EARLY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS FROM BUENOS AIRES TO THE UNITED STATES
1811-1824

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I

THE first overt act of revolution against Spanish authority in what is now the Argentine Republic was the deposition of the Spanish Viceroy, governor in the King's name of the Vice-Royalty of La Plata, and the deportation of himself and his official associates. This was nominally a protest against the invasion of Spain by Napoleon Bonaparte; the revolutionary *Junta Gubernativa* in Buenos Aires still professed loyalty to the captive king, Ferdinand VII. Actually it was a movement for separation from Spanish sovereignty. Professed allegiance to Ferdinand was a device for evading chastisement by Spanish authority, and for securing British sympathy and even assistance. In the Old World, Great Britain had become the ally of the Spanish patriots, who, through the Council of Regency in Cadiz, under the shelter of British naval guns, conserved and exercised the claims of the Bourbon monarchy recently dethroned by Napoleon. But in distant Buenos Aires they never expected Ferdinand to come back to the throne; that is why they affected to remain his subjects.

Diplomatic reachings for foreign encouragement and assistance followed immediately the events of the 25th of May. The first appeal was to Great Britain. Despite the sympathy of the British Minister in Río de Janeiro for the cause of independence in the re-

volted Spanish provinces, the first diplomatic missions from Buenos Aires[1]—to Lord Strangford in Río, and to the British Government in London—were ineffectual because of Great Britain's determined policy to sustain the Spanish nationalists in their struggle against Napoleon and to preserve the old Spanish Empire so that the patriots of the Peninsula might draw support and succor from the royal provinces overseas. The primary object of British diplomacy was to win the titanic European war; a secondary object, however, was—as a price of help to the Spanish nationalists—to keep open the new trade with Spain's hitherto closed overseas dominions.[2]

Their hopes for help from England frustrated by that power's European involvements and commitments, the men of Buenos Aires turned their eyes toward distant North America, whence rumors had arrived of friendly welcome in Washington to a delegation from revolted Venezuela.

In fact, the Supreme Junta of Caracas, in April, 1810, still before the Declaration of Independence of that province, had despatched to the United States two commissioners, Juan Vicente Bolívar and Telésforo de Orea, seeking assistance and alliance; later, in June, a delegation left for London, where they fell in with the agents from Buenos Aires and got the same

[1]Enrique Ruiz Guinazú describes the influence of Strangford on the *emigré* Portuguese court at Río, and his contacts with the Buenos Aires patriots, in his recent biographical study, based on researches in the British Public Record Office, *Lord Strangford y la revolución de Mayo* (Buenos Aires, 1937). See also Noberto Piñero, *La política internacional Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1924). Still more recently the eminent historian of British diplomacy, C. K. Webster, has edited the significant documents illustrating British policy, with a most valuable interpretative introduction, in *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812–1830, Selected Documents from the Foreign Office Archives*, published for the Ibero-American Institute of Great Britain (2 vols., New York and London, 1938). The *Archivo General de la Nación* of the Argentine Republic has published the documents relating to these early missions to England in the first volume of its *Misiones Diplomáticas* (Buenos Aires, 1937). Julian Maria Rubio y Esteban has described a secret diplomatic mission from the Portuguese Court at Río to the Buenos Aires government, July 17 to December 20, 1810, in "The First Diplomatic Negotiations with the Revolutionary Junta at Buenos Aires," *Hisp. Am. Hist. Rev.*, IV (1921), 367–444.

[2]W. S. Robertson has set forth British policy, with apt quotations from records of the Foreign Office, in "The Beginnings of Spanish-American Diplomacy," in *Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner* (N. Y., 1910), 231–267.

chilly reception which their colleagues from the South had experienced.[1] Bolívar and Orea reached Washington in May, 1810, and offered credentials to Secretary of State Robert Smith, who received them informally and very cordially. He approved the attitude of their provisional government and vouchsafed to them that means would be taken to cultivate friendship and commerce between the United States and Venezuela. As a result, the Secretary of State appointed three "agents for seamen and commerce"[2] of the United States: William Shaler, on June 16, 1810, to reside at Vera Cruz; Robert K. Lowry, on June 26, to Caracas; and Joel R. Poinsett, on June 28, to the Port of Buenos Aires. Thus the visit of the Venezuelan envoys begins the first[3] international contacts of Latin American republics with the world outside their own continent.[4] The instructions to these agents of the United States have been quoted many times, but it is worth keeping the essential sentences before us here. To Poinsett (as presumably[5] to the other two agents—*mutatis mutandis*), Robert Smith, Secretary of State for Presi-

[1]The documents from Venezuelan Archives relating to these missions, together with historical articles on them, have been printed by Cristóbal L. Mendoza in the unusually valuable number of the *Boletín de la Academia de Historia* (Caracas, Venezuela) Tomo XVIII (Dic., 1935), 643–743.

[2]Before the Hispanic revolutionary period the United States had appointed consuls to New Orleans (1798–1803), La Guayra (1800–1807) and an agent to Cuba during the American Revolution and a consul there since 1797. The Spanish colonial authorities did not grant them exequaturs as consuls, but tolerated their presence because the necessity of neutral commerce during the Napoleonic wars led Spain to open those colonies to trade from the United States. After 1807, the title "agents for seamen and commerce" was applied to the representative in Havana because the unrecognized title of consul caused too much trouble. These consuls and agents were precursors to those appointed in 1810 to the revolutionary authorities. Roy K. Nichols, "Trade Relations and the Establishment of the United States Consulates in Spanish America, 1779–1809." Hispanic *American Historical Review*, XIII (August, 1933), 289–313.

[3]They antedated the mission of Simón de Bolívar and Luis Lopez to London, commissioned by the Junta of Caracas of June 2, 1810, who reached London July 12, 1810. Cristóbal L. Mendoza, "Documentos relacionados con la Misión de Bolívar y Lopez Méndez a Londres," *Boletín de la Académia Nacional de Historia* (Caracas), XVIII (Oct.–Dic., 1935), 643–711.

[4]W. S. Robertson, *op. cit.*, 231–267. Shaler never reached Vera Cruz, but was active in Cuba, and later on the Mexican frontier. Charles Carroll Griffin, *The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire* (Columbia University Press, 1937), 49–55.

[5]The instructions to Shaler and Lowry are not preserved, but a later reference by Lowry to his instructions implies they were similar to Poinsett's, and one may presume that Shaler's, written at about the same time, were also similar. Cf. Robertson, *op. cit.*, 250.

dent James Madison, wrote that the possibility, in this crisis, of a separation of the Spanish provinces in America from their old sovereignty had impelled the government to send him to Buenos Aires on a mission of good will and observation.[1]

Poinsett reached Buenos Aires, February 13, 1811, after a stop of several weeks in Río de Janeiro and conference there with the Minister of the United States to the Court of Portugal and Brazil, at that capital since 1809, Thomas Sumter, a fellow South Carolinian.

At first the revolutionary leaders at Buenos Aires hesitated to accept Poinsett as an agent of the United States, because he bore no letter of credence to them directly from the President, but misgivings vanished when he explained that his appointment was identical in form to the agents which the United States for some time had maintained in Havana and La Guayra.[2] To

[1] "As a crisis is approaching which must produce great changes in the situation of Spanish America, and may dissolve altogether its colonial relations to Europe, and as the geographical position of the United States, and other obvious considerations, give them an intimate interest in whatever may effect the destiny of that part of the American continent, it is our duty to turn our attention to this important subject, and to take such steps, not incompatible with the neutral character and honest policy of the United States, as the occasion renders proper. With this view, you have been selected to proceed without delay, to Buenos Ayres. You will make it your object, wherever it may be proper, to diffuse the impression that the United States cherish the sincerest good will towards the people of Spanish America as neighbors, as belonging to the same portion of the globe, and as having a mutual interest in cultivating friendly intercourse: that this disposition will exist, whatever may be their internal system or European relation, with respect to which no interference of any sort is pretended: and that, in the event of a political separation from the parent country, and of the establishment of an independent system of National Government, it will coincide with the sentiments and policy of the United States to promote the most friendly relations, and the most liberal intercourse, between the inhabitants of this hemisphere, as having all a common interest, and as lying under a common obligation to maintain that system of peace, justice, and good will, which is the only source of happiness for nations.

"Whilst you inculcate these as the principles and dispositions of the United States, it will be no less proper to ascertain those on the other side, not only towards the United States, but in reference to the great nations of Europe, and to the commercial and other connexions with them, respectively: and, generally, to inquire into the state, the characteristics, and the proportions, as to numbers, intelligence, and wealth, of the several parties, the amount of population, the extent and organization of the military force, and the pecuniary resources of the country." W. R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, N. Y., 1925), I, 6–7.

[2] Poinsett to the Secretary of State, February 13, 1811. *Poinsett Papers*, I, 31, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

fortify their independent position even before they had declared independence to the world, the *Junta* despatched to President Madison a formal acknowledgment of the acceptance of Poinsett as commercial agent of the United States to regulate commercial treaties as "between nation and nation."[1] Meanwhile, they assured the new agent of their desire to cultivate "the most intimate connection" with the United States, and promised him that its commerce would be placed on the footing of the most-favored-nation. This was done in June, 1811, although the customs duties and procedure remained vexatious in the extreme to all nationals.[2] Spokesmen of the revolutionary *Junta* intimated to him that they intended to declare independence as soon as a revolutionary Congress should meet.[3]

Like most North American representatives after him during this period, Poinsett was an advocate of the revolution. He urged the sending of arms and ammunition from the United States; and he asked in vain for more positive instructions anticipating a declaration of independence, with a letter of credence addressed from the President of the United States to the

[1]Manning, I, 320.

[2]High duties and other barriers to trade with the independent ports of Montevideo and Buenos Aires are described in the letters of Stephen Girard's supercargos in 1810. J. B. McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard, Mariner and Merchant* (Philadelphia, 1918), II, 146–171.

[3]Poinsett's first preoccupation in Buenos Aires was Great Britain. He wrote home that the revolutionary groups feared and at the same time courted Great Britain. British policy he sensed as distinctly favorable to them, but prevented by the alliance with Spain from openly encouraging a movement for independence. We know from the investigations of erudite modern scholars (W. S. Robertson, and C. K. Webster, *op. cit.*) that the American agent had sensed the situation not far from correctly. British policy was clearly defined after the alliance with the Spanish national *Junta* against Napoleon: it was to make every effort, by diplomatic suasion or by outright peaceful mediation, to induce the colonies to reconciliation with the mother country, in order that they might maintain relations of commerce, friendship and communication of succors to Spain in the war against Napoleon. At the same time, Great Britain insisted on profiting by the new trade relations with the Spanish colonies, whose commerce to foreign nations had been opened by the revolt,—this trade was a useful sustenance to the British while fighting for the liberation of Spain from the mighty oppressor.

Poinsett discerned a possibility of substituting the influence of the United States for that of Great Britain if the provinces could be brought to declare their independence before the termination of Anglo-Spanish intimacy, which, of course, had resulted from the alliance against Napoleon's invasion of the Peninsula.

governments of Buenos Aires, Chile and Bogotá, all of which he prophesied would become independent.[1] Such credence would have been a recognition forthwith of independence. In fact, President Madison came very close to such a recognition when Secretary of State James Monroe later (April 13, 1811) commissioned Poinsett as Consul General of the United States to Buenos Aires, Chile and Peru, without yet even knowing whether those countries had declared their independence.

It seems quite obvious that Poinsett, who had advised his government to furnish arms to the revolted provinces of the Plata region, must also have encouraged the revolutionists to seek arms and munitions in the United States, as the United States formerly had done in France, and as the Venezuelan agents had recently been doing in Philadelphia.[2] His arrival and suggestions undoubtedly helped to bring about the first mission from Buenos Aires to the United States, but he did not inspire the first appeal to Washington. Shortly before the North American's arrival, the *Junta* had addressed a communication to President Madison:

"The marked proofs which your Excellency has given of your Beneficence and magnanimity towards the Province of Caracas are irrefragable testimonies of the lively Interest which your Excellency takes in the Rights of Humanity. In truth, none are more

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[1]Dorothy M. Parton, *The Diplomatic Career of Joel Roberts Poinsett* (Catholic University of Washington, 1934), 16. Dr. Parton has used the Poinsett Papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, material not now in the State Department. J. Fred Rippy, *Joel R. Poinsett, Versatile American* (Duke University Press, 1935), used and cited the same documents.

[2]Poinsett's biographers do not call attention to the fact that voluminous portions of his despatches remain in cypher, unreadable to date. We may assume that these undecyphered passages are the most important. An allusion in an uncyphered letter of June 29, 1811, gives us evidence that he was familiar with the plans and purpose of a mission from Buenos Aires even before the instructions for the same were written: "Sir, this letter will be delivered to you by Don Diego de Saavedra and Don Pedro de Aguirre whose business I mentioned to you in my letter of the 16th of May." *Poinsett Papers*, I, 86. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The letter of May 16th seems to be missing. Upon his return to the United States, Poinsett got his despatches out of the Department of State and they are now in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. There are memoranda in the Library of Congress, mostly travel notes.

likely to respect them in others than those who have had the misfortune to see them outraged towards themselves. The perfect conformity of our Political Situation, and of the causes of it, with that of the Noble Caraquans, gives us an equal Right to hope that it will be agreeable to your Excellency, that the United States should tighten with the Provinces on the Rio la Plata the common chain of Nations, by a Cordiality more firm and expressive."[1]

The date of this missive is February 11, 1811. Poinsett landed at Buenos Aires two days later.[2] Less than five months after Poinsett's arrival at Buenos Aires, namely, on June 5, 1811, the Provisional Governing Council (*Junta Gubernativa*) of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata of South America, "in the name of Ferdinand VII, King of Spain and the Indies," issued full powers, accompanied by detailed instructions, to Don Diego de Saavedra (son of the President of the *Junta*) and Don Pedro de Aguirre

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[1]Manning, I, 319.

