THE PURPLE LAND: A VISIT TO ARGENTINA IN APRIL 1986

T.H. Jukes

I left San Francisco at 8:00 am on Sunday, April 6 on United Airlines to Los Angeles. Once there, I proceeded to Aerolineas Argentinas VIP waiting room where I devoured a plate of cookies while waiting for my plane, Flight 385, at 11:30 am to Buenos Aires by way of Mexico City and Lima. The journey was long and rather tedious. We stopped in Mexico City in the afternoon for about an hour and a half, then flew to Lima, about 5 hours, where we arrived about midnight, and stopped for about 2 hours. Once we got started again the remainder of the journey seemed short and I watched the sun rise as we approached Buenos Aires. When I walked off the plane, my name was called and a man took my passport and said there was someone to meet me. This turned out to be Dr. Federico Gonzalez, who has a law degree, and is cultural affairs specialist for the American Embassy. He was very hospitable and efficient; he gave me a big packet full of documents, including a three-page schedule of activities for me, with every day being set forth, hour by hour. A copy is attached. I was whisked through Immigration and Customs as a diplomatic guest without being interviewed, and taken to a car with a driver that was waiting at the door. We drove to my hotel, the Elevage, and the energetic Dr. Gonzalez gave me a travelogue description of first the landscape, and as we approached the city, the buildings along the way, interspersed with historical anecdotes. We saw one building with a big placard dedicated to the memory of Evita Peron, and he told me that this was the place where she delivered a speech after the army said she could not be the vice president when her husband was president. Her speech said that she was a woman of the people, and did not want to be vice president. We also passed a large monument, the English monument, which was similar to the Albert Memorial outside the Royal Albert Hall in London. Dr. Gonzalez explained that this had been defaced during the recent war with England, and had not been repaired. He explained to me what a

considerable part England had played in developing Argentine 50 to 100 years ago, including building the Argentine Railways. These were purchased by Peron from Britain for a large sum, so as to commemorate the importance and autonomy of Argentina, and, said my guide, Argentina would have received them for nothing if Peron had waited another two or three years, which he did not do. He said that the attitude of Argentina toward Britain was that of a child to his parent showing generational revolt. On the plane, I had noticed that the map in the airline magazine showed the Malvinas Islands, also South Georgia, as belonging to Argentina. However, they labelled Tristan da Cunha "GB." I could not help reflecting that if Britain had ceded the Falkland Islands to Argentina under mutually acceptable terms, there would have been a magnificent public relations opportunity for obtaining the friendship of Argentina. However, the Argentine military obviously made this impossible, and Mrs. Thatcher wound up leading group-singing of "Rule Britannia" in London, and, after all, the first duty of a government is to protect its citizens, in this case the Falkland Islands' sheep farmers.

The Hotel Elevage is old, ornate and extremely comfortable. While we were waiting to check in, the telephone rang for me, and Ms. Susana Gaona of the Clarin newspaper wanted to interview me. I gave the telephone to Dr. Gonzalez, and he made an appointment for her to see me at 3:00 pm on April 8.

On my schedule, I found that I was supposed to lecture at 9:30 pm on April 10 at the book fair, a popular lecture, "topic to be determined by Dr. Jukes." This was my first intimation of this third lecture. I asked Dr. Gonzalez twice what I should talk about, and all he would say was that I should choose my own subject. He said that Jim Watson was also giving a third lecture, and his would be on the subject of the functioning of the brain of birds. This evidently harks back to Jim's early days as an ornithologist, prior to his coming under the influence of molecular genetics at the age of about 20. I supposed I had better talk about vitamins, but I wished I had known, and then I would have brought some slides.

I hurriedly shaved, and I was driven to the Embassy, which has elaborate security precautions. Inside the embassy all was bustle and activity with phones constantly ringing, and Gonzalez conducted numerous conversations.

