



Bell Ville, Thursday, April 28 de 1900.

F. C. C. A.

S. S. Berlin

FROM JOHN E. R.

My Dearest Maymie

I am so glad to get back to civilization again, and to be able to write to you again. and hope soon to be with you, you must have wondered where I have been so long, but as soon as I got back to Los Palmas I telegraphed to you, to Gray Guards, wondering at the same time if you was still up there, or if you had gone back to Los Algarrobos, all by yourself and the children, and I know you don't like to travel by yourself, I am sorry, but I hurried all the time, traveled at unearthly times of the night, and the whole time it was heavy, heavy, so sorry to leave you so long, but once embarked on this land hunt and land buying there was no turning back, and I think that in time we will be repaid for everything.

We left Los Palmas at 2 a.m. finally catching a train at that time in the morning on Tuesday, the 19th we sat on our saddles on a teeny little open truck while a little teeny puffing engine pulled us for five hours to the end of the rails, through great cane fields and woods, it was a lovely night, and after the morning star came out we saw the Comet, for the first time, very clear and bright, when we arrived at the end of the rails our teeth were chattering with cold and weaked with the heavy dew, but a young irishman in charge out there had some tea with condensed milk and steak made for us so we were soon all right, but no Mr. Lean with horses was there to meet us, so we watched the men loading up the heavy logs, and the bullock carts being in move, and the wild Conestogas or Indians cutting trees, the end of the rail is right in the forest, and is surrounded with the grass & palm huts of these wild people, you never saw such wild looking women, all barefooted, but all surrounded with masses of little children, so the wild & the climate does not prevent them from becoming happy mothers, the train did not arrive that day either

00 next morning, the 20th Don Paracho and I took the rifle and went for a long walk
 we followed a stream and along the edge of the woods for a couple of leagues. but there
 was no game. there are too many people about. but we saw a lot of strange birds
 and trees, and a tucan, a bird with a huge yellow beak, but did not hit
 it. I would have liked its beak for my collection. when we got back we
 found Mr. Lean and his horse waiting for us. two persons, and two pack saddles -
 the persons arrived with remingtons, but the worst horses I ever saw, the thinnest
 and miserablest horses you could imagine. a beggar would refuse to ride them,
 if there had been any chance to have got others I would have refused to have gone
 with Mr. Lean. but there are no horses up there at all. hardly any are to be seen.
 Well we saddled up after lunch, and we trotted & trotted all afternoon as hard as we
 could make the horses go. then camped at a frenchman's right in the woods along side
 of the stream, and by the time we sat, made our beds and put up the mosquitos it
 was late, next morning early early we were on horseback and at midday arrived at
 a lovely little bolicho by a rude bridge over a deep stream. we rode all afternoon
 untill we got to another bolicho not far from the edge of the land we were going to see.
 Next morning we started out. just the three of us. & rode to a part of the camp. just
 inside of the line of the camp a scotchman has settled a the Farguabarron from the Banda
 Oriental, has about 2000 head of cattle on the camp. it seems that the land we went
 to see has been considered untill lately as fiscal land which was to be made into
 a pastoral colony. 250 leagues. in one league blocks. so settlers rushed out to
 take possession of the lots before the Government made the survey and the allotments.
 so when last year the Government survey the land, a great many people found that they
 had settled on private property, so quickly moved off to get into other lots. so
 the first part of the camp we went to see is full of deserted houses, canals - fields
 but Farguabarron, just being on the edge stayed on. The 8 leagues is all freshly
 surveyed off and has freshly marked boundaries all over it. the first part of the
 land that we arrived that day is lovely rolling land dotted with millions of palms
 and groups of trees. plenty of natural water and crossed by a stream and full of cattle
 of all the neighbors. that night we slept again at the bolicho, and the next morning
 Saturday the 23rd we moved our camp to the center of the camp, to a private belonging to



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= Urubione, who has got about 12000 head of cattle on the camp, he has got an Estancia adjoining, and keeps part of his cattle on the camp, he put up corrales and fences, we had lunch there and in the afternoon we rode over the camp, and got as far as the Rio Bernabe which is outside of the camp, but I wanted to see this famous river of which I heard so much for many years: it is a big river half as broad as the parana in front of Parana: it brings snow water from the Cordillera, comes through Salto o jumping, you remember the Leaches went down it on an exploring trip, this river has a very swift current, high banks, covered with big lapacho & curatay trees, it will never be navigable on account of its current, & the big trees on the bottom, impossible, but make navigation impossible, we stood half an hour on its high bank, and during that time two high pieces of bank with big trees fell into the river with a mighty roar, the river water is like mud, thick with sediment and it is this river that dirties the parana, above its outlet the parana is as clear as crystal, later on when we got onto this steamer we saw it ourselves. That night we slept in a big open camp, where we had difficulty in finding firewood, next morning we returned to the puente, and in the afternoon broke camp and returned to the bolicho. The camp exceeded my expectations, it is lovely camp, high, with few swamps, millions of palms, and clumps of woods, an ideal Estancia, on one side there is a huge impenetrable wood, immense trees, all hard wood, when it can be worked it will repay the full cost of the camp. The main part of this camp is the good water, wells can be dug anywhere, with good sweet water, you can dip a bucket in from the surface. The open camp is all good for agriculture, the soil is splendid, maize, alfalfa, peanuts, linseed, cotton, oranges, bananas & dates grow well if planted. At the bolicho that night I met a nice young

Englishman called Richard Paul, he has got one of the large lots of pasture colony land and has some cattle. he is in love with the country, says there are a lot of Englishmen & germans out there, the Government gives them the land on the condition the live on the land for five years, spend five hundred dollars on improvements and keep 500 head of cattle and pay so much a year. so that in five years the land is their own - has cost them about 10,000 \$, all the lots are taken up long ago. but they say that none of the land is as good as that what we want to see, all along the Bermejo there is a strip of exceptionally good land. the rest is low & swampy.