[2]"Sir, I landed this morning from Rio de Janeiro, and hearing that an American vessel will sail this afternoon for Philadelphia, and being desirous of giving the government all the information I could obtain in so short a time, I waited upon John Larrea, one of the members of the *Junta*, and was by him immediately presented to the *Junta* who were then in sitting. They at once objected to the form of the commission, 'it was not directed to them nor signed by the President.' I explained to them that it was similar to the commission held by an agent at Havana, and that it bore on the face of it the reasons why it had not been more explicitly worded. They then directed me to enclose my commission in a note to the *Junta* and that I should immediately know their determination. I enclose a copy of their note and my answer by which you will see that they have recognized me as agent for the commerce of the United States . . . it is their determination to declare themselves independent of the mother country the instant they are attacked; in short, all their measures tend to that end . . .

"Moreno, a member of the *Junta*, embarked today for London. I do not yet know the object of his mission. I am just informed by a member of the *Junta* that they had written to the President some days previous to my arrival, and that their despatches will be on board the vessel expected to sail this evening." Joel R. Poinsett to [the Secretary of State], Buenos Aires, February 13, 1811. *Poinsett Papers*, I, 31. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The *Junta* in its letter to Madison of February 13, 1811, stated: "Don Josef R Poinsetts [*sic*] has just presented himself to this *Junta* with a credential signed by the Secy (of State) to be accredited as commercial agent of the U States in this America and this government conformably to the cordial and friendly intentions which it made known to Y E in its official Letter dated yesterday [*sic*] has decreed his admission to the full exercise of his agency, which it considers as a preliminary to the Treaties between Nation and Nation which will be formed to point out the Rules of a permanent Commerce and of the greatest amity and Union between the two States." Manning, I, 320–321.

(a merchant of Buenos Aires), commissioned to purchase arms in the United States. Saavedra and Aguirre had powers to pledge the public funds of the new government for the purchase of the following articles: 2000 pairs of pistols of one-ounce caliber; 4000 carbines, or short cavalry arms with bayonets (*tercerolas*); 8000 swords; 10,000 guns with cartridges; 1,000,000 flints for the carbines and pistols; to be paid for in Buenos Aires on the presentation of proper documents from the two agents stating that the articles had been bought and shipped on the account and risk of the government. In addition to this, Aguirre and Saavedra had authority to bind the government in the most solemn and legal manner for the payment of up to 30,000 additional guns, carbines and pistols, when delivered on account and risk of the sellers at Buenos Aires.[1]

Separate instructions confirmed the purposes of the full powers and provided 20,000 *pesos* for the expenses of their mission. If possible they were to ship their procurements on a packet to Buenos Aires or Ensenada de Barragán (a port 40 miles down the estuary from Buenos Aires) or even to Montevideo. In case of the outbreak of war between the United States and Great Britain[2] and the consequent risk of delay to the expedition, they were to avail themselves of letters-patent to fit out a ship to get the purchases to a home port. In addition to procuring the munitions they had instructions to endeavor to send cannon-makers and gunsmiths, with tools and models, for whose services they might promise 3000 *pesos* each annually, and also to get apparatus for making gun-flints.

A particular injunction of the instructions was not

[1]Full powers to Diego de Saavedra and Juan Pedro de Aguirre from "La Junta Provisional Gubernativa de las Provincias del Río de la Plata en la América del Sur a nombre del Sr. Don Fernando VII, Rey de España y de las Indias," Buenos Aires, June 5, 1811. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[2]It is not unlikely that Poinsett may have mentioned this possibility, for he longed to serve his country in such a war.

to compromise the government of the United States or any other government. This would require the greatest secrecy as to their names and operations, and the pseudonyms of José Cabrera and Pedro López, with passports accordingly, were provided ready-made for the agents, who represented themselves to be traveling in pursuit of their own commercial business—like our Silas Deane in France in 1776. For delivery to the President they carried a formal letter from the *Junta* frankly revealing their real names and purposes,[1] and recommending the persons of the commissioners and the purpose of the mission, "without a doubt that your Excellency's kindness will generously lend itself to the views and desires of this Government, which will be extremely pleased to comply with what it may have the honor to be asked at any time by your nation."[2]

The envoys left the Plata estuary one of the last days of July for New York on board the cutter *Tigre*, belonging to William G. Miller, a North American trader who soon, on Poinsett's recommendation, was appointed consul of the United States at Buenos Aires. The ship was provided, at the connivance of the revolutionary government, with both Spanish and English papers and flags. Three weeks out from the Plata, they were obliged to put into Río de Janeiro because of damage to their ship by a storm. A dispute with the captain over the expenses of repairs ended by his appropriating 1043 *pesos* from their limited funds. One hundred and four days out from Río, they arrived at Philadelphia, in October, 1811.[3] At that time commerce was languishing under the non-intercourse measures, and money was tight, at least for unknown

[1]Instrucciones que la Junta Provisional Gubernativa de las Provincias del Río de la Plata en la América del Sur comunica a Dn. Diego de Saavedra y Don Pedro de Aguirre sobre lo que deberan observar en el desempeño de su comisión para la compra de armas y la remisión a esta de los Estados Unidos del Norte, Buenos Aires, junio 5, 1811. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[2]Manning, I, 321.

[3]Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Philadelphia, October 19, 1811. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

rebel agents from the remote Río de la Plata, with little cash in hand. They could find no merchant interested in such "speculations" as they proposed. After a delay at Philadelphia, due to the illness of Aguirre, they reached Washington late in October,[1] and received an appointment (we do not know what day) for the delivery of their communications.

James Monroe was now President Madison's Secretary of State. This "minister" asked the envoys for detailed statements about the political and economic condition of their country, questions to which they responded with alacrity. They recorded that "two days later" the Secretary assured them in the name of the President "that the United States of the North would be glad to see the emancipation of their brother peoples of the South under a liberal constitution, and that he believed they would continue their glorious career of liberty despite the presence of some risks which perseverance would overcome; that we could go (*correr*) about the land, and export freely such succors (*auxilios*) as we pleased, and that desirous of assisting us this [executive] branch of the Government would for its part dissemble knowledge of any contracts we had made with munitions makers; that assistance could not go any further than this, since we couldn't be considered otherwise than one of Spain's old provinces; but if there were anything else in which the Government could serve us, it would do so with

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[1]José Antonio Cabrera y Pedro López al Secretario Don Jaime Monroe, Georgetown, October 25, 1811. National Archives (Washington) Division of State Department Archives, series *Argentine Republic, Notes*, Vol. I, part 1. February 11, 1811 to October 27, 1838.

Luis de Onís, the unrecognized Spanish Minister in Washington, noted the presence of suspicious persons, at first believed to be from Cuba, in his despatches of November 3, and November 15, 1811 (No. 199), and identifies them as López and Cabrera of Buenos Ayres in his No. 200 of November 20, 1811. They had then returned to Philadelphia from Washington, "little satisfied apparently with the ostensible reception which they got from the American Government, although it is very likely that they were privately received with the sympathy manifested by the President in his speech at the opening of Congress. They are now in that city and have at their disposal a considerable sum of gold and silver, which they brought with them from Buenos Ayres for the objects of their mission, among others the purchase of arms and of ships to arm." *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid), *Estado* 5637 (Library of Congress facsimiles).

pleasure. At the same time, Mr. Monroe gave us important warnings and begged us to let him know ahead of time of our departure."[1]

The friendly welcome to Saavedra and Aguirre in Washington by President Madison himself contrasts to the chilly reception in London given to Irigoyen by Wellesley, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

The commissioners immediately placed orders for munitions for as much money as they had, with Messrs. Miller and Van Beuren of Philadelphia.[2] Their efforts to order more supplies on credit were unavailing, despite their concert with Telésforo de Orea, the agent in the United States of the Venezuelan Government. Manuel Torres, a Venezuelan revolutionist exile of Spanish birth, who had been living in the United States since 1796,[3] the same who in 1822 was to be recognized as the first Minister of Venezuela to the United States, suggested that the Provinces of the Plata, and Venezuela, jointly pledge their credit for additional purchases, and also that the United States Government might hasten the fulfillment of the purchases by advancing from its own arsenals a delivery of arms, to be replaced out of contracts made by the representatives of Venezuela and Buenos Aires with some reliable dealer.[4] Orea lent himself to the suggestion. Torres then introduced Stephen Girard of Philadelphia to the *porteños* as a substantial merchant in whom the United States might place sufficient confidence to warrant such an operation. They met Girard in Philadelphia, November 30, 1811, and pro-

[1]Saavedra and Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Philadelphia, November 11, 1811 *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. They do not say whether their communications with Monroe were oral interviews or in writing, but both the context of the despatches and the circumstances make for the presumption of oral interviews. Dates of the interviews are not recorded.

[2]Saavedra and Aguirre to Messrs. Miller and Van Beuren, Philadelphia, November 11, 1811. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[3]Nicolas García Samudio, *Capítulos de Historia Diplomática* (Bogotá, 1925), 45.

[4]Telésforo de Orea to José Antonio Cabrera and Pedro López, Washington, November 25, 1811. *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid), *Estado* 5637 (Library of Congress facsimiles), enclosed in Onís's No. 206 to Bardaxi of November 28, 1811. Onís intercepted the letter through the treachery of a postman.

posed the purchase and shipping without delay against the joint (one-third Venezuelan and two-thirds Argentinian) credit of the "governments" of at least 20,000 muskets and bayonets for the defense of the United Provinces of La Plata and the Kingdom of Chile [*sic*]—"in accordance with the views and desires of their government and in accordance also with the conference which they have had with the envoy of Venezuela, Don Telésforo de Orea." They were anxious to order more muskets, flints, pistols, swords, sabres, etc., as fast as they could be manufactured.

Madison and Monroe dallied with the idea of doing for the United Provinces of the Plata just what the French Government had done for the United States of North America in 1776-1778: the extension of secret aid disguised as a commercial transaction. After a consultation with the Attorney General, William Pinkney, Saavedra, Aguirre and Orea were summoned on the 7th of January, 1812, for a conference with the Secretary of State. According to Saavedra and Aguirre, Monroe informed them "that the Government was disposed to sell them the arms, at regular prices, and to satisfy itself with the responsibility for these by the credit of a respectable merchant of the country, that it was moved to do this by its desire for our independence . . . " Elated, the commissioners left the interview requesting to be informed whether Stephen Girard would be acceptable as such a merchant. This information was never forthcoming.[1]

Girard himself was not unwilling to be the Rodrigue Hortalez and Company of North America in this new drama of emancipation, but he required the explicit approval and co-operation of the United States Government. When, despite the continued importunities of the South American envoys, the Secretary of State refused to answer a very direct question on the sub-

[1]Saavedra and Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Philadelphia, February 16, 1812. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

ject, Girard dropped the matter.[1] President Madison would not play the role which Louis XVI's Government had assumed toward the revolutionary British Colonies in North America in 1776. For this decision there were good reasons of state and vital national interest. We shall not fail to note them presently.

The commissioners, then, had to content themselves with the purchase of such succors as their cash funds could cover; moreover, on January 26, 1812, they unexpectedly received instructions of October 3d not to do more.[2] They left for home as soon as possible on the *Liberty* frigate with 1000 muskets with bayonets and 362,050 flints, which they brought safely home to the port of Ensenada de Barragán on May 14, 1812.[3]

[1] "Mr. Diego Saavedra and Mr. Pedro Aguirre, envoys from the Junta of Buenos Aires and Chili, have applied to me to purchase and to ship on account of their respective governments Twenty Thousand muskets with their Bayonettes. Although I am disposed to be serviceable to these gentlemen, yet I do not wish to contract with them, unless I am assured that the shipment alluded to will not be considered as unlawful or disagreeable to the President, etc., etc., of the United States, and that the Government will facilitate me the means of obtaining said muskets, etc., either by selling or lending them to me under such terms and conditions as will be judged reasonable." Girard to Monroe, December 2, 1811. J. B. McMaster, *Life and Times of Stephen Girard* (Philadelphia, 1913) II, 168–171.

Saavedra and Aguirre in a note of January 20, 1812, made one last attempt to persuade the government to sanction the proposed operation of Girard. National Archives (Washington) Division of State Department archives, series, *Argentine Republic, Notes*, Volume I, part 1, folio 9.

[2] Saavedra and Aguirre to the Junta Gubernativa, Philadelphia, February 16, 1812. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. The instructions may have been due to the crushing defeat sustained by the revolutionists at the Desaguadero, the news of which already had greatly dismayed Saavedra and Aguirre.

[3] Aguirre and Saavedra to Supremo Gobierno [of Buenos Aires] and Manuel de Salas to same, Ensenada de Barragán, May 14, 1812. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. These arms must have played a part in the early defense of the Plata region against reconquest.

The commissioners presented to their government on May 19th papers relating to their mission, together with their accounts for approval. The accounts showed expenditures of 29,946 *pesos* and receipts from the government of 20,000 *pesos*. An endorsement shows that these accounts were approved, except for two items which were deducted from payment of the balance claimed by Aguirre and Saavedra: 1043 *pesos* for money taken by the captain of their boat in Río de Janeiro for repairs, and 4664 *pesos* representing a protested note drawn on Mr. Allen of Philadelphia (which note they had apparently purchased on their departure from Buenos Aires) by William Miller on whose ship they had originally sailed from their native land.

