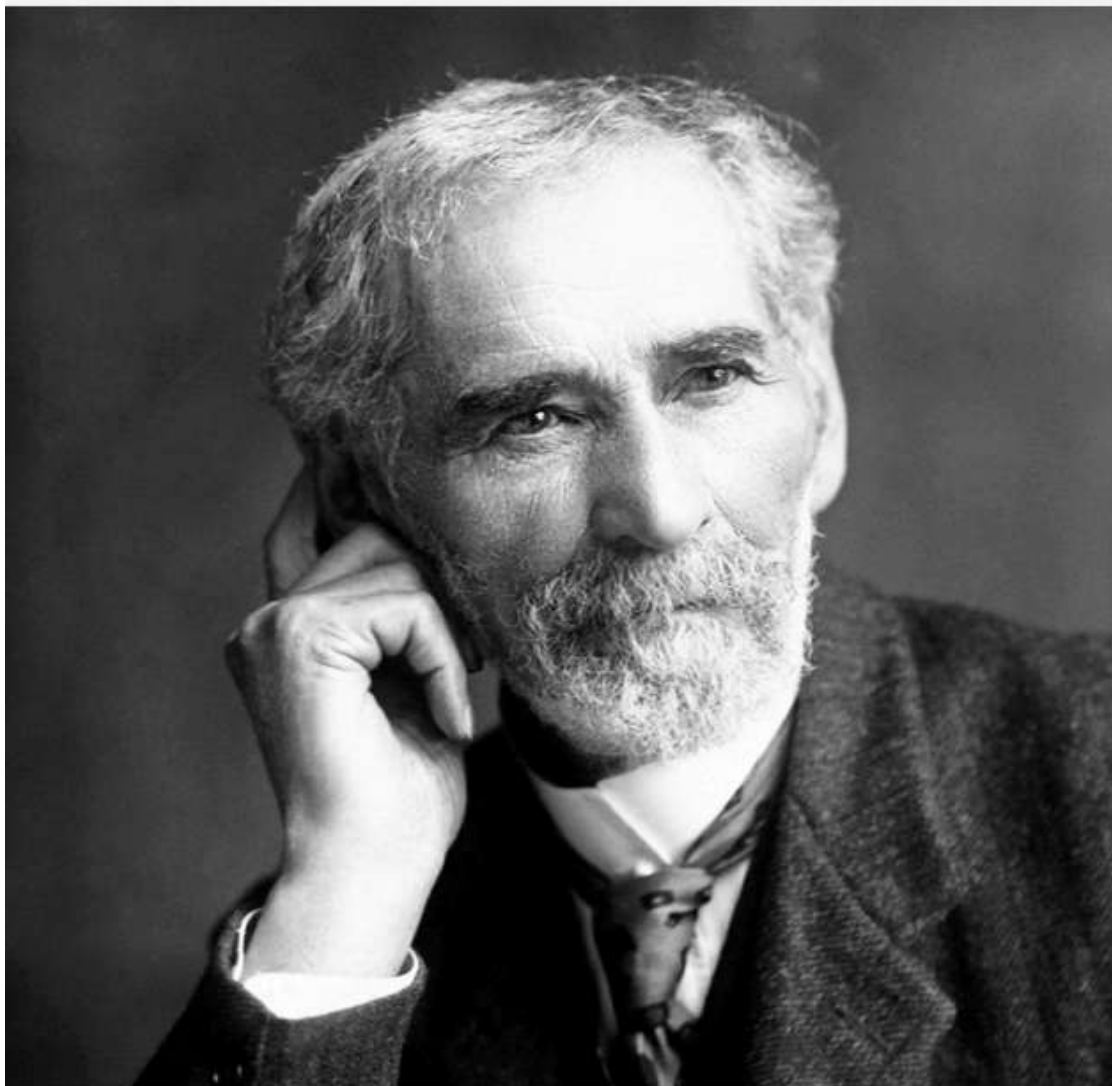




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W. H. Hudson  
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Series Fourteen

