

# BRITISH PACKET



## AND ARGENTINE NEWS.

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BUENOS AYRES, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1849.

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### BUENOS AYRES.

It is generally believed that the negotiations which have been going on for some time between this Government and the French representative, Rear-Admiral Lepodour, have been brought to a close. The result is stated to be the conclusion of a convention which is already on its way to France *ad referendum*.

The question of the River Plate was incidentally alluded to in Parliament on occasion of the debate on the address. Mr. Disraeli, in the course of a sweeping censure of the foreign policy of H. M.'s government, adverted to the Anglo-French intervention in these waters in the following terms:—

Before I make a few observations on the interesting subject which is the topic of the day, I feel bound to those who, though not immediately my constituents, are persons whose interests I have often advocated in this house, to advert to a circumstance of an almost unexampled character—I mean our interference in the waters of La Plata. I may remind the house of the circumstances of that extraordinary case. Six confidential agents have been employed by Her Majesty's Government in connexion with La Plata, and some of them Ministers of the highest class. All have failed; the last, I believe, if not actually expelled, has been treated almost with personal indignity; a second rate revolting colony of Spain has been initiating the old mother country at Madrid, and sending away our Minister. (Laughter and cheers.) Is it possible to conceive that a negotiation has been going on for years in which most important commercial interests have been concerned, and that there should have been six missions employed, and all have failed, and yet that the House of Commons has never instituted any inquiry into the matter? I asked for the instructions sent to Lord Howden, but I was told it would be inconvenient to produce them, because another mission was on his passage to succeed that noble lord. But that mission has failed, and another besides has failed (laughter); therefore, I should still like to have a copy of those instructions. I cannot on this occasion remind the house of the mysterious dynasty of Macbeth, and say that another and another still succeeded, because that is the only thing they don't do. (Laughter.) There is one reason why we don't hear so much of La Plata as we might have done. The Liverpool Reform Association, who have charged diplomacy with being a profession kept up merely to maintain the aristocracy, and that the wooden walls of Old England were merely required to afford employment for their younger sons—they, one might have thought, would have written a tract upon this subject; but, unhappily, it turns out that the merchants of Liverpool are the only parties who are really interested in the question. Faithful to their principles, therefore, the Liverpool Financial Reform Association—the great advocates for retrenchment—are the very men to whom we are indebted for the expense of six missions, all of which have failed, to the greatest injury that our commercial interests have experienced in that part of the world.

While implicitly deprecating the unequalled interference on the part of Great Britain which has produced the present anomalous state of things, the novelist-legislator, pursuing the same strain of sarcasm which characterises his whole speech, taunts the Argentine Confederation with being a "second-rate revolting colony of Spain," thus exposing in the most glaring manner his utter ignorance of the political condition and relative importance in the scale of nations of these young countries. And, as if his only object was to criminate at random, and keep up the hilarity of the House so often excited during his rhetorical display, he represents her Majesty's newly-appointed Minister to this republic as having been treated with almost

personal indignity, when it is well known that Mr. Southern has been received here with the most kindly feeling and is living on the very best terms of friendship with the Argentine Government, waiting for the removal of the difficulties which stand in the way of his official reception as H. M.'s representative. If Mr. Hoed, jun., withdrew, he did so of his own accord, and because it suited his convenience, and not from any lack of courtesy towards him; on the contrary, he was held, and, we believe, continues to be held, in the highest esteem by the Argentine Government. Nor is the invidious sneer to be overlooked, that the Confederation, in the course it has pursued, has been aping the conduct of the mother country on a recent occasion. Every one tolerably conversant with contemporary history, except the would-be statesman who takes England's Foreign Secretary to task, is aware that the dignified and successful stand taken by General Rosas in defence of the prerogatives of his country's independence, has been long held up in both hemispheres as a model to be imitated by all governments, who, from diffidence of their power to resist, have been accustomed to quake at the nod of foreign dictation, however capricious and unjust.

Lord Palmerston was very laconic in his reply to this topic of Mr. Disraeli's speech. All that fell from him was this:—

I say nothing of the mediation in the case of the River Plate, which is still going on, part of the course for which I must divide with Lord Aberdeen (a laugh), but I trust some paragraph will be inserted in the amendment containing a due portion of blame to him as well as to me.