While I was in my room at the hotel, a message was delivered to me from Dr. Jorge Taiana. I had been told to expect this, because Mrs. Maria Belfor, who had been so helpful to me at the Argentine Consulate in San Francisco, had asked if I would like to meet her father, who was presenting a book at the book fair. However, I was not prepared to read on Dr. Taiana's card that he is extraordinary ambassador and plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic. He has just been appointed Argentine Ambassador to Yugoslavia. His book, so his daughter told me, is on the history of the exploration of the Atlantic Ocean. Dr. Gonzalez said that Dr. Taiana had been in jail for three years and had suffered extremely, during one of the earlier regimes. He said that Dr. Taiana's politics are quite left wing. I am to see him at my hotel after I have had my newspaper interview on Tuesday at 3:00 pm. He had written on his card, "I am at your disposal and hope to see you at your convenience. Welcome to Argentina."

Dr. Gonzalez said that it was Professor Leloir's great desire to have Jim Watson and me give lectures, and that the two of us would be put on his committee for subsequent collaboration. Another explanation that occurs to me is that he had originally wished to bring Severo Ochoa and that Severo suggested me as an alternate.

Gonzalez then arranged for me to attend a reception this evening which the Ambassador is giving for a U.S. astronaut. I was then driven back to the hotel where I slept after my long journey, before taking a stroll near the hotel. Looking in the shop windows, I noticed the prices seemed high. I also went to the Plaza San Martin. The traffic was very bad on the side streets, which are narrow and have cars parked on them, but it is not so bad on the big avenues. There are numerous buses of every imaginable color and size. It is warm and humid, and most people are dressed lightly with sport shirts. The crowds look somewhat nondescript and cosmopolitan. I had an unusually vile hamburger at a fast food restaurant,

because I had not eaten since breakfast on the plane. As I was leaving the hotel, I was intercepted by the clerk at the desk with a telephone call, which was from Dr. Leloir, who invited me to lunch the next day at his laboratory at noon. Back in my room, I had a phone call from Dr. Taiana. We arranged that he should meet me after the symposium, at 1:00 pm, on Wednesday.

The driver arrived at 6:00 pm to take me to the reception for an American astronaut, Chang Lopez, held by Ambassador Frank Ortiz, in the Ambassador's Residence. This is a huge and magnificent mansion, built by a wealthy Argentinian around 1880, and purchased by the US in 1930. I arrived exactly on time, almost simultaneously with the astronaut, Mr. Lopez, and we proceeded up the stairway where the Ambassador received us at the top of the stairs. Mr. Ortiz is tall, slender, good looking and very urbane. He was formerly Ambassador to Peru and is a career officer. He stood at the head of the staircase, with one aide, receiving guests for almost an hour. In the meantime, we moved into a large reception room. Everyone was very friendly and I was introduced to many people by Dr. Gonzalez and others on the staff of the Embassy. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere among members of the Embassy staff which perhaps emanates from the personalities of Ambassador and Mrs. Ortiz. Mrs. Ortiz embraces her colleagues when she greets them. She is the daughter of a US Army colonel and she spent some years immediately after the war in the Occupation of Germany, with her parents. She wanted me to meet her daughter, who is a petroleum engineer, and who attended McGill University for five years. I said that I, too, had been educated in Canada, but in Ontario rather than Quebec. I then mentioned that a classmate of mine had become an ambassador, and his name was Galbraith. This produced an immediate reaction. She said that Galbraith had visited Buenos Aires a short time ago, and that he had distinguished himself, as usual, with tactlessness and lack of diplomacy. He had made a speech in front of the Argentine cabinet in which he advised Argentina to ignore or repudiate its monetary debt to the United States, because, he said, the US had done the same thing with the Louisiana

Purchase, and with other obligations in which it had acquired territory, including from the Indians, in days gone by. I reminded her that this was characteristic of Galbraith's behavior in general, and he had boasted in his memoirs that when he was Ambassador to India, it was only necessary to spend about 2 hours a day on the formal duties of the position, and the rest of the time, apparently, he roamed around India purchasing art objects for his collection. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the US did pay France for the Louisiana Purchase.

A lady guest, Mrs. Cotton, the widow of a prominent cardiologist in New York (so she told me) had spent a long time talking with the Ambassador at the head of the stairs before she proceeded to converse with Mrs. Ortiz about home gardening, a topic in which they were both interested.