*The Complete Works of*  
**WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON**

(1841-1922)



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Version 1

*The Complete Works of*  
**WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON**



*By Delphi Classics, 2024*

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*Complete Works of William Henry Hudson*



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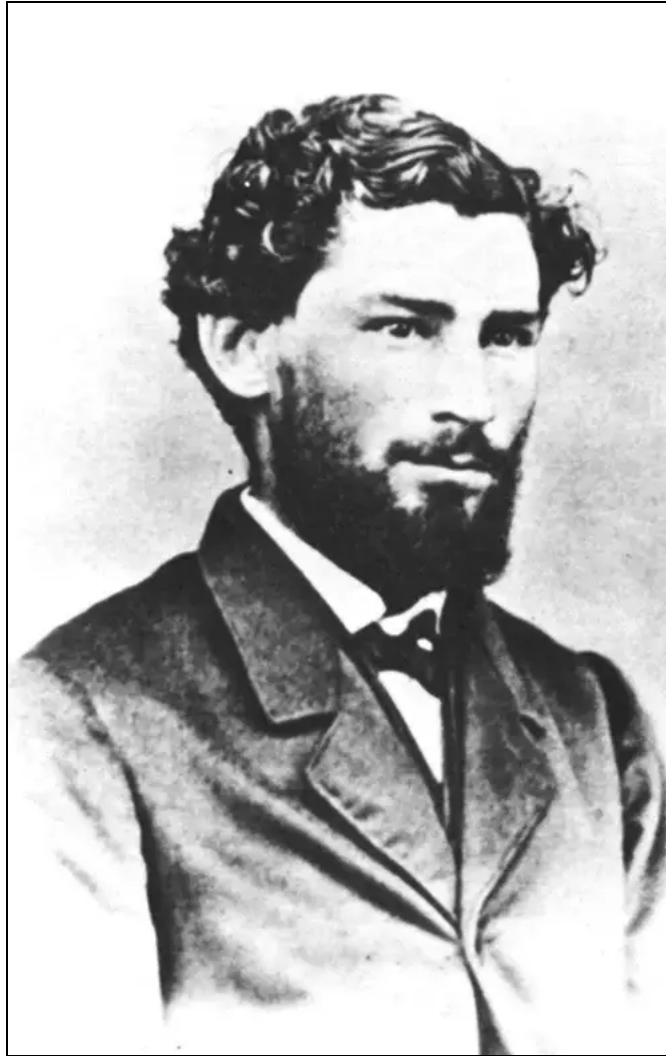
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## The Novels



*Quilmes, a city on the coast of the Rio de la Plata, in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina —  
William Henry Hudson's birthplace*



*Hudson as a young man, c. 1868*

## The Purple Land that England Lost (1885)



### BEING THE NARRATIVE OF ONE RICHARD LAMB'S ADVENTURES IN THE BANDA ORIENTAL, IN SOUTH AMERICA, AS TOLD BY HIMSELF

William Henry Hudson's parents were originally New Englanders, who took up sheep farming in Argentina. He spent his childhood freely roaming the pampas, studying the plant and animal life, while observing human dramas on what was then a lawless frontier. After suffering a serious illness at the age of fifteen, which permanently affected his health, he became introspective and studious. His reading of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which confirmed his own observations of nature, had a particularly strong impact. Following his parents' death, he led a wandering life. Little is known of this period or of his early years in England, where he settled in 1869 and was eventually naturalised thirty years later. Poverty and ill-health may have occasioned his marriage in 1876 to a woman much older than himself. He and his wife lived precariously on the proceeds of two boarding-houses, until she inherited a house in the Bayswater section of London and he could follow his ambition of becoming an established writer.

