

BRITISH PACKET

AND ARGENTINE NEWS.

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BUENOS AYRES.

The scene enacted off Montevideo on the 2d of August, 1845, was, certainly, not of a character to make any public man ever anxious to avow a participation in it. That Lord Palmerston, therefore, when interrogated with reference to the transaction, should have disclaimed any *solidarite* with the former minister, would have been perfectly just and natural. That, when necessitated to speak of the occurrence, he should, from a feeling of delicacy towards his predecessor or from a praiseworthy regard for the honour of his country, have refrained from stigmatising it as it deserved, would also have been quite in place and intelligible. And, when reluctantly compelled to enter into explanations, if, like the Government of the day referring to the battle of Navarino, he had merely termed the affair "an untoward event," or, like Lord Howden at a later period alluding to the battle of Obligado, he had simply designated it as "a collision deeply to be regretted," we could have easily understood and fully appreciated his reserve. But that he should wholly misrepresent the transaction and in such a glaring manner as to almost aggravate the injury inflicted is to us utterly incomprehensible, unless, indeed, we adopt the hypothesis that his lordship followed strictly Mr. Ouseley's official version, and that that fatal diplomatist, ashamed of his proceeding and fearful of incurring the displeasure of H. M's. Government, unscrupulously garbled and distorted the circumstances connected with it in his despatches. This hypothesis, it must be confessed, is by no means unwarranted, as it is perfectly reconcilable with the system of deception which so long obtained in the River Plate. However, be this as it may, it is our duty to re-establish the facts, and this we will at once proceed to do without further comment, merely premising that we employ the words of our lamented predecessor.

We mentioned in our last that the Ministers of England and France, in consequence of the refusal of the Argentine Government to yield to certain preposterous demands, had asked for their passports and embarked for Montevideo. We then omitted to state the rumour which was current, that, during the pendency of the negotiations, those Ministers had ordered the Argentine squadron off Montevideo to be placed under restraint; for we could not conceive such a faith possible in the representatives of two great nations, who had been so long in their protestations of peace and friendship. The fact, however, was accompanied by circumstances of the most arbitrary injustice and outrage. The Captains of the British ships *Courageux* and French frigate *Africaine* went on board the several vessels of the Argentine squadron and invoking instructions from their respective Ministers, intimated to the French and English volunteers, that they must cease to serve under the Argentine flag; the Captain of the *Africaine* stating to his countrymen, that, in the event of a war between the combined powers and the Argentine Republic they should be taken prisoners, they would be shot. After this announcement he took French leave, and was followed by the Captain of the *Courageux*, the latter, however, observing the rules of urbanity.* Scandalous as was this proceeding, it is nothing in comparison with those which immediately ensued. It is understood that the Argentine Government, as soon as it learnt the humiliating position in which its squadron was placed, sent orders to Admiral Brown to withdraw. His departure, however, was opposed by the English and French naval forces; but it was intimated that the return of the steamers which were expected from Buenos Ayres every impediment would be removed. The *Fredrick* and *Fulton* finally arrived on the 2nd inst, shortly after which Admiral Brown signalled his vessels to have short their anchors, and after sufficient time had elapsed to allow the combined fleets to manifest their intention, without any objection having been intimated, he ordered the squadron to get under way, which was immediately done by the *General San Martin*, the *Veinte Cinco de Mayo*, and the *Nacuo de Julio*; the *General Echagay* and the *Maya* being rather tardy in the operation, from accident or restraint. As soon as this movement was perceived by

the combined fleets, vessels were detached in pursuit, and several shot were fired; those of the Argentine squadron under way, one of which going through the stern of Admiral Brown's flag ship, he struck his colours, as did likewise the *Veinte Cinco* and the *Nacuo de Julio*; and possession was immediately taken of them by the allies. Thus was the ignominious deed consummated; but as it did not appear infamous enough to its authors, a commission of Montevideo Riverites was sent on board to tamper with the captured crews. To the honour of the latter, however, be it said, that with the exception of the greater part of the English and French volunteers, they remained faithful to their flag, sparing all the brilliant offers made to them for the purpose of shaking their allegiance. Admiral Brown, his officers, seamen and marines were then distributed between the two steamers for the purpose of being sent to Buenos Ayres; but before they were allowed to depart the Admiral and such of his officers as are natives of the United Kingdom were obliged to sign a pledge that they would not serve against the contest. The steamers arrived here on the 6th, and as soon as the nature of their errand was ascertained, the expression of the deepest indignation could be read in the faces of every honourable foreigner as well as of the natives in general. Still it was repressed; and English officers and seamen walked about as unconcerned as if nothing had happened; and the whole French legion wore as gay as ever the same evening at a tertulia at H. E.'s house. In what other country in the world would such behaviour be manifested—or such confidence placed in the ruling power?—Admiral Brown, who came up in the *Fulton*, did not disembark till the 7th. He came on shore in a French boat, the French corvette *Cuquette* saluting him with 15 guns on his leaving the *Fulton*. What emotion! The gallant veteran was received on his landing with loud cheers by a considerable crowd which had collected in spite of a pouring rain. His carriage was in waiting, to which he was conducted by the Captain of the Fort, and in which he immediately proceeded to his Quinta. [British Packet, Aug. 9, 1845.]