As the reader has perceived, the principal source for the first Argentine mission to the United States, as for the others described in this article, consists of such of their papers as remain in the *Archivo General de la Nación*, in Buenos Aires. José Juan Biedma first described the mission, with some small inaccuracies and omissions, in his brochure *Los Estados Unidos y la independencia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, Imp., Lit. y Encuadernación de G. Kraft, Bartolomé Mitre 724, 1906). He does not cite the source of his information, but it was apparently these same documents now in the *Archivo General de la Nación*.

"The liberality with which we have been considered by the government and inhabitants of the United States," they wrote to Monroe, when embarking from North America, "and their favorable disposition toward the cause we uphold remain graven in our gratitude and respect."[1]

The mission of Saavedra and Aguirre, coupled with the representation of their Venezuelan colleagues, did much to crystallize a policy for President Madison's Government, naturally predisposed, as it was—and Jefferson's before him—in favor of the independence of Spain's revolted colonies. After his first interview with the Buenos Aires representatives, Secretary Monroe instructed the United States Minister in Russia that "various considerations, which will readily suggest themselves to you, have induced this Government to look with a favorable eye to a Revolution which is now taking place in South America," although a *formal* recognition by the United States of a minister from either of the revolted colonies had not been made, "nor has it been urged."[2] To the American Ministers in France he wrote that "although such recognition in France, England, Denmark and Russia in form has not been made, yet a very friendly and conciliatory answer has been given to them. They have also been informed that the Ministers of the United States in Europe, will be instructed to avail themselves of suitable opportunities to promote their recognition by other powers. You will not fail to attend to this

[1]Saavedra and Aguirre to James Monroe, Secretary of State. National Archives (Washington) Division of State Department Archives, series *Argentine Republic, Notes*, I, pt. 1, 10.

[2]To John Quincy Adams, Minister to Russia, November 23, 1811, Manning, I, 12. It was not accurate to say that formal recognition had not been urged. On November 6, 1811, Orea had delivered to Monroe a copy of the Venezuelan declaration of independence, and requested the recognition of the Confederation of Venezuela as a "free and independent nation," and himself as "agent extraordinary" of that government. On November 27, 1811, in his instructions to the Minister in France (Joel Barlow) cited immediately below, Monroe states that the Venezuelans had "proposed to the President the recognition of their independence and reception of a minister from them." "Documentos relacionados con las misiones de Juan Vicente Bolívar y Telésforo Orea á Washington," *Boletín de la Académia Nacional de Historia* (Caracas), XVIII (Oct.–Dic., 1935), 728.

object, which is thought to be equally due to the just claims of our Southern Brethren, to which the United States cannot be indifferent, and to the best interests of this country."[1]

The statement that "Ministers" of Venezuela and Buenos Aires had not been received *formally* implies that they had nevertheless been received, and befriended, informally. The policy pursued by Madison and Monroe in these first contacts with Spain's revolted colonies was tantamount to an unquestionable recognition of belligerency and a very benevolent neutrality. Nevertheless, the South American envoys enjoyed in the United States no more privileges than did the Spanish representative, Luis de Onís, who was not formally received by the United States at this time as minister, although Spanish consuls continued their functions and through them Onís was able to address the Government. The United States quite properly had avoided involvement in the contentions of Spanish civil and international strife in Europe, and with equal propriety it had suspended diplomatic relations pending the emergence of a settled and unquestioned government in Spain. Onís meanwhile busied himself buying arms and munitions for the use of Spain against Napoleon in the Peninsula and for the suppression of rebellion in America, and endeavored to frustrate the missions of the revolted provinces to the United States. The fact that in 1811 and 1812 the agents of the colonies were informally received by the Government when Onís was not, that their belligerency was recognized, and that their cause enjoyed the encouragement and assistance of the diplomacy of the United States, speaks for itself, much in contrast with the attitude of Great Britain. If anything more in the way of encouragement and friendly sentiments need have been looked for, short of formal recognition of the independence of these two Spanish provinces (which had not yet themselves declared

[1]To Joel Barlow, Minister to France, November 27, 1811. Manning I, 12.

their independence) it could have been discerned in the expressions of President Madison's message to Congress of November 5, 1811, in which he referred sympathetically to the "scenes" developing in the great "communities" which occupied the southern portion of "our own hemisphere" and pronounced it a national duty to take a "deep interest" in their destinies.[1]

What were the "interests of this country" which made the United States anxious to promote the recognition of the provinces of Venezuela and of Buenos Aires, while still quite properly withholding recognition from either of the contending regimes in Spain itself, where Napoleon and Wellington were locked in their great military duel?

These interests were undoubtedly bound up in the status of Florida and, to a lesser degree, in the disputed borderlands of the Louisiana purchase, that is, Texas; and ultimately in the destiny of Cuba.[2] Less vitally, they were related, as were British interests, to the maintenance of an open trade with the revolted Spanish provinces. The immediate interest of President Madison and Secretary Monroe was Florida.

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[1]The House of Representatives referred the message, together with a copy of the recent Venezuelan declaration of independence, to a special committee of the House of Representatives, which reported (December 10, 1811) a joint resolution which never came to a vote: that the House beheld "with friendly interest, *the establishment of independent sovereignties* by the Spanish provinces in America, consequent upon the actual state of the monarchy to which they belonged; that, as neighbors and inhabitants of the same hemisphere," the United States felt a "great solicitude for their welfare," that when the provinces had attained "the condition of nations, by the *just* exercise of their rights," the Congress would join with the President to establish with them friendly relations and commercial intercourse as sovereign and independent states. Italics inserted. Manning, I, 13.

It is significant that Secretary Monroe went out of his way to cite this *proposed* resolution to Orea as evidence of interest of the United States in the cause, and to say that the President had received the Venezuelan declaration of independence "with the interest which so important an event was calculated to excite." W. S. Robertson, *op. cit.* 255.

Passage of the resolution would have been equivocally close to a formal recognition of independence.

[2]The most recent, avowedly polemical, account of Cuban-American relationships at this time is Herminio Portell-Vilá, *Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España*, Tomo I (La Habana, 1938).

Madison and his predecessor Jefferson had long since been trying to drive home their imperfect claim to West Florida as a part of the Louisiana cession. The Mobile Act of 1804 had enabled the President to erect a customs district there, but Jefferson, while asserting this act of sovereignty on paper, had carefully avoided a real occupation of the disputed area. He had tried in vain to take advantage of the distresses of Napoleonic times in Europe to secure a recognition of American sovereignty over West Florida, or at least a cession or even a purchase. He had no luck. When the general insurrectionary movement, first against the new Napoleonic dynasty in Spain, and then against Spanish sovereignty of any kind in America, showed itself in West Florida as well as in the other continental provinces of Spain, it seemed to present to Jefferson and Madison the opportunity which they had craved.

Jefferson had often said that Spain's strategy of inviting settlers from the United States into her borderlands, supposedly attracting them from their original allegiance, naturalizing them, and making buffer populations out of them, would peaceably solve the Florida question, because these people would remain unalterably American and ultimately gravitate into the republic. In 1810 Jefferson's successor seized this opportunity. He took advantage of, and even encouraged an insurrection of the inhabitants of the Baton Rouge district—preponderantly immigrants from the United States—who wanted annexation. When this happened, he proclaimed (October 27, 1810) the occupation by the United States, under its claim as a part of Louisiana, of all West Florida—from the Iberville to the Perdido Rivers. The actual act of occupation, however, left undisturbed the small Spanish garrison at Mobile, and thus avoided an open conflict with Spain. A remnant of Spanish authority hung by a thread in Mobile. Depressed by the odds against him, the

Spanish Governor, Vicente Folch, had made a tentative offer, even before the occupation of Baton Rouge, to turn over his province to the United States in case he were not re-enforced by January 1, 1811 (an offer which he soon withdrew).

The first South American envoys, Juan Vicente Bolívar and Telésforo de Orea, had arrived from Venezuela in May of 1810, seeking recognition and alliance, precisely when Madison's administration was contemplating the interesting developments of an "independence movement" in West Florida. (The envoys from Buenos Aires, as we shall presently note, reached Washington in November, 1811, just when Secretary Monroe was deep in a similar intrigue for the revolution and occupation of East Florida.) It was well known that the example of Venezuela had stimulated insurrection in West Florida.[1] There was, therefore, every reason of self interest, as well as of sentiment, why the United States should receive in a kindly and stimulating way the envoys of republican revolutions in South America. To sympathize with a struggle for independence in South America was to encourage it profitably also in West Florida and presently in East Florida, perhaps even in Cuba.[2] There was little doubt that independence of the adjacent Spanish provinces would be followed by annexation, immediately in the case of West Florida already claimed as a part of the United States, probably soon in the case of East Florida for which the United States had been seeking to exchange its spoilation and other claims against Spain; Jefferson hoped to take in Cuba, too, before the Napoleonic wars were over. Administration leaders sensed the import of British

[1] I. J. Cox, *The West Florida Question* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1918) *passim*.

[2] From June to November, 1811, William Shaler (see above, p. 13) was in Cuba sounding out creole sentiment and even Spanish authorities on the possibility of annexation to the United States. Any conceivable chance for such a union was frustrated by a rising of negroes early in 1812 and by the advent of war between the United States and Great Britain. Portell-Vilá, *op. cit.* I, 166–178.

policy of keeping Spain's sovereignty intact in the New World in order not to weaken her as an ally in the Peninsula, and as a price for open trade with a colonial system hitherto closed to their shipping. Madison feared the possibility both of French influence in West Florida (where Napoleon had sent an agent) and of British intrusion there by way of protection. He did not know that the French Minister at Washington, Turreau, had advised his Government in 1808 to occupy both Floridas as a means of curbing the United States.[1] British influence was the more feared, there, because of the strategic relationship of Florida to the imminent war with Great Britain.

The British *chargé* at Washington, John Philip Morier, prompted by the unrecognized Spanish envoy, Onís, had protested formally to the United States at the occupation of West Florida.[2] Protest by the representative of a government which was already stirring the Indians of the northwestern territory to war against the United States made Madison only more eager to control Florida, a possible avenue of British attack against the southwest, and a possible area of conquest from a British ally. The protest of the British *chargé* plus the offer of Folch prompted Madison to the historic special secret message to Congress, which resulted in the notable resolution and act of January 15, 1811.

The resolution recorded the famous "non-transfer" principle, since firmly embedded in the foreign policy of the United States and so closely associated with the Monroe Doctrine as not to be distinguished from it: " . . . considering the influence which the destiny of the territory adjoining the southern border of the United States may have upon their security, tranquillity and commerce, . . . the United States . . . cannot, without serious inquietude, see any

[1]Portell-Vilá, *op. cit.*, 151.

[2]Morier to Robert Smith, Dec. 15, 1810. Henry Adams, *History of the United States* (New York, 1890) V, 315.

part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power." The accompanying act authorized the President to take possession of all or any part of East Florida if an agreement to that effect should be reached with the "local authorities," "or in the event of an attempt to occupy the said territory, or any part thereof, by any foreign government," and to use the army and navy for that purpose.

At the passage of this act, the indignant British *chargé*, after concerting with Onís, counseled his government to occupy Pensacola and New Orleans and to incite a slave insurrection in the southern states of the United States.[1] Madison presumably did not know of this, either.

When the first envoys from Buenos Aires reached Washington in November, 1811, Madison's government was engaged, through the intermediary of General George Mathews of Georgia, in covert intrigues with inhabitants of East Florida on the south bank of the St. Mary's River, where immigrants from the United States constituted a preponderating element in a very mixed and rough frontier population. In this way "local authorities" could be called into existence for the purpose of delivering the province over to occupation by the United States army or navy under the terms of the act of January 15, 1811. In Washington, Mathews appears to have received oral instructions from James Monroe to go down there and stir up a revolution like that of Baton Rouge. Military and naval forces had been ordered to the St. Mary's River where Mathews was diligently at work. Having no recorded instructions, this *agent provocateur* could be disavowed—as he later was—in case he should make a false step up the backstairs of Florida occupation, or in case his activities, secretly provoked, should become too seriously embarrassing to the United States Government.

It is quite understandable that the Government

[1]Portell-Vilá, *op. cit.*, 165. See also Onís to Pezuela, October 26, 1812, *Archivo Histórico Naciónal* (Madrid), *Estado*, Leg. 5638.

and people, particularly of the southern states, looked on the revolution of South American patriots in a friendly light because of a natural affinity of republicanism; but Florida—and beyond Florida, Cuba—make it easy to understand why Madison's government looked with so "favorable an eye" on the revolution taking place in Spanish America, why it received the first envoys with all but formal recognition, why it desired to help promote the recognition by other powers of the independence of Venezuela and of Buenos Aires, even though the provinces of the Plata region, at least, had not yet declared their independence. The weaker Spain's power in America should become, because of her distresses in Europe, the greater would be the advantage of the United States, the closer the republic of the North would be to a definitive and peaceful solution of the Florida Question, and thus to a rounding out of the nation's coastline by the addition of a contiguous old Spanish province, never overlooking the possibility, at least, of eventually annexing the island of Cuba.

