condition of the rich district of Misiones (Paraguay) at the time I visited it, shortly after the conclusion of the great war between Paraguay and Brazil in 1870, does not enable me to speak with authority on the condition of communities, the guiding spirits of which were expelled as far back as the year 1767. The actual buildings of the missions, the churches in a dismantled state, have indeed survived; in many instances the tall date-palms the Jesuits planted still wave over them. Generally the college was occupied by the Indian Alcalde, who came out to meet the visitor on a horse if he possessed one, with as much silver about the bridle and stirrups as he could afford, clothed in white, with a cloak of red baize, a large *jipi-japa* hat, and silver spurs buckled on his naked feet. If he had never left the mission, he talked with wonder and respect of the times of the Jesuits, and at the *oracion* knelt down to pray wherever the sound of the angelus might catch him. His children before bed-time knelt all in a row to ask his blessing. If he had been to Asuncion, he probably remarked that the people under those accursed priests were naught but animals and slaves, and launched into some disquisition he had heard in the solitary café which Asuncion then boasted. In the latter case, after much of the rights of man and the duties of hospitality, he generally presented you with a heavy bill for Indian corn and *pindo*[12] which your horse had eaten. In the former, usually he bade you go with God, and, if you spoke of payment, said: 'Well, send me a book of Hours when you get to Asuncion.'

Of Indians, hardly any were left to judge of, for in the villages in which, according to the reports furnished to Bucareli, the Viceroy of Buenos Ayres at the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits, the population numbered in the thirty towns of the missions one hundred and twenty thousand,[13] a population of at most twenty thousand was to be found. On every side the powerful vegetation had covered up the fields. On ruined church and chapel, and on broken tower, the lianas climbed as if on trees, creeping up the belfries, and throwing