

BRITISH PACKET



AND

ARGENTINE NEWS.

(No. 1166.)

BUENOS AYRES, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1848.

[Established in 1826.]

BUENOS AYRES.

On the 23d inst. the financial year ended, and the results of the accounts then made up will be embodied in the Message which Government is to present to the Legislature on Monday next. This *exposé* will, we are confident, be highly flattering, inasmuch as the deficit anticipated in the estimates for the year will be considerably diminished, notwithstanding that no decrease has taken place in the public expenditure, owing to the necessity of maintaining the country in a respectable state of defence until the questions raised by the Anglo-French intervention are definitively settled. There being no cabinet dinner here on the eve of the opening of the Chamber, at which the Message of the Executive like the Queen's speech at home, is read to the guests before its delivery from the throne, nothing has oozed out that can enable us to gratify the wishes of our readers by anticipating any further information as to the contents of General Rosas' forthcoming Message, the appearance of which is awaited with interest.

ENGLAND.

Shocking Disclosures.

It will be perceived from a report we published last week, that the ramifications of the poison-clubs in the villages of Essex have spread wider than was even at first supposed. We are forced to admit the existence of a state of things in real life more terrible than the imaginative horrors of the modern school of French novelists. Can it be true after all that Dumas and Sue have drawn from nature with the mere accuracy of Dutch painters? As you pass through a country village in England, and see the children playing in the sunshine, can the mind admit the conviction that in many instances they are predestined to a lingering and painful destruction; that the blooming cheek must soon grow pale, the rounded form be worn down by an emaciating fire from within, and the changing expression of childhood give way to the monotonous aspect of death, and that all this will be the work of their parents' hands? Would you know how many of the children you see are destined to so premature a fate, ascertain how many have been entered by their parents in the Burial Clubs, and you may then guess with tolerable accuracy the number marked for death.

Nothing but a conviction that this infernal system has taken strong root in the country would induce us to bring such a subject publicly forward. Even so, could we not indicate a partial remedy we would be silent. It is one of the terrible attributes of systematized crime that it invites proselytes. Thus in many cases of ascertainable evil silence becomes a duty. Not so here. The very nature of the system, the objects it contemplates, the means it employs, are suggestive of the remedy befitting the occasion. We must for the time put out of sight such cases as the one which is now under investigation before the Essex coroner. Domestic tragedies are of all countries and of all times. There are no direct means of dealing with the case of a woman of violent passions and ill-regulated mind, without principle, moral or religious, who takes advantage of the opportunities of domestic intercourse to administer poison to her husband. Certain facilities of detection—as we shall show in the sequel—may be given even in such a case, but it is, after all, merely an instance of an ordinary crime effected by means peculiarly horrible. Husbands may, however, be poisoned, and wives may be poisoned, as children are poisoned in consequence of the bonus on their death offered by the burial clubs; and it is of these we would speak. This is a system that can be cut up root and branch by a suppression of these institutions, or at least by giving the insuring parents no legal claim upon the clubs for the amount insured on the contingency of their children's death. It should be observed that the more ordinary but equally horrible consequence of the existing arrange-

ment is, that parents, without the administration of any lethal drug, may simply allow their children to die of neglect and starvation. This no doubt is the commoner method by which parties entice themselves to the benefits of the association, although it would be vain to deny that poison is largely employed. The probability of a child's death in Manchester, should it have been entered on the fatal books, is sufficiently indicated by a phrase in use amongst women of the lowest class in that city—"Aye, ay, that child will not live, it is in the burial club." It is remarked in these cases that the boys whose exertions are likely to be more speedily available to the family funds are not the victims of this infernal system. It is the female children who are ordinarily poisoned.

Much valuable information on this subject will be found in Mr. Chadwick's *Supplementary Report for 1843, on the Practice of Intermittent Tosses*. From this it appears that the actual cost of a child's funeral at Manchester varies from 11. to 16. 10s. The allowances from the clubs in that town are usually 31., and sometimes extend to 41. and 51. We find it mentioned in the Report, that assurances for such payments on the death of children are made in four or five of these burial societies. There was one instance where a man had insured such payments in no less than *nineteen different burial clubs* in Manchester; but here is another case, at length, from Mr. Chadwick's Report, which is a fair example of the method in which the Burial Club system is worked:—

