

Sr. Hutchinson, otra vez, no dice V. nonsenses, no tonterrias: [1]
A Bigoted Response to Thomas J. Hutchinson's *Two Years in Peru* (1873)

By Edmundo Murray



Thomas Hutchinson decorated by the Union Masonic Lodge of Rosario for his work during the cholera outbreak, July 1867
(*The Paraná, With Incidents of the Paraguayan War, 1868*)

When, in October 1870, Thomas Hutchinson was appointed British Consul at Callao, the port of Lima, he was probably preparing for his retirement in Wexford after fifteen years working for the British consular service. His projects for the most peaceful time of his life included writing numerous travel and exploration accounts, and perhaps visiting continental Europe. He could not foresee at that time that one of his books, *Two Years in Peru*, would elicit such a negative response in the Spanish-speaking world.

Thomas Joseph Hutchinson was born on 18 January 1802 in Stonyford, County Wexford. Although little is known of his childhood or his family - undoubtedly of Anglo-Irish background -, his parents may have owned a rural property in the parish of Kilsoran, near the major source area of nineteenth-century emigration from Wexford to Argentina. [2] In his formative years, he undoubtedly received a good education, which allowed him to travel to Germany and study to practice as a medical doctor. He graduated in 1833 from the University of Göttingen as a physician and surgeon. [3]

Hutchinson first went to West Africa as the *Pleiad's* senior surgeon, and served in this capacity on the 1851 exploration of the river Niger. His initial views on the possibility of educating the native population were later reviewed and he held extreme opinions on the African peoples. He was acknowledged by contemporary authors as 'knowledgeable but eccentric' (Burton 1863). Back in London, Hutchinson married his wife Mary, and in 1855 was appointed British Consul for the Bight of Biafra, based at Clarence Port, Fernando Po. [4] The family adopted an African child, Fanny Hutchinson, who lived with them for the rest of their lives. Hutchinson was dismissed in 1861 on the grounds that he was too partial to the interests of the merchants of Liverpool, being replaced by Captain Richard F. Burton (1821-1890), the famous explorer, linguist and travel writer. Hutchinson's attempt at being appointed to the consulate in Tenerife failed, and he was sent instead to the Argentine city of Rosario as British Vice-Consul. In 1867, he was appointed temporarily to the Montevideo consulate, where he owned the *Farmacia Británica*. Between 1870 and 1872 he was British Consul in Callao, Peru.

In 1874, Thomas Hutchinson retired from the Foreign Office and went to live in Ballinesker Lodge, Curracloe, parish of St. Margaret's in County Wexford. From this base he travelled extensively on the

European continent and published several books. Then the family moved to Middlesex in England, and finally to Italy. Hutchinson died on 23 March 1885 in his house at 2 Via Maragliano, Florence.

He was a prolific writer, and his books of travel and exploration include seven works covering Africa, South America and Europe, and a few published lectures about ethnographic studies in Africa and the production of cotton and meat in South America. [5] While he was in Rosario, Hutchinson also edited a short-lived newspaper, the *Argentine Citizen*, which appeared weekly from 10 January to 25 April 1865, and was primarily concerned with encouraging immigration from Britain and Ireland and with British investment and trade (Marshall 1996: 17). [6]

His books were published in London and Liverpool, on which Hutchinson's eyes were set. However, his accounts of Africa and South America received no applause in the consular, business and scientific communities in England. And his readers in South America were none too impressed. In Argentina, President Bartolomé Mitre observed that Hutchinson wrote 'with neither order nor scientific method. Hutchinson is a character with a passion for travelling, and for travel writing. [...] According to Captain Burton, the famous explorer of Central Africa, his [Hutchinson's] books have not been too widely accepted in England. [...] In spite of my high opinion of Hutchinson as a person, my gratefulness for his consideration, and my respect for his untiring industriousness, I must say that his books, even if they do include some helpful information, do not broach any particular idea nor do they have any durable character. Without a doubt, his best work is an English-language statistical and trade newspaper that he published here.' [7]



Miguel Lobo y Malagamba (1821-1876)
(Museo Naval, Madrid)

In Peru, where Hutchinson spent the final stage of his career in the British consular service, *Two Years in Peru* elicited anger and negative reviews in the local press. But his worst critic was the veteran officer of the Battle of Callao, the Spanish admiral Miguel Lobo.