II

The war of 1812-1815 between the United States and Great Britain interrupted the procession of missions from Buenos Aires to Washington.[1] During the

[1]In the *Archivo General de la Nación*, S1–S2–A4, No. 9, is an unexecuted commission, dated February 7, 1812, to Alvarez Fonte for a mission to the United States never realized "por las sospechas prudentes que sobrevinieron respecto del Extranjero con quien hubo de efectuarse por los Estados Unidos." The foreigner whose good faith was thus suspected at the last moment was one George Ducht, a citizen of the United States, Ducht having agreed, upon liberal terms and every sign of good faith, to facilitate the procurance of arms and munitions. The government of the Provinces, unable to secure credit abroad, prepared to send, upon only thirty hours' notice, Don Antonio Alvarez de Fonte to New York, under strictest secrecy and the pseudonym of "Tom Jones" with 40,000 *pesos de plata* and 9 *tejos de oro* for the purchase of rifles, knapsacks, and cavalry sabres. If later he could arrange credit, he was to contract for more, and to persuade artificers (gunsmiths, swordsmiths, potters, papermakers, printers, cotton and linen spinners and weavers, and mineralogists) to emigrate to Buenos Aires with families, in return for land grants and wages of 60 to 90 *pesos* [a month?]. The detailed instructions to Fonte, of 17 articles, were never acted on. There are in the *expediente* the notes for a draft of a communication to the Congress of the United States, dated February 12, 1812, which, roughly translated, reads: "Let that republic be reminded of the kindness shown to the Caracans and let it see the equal claims of our own government to promises of protection."

war the United States was desperately busy, at first striving to conquer Canada, and then trying to defend its own territory. It was no longer possible for foreign rebel agents to buy munitions, even if they could get through the British blockade.[1] Such supplies were needed for the defense of the country.

The War of 1812 proved no more fruitful on the southern frontier than to the north. As expected,

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[1]There were, nevertheless, some communications received from Buenos Aires at Washington during the war. Manuel Moreno addressed the President of the United States, from the "Fortaleza de Buenos Aires," July 21, 1813, enclosing certain printed matter to show the state of public affairs in the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, and the noble efforts and sacrifices with which the inhabitants consecrate themselves for their liberty in common with that of the American continent. National Archives (Washington) Division of State Department Archives, series *Argentine Republic, Notes*, I, pt. 1, 12.

The Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, Gervasio Antonio de Posadas, addressed two letters to President Madison, March 9, 1814, translations of which are printed in Manning, I, 334. In the first, Posadas declared: "The United Provinces of Río de la Plata aspire to a close and intimate relation with the United States; and it would give me a pleasure if you, according to the known generosity of your character, would permit me to communicate to them the wishes of my countrymen. It gives me great pleasure to have the present opportunity of communicating to you my respects, and most anxious solicitude for a friendly alliance." In the second letter, he says: "The victories of the North, which obliged France to cease oppressing Spain, may enable our enemies, with the assistance of Great Britain, to injure our cause, if some powerful arm does not volunteer her aid. Though humanity and justice are interested in the sacred cause defended by South America, four years of experience have taught this people, that it is not for the interest of the Potentates of Europe to favor the independence of the colonies. Hitherto the greatness of the powers of Europe has been founded on our degradation. Perhaps the preponderance we should give to your influence in the commercial world has not a little influence. It is on you we place our present hopes, who have the happiness to govern the only free people in the world, whose philosophic and patriotic sentiments we are ambitious to imitate. I am sensible the war, in which you are at present engaged, will prevent your giving us that immediate aid that would end our troubles. The people of this country can as yet support their cause with dignity, could they procure a supply of arms and ammunitions. Your Excellency cannot fail of being able to afford us these supplies; and our prompt and ready payment cannot be doubted. Your Excellency may be assured that the Provinces of Río de la Plata will not be ungrateful for such a relief, and will be ready to engage in any treaties of commerce that will be advantageous to the United States. The interest that the inhabitants of said States have generally felt for the success of our cause, convinces me of the happy result of this request."

In the *Archivo General de la Nación*, in Buenos Aires, there is a draft of a letter of May 30, 1815, to the President of the United States, requesting court action favorable to the release of certain property belonging to the government of Buenos Aires, "also American" (*como Americano también*), in the custody of Manuel Pinto, who was on a British ship, the *Nereide*, when it was captured in December, 1813, by an American privateer. The articles were described as "necessary to sustain with honor the common cause of all peoples." I have found no evidence to show that a corresponding document was delivered to its addressee, but a letter from Pinto, dated London, August 10, 1815, says that he has won his claim for the release of the "neutral goods" upon appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States—the celebrated case of the *Nereide*. Instructions to Pinto direct him to concert with Saavedra (newly appointed agent to London) for the use of the funds forthcoming from the United States after the award of this claim.

British forces occupied East Florida, at Pensacola, as a base for invasion of the United States. General Andrew Jackson dislodged them (November 8, 1814) after his successful campaign against the Creek Indians, but he had to hurry away to defend New Orleans from Pakenham's invasion. On the eastern extremity of the frontier with East Florida, the military and naval forces of the United States before the outbreak of the war had occupied Amelia Island, in the mouth of the St. Mary's River, taking it over from the "local authorities" *á la Baton Rouge*, according to the terms of the Act of January 15, 1811. After an abortive campaign to extend the occupation to St. Augustine, the invaders retired to Amelia Island. It was deemed expedient to disavow the machinations of General Mathews, rather than make a formal enemy of Spain. Amelia Island itself was evacuated May 16, 1813, in order to be able to present a fairer front at the peace negotiations expected to be conducted under Russian mediation.[1] Throughout the remaining months of the war it afforded a nest to smugglers through whom American citizens illegally traded with the enemy. So the war ended with East Florida clear of American troops, and West Florida formally annexed, despite Spanish protests, to the territory of Mississippi and the State of Louisiana. The fond expectations of the Southern Expansionists to take East Florida from Britain's ally, in any war with Great Britain, had been frustrated.

Before peace had been re-established in the United States in 1815, Wellington's major military efforts in

[1] "You know that to take by force any place in the possession of another nation, whatever our claim to that place may be, is war; and you must be aware that both Russia and Great Britain will feel disposed, if not to support the pretensions of Spain against us, at least to take part against the aggressor." Gallatin to Monroe, May 2, 1813, quoted by Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812* (New York, 1925), 236. Every student of the subject remains a debtor to Professor Pratt's penetrating work, as well as to the ironic chapters in Henry Adams, *History of the United States During the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (New York, 1889–1890), these among a voluminous literature. Alfred Hasbrouck has described the military features of this episode, and has presented a map, in "Our Undeclared War with Spain," in *Jour. Am. Military Hist. Foundation*, II (Fall, 1938), 115–126.

Spain and elsewhere had been completely successful. Napoleon had been driven out of the Peninsula; Ferdinand VII had been brought back to his throne; and England, apparently with a tacit understanding that she would still carry on the trade opened with the colonies during their insurrection,[1] had made a convention with the restored Bourbon monarch to take the most effectual measures to prevent her subjects from furnishing the rebels in Spanish America with military supplies.[2] Freed from pressure in Europe, Ferdinand's forces now suffocated one after another the rebel governments throughout his vast continental domains in Mexico, Central America, northern South America and the Pacific Coast of that continent. At the beginning of the year 1816, monarchical authority had been restored everywhere except in the provinces of the Río de la Plata, which throughout the Peninsular War had professed, at least in words, allegiance to Ferdinand VII, fondly expecting that he would never be restored to the throne. It was in these first months of 1816 that the great San Martín was drilling his small army in the Cuyo, on the western frontier of the present Argentine, secretly projecting his immortal campaign over the passes of the Andes for the liberation of Chile. At Buenos Aires the stormy Chilean fugitive patriot, José Miguel Carrera, was dreaming of a similar exploit, a dreamer in exile without an army.

Failure to annex Florida during the convulsion in the Spanish peninsula and its repercussion in the Spanish colonies, the subsequent liberation of Spain, the restoration of the Bourbons, the collapse of

[1] W. S. Robertson, *op. cit.* 264.

[2] Additional articles, of August 28, 1814, to the Anglo-Spanish treaty of alliance of July 5, 1814. In the treaty of alliance it was agreed, pending the formulation without delay of a definitive treaty of commerce, and in the case of foreign nations being permitted to trade with Spanish-American colonies, that British subjects should be admitted to trade in those colonies on the basis of the most-favored and privileged nation. *De facto* British trade continued with the Spanish provinces but British diplomacy was not able to insert into a formal treaty the right to trade with the Spanish colonies. Cf. Jerónimo Becker, *Historia de las relaciones exteriores de España durante el siglo XIX* (Madrid, 1924), I, 332–344.

emancipation over such a great part of America, the re-affirmation of the Anglo-Spanish alliance with the restored monarchy, peace in Europe and the proclamation of the Holy Alliance; all this put the Florida Question and relations between the United States and Spain in a new light when diplomatic relations were re-established, December 19, 1815, by the reception of Luís de Onís as Minister of Ferdinand VII. For one thing, political conditions in Spain were now definitely stablized, and there was no longer any reason for not resuming diplomatic relations by a recognition of the monarchical regime. Secondly, Spain's demonstration of force in America and her allies in Europe gave tone to her representations against assistance to her rebelled subjects in America, or the recognition or encouragement of their cause, even informally as Madison and Monroe had been prone to do in 1811. President Madison formally proclaimed (September 1, 1815) the neutrality of the United States in the war between Spain and her revolted colonies, and Onís was now entitled to satisfaction for any violation of the law of neutrality by the government to which he was accredited. "Unequivocal neutrality,"[1] therefore, became the order of the day, and the neutrality laws were amended by the Acts of 1817 and 1818, specifically applying to "colonies," "provinces" or "people" (i. e., the revolted South American communities), as well as to "princes" and "states." Neutrality between the belligerents, of course, did not prohibit (as had been forbidden by the Anglo-Spanish alliance) trade in contraband to either, subject to interception by the enemy. It would, however, forbid extending the hand of annexation to the "local authorities" of adjacent Spanish Provinces revolted against their sovereign, like Florida in 1811. Nevertheless, Florida in 1815-1821 remained the principal object of the administration's diplomacy, to be

[1] "The part pursued by the Government of the United-States in this contest, has been unequivocal Neutrality." Secretary J. Q. Adams to G. W. Erving, Minister to Spain, Washington, April 20, 1818. Manning, I, 61.

acquired in diplomatic negotiations between the United States and Spain, without the use of force.

Until the signature by John Quincy Adams and Luís de Onís of the Transcontinental Treaty of February 22, 1819, and after that until its ratification exactly two years later, the question of the independence of the revolted Spanish provinces and the Florida Question served as counter and foil in a diplomatic duel of continental stakes between the Old World and the New. It began in 1817 when Richard Rush, Acting Secretary of State, refused to entertain Onís' protests over violations of neutrality unless he would negotiate for the cession of Florida and a new boundary line west of the Mississippi.[1] Spain, on her part, tried to make the progress of the Florida negotiations contingent upon non-recognition by the United States of Buenos Aires and other revolted provinces. The United States in effect threatened Spain with their recognition if she did not yield, but was cautious not to follow up the threat until Florida was safely in the bag. Spain, retreating before President Monroe and his able successor as Secretary of State, the redoubtable John Quincy Adams, appealed to Europe for help. Not until they were sure that there would be no real help from Europe did Monroe and Adams push home the charge, by permitting and resolutely justifying, if they did not actually inspire, General Andrew Jackson's punitive pursuit in 1818 of the Seminole Indians over the frontier to their base in Florida; this foreshadowed a forceful occupation of a defenseless and anarchical province if Spain did not relinquish it by negotiation. In 1819 Onís signed away Florida and accepted a fixed boundary from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, at least saving Texas for his master, but the King delayed ratification of the treaty for two years in an effort to postpone recognition by the United States of the new states to the south.

[1]Richard Rush to Luís de Onís, Department of State, April 20, 1817. *Annals* of Congress, 15th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. II, p. 1931.

During this diplomatic duel public sympathy warmed toward brother republican peoples struggling, as the people of the United States themselves had struggled only a generation before, to throw off another yoke of European sovereignty in the New World. In the battle of propaganda, which Onís declared in the press, the agents from South America got the better of it. The voice of the North American people, which had been inarticulate amidst the issues with Great Britain before 1812, now swelled in favor of recognition. New nationalists, with presidential aspirations, like Henry Clay, sensed its import and became its champion.[1] They wanted recognition of the new Hispanic states first, and were sure that Florida would follow easily into the sovereignty of the United States anyway. The President and his cabinet at times inclined to yield to this pressure for immediate recognition. John Quincy Adams, no less sympathetic to the patriotic cause and certainly realizing its significance for the whole American World, persuaded the Administration to go slow, first to secure the interests of the United States, and if possible to avoid war with Spain, perhaps with Europe, too.

The first mission from Buenos Aires after the return of peace in the United States was that of Thomas Taylor, a citizen of the United States who had embarked on a career of privateering under the flag of the United Provinces.[2] He came to fit out privateers. He was provided with a letter of introduction to the President from General Ignacio Alvarez, then the Supreme Chief of the United Provinces. Taylor succeeded in preparing, under the guise of American merchant ships, two vessels, which were armed as privateers after leaving port, and had remarkably successful voyages. In the *Archivo General de la Nación* at Buenos Aires there is only one letter from Taylor about this mission, of February 8, 1816.

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[1]Griffin, *op. cit.*, 134.

[2]Lewis Winkler Bealer, *Los Corsários de Buenos Aires, 1815–1821, Publicationes del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*, No. LXXII, (Buenos Aires, 1937).

