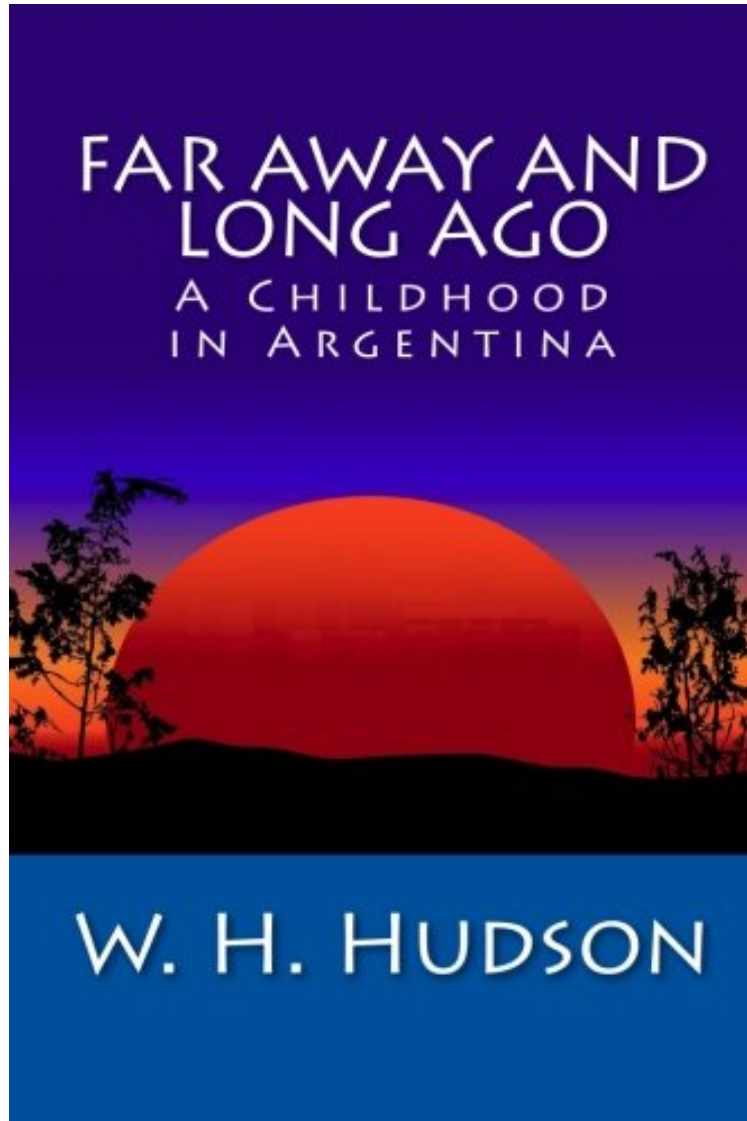


[Download pdf ebook] Far Away and Long Ago: A Childhood in Argentina

Far Away and Long Ago: A Childhood in Argentina

W. H. Hudson

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W. H. Hudson : Far Away and Long Ago: A Childhood in Argentina before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Far Away and Long Ago: A Childhood in Argentina:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The making of a naturalist in the ArgentineBy John P. Jones IIIW H Hudson is of English extraction. He was born in Argentina in 1841, where his family was trying to scratch out a living on the pampas. This work was written late in life, with a first draft prepared during a six week convalescence on the south coast of England. Hudsons memoir was first published in 1918, and thanks to the publisher, Eland, kept in print.