"The child (according to a statement of the case) had been entered in at least 10 burial clubs; and his parents had six other children, who only lived from nine to 18 months respectively. They had received 201. from several clubs for one of these children, and they expected to receive at least as much on account of this child. An inquest was held at Mr. Gardiner's instance, when several persons who had known the deceased stated that she was a fine fat child shortly after her birth, but that she soon became thin, was badly clothed, and seemed as if she did not get a sufficiency of food. She was mostly in the care of a girl six or seven years of age; her father bore the character of a drunken man. He had another child, which was in several burial clubs, and was a year old when it died; the child's mother stated that the child was more than 10 months old, but she could not recollect the day of her birth; she thought its complaint was convulsions, in which it died. It had been ill about seven weeks; when it took ill she had given it some oil of aniseed and squills, which she had procured from Mr. Smith, a druggist. Since then she had given it nothing in the way of medicine except some wine and water, which she gave it during the last few days of its life, when it could not suck or take gruel. It was in three burial clubs; her husband told her that they had received upwards of 201. from burial clubs in which the other child had been entered; none of her children who had died were more than 18 months old. A surgeon stated, that he made a *post mortem* examination of the body of the deceased; it was then in an advanced state of decomposition, but not so far gone as to interfere with the examination. There was no appearance of external violence on the body, but there was an extreme degree of emaciation. The brain was healthy, and gave no indication of convulsions having been the cause of death; the process of teething had not commenced; had such been the case it might have led to the supposition that fits might have occurred; the lungs, heart, stomach, and intestines were in a natural and healthy state. The jury having expressed it as their opinion that the evidence of the parents was made up for the occasion and entitled to no credit, returned the following verdict:—Died through want of nourishment; but whether occasioned by a deficiency of food, or by a disease of the liver and spine, brought on by improper food and drink, or otherwise, does not appear."

It would be idle to multiply instances of what, upon the testimony of all parties most capable of forming a judgment upon the subject, must be taken as an acknowledged fact. Infanticide, either by the administration of poison or by the neglect of children entered upon the fatal rolls of these death-unions, prevails throughout England to a most lamentable extent. It seems, indeed, a hard thing to say to the poor man, "You shall not join an association which would be bound to supply you with the means of

giving your child a decent interment." But see the alternative. Is it possible to retain the good without letting in the evil? It has been suggested that in no case should the parents be allowed either from one or several insurance societies more than would be sufficient to cover the expenses of the funeral of the child insured. Some of the burial clubs have even adopted this as their rule. But it appears too easy of evasion; and in such cases, as these half-measures are rarely successful, it would be well to remove from the apprehension of the poorer classes the possibility of successfully evading the law. May's case in Essex the other day was a fair example of the working of the system as it stands in the agricultural districts, and we shall shortly have occasion to bring other cases before public notice. One would have supposed at first that infanticide of this nature did not obtain in the manufacturing districts, as infant labour in factories becomes remunerative at so early an age. The returns, however, show that the supposition is not borne out by the facts. Manchester and Stockport are tainted with the same foul spot as the quiet districts of Essex.—*Times*.

FRANCE.

A banquet, got up by the Red Republicans at Toulouse, has revived all the fury of the Conventionalist of 1793. It was attended by the prefects and authorities of the town. The red cap was hoisted as the revolutionary signal of blood, and cries of *Vive Barbès! Vive la Montagne! Vive Robespierre! Down with Cavaignac! Up with the guillotine!!!* seem to have been frantically shouted by the assembled guests. It appears that the officer commanding the district refused to assist at the banquet, and announced the fact to the Government. When these incidents became known in Paris, a M. Denjoy assailed the Government, for permitting these revolutionary meetings, and in the course of his speech denounced the sanguinary objects of the Red Republicans with the most crushing eloquence. A scene ensued in the Assembly which is said to have surpassed in violence any of the recorded events in the Convention. When M. Denjoy alluded to the late speech of Ledru-Rollin, the fury of the Mountain party knew no bounds. They rushed in a body to the tribune, threatening summary vengeance on M. Denjoy; and it was only by the strenuous exertions of his friends and the officers of the Chamber that M. Denjoy was saved from falling a sacrifice to the vengeance of the left. The President put on his hat, and it was only after a long interval that order was sufficiently restored to resume proceedings.