It shows: first, that it had the official support and direction of the government of the United Provinces; secondly, that Taylor was well pleased with his contacts in the United States at this time.[1]

Taylor went back to the United States as a fellow passenger[2] with the next significant visitor from the far south, the Chilean exile, José Miguel Carrera, who came on his famous self-sustained mission, supported by his own wits and contrivances, to collect arms and to recruit an expedition for the liberation of Chile. The three Carrera brothers were among the remnants of Chilean patriots, including Bernardo O'Higgins, whom the victorious Spanish royalists had driven eastward through the Andes in November, 1814. Of these refugees in Mendoza, General San Martín selected the more reliable O'Higgins for Chilean collaborator in his own grand strategy for the liberation of that country. The presence of the Carreras and their rival ambitions interfered with San Martín's own plans. Presently they found themselves under military surveillance and expelled from the Cuyo frontier to Buenos Aires. From the recent months of comradeship with Joel Poinsett[3] in the unsuccessful insurrection in Chile, José Miguel Carrera, like most revolutionists in South America, had shaped a glowing image of the United States as a land of liberty and of help for

[1]Tomás Taylor al Exmo. Supmo. Director de las Provincias del Río de la Plata, Philadelphia, February 8, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

"I have the honor to inform your Excellency of my safe arrival in these Provinces [*sic*] on January 16 last, after a voyage of 64 days.

"Immediately after disembarking at Annapolis, and eager to put into practice the object of my mission, I proceeded to Baltimore and then to this city. Though I have not yet seen the principal people who are to take part in the negotiation, I can assure your Excellency that, according to present prospects, your intentions will be completely fulfilled, since everything is working out well in this country, which knows our needs and the justice of our cause, and which takes an interest equal to ours in the fate of those peoples. Within a month a vessel ought to be perfectly armed for sea, and I believe I have to do no more than await the arrival of the frigate *Avispa* in these parts in order to go with all the rest. Your Excellency will be apprised of everything immediately.

"The newspapers which I am sending will inform you of the latest events in Europe and of the setbacks (*contrastes*) which the system suffers in the points of revolution (*puntos rebolucionados*) in this part of America."

[2]William Miller Collier y Guillermo Feliú Cruz, *La primera Misión de los Estados Unidos de Anérica en Chile* (Santiago de Chile, 1926), 190.

[3]Poinsett had gone to Chile after a few months in Buenos Aires. His connection as a consul general did not prevent him from taking a personal part in the Chilean revolution.

freedom. He had pictured asylums of refuge there and the outfitting of expeditions from the northern republic. After vainly attempting to organize in Buenos Aires a campaign of his own for the liberation of Chile, Don José Miguel pawned his wife's jewels and made his way to the United States on a returning gunrunner, relying on a fund of 5000 *pesos* which Poinsett had taken for him to North America.

Carrera arrived at Annapolis, January 17, 1816, on the ship *Expedition*, owned by the Baltimore trader and outfitter of privateers, Henri Didier. Commodore Porter presented him to President Madison this same month of January, later to the Secretary of State, Monroe.[1] Carrera made the acquaintance of many other prominent people during his year's sojourn in the United States. He represented himself as plenipotentiary of the revolutionary government of Chile, and went through the form of securing from two surviving members of the expelled *Junta* of Santiago a mandate to that effect. The good Commodore Porter, then superintendent of the navy yard, and his discreet friend, Poinsett, helped him all they could. It is uncertain whether he ever cashed the 5000 *pesos* previously taken for him to the United States by Poinsett, which seems to have been transferred to Halifax; but he managed to borrow $4,000 from John Skinner, postmaster of Baltimore, one of a group of men interested in speculations in munition shipments to South America and in the outfitting of privateers. With this start he managed, on promises to pay upon arrival, to recruit and outfit an expedition for the redemption of Chile, to be achieved by a march overland from Buenos Aires or by an expedition through the Straits of Magellan, as chance should dictate.

The ships, at least the *Clifton* and *Salvaje*, were furnished and loaded by Darcy and Didier of Baltimore. Carrera guaranteed payment for them by the government of Chile.

[1]Collier y Feliú Cruz, *op. cit.*, 202, notes that they called on Monroe, but did not find him in. A letter from Porter to Monroe three years later recalls that he once presented Carrera to him (Monroe). Porter to Monroe, January 3, 1819. *Monroe Papers*, XVII-2209, *Library of Congress*.

Carrera sailed from the United States December 5, 1816, on the ship *Clifton*, with some thirty young adventurers, mostly French and North American, followed by others in the brig *Salvaje* and the schooner *Davei*. When he arrived at the Río de la Plata, San Martín had already crossed the Andes and defeated the Spanish forces at Chacabuco, and O'Higgins was ruler of Chile. Carrera's still unpaid adventurers promptly cast their lot with the Buenos Aires Government, which bought in the vessels and their supplies (except for the *Salvaje*, which eventually got away around the Horn and reached Chile in May, 1817, where the supercargo, Henry Hill, disposed of the warlike stores to General San Martín),[1] and took the people into its service.[2] When Carrera plotted to get

[1]Henry Hill, *Recollections of an Octogenerian* (Boston, D. Lothrop & Co., 1884), 82. The voyage of the *Salvaje* (*Savage*) from Buenos Aires to Coquimbo, together with much information about North American trade with revolutionary Chile, is set forth in great detail in the correspondence of the pious Henry Hill, whose manuscript papers are now preserved in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University. The *Salvaje* returned to Baltimore with a cargo of copper and specie.

[2]The history of this expedition and the final tragic fate of José Miguel Carrera and his brothers have been immortalized in Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna's epic volume *El Ostracismo de los Carreras* (Santiago, 1857, and later editions, including the 1938 edition in the republication of Vicuña Mackenna's works by the University of Chile.) Vicuña Mackenna had access to the papers (now preserved in the National Archives of Chile) of Carrera, but not his diary. The later discovery and use of the diary enabled Miguel Varas Velásquez to make certain corrections, particularly of the voyage to the United States, in his *Don José Miguel Carrera en los Estados Unidos* (Santiago de Chile, 1912) first published in *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*, 1912, Núm. 7 y 8. William Miller Collier and Guillermo Feliú Cruz have availed themselves of this material and documents in the United States to summarize carefully Carrera's visit to the United States in their *La primera misión de los Estados Unidos de America en Chile* (Santiago, 1926).

Skinner entrusted to his father-in-law, Judge Theoderick Bland, for collection, Carrera's note for $4,000, when Bland went to South America in 1817 as a member of the commission of investigation (Caesar A. Rodney, John Graham, and Bland) to Buenos Aires, Chile and Peru. (John Skinner to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, Baltimore, June 5, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8). Bland tried to collect the note from the Buenos Aires government on the ground that the interposition of that government, and its use of the military munitions and officers procured by Carrera, had prevented them going into the hands and service for whom they were particularly intended (Theoderick Bland to His Excellency Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of South America, Buenos Aires, April 4, 1818. *Ibid.*) I found no evidence of action on this petition. In Chile, Bland applied to the dictator, O'Higgins, for payment of the note to one Richard R. Boughan [Brougham?] who had power of attorney. O'Higgins declared that Carrera had no authorized mission in the United States, notwithstanding the patriotic nature of his activities, and he eventually obliged José M. Carrera's father to pay the note (although the father denied responsibility for it and even questioned its authenticity) presumably out of Don José's patrimony. *Archivo Nacional* (Santiago de Chile), *Varios* Vol. 128, 238.

away from Buenos Aires for Chile with one of these ships, he was arrested and imprisoned.

Carrera's activities in the United States have never been considered one of the early missions from Buenos Aires which are the subject of this paper. The revolutionary government acknowledged no responsibility for his representations nor his debts. Nevertheless, there is in the National Archives of the Argentine Republic the unsigned draft of a communication to the President of the United States, dated May 29, 1815, that throws some new light on Carrera's possible relation to the Buenos Aires Government. The letter itself, signed by General Alvarez, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata—who had manifested some sympathy for Carrera's projects in Buenos Aires—is preserved in the records of the Department of State,[1] in the National Archives at Washington, showing that it was delivered. It states that Alvarez, availing himself of the occasion of Carrera's trip, was appealing for aid in materials of war, for the punctual payment of which the Buenos Aires Government would be responsible. "The above mentioned brigadier, Don José Miguel Carrera, will explain verbally to your Excellency our situation and the succours we are most interested in, and I confidently hope for all from your Excellency's generosity."[2]

If the Buenos Aires Government denied all responsibility for Carrera's activities in the United States, while appropriating the fruits of them, it was eager to send him back there, with passports for his two brothers, in order to get rid of all three. San Martín visited Don José in prison and offered to send him to the United States on a diplomatic mission if he

[1] *Argentine Republic, Notes*, Vol. I, part 1, p. 24. It is interesting to note the sense in which a clerk in the State Department summarized this note at some later date, in a slip pasted on the document: "May 26, 1815, Buenos Aires. General Alvarez, Pres't. of, writes to the Pres't. of the U.S., that Gen'l. José Miguel Carrera is about visiting the United States and hopes the U.S. will furnish war materials to his country for which Carrera will pay promptly, etc."

[2] *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

would desist from further projects in Chile.[1] Carrera resolutely refused, later escaped to Montevideo, engaged in hostilities against Buenos Aires, and eventually met his death before a firing squad, like his two brothers before him. The Carreras were passionate patriots who wanted to see their country free, but would not tolerate its emancipation at any hands but their own.

The European situation had clarified after the year 1815 by the exile of Napoleon and the restoration of legitimate governments everywhere, including that Ferdinand VII to whom the people of Buenos Aires had professed their allegiance. As the historic Congress at Tucumán was assembling, the provisional government decided to send to the United States a secret formal mission in anticipation of a declaration of independence. While Carrera was still in the United States, the Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, the same General Alvarez who had provided the Chilean patriot with a species of credentials to President Madison, designated one Colonel Martin Thompson as an agent, not yet invested with public character, nor disposed to exceed the "specific object" of his mission without an understanding beforehand with the United States Government.

Thompson's instructions[2] reveal an attempt to play off the United States against Great Britain. They imposed upon him inviolable secrecy as to his voyage and mission, except for complete information about it to the President. He was to make known to the President the state of affairs in Buenos Aires, and the desire of those provinces to tighten their relations with the United States by a "pact of reciprocal interests," which, however, must be ratified by "the authorities of the United Provinces." In the name of the Buenos

[1]Bartolomé Mitre, *Historia de San Martín* (2d Ed., Buenos Aires, 1889), II, 92.

[2][Alvarez] to James Madison President of the United States, Buenos Aires, January 16, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. The English text s in Manning, I, 343.

Aires Government, he was to order every kind of material assistance, pledging that government to compensate with all imaginable advantages for the commerce of the United States. "If munitions of war cannot be gotten in any other way," read the instructions, "you may guarantee cash payment for them. Specifically, you will request two, or at least one frigate, to protect the commerce of that nation and to introduce a preponderance of North Americans over British nationals." He was to try to procure from the United States Government officers of all classes, promising them attractive distinctions. He was to urge the President to get those European powers without colonies to neutralize the machinations of the other powers, particularly Spain, by taking part in the destiny of the Plata country; and he was to seek to establish secret relations with the patriot government in Mexico. In general, he was to accept any proposal which might help to advance and sustain the cause of the Buenos Aires Government.[1]

In a credential presenting Thompson to the President of the United States, General Alvarez bespoke for him full credit and consideration, and offered similar consideration and security to such ministers as the President might send to the United Provinces. The Director mentioned the "well-known circumstances" which hitherto had prevented the United Provinces from establishing with the United States the relations of amity and strict correspondence which reciprocal interest and a common glory ought to have inspired. Evidently he was referring to the failure of the Provinces to declare their independence, (perhaps also to the interruption of communication by the War of 1812-1815 between the United States and Great Britain), for he went on to say that "a series of extraordinary Events and unexpected changes,

[1]Instructions for the Delegate [*diputado*] to the United States, Buenos Aires, January 16, 1816, accompanied by full powers from the "Honorable Junta of Observation." *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires) S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

which have taken place in our ancient Mother-Country, have constrained us not to make a formal Declaration of Independence: nevertheless our conduct and our Public Papers have sufficiently expressed our Resolution. When this Letter reaches Your Excellency, The General Congress of our Representatives will have met, and I can assure you, without fear of being mistaken, that one of its first acts will be a solemn Declaration of the Independence of these Provinces of the Spanish Monarchy and of all other Foreign Sovereigns or Powers."[1] A separate missive used a more personal tone to Madison: confident as he was of the great desire of his fellow citizens to form a close connection with the United States, he was sending by the "national Colonel Martin Thompson" a specimen of the first arms manufactured in the Provinces of Buenos Aires and Tucumán under the auspices of a free government, as an homage due to the Chief Magistrate of the United States. It was accompanied by a manuscript essay on the new mineral discoveries in those provinces. The Director closed his epistle with what may be hoped to be a prophetic note: "the expressions of the sentiments of a people, who amidst the struggle in which they are engaged to secure their rights, reflect on the natural relations which are one day to unite them with that people over whom you so worthily preside."[2]

Here was a temptation for the United States—if it wished to take its eyes off Florida and dared to challenge the menacing European concert where the Holy Alliance had just been proclaimed—to bind itself prematurely to a new republic, indeed to the whole southern continent. But the advantage of such a consummation was not sufficiently great to compensate for the risks in a possible collision with Great Britain, or with a European coalition, or both, in support of

[1]Manning, I, 341.

[2]National Archives (Washington) Division of State Department archives, series *Argentine Republic, Notes*, Vol. I, pt. 1, 26–28.

Spain. We now know that Europe was not sufficiently united to support Spain, but Madison's government did not yet know it; besides, it was more interested in Florida. Even if Madison had been prepared to recognize this new mission from the Argentine, he would have been prevented from doing so by the blunders and ineptness of the envoy himself.

