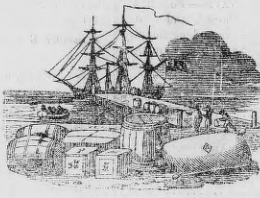


BRITISH PACKET



ARGENTINE NEWS.

AND

BUENOS AYRES, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1848.

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BUENOS AYRES.

To-morrow elections are to be held in the different parishes of this city and in the several country districts for the choice of 26 deputies to serve in the next legislature, in lieu of 24 whose term has expired and of 2 deceased.

The Police has given notice that it is prepared to receive tenders for the conveyance of stone to this city to continue the paving of the streets.

Notice has also been given by the same department that it has been furnished with funds by government for the purchase of waste lands in the suburbs of the city, and that it is ready to treat with parties wishing to sell.

A splendid new clock is being put up at the Cabildo. Meanwhile that of San Francisco is to be regarded as the town clock.

We deem it proper to warn our readers that the utmost term allowed for the payment of the Contribution Directa expires on the 24th inst.

M. F. Calamet, late Vice-Consul of France at Maldonado, who, in consequence of the Anglo-French intervention was under the necessity of removing to Montevideo, has lately returned to the former town and obtained liberty to reside there in his private capacity; he having memorialized President Oribe, setting forth his desire to live under the guarantees of the laws and authorities of the country in which he has resided for nearly 30 years, and under the protection which H. E. has uniformly extended to foreigners.

From the 26th of August, when the French vessel blockading the Buceo was withdrawn, to the 24th ult., 113 merchant vessels of different nations, entered that port, viz.—45 Oriental, 32 Argentine, 4 American, 11 Brazilian, 4 Spanish, 1 Hamburg, 11 Sardinian, 1 French—the aggregate tonnage being 6753.

Notwithstanding that the French agents would fain make it appear that they are disposed to favour commerce, by the virtual removal of the blockade of the Oriental coast, they continue to connive in a most unaccountable manner at the piratical depredations of their protégés, the armed foreign banditti in Montevideo, which materially interfere with it, both in this river and the Uruguay. Among the late captures was the Oriental schooner *Joven Sebastian*, loaded with firewood, which was detained in Montevideo until the sum of 553 dollars was paid as a ransom.

It is reported that fresh disturbances have taken place in Bolivia. The Minister of war, General Belzú, is represented as having deposed his colleagues in the cabinet, and left the capital with the intention of proceeding to Oruro to place himself at the head of the troops there. President Velazco, it is stated, had quitted Chuquiaca and gone to Potosí for the purpose of assuming the command of the forces in that quarter.

The French Revolution of 1848 has been fruitful in phenomena; but no phenomenon has been more striking than the fate of M. Lamartine. His movement and his brilliancy were those of a meteor. His obscurity has been as sudden as startling. For two months he was the star of promise and hope that gleamed with solitary lustre athwart the darkened sky of France. Every other actor in the melodrama of its politics was viewed by some party or another with suspicion, jealousy or dislike. The rich hated Louis Blanc, the bourgeoisie dreaded Ledru Rollin. Foreigners looked with mixed fear and distrust on men who were pledged to principles subversive of civil order, if not hostile to international concord. But Lamartine conciliated all classes and all opinions. His tone of refinement delighted the high-born and the well-to-do. His eloquent liberalism charmed the disciples of liberty and equality; his apparent moderation disarmed the sullenness of foreign nations, while the dash of chivalry and the opportune courage he displayed won for him the admiration of his own. Throughout Europe there was not for two months such another name as Lamartine in fame, fortune, and popularity. But all these precious and glorious attributes were short-lived. In less than another month a change came, and what a change! To any man it must have been a bitter reverse,—to a Frenchman almost death. It was not that he incurred obloquy, or persecution, or imprisonment. Far worse,—he fell into obscurity. He became of no note, of no esteem, of no influence. The man in whose train the mob of Paris had shouted, by whose words their passions had been lulled or their enthusiasm roused, the man to whom foreign deputations had paid homage and foreign statesmen offered flattery, became the subject for a schoolboy's moralizings and a cynic's snarl. He sank by one sudden plunge from the pedestal of the great to the shelf of the equivocal. He exchanged fame for something which to a Frenchman was worse than infamy. Is it strange that he should resent this stroke of fortune and this sample of ingratitude! He has accordingly penned a justification of himself against charges which his own ingenuity has framed. For, where there was no specific accusation, it was necessary to invent one; where there was no accusation, there could be no defence; and where there was no defence, there could be no revenge on the ungrateful silence or the reproachful neglect of his countrymen. In this production it is needless to say there is much eloquence, more fancy, and some justice. The main and irresistible reply to it consists in the very fact that there should have been any reason for writing it. Why is not M. Lamartine what he was four months ago? Great as his powers may be, both as an orator and a poet, they will be infinitely greater than the world ever believed them to be, if they restore him to his former place.