I was introduced to Dr. Saadi, who said he had met me at Berkeley, presumably through the Space Sciences Laboratory, because he is in the astronomical sciences. I also met the Ambassador from Costa Rica and his wife. I drank large quantities of the native orange juice, which has a very high water content, augmented by melted ice. Apparently, I was dehydrated from my plane trip.

Promptly at the appointed time, 8:30 pm, the Ambassador and his wife withdrew from the gathering, and the guests left. The driver was waiting for me to take me back to the hotel. I went to bed early enough, but after about an hour, the telephone rang, and it was a man from the newspaper, Clarin. I am to be interviewed by Eleanor Grossman and Susana Gaona, who telephoned yesterday, who will serve as the interpreter. The interview will be after the talks on Wednesday.

It is interesting that my presence here, as well as my interest in the genetic code, go back to a fateful evening in November 1962, when Severo Ochoa spoke on "synthetic polynucleotides and the amino acid code" at the Enzyme Club meeting at Rockefeller University.

The central part of Buenos Aires's downtown district, especially the side streets, is somewhat dilapidated and run down. Many of the sidewalks have holes in them. That horrible invention, the paint spray can, has been extensively used for sloganeering on fences and walls. The graffiti are often revolutionary and I note that the name "Malvinas" is used occasionally.

I arose on Tuesday to a continental breakfast, and I noticed that one of the croissants had a dab of chocolate concealed in its center, a feature that reminded me of Brazil some years ago. After breakfast, I worked on my notes for a while, then placed a call at 11:00 am, 6:00 am California time, to Caroline in Walnut Creek. Much to my pleasure, the call went through in about five minutes.

The driver then came to take me to the Fondacion Campomar, which is a research laboratory endowed by private funds, and supported in part by private and public funds, for Dr. Leloir and his group. About 40 scientists work there. I was then ushered in the library to wait for Dr. Leloir and in a few minutes he arrived. He is rather frail, soft and quietly spoken, and somewhat eccentric. He talked with me for a while, then excused himself and left me alone in the library while he attended to some laboratory business. In the meantime, I read some journals, including the N.Y. Academy of Sciences Annals, with an article on strange constitutents of diets, and dietary preferences, some for and some against, pork. He then returned and took me to the lunch seminar, which is apparently a daily or near-daily affair, where members of the laboratory either present work on their own research, or give discussions of the current scientific literature. The seminar today was given by Dr. Eduardo de Robertis from UCLA. He had travelled on the same plane with me (although I did not know this), but his father had met him at the Buenos Aires airport, so the Embassy representative did not find him. He is to be the fourth speaker on the Wednesday morning program. His talk was on his own work on the homeo box and related proteins in frogs. He was very up to date. On the blackboard in the seminar

room was a large handwritten notice (in Spanish, of course) in three different colors of chalk, warning that all who had samples in the cold room that had been there a long time should remove them by April 7, otherwise they would be thrown out. Obviously, scientific laboratories are the same in at least that respect in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Dr. de Robertis got into his field by working in England on frog eggs with Dr. Gurdon.

The seminar lunch table was set up with two place settings at one end. The rest of the group, including Dr. Leloir, "brown-bagged it." The two place settings were for Dr. de Robertis and myself. Evidently, we were the honored guests. de Robertis reminisced during lunch, of the day he graduated at Montevideo, the next day he got married, and the day after that he started teaching a new course. I asked him how his wife liked this, and he said that she still recalls the treatment unfavorably.

Dr. Leloir brought his own lunch in a Swiss Airlines travel bag. His food was in two screw-top containers, one containing some kind of a stew, the other with a nondescript dessert. After lunch, Dr. Leloir had disappeared, so I wandered upstairs, and found de Robertis is a lab talking to one of the staff. I tried to talk to de Robertis and he said that th other man, whose name I forget, wanted to talk to me about scientific journalism, and he wanted me to meet his small group who are starting work in this field. He took me to the basement. One of the three, Claudia Chauffan, spoke excellent English. She is an MD. The other two were Laura Rozenberg, who spoke practically no English, and Fernando Rittaco, who spoke none. They started a tape recorder and I held forth at length on the evils of the media, but I explained that it was necessary to talk to newspaper reporters, otherwise the story will be 100% wrong, but if you spoke to them, it might be only 95% wrong. They wanted to know where they could study scientific journalism in the US. I said that I did not know, but it would certainly not be in the schools of journalism. I explained to them that when reporters telephone for information it is always two hours or less before the deadline so that they will not have time to read anything

that you mail them.

