

FOLLOWING THE CONQUISTADORES

ALONG THE ANDES AND
DOWN THE AMAZON

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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INTRODUCTION

This book is, in a sense, the sequel of a book by the same author entitled *Following the Conquistadores up the Orinoco and down the Magdalena*.

Shortly after returning from this trip along the Orinoco and the Magdalena, Doctor Mozans called upon me, and we soon grew to be great friends. He is a devoted student of Dante, and I am one of the innumerable laymen who greatly admire Dante without having even the slightest pretensions to having studied him. I think that the intimacy of Doctor Mozans and myself was largely due to his finding out the interest I had taken in translating, so to speak, Dante's political terminology into that of the present day,—for Dante wrote with a lack of self-consciousness which we could not nowadays achieve, and so, in perfect good faith, and I may add with entire propriety, illustrated the fundamental vices and virtues by placing in hell and purgatory the local Italian political leaders of the thirteenth century side by side with the mightiest figures of the elder world, the world of Greece and Rome at their zenith. I had remarked to Doctor Mozans that this attitude, which added so enormously to the power of Dante, was one which we were now too self-conscious to follow; that, whereas it seemed perfectly natural to Dante to typify the same fierce and stubborn soul qualities both in the person of Farinata and in the person of Capanius, and to appeal to a Florentine faction fight as he did to the memory of the stupendous wars which made Rome imperial, it would now be quite impossible for us to avoid feeling, and therefore conveying, a sense of incongruity if we coupled a feast of Lucullus with some equally tasteless banquet by a member of the Four Hundred, or spoke in the same breath of Clodio and Isaiah Rynders or John Morrissey.

The acquaintance thus begun went on, and when I was about to leave the White House, Doctor Mozans proposed that I should make a South American trip with him, instead of my proposed trip to Africa. I should have been exceedingly pleased to have done both; but as my trip was to be taken primarily as a naturalist in-

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terested in the great game, I thought it best not to change my point of destination—and the comments Doctor Mozans makes upon the rarity and shyness of all large animals in the tropical forests of South America show that I was wise. But Doctor Mozans would have been an ideal traveling companion. His trip was one of absorbing interest, and it is told so delightfully that I do not now recall any similar book dealing with South America so well worth reading.

Doctor Mozans has every qualification for making just such a journey as he made, and then for writing about it. He is an extraordinarily hardy man, this gentle, quiet traveler. He has that sweetness of nature which inspires in others the same good feeling he himself evinces towards them; he loves rivers and forests, mountains and plains, and broad highways and dim wood trails; and he has a wide and intimate acquaintance with science, with history, and, above all, with literature. This volume supplements his previous volume, giving his journey across the Andes from the West Coast and his voyage down the Amazon; so that he has seen all that is most characteristic, and to the traveler most attractive, in tropical America, from the barren Andean plateaus, filled with the ruins of a dead civilization almost as ancient and interesting as that of Egypt or Mesopotamia, to the hot, steamy, water-soaked forests which cover the middle and the northeast of the Southern continent. We are fortunate in having a man like Doctor Mozans traveling in the lands to the south of us. He speaks with just admiration of the great work done by Secretary Root, when, in an American warship, he circled the Southern continent, representing our country as an ambassador whose work was of highest moment. But Doctor Mozans himself also really acted as such an ambassador; and his sympathy with, and appreciation of, the people whom he met—a sympathy and appreciation evident in page after page of his book—earned for him thoughtful and unwearied kindness in return, and admirably fitted him, while on his journey, to interpret our nation to those among whom he traveled, and now admirably fit him to interpret them in return to us.

Taste in books is highly individual, and long experience has shown me that I sometimes greatly like books for which most of my friends care not at all; but it does seem to me that it would be difficult for any man to rise from reading Doctor Mozan's books without feeling, not only that he has passed a delightful time, but

also that he has profited greatly by the vivid picture presented to him of our neighbors to the south and their marvelous country. As Americans, his studies of these neighbors of ours are of peculiar value to us. Moreover, Doctor Mozans' literary tastes and in particular his great fondness for the poetry of many different tongues stand him in good stead. It is pleasant to travel in company with one who knows books as well as men and manners, and who yet cares also for all that is beautiful and terrible and grand in Nature. German, Italian, Spanish, English—there is hardly a favorite poet, writing in any language, whose words do not naturally rise to Doctor Mozans' mind as he comes to some particular scene which he thinks that some particular passage in some of his beloved authors aptly illustrates; and his quotations from the South American poets are not only apt in themselves, but illuminative to those among us who do not realize how very far South American civilization has gone along certain lines where our own progress has been by no means well marked. In particular, the translations that the author gives us of some of the simple Indian ballads make us wish that we could have these ballads all set forth in popular form; while Doctor Mozans' humorous appreciation of the excesses into which the poetic habit sometimes misleads his South American friends completely reassures us as to his coolness of judgment.

We are far from realizing all that of recent years has been accomplished in South America. We are now fairly well acquainted with the great material advances that have been made in Chile and the Argentine, with the growth along cosmopolitan lines of cities like Buenos Ayres and Rio de Janeiro. But Doctor Mozans quite incidentally makes us understand the charm of the older and more typical Spanish-American cities, and brings to the attention of our people the extraordinary quantity of serious work in scholarship which has been achieved in the universities of these cities during the centuries immediately past; and he also shows how the forces of modern life are now vivifying this charming social, ancient life, which has so long been held back and perverted into wrong channels. The book ought to make our people understand and appreciate far better than at present the South American nations which he visited, and the high and fine qualities of whose peoples he sketches so vividly.

Nor is it only in describing the scholars and gentlefolk of these countries and their achievements in the past, and the courteous,

kindly-natured Indian or semi-Indian peasantry, that Doctor Mozans tells us much that we ought to know. He also brings vividly to our minds facts about the natural scenery which are new to most of us. I confess that, as an ardent admirer of the Grand Canyon, it was rather a shock to me to have Doctor Mozans speak of it as inferior to the extraordinary gorge of the Marañon, the headwaters of the Amazon. It does not seem to me that anything on this earth can be grander than the Grand Canyon! But at any rate I earnestly hope that the railroad Doctor Mozans advocates will speedily be built, and the wonderful gorge he describes be opened to the vision of less hardy travelers than he is.

In closing, I can only repeat again that this is a delightful book from every standpoint. It is an especially delightful book for Americans because throughout it Doctor Mozans shows that he is so thoroughly good an American, so imbued with what is best in our National spirit, and with the thoughts and aspirations of our greatest statesmen and writers, and indeed of all who have expressed the soul of our people. He is peculiarly fit to interpret for us our neighbors to the south; and he describes them with a sympathy, insight and understanding granted to but few. Moreover, his feat was a really noteworthy feat, and it is told with vividness, combined with modesty, and an evident entire truthfulness; and we should be equally attentive to what he sets forth as our accomplishments—for example, in digging the Isthmian Canal and bringing order to Cuba—and to his allusions to our shortcomings, as shown by our ignorance and lack of appreciation of the great continent south of us, and our failure to try to bring it and its people into closer relations with us.

Theodore Roosevelt

Sagamore Hill,
April 20, 1911.