Invectives and Diatribe

On 8 October 1870, Thomas Hutchinson was appointed Consul at Callao, with a salary of £600, plus £385 allowance and outfit (FO 61/261). [8] On 1 March 1871 he sailed from Liverpool on the *Cordillera*, arriving at Callao on 22 April with his wife and daughter. Most of his reports include accounts about crimping at Callao harbour, a problem caused, he claimed, by Peruvian, Chilean, British and Spanish captains. Hutchinson's health was then failing and he was on leave for most of 1872 (FO 61/263). Back in England, he retired from the consular service on 24 February 1874 (FO 61/286).



Sea-shore view of Payta
(Heliotype in *Two Years in Peru*)

Two Years in Peru appeared in London in 1873. The book was published in two volumes, and it is a compilation of Hutchinson's trips and archaeological explorations in the Andean country. The first chapters include accounts of the journey from Liverpool to Lima, with full descriptions of the Strait of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego and Punta Arenas, the indigenous people of southern Patagonia and Chile, the Chiloé archipelago, Valparaíso, Santiago, Iquique and Tarapaca, and of his arrival at Callao, a major port near Lima. In the chapters that follow, there are scientific deliberations, including medical, ethnographic and archaeological observations of places in central and northern Chile, present-day Bolivia and south Peru.

On Lima and its port, Callao, the author included reports and statistical information on trade, agricultural production, industry, shipping, railways and mining, as well as security, health, education, immigration policies, demographic information, local politics and even customs - among them the 'sleepiness' - of the Peruvian people. Both volumes are richly illustrated, including numerous pencil sketches by José Maria Zaballa and John Schumaker, and a number of heliotype pictures, a higher-resolution photographic technique which was pioneered in the 1870s in Lima by V.L. Richardson.



Tapada, a custom of Lima ladies
(*Two Years in Peru*)

One of the accounts, in chapter 11, tells of the 'Bombardment of Callao by the Spanish fleet in 1866' (Hutchinson 1873: 223). In 1866, Spanish forces occupied the Chincha islands, major world producer of guano fertiliser. Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Bolivia united their forces against Spain in what was called the War of the American Union (1864-1867). In February a Chilean-Peruvian army successfully battled the Spanish armada in Abtao, and on 31 March the Spanish forces attacked Valparaíso in Chile. At noon of 2 May 1866 the Spanish ships, led by the iron-clad *Numancia*, began shooting at the fort of Callao. After fierce fighting between the invading navy and the Peruvian forces on land, the Spanish abandoned the battlefield and '2 de Mayo' is still celebrated as a Peruvian victory. [9] The commander who ordered the retreat of the Spanish fleet was rear-admiral Miguel Lobo y Malagamba (1821-1876), a seasoned naval officer with experience in Africa and America, who would consider Hutchinson's writings to be a series of *dislates* (nonsense).

In 1874, Miguel Lobo published *Un hijo de Inglaterra a quien le ha dado por viajar en las Regiones Americanas que fueron de España y por escribir sendos dislates sobre ellas y sus antiguos dominadores*. [10] Each of the seventy-seven pages of this book are dedicated to demolishing the information and ideas included in Hutchinson's *Two Years in Peru*. This long diatribe - without any division in chapters or even subtitles - was written to counter the neglect of the Spanish authors to defend 'the prestige of Spain and the historical truth regarding the conquest of America' (Lobo 1874: 5).