Thompson reached New York on May 3, 1816, somewhat indisposed in health[1] (it is worth recording this, in view of the sequel). The absence of the President and of the principal cabinet officers from Washington during the summer heat induced him to delay going to Washington until August,[2] at which time he met only subordinate officials. Meanwhile he had occupied himself in contracting directly with a number of officers (French and Polish *emigrés* and some North American veterans of the recent war with England) for services in Buenos Aires, in confabulations with Carrera and his intimates, in marvelling at the new spectacle of steamboats (*estimbotes*) and writing long despatches about them and their possible usefulness in the far south. Bickerings over unimportant matters, and requests for more salary and more secretarial aid, filled up his despatches. When in November he reached Baltimore again, *en route* to Washington, he noted[3] that since he was not invested with a public character, and could not transcend the object of his mission without an understanding with the Washington Government, this might make it impossible to be received as a deputy of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata even after their declaration of independence. He wished, therefore, to receive more liberal and expansive instructions, giving him a public rank.[4] When this despatch reached Buenos Aires,

[1]Martin Thompson to the Supreme Director of the Provinces of the Río de la Plata, No. 1, New York, May 20, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4.

[2]Martin Thompson to the Supreme Director, No. 4, Philadelphia, August 23, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[3]Thompson to the Supreme Director, Baltimore, November 14, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[4]Thompson to the Supreme Director, No. 13, Baltimore, November 14, 1816. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

Thompson had already been removed. The reasons given by the Director (now Pueyrredón) were that, in his dealings with the "Polish officers"[1] directly (instead of through the United States Government), he had violated his instructions on several scores: first by engaging the officers directly, and secondly, by thus revealing the nature of his mission; he had further entered into negotiations with shipping firms before reaching an understanding with the Washington Government.[2]

Pueyrredón took formal pains to explain to the President that Thompson was being removed for violation of his instructions for having arbitrarily departed from the line of duties marked out for him and because "without having duly estimated the honor of conferring with you he has granted licenses which are in direct contradiction with the said principles[3] [of his instructions]." Presumably this refers to the granting of privateering commissions, which were causing the United States much annoyance because of the well-established protests of Onís at these violations of neutrality.[4]

It had been the principal purpose of Thompson's mission—as revealed so clearly in his instructions—to

[1]The government nevertheless honored the contracts he had made with such officers, after instructing him to make no more.

[2]Draft of a despatch to Martin Thompson, Buenos Aires, January 10, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[3]Pueyrredón to Madison, January 10, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. The English text is printed in Manning, I, 346, where it is misdated January 1, 1817.

After the order for Thompson's removal had already left Buenos Aires, but perhaps before it was received in the United States, he foolishly affixed his name, as "Deputy from the Río de la Plata," jointly with the agents from Venezuela, New Granada and Mexico, to a commission from "the deputies of free America, resident in the United States of the North, to their compatriot, Gregor MacGregor, General of Brigade, in the services of the United Provinces of New Granada and Venezuela" to take possession of East and West Florida. This commission, dated March 31, 1817, naturally made all its signatories *persona non grata*, but it was not the cause of Thompson's removal, as asserted by Alberto Palomeque (*op. cit. post*), because Pueyrredón already had revoked his commission three months earlier. Bolívar immediately disavowed the document. For the text, see *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 2d Session (1819) Vol. 2, p. 1612, and *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, IV. The Buenos Aires authorities, and Bolívar also, disavowed the commission to MacGregor.

[4]For the lengthy correspondence between Onís and the Secretary of State, see *Annals*, 15th Congress, 1st Session (1818) Vol. 2, pp. 1899–1943.

make the United States Government, by and with its own consent and approval, the intermediary of assistance for the United Provinces, and to commit it to direct dealings. Thompson could not have worse mishandled his duty. His letter of dismissal bluntly said that it would not even be necessary for him to return to Buenos Aires.[1] The most decisive comment on his diplomacy is a postscript to a despatch of his successor: "Thompson is in a hospital, hopelessly crazy."[2]

From now on the operations of the Buenos Aires privateers began to play an important and vexatious part both in the relations between the United States and Spain and between the United States and the Provinces. The war of 1812-1815 between the United States and Great Britain had left a horde of veteran privateer commanders, crews, and well-adapted vessels idle in North American ports. The revolted provinces of Hispanic America possessed no significant naval forces. The Spanish navy was not large enough to convoy that nation's merchant marine successfully against privateers as did the British navy during the war with the United States. Quite naturally, therefore, the rebels turned to the use of privateers, and with formidable results, particularly in the case of the United Provinces and Venezuela. These were not shipbuilding countries; they commissioned their first privateers to foreigners appearing in the Plata estuary and on the Spanish Main; later, beginning in 1816, they sent forth by their agents to foreign parts blank letters-of-marque to commission such foreigners as could be had. The devastating horde of South American privateers was thus practically all foreign, most of them procured in foreign ports, many in the United States.

Investigators have estimated that at least thirty-

[1]Draft of February 9, 1817, for instructions to Martin Thompson. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[2]Manuel H. Aguirre to Pueyrredón, August 17, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

nine privateers carrying the flag of Buenos Aires—sometimes also that of other revolted countries and even that of Portugal, fraudulently, of course—frequented the ports and waters of the United States. Nine of them had once been privateers under the flag of the United States in the recent war against England. Most of these vessels were purchased in the United States, and fitted out either outside of its jurisdiction, or actually in its territorial waters in violation of the law. Onís' protests against illegal commissioning and equipment of privateers and the sale of their plunder in the United States, constituted a great part of his difficult written exchanges with the Secretary of State. They reiterated the charge that these craft had been armed and equipped within the United States in violation of the law of nations, the Treaty of 1795 between Spain and the United States, and the neutrality laws of the United States itself, and that the vessels were commanded and principally manned by the citizens thereof. Despite Adams' laborious defensive replies to Onís, he acknowledged in other documents, the justice of the protests.[1] The neutrality laws allowed the sale of ships to all comers, provided they were not armed within the country; and though they forbade American citizens taking commissions or enlisting *within the United States*, it was possible to do so outside the nation's jurisdiction. The remote ungoverned Texan port of Galveston (claimed to be within the United States) and Amelia Island, just outside the national jurisdiction,

[1]Manning, I, 49. "You will remonstrate to them: that the fitting out of privateers in our Ports, to cruize either for or against them [the South American revolted provinces] is prohibited by our Laws; that many such privateers have been fitted out in our Ports (unknown to this Government), and though manned and officered entirely by people of this country they have captured the property of nations with whom we are at peace . . . that the licentious abuse of their flags by these freebooters, of every nation but their own, has an influence unpropitious to the cause of their freedom, and tendency to deter other countries from recognizing them as regular Governments." John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to Caesar A. Rodney, John Graham, and Theoderick Bland, Special Commissioners of the United States to South America, Washington, November 21, 1817. Manning, I, 47.

In 1805 Spanish authorities in Cuba granted to citizens of the United States *letters-of-maryue* against Great Britain. Portell-Vilá, *op. cit.*, 144.

became rendezvous and markets for these illegally equipped corsair vessels. Both of those places were beyond the immediate control of the Washington Government; in fact, the federal forces available for police work were not adequate to patrol the extensive territorial waters proper. Even within waters where some surveillance was possible, like Chesapeake Bay, outfitting and illegal augmentation took place. Where arrests followed, as they occasionally did, it was almost impossible to get juries to convict except in cases of flagrant atrocity. Public opinion was on the side of the privateers.[1] Embarrassments caused by the activities of these craft, and sympathy for them, became a problem for John Quincy Adams in his dealings with new agents from Buenos Aires.

III

General San Martín's grand strategy for the emancipation of Perú and the winning at last of independence throughout the continent was directly responsible for another mission from Buenos Aires. Having crossed the Andes in January, 1817, and defeated the royalist army at Chacabuco (February 12, 1817), the General planned his next major move: the delivery of Perú by an invasion from the sea. He suddenly returned unannounced to Buenos Aires and arranged with Pueyrredón, the Supreme Director of the now independent United Provinces (the Declaration of Independence had been voted at Tucumán July 9, 1816), for a mission to the United States to buy or build, fit out, and man a naval squadron to make the long voyage to Valparaiso in order to control the Pacific and to help convoy an army of liberation to

[1]Two scholars have written excellent but not definitive accounts of the privateers of the United Provinces. Theodore S. Currier, *Los corsários del Río de la Plata* (Publicaciones del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, No. XLV, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Buenos Aires, 1929) exhausts the voluminous published sources in the United States, but does not utilize the materials printed in the Argentine. Lewis Winkler Bealer *Los corsários de Buenos Aires* (*ibid.* No. LXXII, Buenos Aires, 1937) notes this deficiency but himself does not exhaust the archival material either in the United States or the Argentine.

the shores of Perú. For this important representation they chose Manuel Hermenejildo de Aguirre, with the honorary title of Commissioner General of War and Marine, as chief of mission, and Gregorio Gómez, captain in the customs service, as second, with the honorary title of Commissioner of Marine. The envoys sailed from Buenos Aires late in May, 1817, equipped with credentials and detailed instructions based on a special contract between General San Martín and Aguirre.

By the terms of this contract, General San Martín, exercising powers conferred on him by the Supreme Director of Chile (Bernardo O'Higgins), named Aguirre as agent of that state to buy or to have constructed in the United States, two 34-gun frigates, according to specifications set forth in detail, and as many other ships of war as he could get, and to send them under the United States flag, fully equipped and armed, to the Río de la Plata *en route* for Valparaiso. For this he was provided with 100,000 *pesos* cash, and promised 100,000 more in three months. In case Lima should be taken with the aid of these ships, Aguirre was to get a bonus of 100,000 *pesos* for himself in addition to a salary of 12,000 *pesos* for the trip and traveling expenses.[1] Pueyrredón jointly guaranteed the contract on behalf of the United Provinces and

[1] *Convención celebrado entre el Exmo. Señor Capitán General don José de San Martín y el cuidadano de las Provincias Unidas don Manuel H. Aguirre.* Buenos Aires, April 17, 1817. This and related documents (but not all those cited in this essay) are printed by Alberto Palomeque, *Orígines de la diplomacia argentina, Misión Aguirre á Norte América* (Buenos Aires, 1905) II, 123–128. Palomeque had access to a collection of Aguirre's own papers, containing copies of the contract, and numerous other documents, which were assembled by Aguirre to defend a claim of 52,098.19 *pesos* which he presented to the Chilean Government after his return from North America (see p. 74, note 2 below). This original *expediente* is now in the possession of Señor Carlos Ibaguren of Buenos Aires, who kindly permitted me to inspect it; but a transcript is also in the *Archivo General de la Nación.* Practically all these documents are printed in one place or another in Palomeque's imperfectly organized volume. Apparently Palomeque did not use the important but incomplete *expediente* of documents relating to the mission of Aguirre and Gómez which are now preserved in the *Archivo General de la Nación*, in Buenos Aires, nor the much smaller and more fragmentary *expediente*, labeled "Aguirre, 1818," in the *Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto*, in the same city. Some of these, however, are duplicated in the family *expediente* used by Palomeque. Where possible, I here cite Palomeque's printed documents for the reader's convenience, instead of the archival originals; otherwise I cite the latter.

he also authorized Aguirre to borrow on authority of his government up to 2,000,000 *pesos*[1] to supplement the 200,000 *pesos* provided by Chile.[2] Gómez, on his part, was promised by the Buenos Aires Government a contingent bonus of 10,000 *pesos* similarly, in addition to traveling expenses and the continuance of his regular salary as commissioner of customs, plus an annual supplement of 1500 *pesos* during the trip. The envoys received 25 blank privateering commissions from each government, and authority to guarantee exemption from all customs duties in Chilean ports of prizes made within ten months of the date of privateering commissions. Pueyrredón had explained to

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[1]In using the words *pesos* and dollars, I have used them just as they occur in the documents, without being able to know the prevailing rate of exchange for translation into dollar equivalents. I presume a silver *peso* and silver dollar were then roughly equivalent.

The Consul of the United States, at Buenos Aires, Thomas Lloyd Halsey, irresponsibly had led the Government of the United Provinces to expect an issue of a 9 per cent loan of 2,000,000 dollars from private sources in the United States, with the assistance of the government of the latter, the same to be negotiated by John Devereux, special agent of the United States, who had left Buenos Aires for the United States with a loan contract signed by Pueyrredón and Thomas Lloyd Halsey, dated Buenos Aires, January 31, 1817. The loan was not to be payable until ten years after the conclusion of the existing war, but optionally before that. The "House of Mr. John Devereux" was to get a six per cent commission for underwriting the loan. "And to the end that these conditions may have all the force and effect necessary for their fulfillment on both sides by means of the signature of the consul of the United States, this document has been respectively signed by us both, and countersigned by the Secretary of the Treasury, in conformity with a copy duly verified, and deposited in the proper office for the uses of official purposes which are or may be required." Buenos Aires, 31st January, 1817. [signed] Pueyrredón, Thomas Lloyd Halsey, José Domingo Trillo, acting Secretary of the Treasury. National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department Records, *Argentine Republic, Notes.* Vol. I, part 1, 13. See also Manning, I, 347, 349, 354). Richard Rush, acting Secretary of State in Washington, promptly repudiated this agreement. Richard Rush to "Señor [———]" Department of State, April 21, 1817, *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

In acknowledging the Secretary's despatch of April 20, 1817, relating to the agreement, Halsey observed that it was Devereux' project, not his: "My signature to it was merely as his agent in his absence. The United States not allowing any salary to its consular agents in foreign countries, they are obliged to seek their maintenance by commercial or other pursuits, and, therefore, it sometimes happens that the signature as an individual is unintentionally blended with the official capacity . . . I repeatedly explained to them that I could not answer for the success of the proposition." Consul T. L. Halsey to the Secretary of State, Buenos Aires, November 21, 1817. National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department Archives, *Buenos Aires, Consular Despatches,* December 9, 1811—November, 1817). The body of the proposed contract, above quoted, does not admit of such an excuse of "unintentional blending."