M. Lamartine opens the pleadings in a case in which he himself is defendant. He first makes his charges, then refutes them. This is convenient. In anybody's hands it is an expedient manoeuvre; how much more so in one who has studied the science of effect so successfully as the historian of the Girondists! The chief objection to it is, that the article is transparent. Many topics of imputation will be selected expressly for the facilities of exculpation which they offer. For instance, who but an ingenious advocate would have fabricated for his opponents such a count as this, with which M. Lamartine introduces his case, viz., that he "was ardent in his ambition, but weak in the exercise of power?" Ardent in his ambition! What a topic for a Frenchman to harangue Frenchmen on! What Frenchman is not ardent in ambition! What Frenchman does not sympathize with the ardent, the ambitious, and the aspiring! M. Lamartine knows his countrymen well, and has selected his "points" with judgment. "And feeble in the exercise of power!" This, too, is a gratuitous assumption; but it exhibits the rhetorician's art. It creates for him an opportunity of describing the second as he described the first Revolution; of painting the second Assembly as he had painted the first Convention; of recalling to the mind's eye the march of himself and his colleagues to the Hotel de Ville, "at the head of a column of the people," "borne along under a canopy of sabres, pikes, and bayonets, into the halls stained with blood," "and encumbered with the dead and wounded," "to a small table at which the Government was organized," by the same vivid colouring which

has stamped upon all memories the flight to Varennes and the taking of the Bastille. It allows—nay, compels—the hand that contrasted the Girondins with the Montagnards to contrast the two Republics—"the Republic of your wishes, and that which you would not have,—the more violent, sweeping, dictatorial, and terrorist in language, in gesture, and in colour; the other moderate, pacific, legal, constitutional, and unanimous;" and to remind Paris how he and his colleagues had "twenty times during the first 72 hours" of the young Republic been "taken up, dragged, carried to the doors and windows, on to the head of the staircase, into the courts and the square, to address men of another epoch, who so fallaciously interpreted the will of the people;" and to pronounce over again those memorable words,—"The red flag, citizens, which you present to us has never been anywhere except round the Champ de Mars, trailed in the blood of the people; the flag which we wish to preserve to the Republic has made the tour of the world with our bravery, our glory, and our liberties." No; M. Lamartine was never accused of weakness as a member of the Provisional Government. All people and nations remember the indefatigable orator who was perpetually addressing vast, heterogeneous, and alien assemblies; the intrepid Minister who was daily facing danger and death; the discreet correspondent with foreign states, who persisted in repudiating a policy of aggression and interference. Not only may we say on these points "Quis incusavit?" but also, "Quis non laudavit?" The defence was superfluous, because the censure was imaginary; but the strategy adopted is as old as the lessons of Tully and Quintilian.

So, also, when he assumes that he is charged with having "compromised the safety of the Republic by not at once throwing our forces over the Rhine and Alps," he is, not unconsciously, resuscitating a powerful sympathy in the bosoms of all foreign statesmen and the wisest of French patriots. What would now have been the prospects of Europe had she been plunged into a second revolutionary war? What would have been the inevitable doom of France had she wantonly provoked it? To M. Lamartine great credit and many thanks are due for his manly and courageous devotion to the cause of peace. But who has made this a ground of censure, and a stumbling-block of offence? When he appeals to his principles, he is not defending, but exalting himself. It is wounded vanity, not assailed innocence, that speaks.