Kudos. Almost the entire work concerns the years from his first memories, at age 4, until age 12. Living on an isolated farm the natural world was his primary entertainment, and at the age of 6, he was riding his own pony, and ranging considerable distances. No helicopter parents in the days before the invention of that flying machine. Admittedly, my principal source of knowledge about this extensive country is one musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber: *Evita*. Therefore I found myself intensely interested in his descriptions of a cone country at the time that England was commencing the Industrial Revolution, France would have another brief revolution, and commenced its Second Empire, and the United States expanded westward, but was unable to resolve its fundamental dilemma that would lead to the Civil War. Flat. The principal geographic feature of the pampas, where even a slight rise was a major feature. Hudson commenced his life living at a home called the *Los Veinte y cinco Ombues*, which means the 25 Ombu trees yet something more I had never heard of, but now Google will provide some magnificent pictures of this tree. In good years, meaning rain abundant, the pampas would be covered with thistles, which were good eating for the cattle. Birds were his favorite fauna; he covered virtually all the fauna though, including the large snakes, and usually provides their scientific names. Egg-collecting, for food, was a frequent pastime. The English were a minority in a gaucho culture. The Spanish had settled the area for at least two centuries, as evidenced by ancient popular trees that surrounded the estates (which were often mere hovels). Hudson provides sketches of the people who lived in the area, including an Englishman, Captain Scott, and an itinerant beggar by the name of *con-stair lo-vair*. Schooling? Itinerant teachers, likewise, who would stay on the farm for periods of time. Mr. Trigg appeared to be bi-polar, and was dismissed when he use a bullwhip on the kids. The author provides succinct sketches of the neighbors, English and Spanish, within a 25 km radius. He also visits Buenos Ayres (so spelt) on a couple of occasions, and provides a memorable depiction of the stock yards, and the method whereby cattle were slaughtered, as well as washer women being harassed by rich toughs. After Latin America threw off the Spanish yoke (which he always puts in quotes), it seems they have been ruled by countless thugs. Hudson depicts the rule of the Dictator, Rosas, who reigned for 17 years, 1835-1852, and how he was overthrown (by, yes, new thugs). An integral part of the gaucho culture appears to be fighting and killing, just for the sport of it. Hudson contracted typhus at the age of 13, and within two years contracted rheumatic fever. With the former, his mother, who had been largely unmentioned until then, carefully nursed him back to health. She also was a nature enthusiast, and encouraged her child. With the latter illness, the fever permanently damaged his health for life. He never really says what he did for all that period between the age of 15, and finding the south coast of England during the First World War. He does briefly discuss animism and Darwinism replacing more structured religious beliefs. Childhood memories and their accuracy. At the commencement of his work Hudson mentions, without directly attributing, the concept of Marcel Proust's *Madeleine*, the taste of which initiates a rush of memories. Hudson says it is the perfume of some flower, but then says his memories are actually based on some different reflex, seemingly available due largely to his convalescence. Like Bruce Springsteens *Glory Days*, a reference to high school, the high point in ones life, when one was the star pitcher, I had a nagging problem with Hudsons account of a glorious childhood between, largely, 5 and 11, and then nothing thereafter, although the account seemed completely authentic. Id even have appreciated a map that revealed where they actually lived and traveled. Overall, 4-stars. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. most enjoyable By L. M. Gainsford This book was like knocking on an old friends door, being welcomed in and settling in front of a fire with a glass of something in one's hand. The author then talks, gently and beautifully, weaving this picture of his early life. He brings his characters to life and describes the birds and other creatures so well, I felt as if I was there with him, every time I picked up the book to read. A gentle lovely story of a young boy's steps from childhood. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A look at 19th century living on the Argentine Pampa By steven woodruff A 19th century saga of life on the pampa. Great detailed writing about birds, flora, and colorful characters.

Far Away and Long Ago is the autobiography of naturalist William Hudson, who spent the first eighteen years of his life on the Argentinean pampas. Hudson is revered in Argentina, where they refer to him as Guillermo Enrique Hudson and name streets and towns after him. In simple and stately prose, he writes about his boyhood as one of several sons in an English family that ran an estancia on the Pampas. Despite several failed attempts to school him, he managed to pick up one of the best educations available: by using his eyes and ears to study nature. His skill in language, which is considerable, came from reading his father's books on his own. Whether writing about ombu trees, plovers, snakes, lightning storms, rheas (Argentinian ostriches), or his neighboring ranchers, Hudson brought a whole world to life with this book. Hudson published *Far Away and Long Ago* in 1917 while he was living in England. During W. H. Hudsons time, the Argentine pampas was a land of freedom and excitement, which he describes well in this memoir. Descriptions of natural history and wildlife also abound, together with politics and interpersonal relationships of the times. You'd think Hudsons book would give insights into Hudson's childhood and life - and it does - but more importantly it recreates the history, culture and geography of Argentina in a way few travel books accomplish. *Far Away and Long Ago* is perhaps one of the greatest autobiographies ever written, a book that will, without question, withstand several readings.

From the Back Cover As W. H. Hudson lay sick in bed in England when he was nearly eighty years old, his entire childhood returned to him so vividly that he could write in exact detail about these long-forgotten memories - starting with his earliest memories of the house in which he was born and finishing with the disastrous close of his childhood idyll at age fifteen when typhus struck. *Far Away and Long Ago* is told with such passion and candor that the grassy plains of Argentina, the gauchos, the birds and wildlife emerge from the pages. Not only great natural history, *Far Away and Long ago* is one of the most magical childhood memoirs ever written. (5 1/2 X 8 1/4, 352 pages)