His early books are romances with a South American setting, which are often imbued with a brooding sense of nature's power. First published in October 1885, the following novel was subsequently reprinted under the simpler title of 'The Purple Land'. Although initially a flop at the end of the nineteenth century, the second edition, published in 1904 with "some small verbal corrections and changes, the deletion of some paragraphs and the insertion of a few new ones," (according to Hudson's introduction to that edition) saw a significant increase in sales.

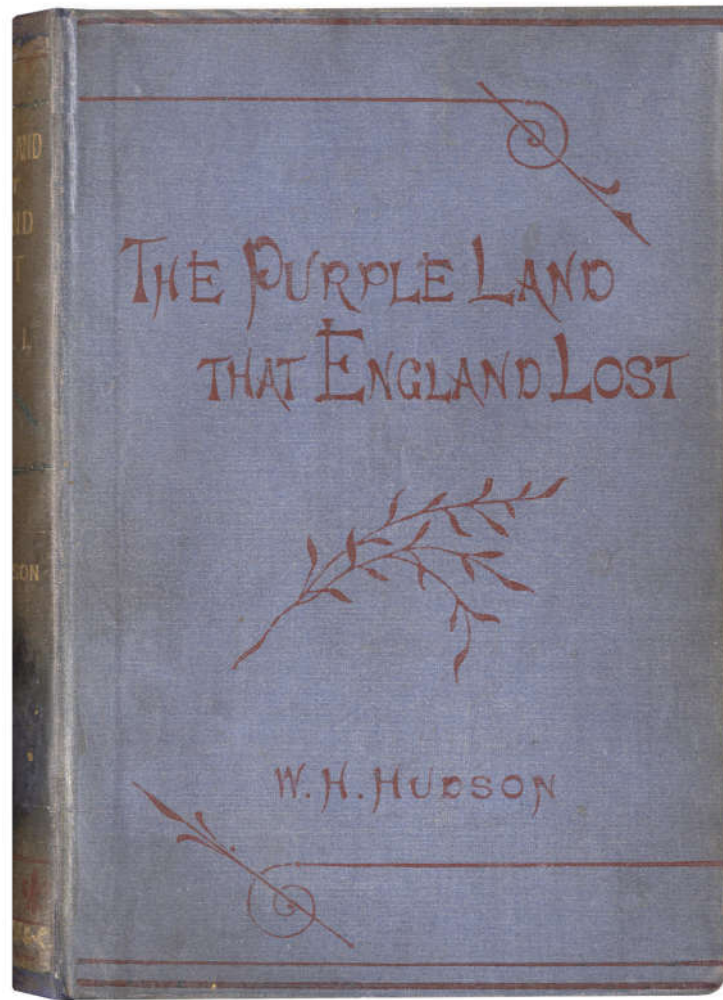
It tells the story of Richard Lamb, the son of an Argentine sheep farmer, who elopes with Paquita, a teenaged Argentinean; they marry in secret and fly to Montevideo, Uruguay. There the new bride is left with an aunt whilst the husband sets off to find work. He soon becomes embroiled in adventures, unwittingly helping a rebel guerrilla general escape from prison and joining his cause. When the rebels are defeated Lamb flees in disguise. He helps Demetria, the daughter of an old rebel leader, escape her persecutors and return to Montevideo. There Lamb, along with Paquita and Demetria, flees to Buenos Aires, but things do not end well...

Critics, eventually, liked the novel, with one noting that, "Hudson's prose style is one of singular purity and grace. Joseph Conrad said of it: "One can't tell how this fellow gets his effects; he writes as the grass grows," whilst another reviewer declared, "Hudson's value does not depend entirely on the rare poetry of his language, but is measured also by the scientific accuracy of what he wrote". One critic summed it up by saying, "The author has hit upon a very entertaining manner of describing a country that is comparatively new to history and to civilisation". Ernest Hemingway referred to this book in his novel 'The Sun Also Rises':

*"The Purple Land is a very sinister book if read late in life. It recounts splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land, the scenery of which is very well described. For a man to take it at thirty-four as a guide book to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books."*



The novel was adapted for radio in 2011 by Andrew Davies, with David Tennant playing Richard Lamb



*The first edition*

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THE  
PURPLE LAND THAT ENGLAND  
LOST.