[2]On the other hand, O'Higgins promised to "fulfil inviolably and religiously all engagements and commitments which we may make with that nation [the United States].' O'Higgins to Aguirre, Concepcion, June 4, 1817. Palomeque, II, 124.

Madison the removal of Martin Thompson among other reasons for granting certain "licenses" contrary to the sense of his instructions, but he had no hesitation in giving Aguirre and Gómez express instructions to issue the same.

Supplementary instructions from Pueyrredón to Aguirre and Gómez directed them, in case they could not get the frigates, to procure six corvettes of 25 to 30 guns each, and a listed[1] quantity of guns and ammunition for the armament of other ships in Buenos Aires (the latter purchases to be paid out of the anticipated loan). The Supreme Director added an order to procure two proper sabers and two fine pairs of pistols, suitably ornamented and appropriately engraved, as gifts for San Martín and O'Higgins in gratitude for their services on the memorable day of Chacabuco; also a dozen good quality sabers to be presented on occasion in the future as rewards for valor to deserving officers. Finally, they were to buy "for the use of this government" a good telescope and barometer with thermometer attached.[2]

The credentials which Aguirre carried with him, including letters to the President from Pueyrredón, San Martín, and O'Higgins, have interest because of certain technical questions that he encountered in Washington, and because they describe the essential object of his mission. His formal credentials, signed by Pueyrredón as Supreme Director of the United

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[1]List No. 1:

Cannon balls of caliber	8	. . . . .	8000
" " " "	6	. . . . .	4000
" " " "	4	. . . . .	8000
" " " "	2	. . . . .	4000
Six-inch shells		. . . . .	4000

List No. 2:

Mortars	caliber	18	number of:	24
"	"	12	" "	24
Cannon	"	9	" "	24

[2][Supreme Director] to the Commissioner Don Manuel Aguirre [draft], Buenos Aires, April 30, 1817; unsigned draft of a communication to Don Gregorio Gómez, advising him of his appointment as second to Don Manuel H. de Aguirre in the mission to be sent to North America, April 30, 1817; [Supreme Director] to Gregorio Gómez, May 6, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

Provinces of South America, and by Gregorio Tagle, Minister of State, denominate him as "agent of this government near that of the United States of North America, granting to him the privileges, pre-eminences and prerogatives which belong to said title." A letter from General San Martín to the President explained that the Supreme Director of the Government of Chile (O'Higgins) had considered that a principal instrument to secure the liberty of America was the armament in the United States of a squadron destined to the Pacific Ocean.

This squadron, said San Martín, "united to the forces which are now preparing in the river La Plata, may co-operate in sustaining the ulterior military operations of the army under my command in South America; and, convinced of the advantages which our actual political situation promises, I have crossed the Andes in order to concert in that capital [Buenos Aires], among other things, the guaranty of my Government, and, in compliance with the stipulations between the Supreme Director of Chile and its intimate ally, to carry into effect the plan which has been confided to Don Manuel Aguirre. Your Excellency, who enjoys the honor of presiding over a free people, who contended and shed their blood in a similar cause to that in which the inhabitants of South America are now engaged, will, I hope, deign to extend to the above-named person such protection as is compatible with the actual relations of your Government; and I have the high satisfaction of assuring Your Excellency that the arms of the country under my orders will not fail to give consistency and respect to the promises of both Governments."[1]

This straightforward and purposeful document is, so far as I know, the only letter which the immortal San Martín ever addressed to the immortal James

[1]Don José Francisco de San Martín, General of the Army of the Andes, to James Monroe, President of the United States, Santiago, Chile, April 1, 1817. Note that this letter is antedated to April 1, and at Santiago. Manning, I, 352.

Monroe. It shows that a naval armament which he hoped to get from the United States was a factor in his grand strategic combination. It was not, however, an indispensable factor, for the great commander's resourcefulness would turn in any direction.

Pueyrredón, in a letter presenting Aguirre to Monroe, said that he was deputed to the President "in the character of the agent of this Government" and requested for him "all the protection and consideration required by his *diplomatic rank* and the actual state of our relations.[1] This will be a *new tie*, by which the United States of the North will more effectually secure the gratitude and affection of the free provinces of the South."

Neither the credentials which Aguirre carried, nor the contract which served as his instructions, nor the supplementary instructions from Pueyrredón that he carried from Buenos Aires, directed him to solicit a recognition of independence. By implication, and in effect, they left it open to the United States to decide what diplomatic rank, if any, the actual situation would justify extending to him.

The envoys arrived in Baltimore, in July, 1817, after a swift voyage of fifty-nine days.[2] Aguirre immediately proceeded to Washington, where he presented his credentials to Richard Rush, who was acting as Secretary of State *ad interim*, pending the arrival from London of John Quincy Adams to take over that office. President Monroe was absent from the city on a "good feeling" tour of the country. Rush re-

[1]Italics inserted. The "actual state of our relations" had been described in the first paragraph of the letter: "When the interests of sound policy are in accord with the principles of justice, nothing is more easy or more pleasing than the maintenance of harmony and good understanding between Powers which are connected by close relations. This seems to be exactly the case in which the United States and these provinces stand with respect to each other; a flattering situation, which gives the signal of our success, and forms our best apology." Juan Martín Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of South America, to James Monroe, President of the United States, April 28, 1817. Manning, I, 353. I did not find in Buenos Aires any copies of these communications, of which Manning prints the Department of State translations.

[2]Palomeque, *op. cit.*, I, 39. One may question the precise dates of departure and arrival as stated by Palomeque, but not the months.

ceived the visitor from the distant Río de la Plata in a private and informal, but none-the-less warmly sympathetic manner. He did not scruple to say that he believed that the President, in common with the nation at large, cherished the most sincere good will towards all the inhabitants of the American continent, and looked with feelings of great solicitude and kindness upon the struggle in which so many of them were engaged. He made it plain that *the government* of the United States, because of its policy of strict neutrality, and because of its treaty of commerce and amity with Spain, could take no part whatever in this struggle; and he emphasized that this policy of neutrality was the one most likely to be beneficial to the South Americans themselves.[1]

Aguirre, unabashed, asked if the United States Government would sell some ships out of its own navy to assist this campaign for the liberation of Perú. Rush, of course, said no; but he explained that neither the laws of the United States, nor international law, would prevent Aguirre as an individual from purchasing arms and munitions from private individuals, the purchaser taking upon himself the risk of carrying contraband. He was free to buy ships of any size from other private individuals in the seaports of the United States, but he must not arm or in any way equip them for war. As long as he kept his activities and purchases within the sphere of an individual, avoiding any breach of the laws, his conduct would be sanctioned and he himself protected; if the cause of his country could in this way be benefited, then the people and Government of the United States would be content. According to Rush, Aguirre was quite satisfied with this declaration and the sentiments manifested; he said plainly that he did not expect to be received in his official character, and that since he could have

[1] "The last idea was pressed the most distinctly, as it was calculated to suggest to the commissioner the best excuse for not recognizing him in his official capacity." Rush's statement of November 22, 1817.

no further business with the Government, he would set off the next day for Baltimore and begin his operations "as a merchant" there and in other cities. Rush ended the conversation on a note stressing the advantages of free and popular governments, and was somewhat surprised to hear Aguirre intimate guardedly that the people of Buenos Aires were scarcely fitted to be republicans, or at any rate, would not be able to set up a democratic form of government; that "the better sort" were against it; and that conformably to this incapacity they would make an offer to Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand, to come from Spain to rule over them in the capacity of an "independent King."[1] From this moment the possibility of more monarchies in the New World became an anxiety to Monroe and his advisers.

"This Government says that it is against its interests to become involved in a war with Spain, and all that it can do is to *let me do.*" Aguirre thus summarized this first interview.[2]

With these friendly expressions, even encourage-

[1]Richard Rush, Statement in relation to the contents of a Letter of Don Manuel de Aguirre, of 14 Novbre., 1817, November 22, 1817. The National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department Archives, *Notes from the Argentine Legation*, I, Part 1, Feb. 11, 1811, to Oct. 27, 1838. Aguirre made a similar statement to Adams, December 24, 1817, about an offer to Don Carlos. J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*.

Palomeque, in his study, *op. cit.*, passionately exalting Aguirre as a patriot of the revolution, prints a Spanish translation of Rush's remarks, but omits this last statement.

[2]Aguirre to Supreme Director, New York, August 30, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. In this despatch Aguirre states that this is the sense of what he had written in an earlier despatch (not extant in this collection). Bartolomé Mitre, *Historia de Belgrano* (4th Ed., Buenos Aires, 1887) III, 98, summarizes this earlier despatch, of July 30, 1817, out of the Secret Archives of the Congress of Tucumán.

Some months later, in a letter to the Supreme Director, without date, Aguirre mentions that in "his first communications" he had described the interview with the Secretary of State *ad interim*, "in which he assured me orally that ships cannon, arms and ammunition were articles of commerce by the laws of this country and that I would be protected by this Government in the execution of my mission, so long as it appeared as a business deal under neutral flag and in a neutral vessel." (Aguirre to the Supreme Director [1817]. *Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto* (Buenos Aires) *Misión Aguirre*, 1818). This agrees substantially with Rush's account of the interview; but in a letter of November 14, 1817, to J. Q. Adams, Aguirre represented Rush to have said that the Government could take no "open and direct part" in favor of the Spanish colonies. The National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department Records. *Notes from the Argentine Legation*, Vol. I, Part 1, February 11, 1811, to October 27, 1838). Adams referred this letter immediately to Rush, who responded November 22, 1817, with the detailed description of the interview above cited.

ment, from the Department of State, the agents hastened away from Washington to buy or build their cruisers. They soon found that all talk of loans, with or without the sanction of the United States Government (which last, of course, was out of question) was foolish. Carrera's unfulfilled promises had ruined the credit of both Chile and of Buenos Aires, and now ships were returning from the Plata with discouraging reports of conditions there.[1] All they could do was to use the 100,000 *pesos* in hand to contract[2] for the construction, in New York, of two 34-gun frigates, to cost a total of 200,000 *pesos;* the balance was to be paid before the vessels left the port. They were also able to persuade several privateers to take commissions in the Chilean service and to set out loaded with cargoes of munitions, on their own account and risk, for sale to the government of Buenos Aires or Chile.[3] Optimistically they wrote home that the frigates might be expected to be in Valparaiso the following March, provided that the second 100,000 *pesos*, promised from the Government of Chile, should reach them promptly.

Despite endeavors to disguise the construction of these ships as a private enterprise, it proved impossible to keep the business under cover, if only because of the obvious character of the frigates and the enthusiastic popular interest in them. The Spanish consulate speedily got wind of the truth. While Aguirre was engaged in the execution of formal contracts, "there was presented to him," a copy of the Act of Congress of March 3, 1817, prohibiting, under heavy penalties, all persons from fitting out vessels of

[1]Aguirre to Pueyrredón, New York, August 17, 1817, *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9. Same to Supreme Director of Chile, March 18, 1818. *Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto* (Buenos Aires), *Misión Aguirre*, 1818.

[2]According to the depositions secured by the Spanish Consulate (Manning, III, 1977), the contractors for the hulls were Messrs. Brown and Chesseman; other contractors supplied rigging, etc.

[3]Among these ships were the *Ellen Tooker*, the *Colomb*, the *Araucán*. Aguirre to Pueyrredón, personal, New York, September 12, 1817; Gregorio Gómes to Pueyrredón, New York, November 13, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

this description. Fearful that the frigates could not proceed to their destination, Aguirre, again in Washington, appealed to Secretary Adams for further advice, alluding to his earlier conversation with Rush.[1] Adams referred him to the lawyers. Aguirre then got this legal advice: "The act of preparing and sending out ships armed for war, equipped and manned in a neutral port, is an act of hostility in violation of neutrality and of the laws of this country. The Director of the Customs is empowered by these laws to detain and confiscate such ships, the value of their proceeds to be divided between the informer and the Government; and the owner or the person who appears to be such, to be imprisoned for ten years and fined $10,000." Dismayed at this prospect, he determined to risk jail for his country's sake.[2] The construction of the cruisers went forward, and the agents anxiously wrote home imploring that the second 100,000 *pesos* be sent to them, as promised, so that the frigates could be delivered and put to sea.[3]

Leaving Gómez to watch over the construction of the frigates in New York, Aguirre returned to Washington in late October.

The rising tide of popular sentiment in favor of the revolutionists in South America had already made further impression upon the natural sympathies of President Monroe. He had been an instinctive apostle of the rights of man ever since his participation as a youthful soldier in the revolution of the English colonies in North America and his first diplomatic mission to revolutionary France in 1794-1796. We have observed the cordiality with which he had received the first emissaries from the Plata region in

[1]Aguirre to Adams, November 14, 1817. The National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department Archives, Notes from the Argentine Legation, Vol. I, Part 1, February 11, 1811, to October 27, 1838.

[2]Aguirre to the Supreme Director, no date [1818]. *Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto* (Buenos Aires) *Misión Aguirre*, 1818. Printed, with minor errors in Palomeque, I, 59.