Dr. Leloir then appeared, and said that I could stay as long as I wanted, but that he had to leave at three. I excused myself and went upstairs, where my driver was waiting, but I decided I had better first start work on the main project of my trip, which is not giving a talk, but obtaining a satisfactory slide projector. I elicited the help of Manon, Dr. Leloir's secretary, for a telephone campaign, which started with locating Marta Díaz, at the headquarters of the book fair. Her first line of defense was that she had learned only yesterday afternoon, April 6, that I would even need a slide projector. She was now busily taking steps to obtain one, and I should not worry myself about it, because it was her responsibility to see that everything was done to my satisfaction. This was all very well, but I knew that the auditorium seats 1,000, and I also knew that Dr. Gonzalez had told me that the slides would not be visible from the rear of the auditorium. After subjecting Marta to a good softening-up preliminary treatment through the medium of Manon, I asked the driver to take me to the book fair so that I could eyeball Marta. This was a good long trip, but I ran Marta to ground, and the battle of wits started. I told her that I wanted a 1,000 watt projector, and she said that 500 watts would be sufficient and 500 watts had been ordered. I then asked about the screen. I also said that I would pay personally for the larger projector, an offer which she refused. I then requested to be driven to the auditorium, Centro Cultural San Martin, which was about a 20-minute automobile ride away. I was driven to the auditorium with one of Marta's assistants to guide the driver. I found that the wall behind the stage was painted white, and it would suffice minimally for the projection of slides, although there were seams in it. We found a small, voluble man in the auditorium who apparently was in charge to some extent of the projection project. We will call him "Senor Nonprojectionist " (NP). I gave him a good talking-to and demanded a zoomar lens and a 35-mm carousel with a 140-slide capacity, not the kind that takes the very thin slides. I then phoned the American Embassy to speak to Dr. Gonzalez, requesting

a 1,000-watt projector. He assured me that there was no such projector in the Argentine Republic. I told him that Marta had said there were many such projectors, and he said that he had just spoken to her and found that 500 watts was the top. (Two days later, Dr. Leloir told me that he had a 1,000-watt projector. Too late, of course.)

If the other speakers get a half-way decent shake out of the projection equipment, then they had better thank me. I was driven back to the hotel, and I thought that by now I had earned a meal, the first since leaving California. I went into the hotel dining room, but it was closed, so I went to the coffee shop. The menu was just snacks and sandwiches, but I cross-questioned the manager very searchingly, and I found that I could purchase a small portion of beef. This turned out to be a delicious filet mignon, totally lean, and broiled very carefully with none of the vile sauces that the French school of cookery uses to conceal defects in beef. The price of the meat, which the manager said came from the back of a cow, was only $3.50. I had french fries, rolls and butter, a bottle of beer, and a large portion of ice cream for dessert, for a total cost of A6.58, in Australes, equivalent to about $7.25.

Wednesday, April 9, I got up early so as to get to the auditorium a half hour before the scheduled start of the meeting. I was soon greeted by an unwelcomed visitor to my G.I. tract, the revenge of Nuestra Senora de las Malvinas. I did my best to fight it off, but, of course, the show must go on.

One look at the projectionist (NP) was enough to convince me that there was nobody home. I loaded the carousel for myself, and ran my slides through as a rehearsal. After a few minutes, an official timidly asked me if I would now permit the audience to enter the room. I consented. I had asked the projectionist yesterday for an electric pointer. He showed me he had it, but he did not give it to me.

Dr. Leloir was in the chair, and after a long ceremonial address in Spanish by one of the officials, who said I was from Los Angeles, he started the proceedings. The first speaker was Juan Oró, who spoke in Spanish, of course, and regaled the audience with many colorful slides showing comets, the red spot on Jupiter, extinction of dinosaurs, synthesis of biological molecules, and a new scheme for putting together a proto-cell out of various odds and ends. He used about 40 slides and no manuscript. The schedule I had been given said 30 to 40 minutes for a talk followed by 10 minutes discussion by local scientists, but he spoke for an hour.