The following are extracts from the last English papers—

BRITISH FORCES IN THE RIVER PLATE.

A return recently presented to the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Cobden, gives the following as the amount of British naval force employed in the River Plate on the 30th June and 31st December in each of the six years from 1843 to—

1843	June 7	ships, mounting 119 guns, with 1390 men	1300
	Dec. 6	" " " 113 "	1300 "
1844	June 7	" " " 123 "	1532 "
	Dec. 4	" " " 64 "	686 "
	Janell 1	" " " 205 "	2092 "
1845	Dec. 13	" 4 tenders 263 "	3711 "
	Jan 1	" 3 tenders 279 "	2929 "
1846	Dec. 11	" 3 tenders 221 "	2359 "
	Jan 12	" 3 tenders 228 "	2359 "
1847	Dec. 7	" 3 tenders 83 "	1028 "
	Jan 10	" 2 tenders 139 "	1469 "
1848	Nov. 6	" 2 tenders 66 "	878 "

The ships employed are from the fourth-rates downwards. The number of British troops landed at Montevideo between the 1st of July, 1845, and the 1st January, 1847, which is given in the above return, is stated at 626 in October, 1845; 815 in December, 1845, and January, 1846; 253 (marines) in July, 1846; 311 (marines) in August, 1846; and 384 (marines), (70 of these to replace others embarked) in November, 1846. The paper also includes a return of five Argentine vessels of war captured by the combined British and French squadrons during the years 1845 and 1846, two of which have been attached to the French, one to the British squadron, and the other two lent to the Montevideo Government.—*Willmer & Smith's European Times*, April 7.

ENGLAND.

The Government Navigation Bill has undergone a very material change since our last. In order that our readers may understand clearly the exact position of this important measure, we may here repeat that the principle of the Government plan for removing, with the least inconvenience, the present anomalies and restrictions on British shipping, was based upon a reserve right "to retaliate" upon those foreign nations, which, after the bill was in operation, refused to concede those advantages to our trade which we freely accorded to them. Mr. Gladstone, disapproving of this reserved right of retaliation, which he thought would involve our Government in perpetual disputes with foreign nations, had a pet scheme of his own to effect the object which the free-traders sought to accomplish, and the right honourable gentleman has now propounded his views. He proposed to divide the law into two branches; the one to apply to our foreign trade, and the other to embrace our colonial and coasting trade; and to make our bargain with foreign countries "conditional" upon their granting equivalent advantages to our own. Mr. Bouverie has a third

plan to secure reciprocity in a way which nearly all parties deemed impracticable—namely, by our restrictions being removed after a declaration that the British trade was exempt from similar restrictions in any foreign country. The "most favored nation" clause rendered this impossible, and only 15 members supported Mr. Bouverie's amendment, whilst 132 voted for its rejection. We, therefore, dismiss his plan from our further consideration; it will be seen that, after all, the pinch of this question was, what and how much we should give up to the Americans to induce them to make corresponding concessions. It was frankly avowed that if they would "give us up all," namely, their coasting trade, even in return for our own colonial, and intercolonial, and coasting trade together, that in the end we should not be losers. But Mr. Gladstone and the free-traders have found that they were too sanguine. The last arrival from the United States shows that the Americans are quite averse to the project of giving up their coasting trade, precisely as we have all along intimated in the *European Times*. They ask us to give up the long voyage, for which they will give us in return the right of sending European and Asiatic produce in British ships to the United States from our shores; but what they propose to give us in return for our colonial trade does not appear. It is easy to anticipate the consequences of the refusal to the cabinet of Washington to ratify the promise held out to us last year by Mr. Bancroft, "if you will do all, we will do all," which we at the hazard of giving umbrage to many of our readers, stated distinctly would not be sanctioned by Congress. The idea of opening the coasting trade of the United States and the British islands to each nation respectively, must, therefore, be abandoned for the present. Mr. Labouchee, under the plea that the difficulties to which we alluded in our last number—respecting carrying duty paid tobacco, coastwise for instance—are found to be insuperable in practice, has withdrawn the whole of the clauses having reference to the coasting trade; and the Navigation Bill now stands in much the same position as it did last year as respects its actual provisions, but with a reduced majority in its favour in the House of Commons. Whether Mr. Gladstone has been influenced by the reported refusal of the Americans to yield up their coasting trade, which at once demolishes his "conditional" scheme, or whether he finds it otherwise impracticable, and likely to embarrass the Government if pressed upon the Commons, certain it is that he has withdrawn his proposition, and, as might have been expected, the protectionist party have loudly ridiculed the signal failure of both the Government's and the "conditional" plans so far as they have been relinquished. The bill has gone through the Committee, and the third reading is fixed for an early day after the Easter recess. Another struggle will then take place. The Peelite, if there is such a party, or, at any rate that body which Mr. Gladstone represents on this question are now in union with the Government; but the protectionists will muster their whole strength upon the next division, and if they increase or even maintain their large minority, the ultimate fate of the measure in the Upper House may be easily conjectured when it is remembered that the opinion of the Lords has been already expressed against the proposed alterations. Whether the Lords will attempt to modify and improve the bill, or whether they will throw it out altogether, will, as we have already said, depend upon the issue of the final contest in the House of Commons.—[*Id.*]

Chatham, March 23.
The *Warspite*, 50 guns, is daily expected to be brought forward for commission, to relieve the *Raleigh*, 50 guns, Commodore Sir Thomas Herbert, K.C.B., south-east coast of America.