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES IN THE BANDA  
ORIENTAL, SOUTH AMERICA.

BY  
W. H. HUDSON.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, AND RIVINGTON,  
CROWN BUILDINGS, 182, FLEET STREET.  
1885.

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*The first edition's title page*

## PREFACE



THIS WORK WAS first issued in 1885, by Messrs. Sampson Low, in two slim volumes, with the longer, and to most persons, enigmatical title of *The Purple Land That England Lost*. A purple land may be found in almost any region of the globe, and 'tis of our gains, not our losses, we keep count. A few notices of the book appeared in the papers, one or two of the more serious literary journals reviewing it (not favourably) under the heading of "Travels and Geography"; but the reading public cared not to buy, and it very shortly fell into oblivion. There it might have remained for a further period of nineteen years, or for ever, since the sleep of a book is apt to be of the unawakening kind, had not certain men of letters, who found it on a forgotten heap and liked it in spite of its faults, or because of them, concerned themselves to revive it.

We are often told that an author never wholly loses his affection for a first book, and the feeling has been likened (more than once) to that of a parent towards a first-born. I have not said it, but in consenting to this reprint I considered that a writer's early or unregarded work is apt to be raked up when he is not standing by to make remarks. He may be absent on a journey from which he is not expected to return. It accordingly seemed better that I should myself supervise a new edition, since this would enable me to remove a few of the numerous spots and pimples which decorate the ingenious countenance of the work before handing it on to posterity.

Besides many small verbal corrections and changes, the deletion of some paragraphs and the insertion of a few new ones, I have omitted one entire chapter containing the Story of a Piebald Horse, recently reprinted in another book entitled *El Ombù*. I have also dropped the tedious introduction to the former edition, only preserving, as an appendix, the historical part, for the sake of such of my readers as may like to have a few facts about the land that England lost.

W. H. H.

*September, 1904.*

## CHAPTER I



THREE CHAPTERS IN the story of my life — three periods, distinct and well defined, yet consecutive — beginning when I had not completed twenty-five years and finishing before thirty, will probably prove the most eventful of all. To the very end they will come back oftenest to memory and seem more vivid than all the other years of existence — the four-and-twenty I had already lived, and the, say, forty or forty-five — I hope it may be fifty or even sixty — which are to follow. For what soul in this wonderful, various world would wish to depart before ninety! The dark as well as the light, its sweet and its bitter, make me love it.

Of the first of these three a word only need be written. This was the period of courtship and matrimony; and though the experience seemed to me then something altogether new and strange in the world, it must nevertheless have resembled that of other men, since all men marry. And the last period, which was the longest of the three, occupying fully three years, could not be told. It was all black disaster. Three years of enforced separation and the extremest suffering which the cruel law of the land allowed an enraged father to inflict on his child and the man who had ventured to wed her against his will. Even the wise may be driven mad by oppression, and I that was never wise, but lived in and was led by the passions and illusions and the unbounded self-confidence of youth, what must it have been for me when we were cruelly torn asunder; when I was cast into prison to lie for long months in the company of felons, ever thinking of her who was also desolate and breaking her heart! But it is ended — the abhorrent restraint, the anxiety, the breedings over a thousand possible and impossible schemes of revenge. If it is any consolation to know that in breaking her heart he, at the same time, broke his own, and made haste to join her in that silent place, I have it. Ah no! it is no comfort to me, since I cannot but reflect that before he shattered my life I had shattered his by taking her from him, who was his idol. We are quits then, and I can even say, “Peace to his ashes!” But I could not say it then in my frenzy and grief, nor could it be said in that fatal country which I had inhabited from boyhood and had learned to love like my own, and had hoped never to leave. It was grown hateful to me, and, flying from it, I found myself once more in that Purple Land where we had formerly taken refuge together, and which now seemed to my distracted mind a place of pleasant and peaceful memories.