My turn was next. There was no light on the lectern, and when the slides started, the house lights were turned off, and I was in total darkness. It was time to ask for my electric pointer. Someone brought it to me and I used it to read my manuscript. Most of my 18 or so slides were fairly bright, so the audience did not suffer too much from lack of legibility. I ended my talk by giving a rousing introduction to Jim Watson in which I said that the only scientist in history that I have been able to find who has made a comparable discovery at such a young age was Sir Isaac Newton, who had discovered the differential and integral calculus at the age of 24, while Jim discovered base pairing at the age of 25, and this discovery had completely revolutionized biology.

I think this pleased Jim. Anyway, he thanked me, and I would say that it was a fairly strong compliment. Jim gave a very good talk. His slides were much darker than mine, and much more complicated. Jim did a splendid job on the opponents of recombinant DNA. He also strongly advised amniocentesis procedures to detect defects, including sickle cell anemia, in early pregnancy, and he said the fetuses should be promptly aborted if such defects showed up. He emphasized that such mutations were the result of chance, and God or fate had nothing to do with it.

The final speaker was de Robertis, whom I had heard the day before at the lunch seminar in Fundacion Campomar. He gave the same talk, this time in Spanish, and used the same slides as in the lunch seminar. Yesterday the slides were hard to read, even in the lunch room, and today some of them were impossible to read even from the front row in the auditorium. Presumably, he was on the program as the young local scientist who had made it in the United States. He wore a sweater with a frog embroidered on the front of it.

I had promised to meet Dr. Taiana after the meeting, but he did not show up. I had also made an appointment with a reporter from Clarin, the leading newspaper in Buenos Aires, who brought a translator with her. I spent almost an hour answering her questions after they were translated to me.

Starting during the final talk, the pounding of drums could be heard out on the street. I learned that this was a demonstration, but no one could tell me what the demonstration was about. By the time I got through with the newspaper interview, the demonstrators had left. I returned to my room for self-medication and preparation for the duties of the evening. This evening, Wednesday, there is a reception at the Embassy to be followed by a ceremonial dinner with the President of Argentina at his residence, Los Olivos. I went to the reception, but did not go to the banquet. I would not have been able to eat anything, anyway, and I was extremely tired from the effects of the intestinal infection, or contamination.

We got to the reception almost one and a half hours late, because the roads had been blocked by striking taxi drivers. The reception was very pleasant and well attended. When I was received by the Ambassador's wife, she kissed me. I didn't see her kiss any of the other guests. Not to be outdone, when I chatted with her husband, I said what a great privilege it had been to meet her, and it was obvious that she was a tremendous asset to our diplomacy in Argentina.

The Ambassador agreed with me, and thanked me very warmly for what I had said.

Jim Watson's wife, Elizabeth, was there, and I had a good opportunity to become acquainted with her. I had not met her before. She has two sons, aged 14 and 16. She told me that she met Jim during his writing of the book, "The Double Helix." She said that Gunther Stent had prepared an annotated edition of it. I knew about this, but I had not seen it. I wrote out for her the first three verses of my parody poem, "Base Fever," which is founded on the poem "Sea Fever" by Masefield. My verses are as follows:

BASE FEVER

I must go back to the lab again; to the Cavendish that I knew
And all I ask is a room to share with Jerry Donohue,
And that loud laugh in the tea-room, with Sir Lawrence twitching,
And a sour look on Maurice's face, caused by Rosy's bitching.

I must go back to the lab again, for the summons of DNA
Is a wild call, and a clear call, and I cannot say nay,
And all I ask is the latest scoop in a manuscript by Pauling,
And a grim smile from Chargaff, but no name-calling.

I must go back to the lab again, and my bed in the frigid attic,
To those week-ends with the avant-garde, who are brilliant and erratic.
And all I ask is to be once more in the days that were so groovy,
A boarding house, some English food, and a pornographic movie.