—The Committee of the Assembly appointed to examine into the state of the property of the Orleans family has reported in favour of the payment of their debts, about one million sterling; that the sequestration be maintained on their estates; but that the personal property of the Princes be restored to them, and an annuity be allowed to them pending the arrangement of their affairs. The sequestrated estates are valued at three millions sterling.—*Ibid*.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

The obstinacy of the Provisional Government of Schleswig-Holstein, in throwing impediments in the way of carrying out the armistice, has been productive of counter proceedings by the King of Denmark. The Schleswig-Holsteiners maintain their illegal government in spite of the armistice, whilst the Danes are establishing a government of their own equally in face of the conditions agreed upon. We know that the exertions of Lord Palmerston are still earnestly directed towards bringing about an adjustment of the quarrel; but whilst the main difficulty exists, we have at present very little hopes of complete success. Each party endeavours to put the other in the wrong; but shows no sincerity in wishing to bring about a satisfactory solution. The King of Prussia has refused to recognise the Danish Commissioner, Count Moleke; and thus, in the very inception of the working of the joint government, a misunderstanding has arisen, as we fully anticipated.—*Ibid*.

UNITED STATES.

THE PROSPECT.

We are approaching the end of the Presidential contest. Within four weeks more, the re-

sult will have been declared and published throughout the Union. The last preceding election has taken place, its issue is substantially known, and we can now see as clearly as may be seen until the Electoral ballots are counted out of the boxes.—We propose to take a brief survey of the field preparatory to the crowning struggle.

Maine seems pretty certain to vote for Cass, though his party is a minority of the People. A large vote will be polled for Gen. Taylor—we think thousands more than for the Whig candidates at the late election—but if the Cass party draw out all their vote, we apprehend they cannot be beaten.

Massachusetts will vote for Taylor. The independent Free Soil movement may prevent a choice by the People, but the Legislature will choose the Taylor Electors, if they are not chosen by the People.

New Hampshire is morally for Cass. We think his opponents might, by a determined effort, prevent any choice by the People; but, as the Legislature is strongly Loco-Foco, this would answer no purpose. Yet there will be a good contest.

Rhode Island is sure for Taylor.

Vermont may be lost to Taylor by a concerted concentration of all the Cass votes on the Van Buren ticket. Arrangements are now on foot to secure this result, but we think they can hardly be so perfected as to answer the purpose.

Connecticut is pretty safe for Taylor, though not absolutely so. The Free Soil movement is strong there, but seems to draw about equally from the two great parties. The Whigs must work to carry it, and we think they will.

New York is very sure for Taylor, in spite of all adverse calculations. Whether Van Buren or Cass stand second is doubtful; but we think Gen. T.'s plurality over the next highest cannot fall short of 45,000.

New Jersey appears to be good for Taylor, but may yet be lost without a thorough organization and a determined effort. Apathy and heedlessness will lose it. Its majority in a Presidential contest has been small ever since 1828, and no one can positively say from which party the more Van Buren strength will be subtracted.

Pennsylvania is a Taylor State to-day, and with proper exertion will give Gen. T. 10,000 to 20,000 majority. But if his prominent friends should fall into the unparliamentary blunder of considering the victory already secure, and thus falling to loggerheads over the division of the spoils, they may throw it away yet.

Delaware is for Taylor—no mistake about it. Maryland can't be induced to vote for anybody but Taylor, but his friends have a good fight to make for it. Mr. Clay's majority in '44 was 3,308; it can hardly be overcome but may be seriously reduced if a thorough effort is not promptly resolved on.

Virginia will vote for Cass. We have calculations of gains here and there for Taylor, but they do not convince us. Taylor is personally strong in the Old Dominion, but Loco-Focoism is stronger.

North Carolina will pretty surely vote for Taylor, but by a closer vote than anybody anticipated prior to last August. A systematic effort by the Whigs of the Whole State is necessary.

South Carolina will vote for Cass. All the talk of its probably or possibly going for Taylor is moonshine.

Georgia will be one of the best fought States in the Union. The probability indicated on the face of the late return is that it will go for Cass, and though we consider it an extremely doubtful State, we shall set it down on that side for the present.

Alabama is for Cass, beyond doubt.

Florida is morally certain for Taylor. Our returns indicate a Whig victory at the late Election, and Gen. Taylor is stronger than his party in Florida, while Gen. Cass is weaker than his.

Louisiana has been thoroughly canvassed by Gen. Taylor's friends, and they say there is really no mistake about it—that it will go for Old Zack by at least 500 majority, and probably 1000. We think they are right.

Ohio is in the fog. We think it will vote for Cass. We can tell better a week hence.

Indiana we consider more likely to vote for Cass than anybody else, though we know it will be desperately fought. We cannot go behind