During the months of quietude after the storm, mostly spent in lonely rambles by the shore, these memories were more and more with me. Sometimes sitting on the summit of that great solitary hill, which gives the town its name, I would gaze by the hour on the wide prospect towards the interior, as if I could see, and never weary of seeing, all that lay beyond — plains and rivers and woods and hills, and cabins where I had rested, and many a kindly human face. Even the faces of those who had ill-treated or regarded me with evil eyes now appeared to have a friendly look. Most of all did I think of that dear river, the unforgettable Yi, the shaded white house at the end of the little town, and the sad and beautiful image of one whom I, alas! had made unhappy.

So much was I occupied towards the end of that vacant period with these recollections that I remembered how, before quitting these shores, the thought had come to me that during some quiet interval in my life I would go over it all again, and

write the history of my rambles for others to read in the future. But I did not attempt it then, nor until long years afterwards. For I had no sooner begun to play with the idea than something came to rouse me from the state I was in, during which I had been like one that has outlived his activities, and is no longer capable of a new emotion, but feeds wholly on the past. And this something new, affecting me so that I was all at once myself again, eager to be up and doing, was nothing more than a casual word from a distance, the cry of a lonely heart, which came by chance to my ear; and, hearing it, I was like one who, opening his eyes from a troubled doze, unexpectedly sees the morning star in its unearthly lustre above the wide, dark plain where night overtook him — the star of day and everlasting hope, and of passion and strife and toil and rest and happiness.

I need not linger on the events which took us to the Banda — our nocturnal flight from Paquíta's summer home on the pampas; the hiding and clandestine marriage in the capital and subsequent escape northwards into the province of Santa Fé; the seven to eight months of somewhat troubled happiness we had there; and, finally, the secret return to Buenos Ayres in search of a ship to take us out of the country. Troubled happiness! Ah, yes, and my greatest trouble was when I looked on her, my partner for life, when she seemed loveliest, so small, so exquisite in her dark blue eyes that were like violets, and silky black hair and tender pink and olive complexion — so frail in appearance! And I had taken her — stolen her — from her natural protectors, from the home where she had been worshipped — I of an alien race and another religion, without means, and, because I had stolen her, an offender against the law. But of this no more. I begin my itinerary where, safe on our little ship, with the towers of Buenos Ayres fast fading away in the west, we began to feel free from apprehension and to give ourselves up to the contemplation of the delights before us. Winds and waves presently interfered with our raptures, Paquíta proving a very indifferent sailor, so that for some hours we had a very trying time of it. Next day a favourable north-west breeze sprang up to send us flying like a bird over those unlovely red billows, and in the evening we disembarked in Montevideo, the city of refuge. We proceeded to an hotel, where for several days we lived very happily, enchanted with each other's society; and when we strolled along the beach to watch the setting sun, kindling with mystic fire heaven, water, and the great hill that gives the city its name, and remembered that we were looking towards the shores of Buenos Ayres, it was pleasant to reflect that the widest river in the world rolled between us and those who probably felt offended at what we had done.

This charming state of things came to an end at length in a somewhat curious manner. One night, before we had been a month in the hotel, I was lying wide awake in bed. It was late; I had already heard the mournful, long-drawn voice of the watchman under my window calling out, "Half-past one and cloudy."