Masefield's poem is:

SEA FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray, and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life.
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a
whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

I was quite tired. I dined on Pepsi-Cola, then returned to the hotel.

I learned at the reception that the newspaper that interviewed me, Clarin, had the greatest circulation of any Spanish newspaper in the world. The reporters at the morning meeting talked to Jim Watson, too, but he excused himself after a few questions, while I continued to the bitter end.

Thursday there is a tour of Buenos Aires at 10:00 am, and Dr. Gonzalez planned to call for me at the hotel. Later in the day is the grim prospect of two evening lectures, one at 6:30 pm, followed by a second lecture at 9:30 pm.

Thursday, April 10. It was raining in the morning, and Dr. Gonzalez telephoned to cancel the tour of the city on which he proposed to take me with the Watsons. However, after about an hour the rain stopped and the sky cleared.

Buenos Aires must have been a wonderful city about 40 years ago, but today it is struggling with congested traffic and a huge increase in population. Presumably this is the same for all the world's great cities. Buenos Aires in the largest city in South America. The recent drop in the price of oil wil accelerate the problems. It was quite thrilling to see so many students at the meeting on Wednesday. They were herded to the back of the auditorium, and I was told that many of them were unable to get in. I was also told that numbers of them traveled to Buenos Aires by bus from outlying districts, just to hear the lectures.

Thursday began placidly, but all this was to change. I was scheduled to give a talk on the neutral theory of molecular evolution at the Fondacion Campomar at 6:30 pm. Because of the tremendous traffic jam the previous night, I told my driver to call for me at 5:00 pm rather than 6:00 pm. Because clothes are so important, and because most laboratory biochemists take pains to dress with studied informality, I decided that I should wear a sport shirt, without a tie, and slacks, for my talk. I was still arranging my slides at 4:30 when

the room telephone rang and I was told the driver was waiting for me. I thought he could wait until I was finished, so I continued to arrange my slides for about 15 minutes, and the phone rang again, and I was told to hurry downstairs. I complied and found that there was a apoplectic Argentine physicist sitting in the car waiting for me. He said that we were expected at City Hall to meet the Mayor and we were late. We drove post haste to the City Hall where various officials were waiting to escort us in. We went to the second floor, and found there were several other people awaiting us, including Jim Watson, who was wearing a tie, an event in itself. We were then escorted through two antechambers to the Mayor's office and stood patiently until he appeared. He was very cordial, he said he was an ornithologist, and I said something about the bustard and the ostrich. After some perfunctory small talk, he left the room, and we were allowed to depart. Bear in mind that Buenos Aires is about ten times the size of San Francisco, and imagine, if you can, Mayor Feinstein having some nondescript scientists brought to her office to talk to her.

As I have said, I had planned on arriving at the Fondacion one hour ahead of my scheduled talk. The appointment with the Mayor made this impossible. I did not get there until about 6:10 pm, which was still twenty minutes early. An employee was standing on the steps waiting for me, and I went into the library and started reading the Journal of Molecular Biology. Soon, Dr. Leloir appeared, and he asked me why I was so late. I did not understand. He then told me my lecture was supposed to start at 5:30 pm, and most of the audience had gone home. I pulled myself together and talked about 45 minutes. My schedule said 6:30, not 5:30. The schedule also said that I was supposed to leave the Fondacion Campomar at 8:30 and then go to the book fair. This, too, was wrong. The Fondacion closed at about 6:30. The Fondacion people suggested I return to the hotel, which would have been ridiculous because of the traffic jam, but fortunately my driver was waiting, so I went with him to the book fair. Inside the gates of the entrance of the main

part of the book fair, there was a large demonstration of students chanting and waving placards. I would say there was at least 100, and they looked like very fine young people. The list of their demands passes belief, especially if you have lived in Berkeley. Their demands were more teachers, more classrooms, more computers, more library facilities. I suggested to them that they apply to IBM for more computers and they told me that IBM had furnished only four computers to the university. I asked them for some of their literature, and for the name of a participant. This was Pablo Ricardo Mato, [redacted] Buenos Aires, Cap. Fed. 1426. I went inside and told the officials at the fair that they had better give those students some computers before they started breaking windows.