The noble lord, without any affectation of modesty at all, might have thrown the whole blame of the commencement of the intervention on his predecessor. But he alone, we fear, must be held responsible for its continuance, or, at least, for the procrastination of a definitive settlement. Lord Aberdeen as soon as he saw his error had the manliness to acknowledge it; and had he remained in office we are satisfied that the relations between the two countries would have long since been replaced on their former footing of cordiality.

We give elsewhere some highly interesting intelligence from California. The *New York Herald*, from which we copy part—the rest being translated from the *Rio Janeiro Journal do Commercio*—thus prefaces Commodore Jones' last official report—

Our columns to day, contain official despatches from California, which were forwarded to the Secretary on the twenty-second of December. They will be found in another column, under the telegraphic head. If one half of the information which Commodore Jones details be true—and we have implicit confidence in the whole of it—society in California is in a truly lamentable state. He confirms all that has been said of the frequency of murders in the gold region, and the necessity there exists for prompt and decisive legislation for that part of our territory.

The necessity of Congress providing some sort of government for our distant territory of California, is becoming more urgent every day; and unless some relief be extended, we may reasonably anticipate the worst consequences. It is now in a state of direful anarchy and confusion—worse even than any country in Europe after a revolution. Notwithstanding the pressing emergency that has existed for forming a government for that territory since it was acquired from Mexico, Congress has wasted its time, from the commencement of the session till the present, in idle discussions on the slavery question, on mileage, on "them books," on pro-

positions to abolish grog in the navy, and reduce our sailors to a vegetable compound, instead of legislating for that valuable acquisition. Unless some government be framed for that territory, great, and perhaps irreparable, injury may be done. All Europe is in a hubbub in consequence of the vast gold wealth of California. Expeditions are being formed in Antwerp, Bremen, and every part of England, and the prospect is there will be an inundation of foreigners of all nations there in a short time. What a lamentable state of affairs must ensue among a heterogeneous population, without any government at all!

The accounts which we are receiving from there from day to day, are indeed harrowing. Murder stalks in broad day-light, and unless relief be immediately extended, we know not what the result will be. The thirst for gold is attracting all the worthless and reckless characters of the Pacific to the gold mines, and such a concentration of bad materials will produce a scene of crime and misery without a parallel.

On the subject of the marvellous tidings from the new *Dorado*, the *London Illustrated News* remarks as follows—

All this is very wonderful, and Brother Jonathan is very lucky. It is not always that an unjust war is the means of enriching its perpetrators to such an extent as this. The Anglo-Saxons are a great race; and notwithstanding the Mexican war, we are half inclined to believe that they deserve the *Dorado* for having discovered it. Under the stagnant rule of the Spanish race in Mexico, the riches of California were unknown and unsuspected. It was no sooner ceded to Brother Jonathan, than his keen eyes discovered its secret, and his nimble fingers turned it to account. California is indeed a splendid acquisition. Independently of its gold, which, plentiful as it now appears, may soon be exhausted, the country and the climate are admirable; and in a few years California promises to be one of the most flourishing states of the Union, and the emporium of a magnificent trade with all parts of the world, especially with the East. We had thought that in this age of revolutions the stories to be told by the Old World would have surpassed those of the New; but California seems destined to rival even Europe in the romance of its history.

### CALIFORNIA.

Extracts from the despatches of Commodore Jones to the Secretary of the Navy.

Monterey, October 25.

Nothing can exceed the deplorable state of things in California, owing to the wild effects of the gold mania. I regret to state that even in this squadron the effects of this mania have been felt; some officers have evinced uneasiness respecting the measures which I took and were imperiously required by the circumstances of the times. But I think I may add that I was not disappointed as to the effect of the means I employed to avoid desertion and maintain order in the squadron, for we have only had one deserter since the flight of the eight from this vessel on the night of the 15th inst., and the views and opinions of the officers who shewed themselves sceptical as to the lawfulness and efficacy of the means employed to avoid crime and punish it, have undergone a very salutary change. Consequently I shall be able to remain on this coast till the anarchy and confusion which now reign here are superseded by the establishment of some lawful government, which shall be strong enough to cause the law to be respected and to protect life and property, which at present run great risk beyond our entrenchments.