After ten pages including remarks about Hutchinson's ability as a travel writer, the author of *Un hijo de Inglaterra* focuses on linguistic criticism. When Hutchinson criticises the fact that the Spanish conquistadors changed numerous Inca place names, Lobo counter-attacks with the English-language toponyms that are frequent in the Magellan Strait and were named by English expeditions. Then he reproaches the consul's translations from Spanish into English, including that of *perder los estribos* as 'to get confused or embarrassed', which Lobo argues is enough to evaluate the bad translations in Hutchinson's book: 'we can certainly assume that our readers [...] will exclaim *ab uno disce omnes*' (13). [11]

Next in Lobo's condemnation is spelling, in particular the question of the 'ñ':

Of course the Spanish linguistic knowledge of Mr. Hutchinson [...] has nothing to do with the fact that, without the authorisation of the Spanish Academy - incidentally, an authorisation which no British authors seek - he omits one of the letters in the Spanish alphabet, the ñ. But, not content with this *ab-irato* banishment, it is also imposed upon the *r*, when two of them happen to be unfortunate enough to occur together in a Spanish-language word. Therefore, in-

stead of *Carrillo*, a Peruvian engineer, we see this name written, *ex-officio* by Mr. Hutchinson, with the nickname *Carillo*. And the delicious fish in the north of Peru's coast [...] that is known as *Mojarrilla*, is re-christened *mojarilla* (14). [12]

This apologia of the *ñ*, which is indeed justifiable from a purely linguistic point of view, is somewhat biased by the palpable intolerance of the author towards everything that is not Spanish. It would be worth attempting a comparison of this narrow-minded passage with the enjoyable 'La *eñe* también es gente' by the Argentine author María Elena Walsh. [13]

Also visible in Lobo's work is his vindication of the Spanish conquest of America. 'So all the South American histories say that in general the Christianisation by the Spaniards in those countries was limited to raising crosses on the hill tops, to building chapels in suitable places, and to changing the original place names to others with the names of saints! [...] So then it is nothing to succeed in propagating throughout the largest part of the New World a language that is one of the most beautiful languages, and with it, one of the most original and precious of literatures' (31). [14]

But the most important evaluation of *Two Years in Peru* by Miguel Lobo seems to be focused on an event that he witnessed first-hand, the attack on Callao by the Spanish fleet on 2 May 1866. All the details offered by Hutchinson are challenged by Lobo. When Hutchinson reports that the Spanish battleships 'had all got such a peppering' that at five in the afternoon they had to withdraw (Hutchinson 1873: II, 234), Lobo says instead that the officers were just following their orders (Lobo 1874: 71-73).



The battle at Callao, 2 May 1866

Conclusion

Miguel Lobo's book abounds in bigoted interpretations of both British and Latin American cultures. His comments - though partially true in some aspects of Hutchinson's book - are guided less by a genuine defence of Latin American cultures than by an attitude of considering the Spanish culture superior to that of the British empire, which is typical of an obsolete way of thinking among Spanish officials in the second half of the nineteenth century. Lobo's beliefs draw on the imperialist approach to cultures different to one's own, in which the colonialist mind only perceives powerful enemies or colonised peoples.

Incapable of even a minimal recognition of Hutchinson's work, or at least an objective criticism of the book, in the closing paragraph Miguel Lobo scoffs at the way some English-speaking people pronounce words in Spanish: 'Sr. Hutchinson, otra vez, no dice V. nonsenses, no tonterrias' (77).

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Acknowledgements

I am obliged to Edward Walsh of London for his generous hospitality and his expert guidance through the intricacy and formalities of the city's various libraries and archives. I am also grateful to Roberto Landaburu of Venado Tuerto for sharing interesting information about Thomas Hutchinson with me, and to the genealogist Helen Kelly of Dublin for her research in Wexford archives.