FRANCE.

With some exceptional disturbances in the distant provinces, continues tranquil, and Louis Napoleon is proceeding in the surest path to maintain his position, by instantly suppressing domestic disorder, and by steadily avoiding any interference by force of arms in the affairs of the continental nations. Notwithstanding the excitement attempted to be created by the Red Republicans, upon the question of Piedmont, Louis Napoleon and his ministry, supported by all the rational men in France, set their faces against an armed intervention for the purpose of preventing, that which nobody contemplates, the dismemberment of Sardinia,—so that men of

all parties in England consider that a great step has been made towards the pacification of the south of Europe, as the exemplary moderation of Austria gives a further guarantee that hostilities will not be resumed upon the question of the Lombard provinces. The proceedings of the National Assembly continue but of subordinate interest. The defeat of the Piedmontese and the abdication of Charles Albert have been communicated to them; but M. Thiers and others having explained pretty clearly that it will require 500,000 men to enable France to carry on a propagandist war, and that a war with Austria and Russia will be inevitable if France meddles by an armed intervention in Italian affairs; the Assembly, as well as the nation generally, entertain more prudent opinions than they did when Lamartine talked poetically of the treaties of 1815 being destroyed, and thus an almost universal desire to refrain from crossing the Alps is gaining ground amongst all classes. The Socialists form the chief exception; these seem intractable. In various parts of the country they still foment discord, and raise enemies. Their cry is always for blood. "Money or blood." "Houses to burn, and rich to guillotine or hang." The local authorities are compelled to call in the aid of the military to put down these disorders. The different parties are now engaged in their respective electioneering proceedings. The Rue de Poitiers club have recommended a new ministry after the elections, formed of M. de Broglie, M. Molé, M. Thiers, General Bugeaud, M. de Montalembert, M. Passy, M. Leon Faucher, and M. Merly, with M. Berryer as President of the Assembly. The mob-orators of the Socialists continue to excite the people by the most revolutionary language, but we believe that a vast majority of the French people will support the cause of order, and that a very small number of Socialists will be elected to the new chamber. At any rate the chiefs are got rid of for some time to come. M. Proudhon has been condemned by a jury for libelling the President of the Republic; M. Duchesne has shared the same fate, and the former has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and the latter to one year, with corresponding fines. We rejoice further to state that Barbés, Albert, Blanqui, Flotte, Sobrier, Raspail, Quentin, have been convicted at Bourges, and Barbés and Albert are sentenced to transportation for life; Blanqui to ten years' imprisonment; Sobrier to seven years; Raspail to six years; and Flotte and Quentin to five years' imprisonment each. General Courtais, Degré, Borne, Thomas, Vilain, and Larger have been acquitted, and are set at liberty. Causidiere, Louis Blanc, Honneure, Lavison, Napoleon, Chancel, and Seigneuret, not having appeared, have been condemned *par contumace*, and have been sentenced to transportation. Hubert has been arrested, and will probably be tried at some future period. The removal of these pests of society will, we hope, tend to consolidate public tranquillity; but their cause is so desperate, and their party seek to accomplish their purposes by such atrocious means, that we are always prepared for some *atentat* similar to that which in the time of the Consulate was known by the name of "infernal machinations." The great body of the French people is, however, now sound in principle; and the prudent course pursued by Louis Napoleon tends to improve the condition of the country in almost every branch. The ministry, however, has only been able to carry a vote for a small pension to eighteen socialists, who were removed at the time of the revolution last year, by a slender majority of 13, in a House of 713 members. In fact, the ministry requires to be materially strengthened. Mr. Proudhon's journal has been again seized. This paper seems to set all Government at defiance. The Moderates are setting up a journal to counteract the Socialist principles so industriously circulated. All parties seem to be exclusively occupied in electioneering matters.—[*Id.*]

DENMARK AND THE DUCHIES.

We have received our Hamburg papers and correspondance of the 7th inst., which serve partly to explain the unaccountable manoeuvre which the Danes made in sending two of their finest ships into a shallow and narrow harbour, and which ended with the loss of the two vessels. It appears that at the time when the Danish squadron engaged the strand batteries at Eckernörde, a detachment of Danish troops was landed at a place called Bulk, between the fortress of Friedricksort and Eckernörde. There

*We allude here especially to what took place on board the "Maya"; for, after writing the above, we hear that the actors and the scenes were different on board the several vessels.