But what shall we say when a man of M. Lamartine's social and political position condescends to enter into a minutetail of his pecuniary affairs in order to meet the imputations of malversation, corruption and public robbery? What shall we say of the country where such insinuations against public men are lightly made and easily believed? What shall we say of the morals and purity of a people whose statesmen, so lately the god of its idolatry, is accused of having turned a desperate revolution to his own good account, and of having cloaked out his own fortunes from the misfortunes of his country? But what shall be said of the man who, thus assailed, deems it requisite to publish the state of his liabilities and assets, his leases, releases, acquittances, and even the transactions with his publisher! "I blush," he says, "to expose all these particulars; but the people have a right over the reputation of their representatives." Indeed! This is a new doctrine. We admit that the people have a right to be satisfied of the integrity of the people's servants; but to poke into their banker's books and pour into their publisher's accounts is a prerogative which fraternity does not demand and liberty ought hardly to allow. M. Lamartine ought to have blushed at the idea, not over the act, of this strange communication. He ought to have resisted the temptation of parading both his honesty and his poverty.

M. Lamartine's real sin is not Communism. It is not treachery. It is not love of war. It is not pecculation. It is not weakness during the time of the Provisional Government. On all these points he defends himself largely; and they are all superfluous. His real sin was weakness in the executive Government. He connected himself with Ledru Rollin, a man of un-congenial sentiments and more than equivocal character. He connived at his political and his personal misdoings. He allowed Louis Blanc to play his own game at the Luxembourg, and

Cassidière and Sobrier to prepare the arms and organize the soldiers of revolt out of the funds of his Government and at the head-quarters of his police. He did not take a decided and decisive line at a crisis which required the most marked decision of character and action. He played fast and loose with men who acknowledge they "were capable of serving or ruining" the Republic. He who showed no fear amid the pikes and sabres of the February mobs exhibited a weakness, an irresolution, and an ambiguity, in the months of March and April, which he does not explain and cannot justify. That his own integrity remained unshaken through the glittering temptations of a revolution which had surprised him into power, and placed unexpected greatness in his hands, we are willing to believe; but that other considerations unworthy of a statesman and a patriot operated very strongly upon his mind, and embarrassed his resolution, appears but too evident from the report of the committee of inquiry to which this pamphlet is intended as an evasive reply.—Times.

From the American Papers.

Henry Clay and the Presidency.

Cincinnati, Sept. 23, 1848.

In the Cincinnati Chronicle, we have another letter from Henry Clay in reference to the Presidency.

Certain members of the whig party of Cincinnati, it seems, had addressed Mr. Clay, inviting him to assume an "independent position," with regard to the present canvass for the Presidency, and assuring him of the earnest support of numerous friends. In answer to this Mr. Clay says, in substance:—

"My name, gentlemen, was submitted by my consent to the consideration of the National Whig Convention, which met in Philadelphia, but which did not think proper to place me in nomination as a candidate for the Presidency. I have quietly submitted to the decision of that body, and cannot consent to any further consideration of my name in connection with the office of President of the United States; and accordingly I have refrained from giving, and must continue to decline giving, the slightest encouragement or countenance to any such use of it."

[Signed] H. CLAY.

THE NAVY AT AUCTION.—Our proposition to sell our sailing navy and substitute an efficient Steam Mail Marine, though startling to some weak heads of the nation, old granaries of the press, and gony commentators, has nevertheless met with favor at Washington, where the "collected wits" begin to appreciate the wants and interests of the country. The first batch, consisting of the bomb brigs *Vesuvius* and *Atlas*, the schooners *Tampico*, *Bonita*, and the steamer *Spartan*, a vessel worthless to the Navy, are already advertised to be sold at auction, at Norfolk, on the 11th of October. Orders have also been received at the Brooklyn Navy Yard to sell off another batch. Many of these vessels will make valuable merchantmen, and will command, we trust, a good price; at any rate let them be sold. Let the whole sailing navy be sold if possible, and a steam marine be forthwith created; vessels that will serve the three-fold purpose of a mail, commercial, and war navy, at once a source of incalculable wealth, and a sure bulwark of the nation on the seas.

VANCOUVER'S ISLAND has been ordered to be given up to the Hudson's Bay Company by the British Government. One of the reasons given for this by Lord Gray is, in order to prevent the Island from becoming peopled by squatters from the Union, who would before long bring it under the power of the latter. The government it appears has reserved the right of taking back the island, after a lapse of 11 years, for a reasonable cause.

SOMETHING LIKE A CIVIL WAR has commenced in the Island of Jamaica. The negroes refused to pay their taxes, the police were sent to compel them, a fight ensued, and troops were despatched to the scene; but their services were not required. Further disturbances being anticipated, the detachment of troops lately sent to Honduras have been ordered to return to Jamaica.

CURIOUS APPLICATIONS for employment are sometimes made to our Missionary boards. One of these came to our knowledge yesterday.