Gil Blas relates in his biography that one night while lying awake he fell into practising a little introspection, an unusual thing for him to do, and the conclusion he came to was that he was not a very good young man. I was having a somewhat similar experience that night when in the midst of my unflattering thoughts about myself, a profound sigh from Paquíta made me aware that she too was lying wide awake and also, in all probability, chewing the cud of reflection. When I questioned her concerning that sigh, she endeavoured in vain to conceal from me that she was beginning to feel unhappy. What a rude shock the discovery gave me! And we so lately married! It is only just to Paquíta, however, to say that had I not married her she would have been still more unhappy. Only the poor child could not help thinking of father and mother; she yearned for reconciliation, and her present sorrow rose from

her belief that they would never, never, never forgive her. I endeavoured, with all the eloquence I was capable of, to dispel these gloomy ideas, but she was firm in her conviction that precisely because they had loved her so much they would never pardon this first great offence. My poor darling might have been reading *Christabel*, I thought, when she said that it is toward those who have been most deeply loved the wounded heart cherishes the greatest bitterness. Then, by way of illustration, she told me of a quarrel between her mother and a till then dearly loved sister. It had happened many years ago, when she, Paquíta, was a mere child; yet the sisters had never forgiven each other.

“And where,” I asked, “is this aunt of yours, of whom I have never heard you speak until this minute?”

“Oh,” answered Paquíta, with the greatest simplicity imaginable, “she left this country long, long ago, and you never heard of her because we were not even allowed to mention her name in the house. She went to live in Montevideo, and I believe she is there still, for several years ago I heard some person say that she had bought herself a house in that city.”

“Soul of my life,” said I, “you have never left Buenos Ayres in heart, even to keep your poor husband company! Yet I know, Paquíta, that corporeally you are here in Montevideo, conversing with me at this very moment.”

“True,” said Paquíta; “I had somehow forgotten that we were in Montevideo. My thoughts were wandering — perhaps it is sleepiness.”

“I swear to you, Paquíta,” I replied, “that you shall see this aunt of yours tomorrow before set of sun; and I am positive, sweetest, that she will be delighted to receive so near and lovely a relation. How glad she will be of an opportunity of relating that ancient quarrel with her sister and ventilating her mouldy grievances! I know these old dames — they are all alike.”

Paquíta did not like the idea at first, but when I assured her that we were getting to the end of our money, and that her aunt might be able to put me in the way of obtaining employment, she consented, like the dutiful little wife she was.

Next day I discovered her relation without very much trouble, Montevideo not being a large city. We found Doña Isidora — for that was the lady’s name — living in a somewhat mean-looking house at the eastern extremity of the town, farthest away from the water. There was an air of poverty about the place, for the good dame, though well provided with means to live comfortably, made a pet of her gold. Nevertheless, she received us very kindly when we introduced ourselves and related our mournful and romantic story; a room was prepared for our immediate reception, and she even made me some vague promises of assistance. On a more intimate acquaintance with our hostess we found that I had not been very far out in guessing her character. For several days she could talk of nothing except her immemorial quarrel with her sister and her sister’s husband, and we were bound to listen attentively and to sympathise with her, for that was the only return we could make for her hospitality. Paquíta had more than her share of it, but was made no wiser as to the cause of this feud of long standing; for, though Doña Isidora had evidently been nursing her wrath all those years to keep it warm, she could not, for the life of her, remember how the quarrel originated.

After breakfast each morning I would kiss her and hand her over to the tender mercies of her Isidora, then go forth on my fruitless perambulations about the town. At first I only acted the intelligent foreigner, going about staring at the public buildings, and collecting curios — strangely marked pebbles, and a few military brass buttons, long shed by the garments they once made brave; rusty, misshapen bullets,



mementoes of the immortal nine or ten years' siege which had won for Montevideo the mournful appellation of modern Troy. When I had fully examined from the outside the scene of my future triumphs — for I had now resolved to settle down and make my fortune in Montevideo — I began seriously to look out for employment. I visited in turn every large mercantile establishment in the place, and, in fact, every house where I thought there might be a chance of lighting on something to do. It was necessary to make a beginning, and I would not have turned up my nose at anything, however small, I was so heartily sick of being poor, idle, and dependent. Nothing could I find. In one house I was told that the city had not yet recovered from the effects of the late revolution, and that business was, in consequence, in a complete state of paralysis; in another that the city was on the eve of a revolution, and that business was, in consequence, in a complete state of paralysis. And everywhere it was the same story — the political state of the country made it impossible for me to win an honest dollar.