I then gave my lecture, on schedule at 9:30 pm, on the history of vitamins, and at the end there was the inevitable question about Pauling. I said that Pauling proposed that AIDS could be cured by administering vitamin C in doses large enough to cause diarrhea. I also said that in the USA we believed strongly in free speech, but we did not believe in Pauling. My talk was interpreted by consecutive translation. The interpreter was a young physician who spoke excellent English, and he told me that his great-grandfather was English and quite wealthy and had come to Buenos Aires from New York and brought a large library with him. The tradition of English culture and English speaking had been preserved in his family.

My experiences with the Fondacion Campomar have been somewhat strange. On my first visit I had been invited to lunch, but instead the time of my visit was spent in listening to a seminar by de Robertis, which was to be repeated at the meeting at which I spoke the next day, so I heard this talk twice. On the second occasion, after my talk, they closed the place. So I have had not much chance to talk to the scientists in the Fondacion.

Much of my free time I spent sitting in my hotel room. The other people whom I know, Jim Watson and Juan Oro, are in different hotels. I have had no chance to chat with Jim Watson. The only scientific group that I have had a chance to visit is at the Fondacion Campomar. As I have described previously, there was little opportunity for discourse there. I suppose there are biology departments at the University of Buenos Aires, but I have not been given a chance to visit them.

Since I am by myself, I have very little stimulus toward going shopping or sightseeing. However, I am trying to behave myself and I have accepted enthusiastically an invitation to go on a tour of Buenos Aires with a professional guide. I suppose that for the next four hours I shall be looking at a series of monuments of generals on horseback and old convents.

The Elevage Hotel is one block away from the celebrated Florida Avenue, which is a street that has been converted into a shopping mall for pedestrians only. It has many fine shops. Leather goods are a specialty of Argentina, and there are high quality women's purses and handbags, buth they are no longer cheap, as they were in the "old days". I bought a large handbag for about $50.

Many of the men on the streets are in short-sleeved shirts without ties in the relaxed style of the "New World" in general.

As I predicted, there were many equestrian statues and religious edifices on the tour. The tour guide was a professional guide, a young Argentine woman. The other guest on the tour was a German computer scientist who seemed to want to talk a lot about Germany, and I did not have much to say. We first went to the Cathedral, where numerous heroic Argentine generals are entombed, including San Martin. The sarcophagus is guarded by two soldiers in medieval uniforms. Maybe this was where Nixon got his idea for the palace guard--an unpleasant memory. There are numerous statues of the Virgin and of the Savior. Buenos Aires is close to sea level, and sometimes there are serious floods. On one such occasion, the statue of the Virgin was paraded outside the Cathedral, and the rain stopped. My suggestion was that it would be unadvisable to use this procedure too frequently, because sometimes it might not work.

Argentina has a long and turbulent military history, and we were treated to a recital of some of the major wars and battles. We drove to the artists quarter, near the Rio de la Plata, and saw some of the outdoor exhibits of incredibly banal paintings. We then drove to a large and splendid public park, and from there to a smaller park with fine trees in it, and we walked into a large cemetery-mausoleum or graveyard filled with huge and elaborate monuments, beneath which were crypts. Most of the monuments were two stories high, and the grieved families had outdone each other in perpetrating sculptural monstrosities as a tribute to their loved ones. This is the cemetery of the"Argentine 500." It has been completely full for many years, but occasionally, and very seldom, a family will sell its property to some member of the nouveau riche, for an immense sum. The cemetery with its bizarre monuments, many of which are to military corpses,is frequented by the young people of Buenos Aires as a place to stroll. I am glad to say that no graffiti were in evidence.

Our guide took us to the Leloir family tomb. As I saw this huge and pompous edifice; the reason for Dr. Leloir's detached and patrician manner became immediately evident. He comes from an old and wealthy family. As such, in the English idiom, he has "the calm repose that marks the noble caste of Vere de Vere."