Notes

- [1] Scornful use of incorrect Spanish syntax and spelling by a native speaker of English (Lobo 1874: 77).
- [2] The county of birth may also have been Kilkenny. In this case, his father was Alfred Hutchinson [Hutchenson].
- [3] The year of graduation may be inaccurate. No records have been identified in the University of Göttingen of Hutchinson's studies or his thesis dissertation (thanks to Juan Delius and Ulrich Hunger for this information).
- [4] Present-day Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea.
- [5] A list is included in the Appendix following this article.
- [6] The complete collection of the *Argentine Citizen* has been microfilmed by Museo Mitre of Buenos Aires.
- [7] 'Hutchinson, Antigüedades del Perú. No conozco esta obra, ni necesito conocerla para saber que ha de contener muchas noticias de interés; pero redactadas sin orden ni método científico. Hutchinson es un original que tiene la pasión por los viajes, para escribir sobre ellos libros que han tenido poca aceptación en Inglaterra, según me ha informado el capitán Burton, el famoso viajero del Africa Central. Ha escrito sobre la expedición del Níger en Africa, de la que formó parte. Aquí ha sido, por algunos años, cónsul de Inglaterra en el Rosario, y ha escrito dos obras sobre la República Argentina, una de las cuales lleva mi retrato al frente. No obstante mi estimación por su persona, mi gratitud por su distinción y el honor que hago de su infatigable actividad, debo declarar que sus libros, conteniendo algo útil, no responden a ninguna idea, ni tienen un carácter durable. Su mejor obra es sin duda un periódico estadístico-comercial en inglés, que publicó aquí.' (Bartolomé Mitre to Diego Barros Arana, 20 October 1875, in Payro 1906: 197).
- [8] This income was subsequently increased to £900 plus £400 allowance after complaints made by Hutchinson (FO 61/274).
- [9] Independence from Spain was won in 1824 at the battle of Ayacucho, but Spain did not recognise the Republic of Peru until 1855. After the War of the American Union, the final peace treaty between Peru and Spain was signed in 1880.
- [10] Lobo's book title could be translated as *A son of England who took it upon himself to travel through the American regions that belonged to Spain, and to write nonsense about them and their former masters*.
- [11] Y ante semejante interpretación lingüística de nuestro británico viajero podemos presumir, sin miedo de equivocación, que nuestros lectores, concediéndonos les acompañemos en ello, dirán, refiriéndose á los conocimientos del idioma del mismo señor Hutchinson, *ab uno disce omnes*.
- [12] Por supuesto que la erudición filólogo-castellana del Sr. Hutchinson, cuya muestra, puede decirse, tenemos ya de cuerpo presente, nada tiene que ver con que sin permiso de la Academia Española (permiso, que, por otra parte, suelen para ello tomarse todos los escritores británicos), suprima una de las letras del alfabeto castellano, la ñ. Y no contento con este destierro *ab-irato*, impóneselo también á una de las r, cuando dos de ellas tienen la desgracia de figurar juntas en una palabra española; así es, que en vez de *Carrillo*, apellido de un ingeniero peruano, vemos á éste, *ex-officio* el Sr. Hutchinson, con el sobrenombre de *Carillo*; y al sabroso pescado que en la costa Norte de la República, teatro de las recientes andanzas de este señor, es conocido por *Mojarrilla*, bautizado con el nombre de *Mojarilla*.
- [13] Walsh, María Elena, 'La ñe también es gente' in Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología (Argentina), *Efemérides Culturales Argentinas: María Elena Walsh*. Available online (<http://www.me.gov.ar/efeme/mewalsh/laenie.html>), accessed 21 August 2006.
- [14] ¡Conque toda la historia de América Meridional enseña, que en general, el cristianismo de los españoles, en aquellos países, redújose á levantar cruces sobre los cerros, á edificar capillas en adecuados parajes, y á cambiar los nombres primitivos por otros de santos! [...] ¡Conque no es nada el haber logrado extender, por grandísima parte del Nuevo Mundo, una lengua de las más hermosas, y con ella, una literatura de las más originales y ricas!