November 2.

At present, and, I fear, for several years to come, the United States will not be able to maintain any naval or military establishment in California, for no hope of recompense nor dread of punishment is sufficient to render obligatory any contract between man and man on the soil of this state. It would be altogether useless to send troops here, for they would desert immediately. Among the deserters from the squadron there are some of the best naval officers and seamen; some of them had only a few months to serve; and large arrears are due to them, amounting in all to 10,000 dollars. There is great want of wheat, especially at the diggings. The brain and intermittent fevers make great ravages among the gold diggers, for they are

almost absolutely destitute of provisions and clothing; and but few have any tents to protect them from the inclement season which is setting in. Commerce on this coast may be said to be at an end from desertion; as soon as a vessel arrives at any of the ports of California, all the seamen run away, sometimes the captain, mate, in short, every body. At present there is a great number of these vessels abandoned at San Francisco, and this will be the fate of those that may arrive in future. This state of things is not confined to California alone; Oregon is left without any population; its inhabitants all flock to the diggings; foreigners and runaway sailors from the Sandwich Islands arrive by dozens in every vessel which approaches this coast.

Flag ship Ohio, San Francisco, December 22, 1848.

Sir—My letters from Nos. 32 to 42 inclusive, despatched from Monterey by Lieut. Lamme, and from this place by the Lexington, will fully inform you of the operations of the squadron since our departure from the Gulf of California. Nothing material has occurred since my last date. Desertions are less frequent, the Ohio having lost but one man since her arrival here, and I think the disposition to desert is not so general; but that may be owing to the clemency of the season, which, for a while, may suspend the digging and washing for gold except by such persons as are most amply supplied with good horses, and all the necessaries of life requisite for a winter's campaign in a rigid climate affording nothing for the use of man but gold. Incredible quantities of gold are yet daily collected; and scarcely a week elapses without some new discovery of the precious metal more startling than any previous one. It is said that a party of five or six persons, a few days ago, struck upon a pocket, as they term certain deposits, from which in two days, they obtained \$30,000 of pure gold.

I have been living on shore at San Francisco now two weeks, and have had ample opportunity for examining the subject, and I am more than ever satisfied that the disposal of the gold regions in the territory of California is the best, if not the only practicable disposition that can be made of them in the present disorganized state of society out here.

The worst forebodings of evil consequent upon the want of certain and energetic administration of justice in this territory are almost daily realized. Within the last three weeks we have certain accounts of fifteen murders. In one instance an entire household of ten persons—a respectable ranchero, his wife, two children and six servants. The man, whose name was Reed, had been very successful in the diggings during the summer, and had returned to his home, near Santa Barbara, with a large amount of gold. His house was surprised by an armed party, and the whole family, as above stated, were barbarously murdered, and the house rifled of its golden treasure. The perpetrators of this horrid deed are still at large; and of the other five cases four are highway robberies committed on persons returning with gold from the mines. In a word, I may say with truth, that both persons and property are insecure in Upper California at this time; and I am sorry to add that, in all cases of outrage and violence, as yet discovered, emigrants from the United States, disbanded volunteers, runaway sailors, and deserters from the army and navy, are believed to be the perpetrators.

The mutinies, attended with murder, to which I alluded in my letter No. 43, have been fully confirmed, and—without good reason—has caused much uneasiness to shippers of gold from this coast.

To guard each and every vessel sailing hence with large sums in gold dust, would require every ship of the navy. The best that I can do is to keep the vessels of this squadron at sea as much as possible, plying between the ports most frequented by our mercantile marine. Enclosed is a copy of a circular (No. 6) which I found it necessary to issue and make public, in the hope that it may have some tendency to prevent a repetition of such acts as have recently occurred on board the English schooner *Amilico* and the Chilean bark *Adonia*.

A recent arrival from Callao reports that the *Adonia* had been taken into that port, and the mutineers, eight in number, promptly executed.