Monday the 25th we left the bolivia early, and the next day at 10 a.m. we arrived back at the point of the rails. we just had time to put our saddles into their bags and climb up top of a pile of big logs on a little tuck and in the evening late get back to La Palmas, and to the hotel. Mr. Lean accompanied us, it was too late to telegraph. and as there was no bath room in the miserable hotel, we made a room on the corridor with cates stord on end and with buckets of water and a bar of soap we had a fine wash down. the first bath since Paratimara, and the first time we felt refreshed. we had no time for better outside. not even for washing, and I tell you it was fine to get into fresh changes of clothes and feel clean once more. we get terribly dirty. you have no idea. the mud, mud, everlasting mosquito & eating meat with your hands, & gnawing your boots every day makes one awfully muddy & dirty. the next morning, yesterday, we started early, after telegraphing to the seller of the land, telling him that I would buy it. and was going to Buenos Aires to Encarnacion, and telegraphing to you, to Mr. Haines & to Mr. Marty. we took the little train & went to the port & just caught this steamer, Berles, coming from Asuncion. Mr. Lean got off at Barraguanas, and Don Pancho and I just enjoyed a fine night and a fine sleep last night and this morning we just soaked ourselves in a fine hot bath and felt tons cleaner.

This steamer is not one of the best boats, but it is good enough. it is the same one I think that we & the children came up once from Buenos Aires to Parana.



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Now I am wondering if the titles of the land will be all right and if the seller will keep faith. but on monday I will know and expect it will be all right and hope it does not keep me long. you have no idea how homesick I am. Amy outside in the Pastoral Colony. we called on a lovely little hut where the woman stopped us - and told us about her husband. a fine tall frenchman. he had gone quite mad. they had no horse. no meat. and a lot of little children. we left and at the next place we called and they came and took him away. quite mad. singing & shouting. loneliness did it. the savage wilds.

We carried the Winchester rifle with us everywhere. took turns in carrying it. but shot nothing but some charatas. a kind of pheasant. of which we had some meals. we saw no game. there is more in the open but the big wood on the camp is full. I walked or crawled into it for a little distance. quite near to the punts and saw tracks of every kind of wild animal. and the trees were full of Charatas. and wild turkeys. parrots & pidgeons. you should just see how the pidgeons and parrots go for the maize fields. four different kinds of parrots and great big blue pidgeons. they must do a terrible lot of damage. but nobody seems to mind. there is a lot of maize. at every house a big field and there seems to be a good sale for it as they charge up to 1.30 \$ the 10 kilos. Mandioca. a very nice vegetable grows everywhere and I liked it. I only tasted milk once. and that was on the camp. at Urubemas punts. when we returned from the Borneo they were milking and a woman handed me a big cup full of fresh milk. it tasted good after so much mate sucking. the children all eat charque and sweet potatoes. it seems to agree with them.

Everybody outside knew McLean. he goes about a good deal. but I don't think he is much liked. but he is a good campman and knows his way about. all through the montes. in the darkest night. but I can't forgive him for murdering us so badly. the

horses new skin & bone, a poor miserable kind of Conventino horse, worn to skin and bone by long expeditions through big grass & mud and sucked dry by countless mosquitos. we had to abandon three on the way, poor animals. they were so weak that they actually stood still & refused to go into water or mud and it made me sick to watch which the poor animals. it was a revelation to Don Pancho, who said that he would never have dreamt of an Englishman being so cruel. he says he will appreciate better now our horses at La Alganitas.

Don Pancho enjoyed the trip immensely. it will have done him a lot of good too. once he got regular tired out and before he would not have minded if we had just have abandoned him as long as he could just have laid down and slept. I was sorry that I did not bring a sleeping bag for Don Pancho, several times it got real cold. the sleeping bags are splendid things. I could lay it on my saddle blanket & that red rug (jergon) and be perfectly comfortable, as warm and as cozy as possible, putting up the hood against the wind and with the mosquito net spread over to keep out the mosquitos and the heavy dew, it was very cozy. I could get up and have it rolled up and shipped before the others had time to gather their saddles together. Luckily the weather was fine the whole time. the night we left Los Palmar to go outside it rained heavily and the day we left for the steamer it rained in Torontu. Luckily we escaped it outside.

I had my little Camera with me the whole time, in my pocket, and took views of every interesting thing I saw. at night in my sleeping bag, laying on my back, well buttoned in. I would change the plates in the little plate holder. But one day I found out that the little shutter was not working. I took it apart with my pen knife, but could not fix it, so I am afraid that the exposures will all be wrong and the plates useless. I was so mad that I nearly threw the camera into a puddle. I may never get such a chance again to take so many interesting views, and little Johnnie will be disappointed if I don't show him a photo of the funny little puffing engine & the little train. This trip down the river is a fine trip, the boat is so steady. I wish you were all on board with me. I hope to find letters from you when I get back to Buenos Aires. Love to Mother and to the boys and hoping to see you soon. Yours affectionately, Johnnie.