Our tour was almost over, but I livened things up by broaching a fresh topic: The relationship between Peron, Hitler and Franco. This aroused the German computer expert, who started to explain that he was against Hitlerism, but his father was still pro-Hitler, and he could not understand his father's attitude, etc. The guide told us that Peron had collaborated closely with Franco, and had sent large amounts of food to Spain for the Franco regime during the Civil War. As a reward for this munificence, Peron was allowed to settle in Spain after he was thrown out of Argentine subsequently. "Peron declared war on Germany 5 days before Germany was defeated." I can't verify this.

I returned to the hotel and received the news that my plane reservation had been changed from Monday to Saturday evening. Also, that I was scheduled to go to the book fair that evening, where Juan Oró would be lecturing, and afterwards, to a dinner honoring him and Eduardo de Robertis, and I was to be included. This would make up for my absence at the dinner honoring Jim Watson and me on Saturday evening. Juan gave a chatty slide talk with numerous pictures and cartoons of space exploration. He had a large audience. The dinner was in one of the rooms of the restaurant at the exhibition. It was not very pretentious, and there was a large fan on a stand to cool us off a bit. About 20 people were present, and I sat between de Robertis and a man whose name I did not catch, but he was cultural representative for the Spanish Embassy in Buenos Aires. He was very pleasant and we conversed a lot through the dinner. Afterwards, he and his wife drove me home. The dinner started at about 11:00, Spanish style, and I got to bed about 1:30. I was told that a car

would pick me up on Saturday morning at 9:30 and take me to the San Martin Cultural Center, where the last series of lectures in the program would take place, and I should be given a medal along with other participants. It was pouring with rain, and the lecturers were speaking Spanish, something about science and society, so I told Marta I would like to go shopping. She very kindly sent a young lady with me as an interpreter, and we were driven to the shopping district near my hotel. One very important thing I had to do was return to the cultural center for my plane ticket, which Marta had not yet changed to the new date.

I wanted to shop for a gem called "rodocrosita," which is the national stone of Argentina. I also wanted to buy some traditional dolls of Argentine significance. Fortunately, my companion found an old-fashioned shop which had some of these, in fact, I bought their entire stock of five. The morning passed pleasantly enough, even though the rain was pouring very hard. We returned to the cultural center, and my validated ticket was ready for me. I bought a dozen roses for Marta, but she had left, so I asked one of the staff to deliver them to her. My medal was handed to me by Mr. Castiglioni. My stay in Argentina was coming to a close. At 5:30 pm, the car arrived to take me to the airport, together with an escort, Ms. Sylvia Ramirez, who has a Masters degree in languages from the University of Buenos Aires. She saw to it that my ticket was in order and that a boarding pass was issued, then she waited until the flight was called, and I was on my way to board the plane. She spoke excellent English, and we talked on topics of mutual interest for about an hour and a half. The return flight was comparatively uneventful. The plane was full, and I suppose that some other passenger had been displaced to make room for me. There was an unusual difference in operating procedure: The door to the flight deck remained open thoughout the journey so that any passenger who wished to do so

could watch the crew at work. There would be a heavy fine imposed by the FAA on any such laxity by a United States airline.

We arrived in Los Angeles about an hour and a half late, so there was only 30 minutes for me to clear customs and immigration and get from the international building to United Airlines at a considerable distance at Los Angeles International Airport. Because I was a first-class passenger, I was able to stand right next to the door of the Argentine plane when it was opened, and consequently I did not have to stand in line, I got to United Airlines gate at 8:52 am, only to find that my reservation had not been changed April 15 to April 13. However, a first-class seat was available, the plane took off at 9 am and I arrived at San Francisco Airport at 10:12 am on Sunday, April 13, 17 hours of elapsed time after leaving Buenos Aires Airport.

My hosts in Buenos Aires treated me wonderfully. To change my return plane reservation from Monday to Saturday (the Saturday plane was sold out), the Embassy had to phone the president of Aerolineas Argentinas. The young driver who was assigned to me did not speak a word of English, and he asked to borrow my dictionary. He spent his waiting time reading the dictionary so that he could ask me questions in English. de Robertis switched to English for his seminar on Tuesday, just for my benefit, because I was the only non-Spanish-speaking person present.

The Purple Land is a romantic account of Argentina in the last century by the English writer, W.H. Hudson, which I read many years ago.