Feeling very much dispirited, and with the soles nearly worn off my boots, I sat down on a bench beside the sea, or river — for some call it one thing, some the other, and the muddied hue and freshness of the water, and the uncertain words of geographers, leave one in doubt as to whether Montevideo is situated on the shores of the Atlantic, or only near the Atlantic and on the shores of a river one hundred and fifty miles wide at its mouth. I did not trouble my head about it; I had other things that concerned me more nearly to think of. I had a quarrel with this Oriental nation, and that was more to me than the greenness or the saltiness of the vast estuary that washes the dirty feet of its queen — for this modern Troy, this city of battle, murder, and sudden death, also calls itself Queen of the Plata. That it was a very just quarrel on my part I felt well assured. Now, to be even with every human being who despitefully uses me has ever been a principle of action with me. Nor let it be said that it is an unchristian principle; for when I have been smitten on the right or left cheek (the pain is just the same in either case), before I am prepared to deliver the return blow so long a time has often elapsed that all wrathful or revengeful thoughts are over. I strike in such a case more for the public good than for my own satisfaction, and am therefore right in calling my motive a principle of action, not an impulse. It is a very valuable one too, infinitely more effective than the fantastical code of the duellist, which favours the person who inflicts the injury, affording him facilities for murdering or maiming the person injured. It is a weapon invented for us by Nature before Colonel Colt ever lived, and it has this advantage, that one is permitted to wear it in the most law-abiding communities as well as amongst miners and backwoodsmen. If inoffensive people were ever to cast it aside, then wicked men would have everything their own way and make life intolerable. Fortunately the evil-doers always have the fear of this intangible six-shooter before them; a wholesome feeling, which restrains them more than reasonableness or the law courts, and to which we owe it that the meek are permitted to inherit the earth. But now this quarrel was with a whole nation, though certainly not with a very great one, since the population of the Banda Oriental numbers only about a quarter of a million. Yet in this sparsely settled country, with its bountiful soil and genial climate, there was apparently no place for me, a muscular and fairly intelligent young man, who only asked to be allowed to work to live! But how was I to make them smart for this injustice? I could not take the scorpion they gave me when I asked them for an egg, and make it sting every individual composing the nation. I was powerless, utterly powerless, to punish them, and therefore the only thing that remained for me to do was to curse them.

Looking around me, my eyes rested on the famous hill across the bay, and I all at once resolved to go up to its summit, and, looking down on the Banda Oriental, pronounce my imprecation in the most solemn and impressive manner.

The expedition to the *cerro*, as it is called, proved agreeable enough. Notwithstanding the excessive heats we were just then having, many wild flowers were blooming on its slopes, which made it a perfect garden. When I reached the old ruined fort which crowns the summit, I got upon a wall and rested for half an hour, fanned by a fresh breeze from the river and greatly enjoying the prospect before me. I had not left out of sight the serious object of my visit to that commanding spot, and only wished that the malediction I was about to utter could be rolled down in the shape of a stupendous rock, loosed from its hold, which would go bounding down the mountain, and, leaping clear over the bay, crash through the iniquitous city beyond, filling it with ruin and amazement.