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Appendix

Thomas Joseph Hutchinson (c.1802-1885): a Bibliography

- *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, & Binuë Exploration, including a Report on the Position and Prospects of Trade up those Rivers, with Remarks on the Malaria and Rivers of West Africa* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855). 267 pages. Dedicated to Macgregor Laird, Esq., Managing Director of the African Steam-ship Co. Part 1: chapters 1-6. Part 2: chapters 7-10. Addendum (corrigena).
- *Impressions of Western Africa, with remarks on the Diseases of the Climate and a Report on the Peculiarities of Trade Up the Rivers in the Bight of Biafra* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1858). 313 pages. Dedicated to George William Frederick, Earl of Clarendon, HM's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Preface signed in the British Consulate, Fernando Po, 1 January 1858. Appendix A: 'Peculiarities of the Countries interior to Lagos', letter from Samuel Growther, a missionary of the Established Church, to Thomas Joseph Hutchinson, 10 September 1856 (Lagos). Appendix B: 'Opportunities for production and trade of cotton'. Appendix C: 'The Diseases of the Native Africans'. Descriptions of leprosy, yaws, crow-crow, elephantiasis, phagodermic ulcer, lethargy.
- *Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians; with sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Civilized and Uncivilized Tribes, from Senegal to Gabon* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861). 329 pages, with engravings. Dedicated to William Bingham Baring, Lord Ashburton, president of the Royal Geographical Society.
- *Buenos Ayres and Argentine Gleanings: with extracts from a diary of the Salado exploration in 1862 and 1863* (London: Edward Stanford, 1865). Map of the Argentine Republic within the 24th and 35th parallels. 'Note: this map is chiefly copied from Dr. Herman Burmeister's. The course and neighbourhood of the Rio Salado are taken from Mr. Coghlan's map published in 1859. Additions and alterations have also been made by Consul Hutchinson.' Translated into Spanish by Luis Vicente Varela, *Buenos Aires y otras Provincias Argentinas, con extractos de un diario de la exploración del Río Salado en 1862 y 1863* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Siglo, 1866), 296 pages, which was reprinted with preface and notes by José Luis Trenti Rocamora (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huarpes, 1945).

- *The Paraná; With Incidents of the Paraguayan War, and South American Recollections from 1861 to 1868* (London: Edward Stanford, 1868). 424 pages. Maps, illustrations and portrait of the author. Dedicated to Lord Stanley (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs). Preface signed in 21A, Hanover Square, London. Appendix A: Argentine Measures compared with English and French. Appendix B: River Navigation. Appendix C: Argentine Seasons.

- *Up the Rivers and Through Some Territories of the Rio de la Plata Districts in South America [Read at the 38th Meeting, 1868, of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Norwich, on the 21st of August, Section E, Geography and Ethnology]* (London: Bates Hendy & Co., 1868). 30 pages.

- *Our Meat Supply from Abroad: A paper read before the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, January 9th 1871* (Liverpool: David Marples, 1871). 16 pages.

- *Two Years in Peru, with Exploration of its Antiquities* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1873). Volume 1: 342 pages. Volume 2: 334 pages. Dedicated to Manuel Pardo, President of Peru. Map by Daniel Barrera and numerous illustrations. Appendix A: 'Remarks on a Collection of 150 Ancient Peruvian Skulls, presented to the Anthropological Institute', paper read by Dr. Busk, F.R.G.S, at the Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, April 1st 1873, among other papers. Appendix B: Professor L. Agassiz to H.M. Brent (U.S. chargé d'affaires in Lima), Callao 1 June 1872.

- *Summer Holidays in Brittany* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876). 232 pages. Map and illustrations. Dedicated to Mrs. S.C. Hall. Preface signed at Ballinescar Lodge, Curraclloe, Wexford, 1 March 1876.