THE BUENOS AYRES POSTAL SERVICE, 1827
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The following description of the working of the postal system in Buenos Ayres, at a time when it formed part of the Argentine Republic, is taken from an account of the country, published in London in 1828, and may prove interesting to the reader.

‘The post-office is under the superintendence of a director, and although capable of very great improvement, displays some regularity in its arrangements. The inland posts are universally conveyed on horseback; and, though they have to travel over many hundred miles of almost desert country, they are generally exact in their arrival. The postman receives his letters, in a portmanteau; this is tied behind the saddle of his guide, who is changed at every post-house, each relay of horses having its own guide; the postmen have the privilege of calling for horses at any time in the night, by which means they are enabled to make up for the time they may have lost in the day; they are likewise at liberty to gallop in the streets of the different towns, a privilege denied to others. They wear a short jacket, generally red, and their arrival and departure from Buenos Ayres is announced by the blowing of a horn, carried by the guide. On the arrival of the different posts, a list of the letters received is made out, and fixed up in the patio of the post-office, each letter having a number affixed to it; these letters are given up, without inquiry, to any one who tenders the amount of the postage. On the arrival of the English packet, the letters, being too numerous to allow of a list being made out, are given to such person as answer to the names called, upon their paying two rials for each letter. By this means it frequently happens, that a person, after having been engaged for two hours in a hard scuffle to approach the crowded window of the office, finds he has no letter to receive; some other person either through inadvertence or design, having already paid the two rials for postage, and carried his letter off. This serious inconvenience, the present director, whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted with, informed me had been attempted to be remedied by sending the letters to the individuals’ houses, as in England; but the carelessness of the servants who took them in was found to be a more serious evil than the occasional loss of a letter at the office; it is, however, to be hoped, that some improvement in their domestic arrangements may assist the completion of his improvements. The expense of an extra medio or rial to the postman, would be amply repaid by the saving of some hours and of the struggles uselessly thrown away at the post-office window.’

The resemblance of the costume of the horseman depicted on the gaucho stamps to that of the mounted postmen as above described, suggesting, as it does, the probability that one of the latter was intended to be represented, adds to the argument in favour of these overdoubted stamps. the objection which has been made against them, that the value of the ‘ship’ stamps is given in pesos, and that stamps with the value in reales were not used until 1860, also loses much of its force when it is know that the postage of letters before the introduction of labels was paid in reales.