“Whichever way I turn,” I said, “I see before me one of the fairest habitations God has made for man: great plains smiling with everlasting spring; ancient woods; swift, beautiful rivers; ranges of blue hills stretching away to the dim horizon. And beyond those fair slopes, how many leagues of pleasant wilderness are sleeping in the sunshine, where the wild flowers waste their sweetness and no plough turns the fruitful soil, where deer and ostrich roam fearless of the hunter, while over all bends a blue sky without a cloud to stain its exquisite beauty? And the people dwelling in yon city — the key to a continent — they are the possessors of it all. It is theirs, since the world, out of which the old spirit is fast dying, has suffered them to keep it. What have they done with this their heritage? What are they doing even now? They are sitting dejected in their houses, or standing in their doorways with folded arms and anxious, expectant faces. For a change is coming: they are on the eve of a tempest. Not an atmospheric change; no blighting simoom will sweep over their fields, nor will any volcanic eruption darken their crystal heavens. The earthquakes that shake the Andean cities to their foundations they have never known and can never know. The expected change and tempest is a political one. The plot is ripe, the daggers sharpened, the contingent of assassins hired, the throne of human skulls, styled in their ghastly facetiousness a Presidential Chair, is about to be assaulted. It is long, weeks or even months, perhaps, since the last wave, crested with bloody froth, rolled its desolating flood over the country; it is high time, therefore, for all men to prepare themselves for the shock of the succeeding wave. And we consider it right to root up thorns and thistles, to drain malarious marshes, to extirpate rats and vipers; but it would be immoral, I suppose, to stamp out these people because their vicious natures are disguised in human shape; this people that in crimes have surpassed all others, ancient or modern, until because of them the name of a whole continent has grown to be a byword of scorn and reproach throughout the earth, and to stink in the nostrils of all men!

“I swear that I, too, will become a conspirator if I remain long on this soil. Oh, for a thousand young men of Devon and Somerset here with me, every one of them with a brain on fire with thoughts like mine! What a glorious deed would be done for humanity! What a mighty cheer we would raise for the glory of the old England that is passing away! Blood would flow in yon streets as it never flowed before, or, I should say, as it only flowed in them once, and that was when they were swept clean by British bayonets. And afterwards there would be peace, and the grass would be greener and the flowers brighter for that crimson shower.

“Is it not then bitter as wormwood and gall to think that over these domes and towers beneath my feet, no longer than half a century ago, fluttered the holy cross of

St. George! For never was there a holier crusade undertaken, never a nobler conquest planned, than that which had for its object the wresting this fair country from unworthy hands, to make it for all time part of the mighty English kingdom. What would it have been now — this bright, winterless land, and this city commanding the entrance to the greatest river in the world? And to think that it was won for England, not treacherously, or bought with gold, but in the old Saxon fashion with hard blows, and climbing over heaps of slain defenders; and after it was thus won, to think that it was lost — will it be believed? — not fighting, but yielded up without a stroke by craven wretches unworthy of the name of Britons! Here, sitting alone on this mountain, my face burns like fire when I think of it — this glorious opportunity lost for ever! ‘We offer you your laws, your religion, and property under the protection of the British Government,’ loftily proclaimed the invaders — Generals Beresford, Achmuty, Whitelocke, and their companions; and presently, after suffering one reverse, they (or one of them) lost heart and exchanged the country they had drenched in blood, and had conquered, for a couple of thousand British soldiers made prisoners in Buenos Ayres across the water; then, getting into their ships once more, they sailed away from the Plata for ever! This transaction, which must have made the bones of our Viking ancestors rattle with indignation in their graves, was forgotten later on when we seized the rich Falklands. A splendid conquest and a glorious compensation for our loss! When yon queen city was in our grasp, and the regeneration, possibly even the ultimate possession, of this green world before us, our hearts failed us and the prize dropped from our trembling hands. We left the sunny mainland to capture the desolate haunt of seals and penguins; and now let all those who in this quarter of the globe aspire to live under that ‘British Protection’ of which Achmuty preached so loudly at the gates of yon capital, transport themselves to those lonely antarctic islands to listen to the thunder of the waves on the grey shores and shiver in the bleak winds that blow from the frozen south!”

After delivering this comminatory address I felt greatly relieved, and went home in a cheerful frame of mind to supper, which consisted that evening of mutton scrag, boiled with pumpkin, sweet potatoes, and milky maize — not at all a bad dish for a hungry man.

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*End of Sample*