[3]Aguirre to Supreme Director, Baltimore, Nov. 25, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

1811, when Secretary of State. His inclination toward recognition, fortified by warming public opinion, had impelled him to appoint, on his own responsibility, a commission of investigation to visit South America, particularly Buenos Aires, to report upon the condition of the United Provinces. Taking advantage of the difficulty of organizing this fact-finding commission, which consisted finally of John Graham, Caesar A. Rodney and Theoderick Bland; and of family concerns of one of its members, Adams had persuaded the President to delay its departure for several months.[1] The commissioners were still awaiting their departure on the frigate *Congress* when Aguirre reappeared in Washington.

Aguirre called on Secretary Adams on October 29, 1817, and left his commission as "agent" of the United Provinces, signed by Pueyrredón, and another commission as purchasing agent of Chile, signed by O'Higgins. More significantly, he delivered a letter for the President, containing a copy of the Declaration of Independence of July 9, 1816, and an eloquent statement of the reasons why his countrymen had undertaken their political emancipation at the risk of their lives, their fortunes, and their honor.[2] There is no record of his having asked at this time for a recognition of that independence, although he may have been hoping to be received formally. A formal reception by the President of the "agent" after he had just presented his country's Declaration of Independence, would have been actual recognition.

Already Monroe had announced to the Secretary of State, five days before Aguirre's interview of the 29th, that he was going to put to the Cabinet the question: "whether we should acknowledge the Government of Buenos Aires." We are unable to

[1]Onís to Pizarro, Dec. 2, 1817, *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid), *Estado, Leg.* 5642. For the commission see amidst a voluminous literature: Frederick L. Paxson, *The Independence of the South American Republics; a Study in Recognition and Foreign Policy* (Philadelphia, 1916) and Griffin, *op. cit.*

[2]J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs;* Manning, I, 14.

determine precisely when Aguirre had arrived in Washington, before the 29th, and consequently whether it was his presence that impelled Monroe to consider this important subject. Certainly Aguirre's communication of the 29th must have strengthened this decision.

In a cabinet meeting of October 30, 1817, Monroe presented for discussion the following questions:

"Has the executive power to acknowledge the independence of the new states whose independence is not recognized by the parent country and between which parties war exists?

"Is sending a minister equal to recognition?

"Is it expedient for the United States to recognize Buenos Aires or other revolted province?

"What ought to be the future conduct of the U. States towards Spain, considering the evasion practised by her government and amounting to a refusal to make reparation for injuries?

"Is it expedient to break up the Amelia Island establishment which is of a piratical and highly mischievous nature?

"Is it expedient to act as was accorded in the previous May and suspended, i. e. to send a commission to South America to report on the progress of the revolution and the probability of its success?"[1]

Nothing could illustrate better than these queries the inter-relationship of the Florida Question, then in negotiation with Spain, and the question of recognition of the new Latin-American countries now centered upon Buenos Aires.[2] The Cabinet decided affirmatively the last two questions. Adams argued successfully against the expediency of acknowledging the independence of Buenos Aires, and urged that the

[1] J. Q. Adams notes the discussion in a summary way in his *Memoirs* for that date. The questions above quoted are as paraphrased by Griffin, *op. cit.*, 140–141, from a memorandum of "October, 1817" in the Monroe Papers in the Library of Congress.

[2] "The points upon which the important interests in this country are depending, and upon which the success or failure will affect the interests of the Administration, are the relations with Spain, those with Great Britain, and Indian affairs. The Spanish include those with South America." J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, July 28, 1818.

next despatch from the United States Legation in Madrid be awaited before assuming any new attitude toward Spain; this was also agreed to.[1]

Amelia Island, the subject of the fifth question, had become a port for outlawed slave-traders, smugglers, privateers and pirates, ever since evacuation by the United States in 1813. We have already noted[2] that the Venezuelan and Mexican agents in the United States, and the unfortunate Martin Thompson from Buenos Aires, had signed a commission on March 31, 1817, to the English adventurer, Gregor MacGregor, empowering him to take possession of East and West Florida in the name of their governments, "for the purpose of carrying into execution, either in whole or in part, an enterprise so interesting to the glorious cause in which we are engaged." MacGregor, with a company of filibusters recruited at Charleston and Savannah, forthwith possessed himself of Amelia Island.[3] It speedily became, like Galveston, a port not only for the privateers of the revolutionary governments of South America, seeking a place to condemn and sell their prizes, but a meeting place for privateers degenerated into pirates, the enemy of any flag, a rendezvous for thieves, thugs, renegades and rascals of all complexions of race and nationality whose only object was ill-gotten gain, pelf and plunder. The Government decided in this notable cabinet meeting to wipe out once and for all these pirates' nests. On December 23, 1817, Amelia Island was occupied under a strained interpretation of the law of

[1]Adams, *Memoirs*.

[2]See above, p. 46, note 3.

[3]There are two outstanding contributions amidst the literature on MacGregor and the second occupation of Amelia Island: T. Frederick Davis, "MacGregor's Invasion of Florida, 1817," in *Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, VII (July, 1928), 3–72; and Rufus Kay Wyllys, "The Filibusters of Amelia Island," in *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XII (Dec., 1928), 297–325. MacGregor was closely associated with the Baltimore outfitters of Buenos Aires privateers, particularly John Skinner (who had lent the $4000 to Carrera). Skinner wrote Adams that he had believed MacGregor when the latter told him he intended to bring about the annexation of Florida to the United States after it had served its purpose of furnishing a depot of supplies for South American revolutionists, (*Florida Hist. Soc. Quar.*, V [July, 1926], 54–57), but this did not deter the government from occupying the island.

January 15, 1811. It met the immediate protest of Onís, and later, as we shall see, of Aguirre.

The decision to occupy Amelia Island again was considered a decisive reason for finally despatching to Buenos Aires the frigate *Congress* and the commission of inquiry, to explain the same.[1] Before they embarked, Messrs. Rodney and Bland, on instruction from the Secretary of State, got in touch with Aguirre and explained to him, too, the necessity of this action which meant no alteration of the friendly sentiments of the Administration toward the United Provinces. Aguirre at that time readily acknowledged the propriety of the step.[2] In sending this mission particularly, and in dealing with Buenos Aires and the other revolted provinces generally, it was Monroe's idea "to elevate South America as high as we could without a compromitment with the allied powers who may probably, or rather possibly, take the part of Spain. The pulse of the allied powers will be felt while the United States remain free to act."[3] All this was accomplished by executive action before Congress convened on December 1, 1817.[4]

We have stressed the fact that Aguirre carried with him no authority to solicit recognition of independence. Before the meeting of Congress, he made no

[1]J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, Oct. 30, 1817.

[2]J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, January 22, 1818.

[3]Griffin, *op. cit.*, 142, citing Monroe to [————], December 2, 1817. Monroe Papers, Library of Congress.

[4]In despatches to his government, Aguirre took credit for having been responsible for the sending of the famous fact-finding commission, aboard the *Congress* (Aguirre to the Supreme Director, Baltimore, November 25, 1817. *Archivo General de la Nación* [Buenos Aires], S1–A2–A4, No. 9). He claimed it was the result of his note of October 29th to Monroe on the reasons for the Declaration of Independence. Argentine historians, including Mitre (*História de Belgrano*, 4th edition, III, 97–99), have accepted this, stressing the importance of that mission of investigation as a step in bringing about the recognition of the United Provinces by the United States. Of course, Aguirre had nothing to do with it. Monroe had decided on it, on his own initiative, long before the arrival of Aguirre and Gómez, and it was the second occupation of Amelia Island which ended the delay of the commission's departure. As they left, the commissioners carried additional instructions to explain the affair of Amelia Island and to protest against the illegal armament of privateers in ports of the United States, "the licentious abuse of their flags by these craft, of every nation but their own, has an influence unpropitious to the cause of their freedom, and tendency to deter other countries from recognizing them as regular governments." Manning, I, 47.

such request, although naturally he had offered Adams every opportunity to receive him formally as a diplomatic agent. In exercising this restraint he had been wise. Things were not going badly for his cause. He had been warmly received and encouraged to buy his ships—as an individual merchant acting within the law. The President and his advisers were even debating the possibility of recognizing the government of Buenos Aires. They had despatched a friendly commission of inquiry to that distant capital to report on the stability of its government. It was the agitation in Congress that misled the agent into premature, undiplomatic and unauthorized activities.

No sooner had Congress opened then Henry Clay "mounted his South American great horse."[1] Seeking to harass and embarrass the Administration in every way, he and his followers fanned up the first clouds in the Era of Good Feeling by opposing the Spanish and South American policies of Monroe and Adams. First they attacked the neutrality act of March 3, 1817, as inequitable to the patriots—that same neutrality law against which Onís was so bitterly inveighing as unfavorable to Spain. Next they protested against the occupation of Amelia Island as being unfair to the revolutionists (it deprived them of a shelter for privateers illegally fitted out in the United States). Then they began a campaign for the immediate recognition of the independence of the United Provinces.[2] Aguirre's despatches do not reveal whether he confabulated with the opposition in Congress, but his policy became more aggressive immediately he sensed this situation. In numerous conferences with Adams during December and January,[3] he solicited recognition of independence; he complained of the inequalities, as he termed them, of the neutrality law; he protested the occupation of Amelia Island as an invasion of the

[1] J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, Dec. 6, 1817.
[2] *Annals* of Congress, 15th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. I, 402–650.
[3] J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*.

common sovereignty over which Spain and her revolted colonies were contending in civil war; he threatened that if the United States did not recognize the independence of the United Provinces the Buenos Aires Government might shut off to this country its newly opened trade. Knowing that the House of Representatives had called upon the President for communication of all correspondence relating to the revolted provinces of South America, and hoping it would publish them with a resulting appeal to the public, Aguirre carefully recapitulated his interviews in written notes to the Secretary of State.[1]

All this plagued Adams, but he patiently and skillfully met Aguirre's importunities. He inquired if the request for recognition came from any new instructions; Aguirre said no, it resulted from what had transpired in Congress. The experienced Adams observed that the *ordinary* way to achieve recognition was by a treaty between the parties; did Aguirre have powers to negotiate one? The agent was obliged to say that he had no specific powers; but he asserted that he was so enabled by the general tenor of his credentials. The Secretary asked exactly what portion of the United Provinces was under the control of the Buenos Aires Government; how about Montevideo, occupied by Portuguese troops? How about Artigas, who claimed separate authority over the Banda Oriental? When Aguirre intimated that North American trade to Buenos Aires rested on the sufferance of temporary decrees of that government, rather than on a permanent treaty basis, Adams hinted that, in case of a change, the ports of the United States might be closed to the flag of Buenos Aires. Aguirre replied tartly that this would make no difference; the shipping, even the privateers, was all under the flag of the United States, and owned by its citizens. When Aguirre protested about Amelia Island, Adams asked him to put this, too, in writing; if the government of Buenos

[1]Manning, I, 361–368, 373.

Aires were to assume a "superintendency" of all Spanish provinces in both of the continents of America, it were well that the United States know this perfectly, in order to govern itself accordingly. At this Aguirre drew back; he admitted that he was not speaking for his government in regard to Florida.[1]

Nothing could have been more undiplomatic than this strategy, or more calculated to prejudice the agent and his government in the eyes of the Administration. In protesting about Florida, Aguirre had touched a principal nerve center of North American foreign policy. Right then Monroe was nervous about a possible war with Spain, particularly after the occupation of Amelia Island, and Adams still feared that Spain might find European support. And Aguirre was untactful enough to tell Adams that the possibility of the United States becoming involved in war was no just motive why he should not solicit the recognition of his nation! It is no wonder that Monroe and his advisers, particularly Adams, very definitely decided against any recognition at this time.

Meanwhile Clay's group continued to press the subject on the floor of the House of Representatives. They successfully called for papers connected with the Amelia Island affair. The House requested for the communication by the President of all papers relating to the revolted Spanish Provinces. Adams provided an accompanying statement, stressing the fact that Aguirre had no diplomatic title, no powers to treat, and that all his demands for recognition had arisen since the assembly of Congress. But the notes and credentials of Aguirre were made public, as he doubtless had intended, and circulated before a public ever more sympathetic. When the President requested the necessary appropriation for defraying the expenses of the commission of inquiry which he had sent to South America, Clay attached an amendment appropriating $18,000 for a minister and legation in Buenos

[1] J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, IV, 45.

Aires; this was vigorously and eloquently debated, and defeated on March 28, 1818, by a vote of 45-115, but Clay's notable speeches, widely circulated in the sober press of that day, popularized the cause of the patriots.

It so happened that the very day after Clay's motion for recognition had been so decisively defeated, namely, on March 29, 1818, Aguirre received from Buenos Aires a letter of Pueyrredón for President Monroe,[1] at last formally requesting recognition of independence. The South American leader explained that this request had not been made before because of a desire not to engage other nations to compromise their interests by any formal acknowledgment while independence remained doubtful. This letter made it

[1] "As long as the United Provinces of Río de la Plata considered the issue of the contest in which, in obedience to honour and justice, they had engaged with the Mother Country, as doubtful, they cautiously abstained from requiring of other Nations to compromit their interests by a formal acknowledgment of their Independence. This manly silence, uninterrupted either by actual reverses or the greatest difficulties and dangers, allowed sufficient time to other Nations to apprize them of their unavailing sacrifices, if, on consideration of their magnanimous resolution, they had deemed it rash or unjust;—but having left us to the exertion of our own efforts, awaiting as it were their result, the time appears at length to have arrived, which authorizes us to claim of the respectable powers of the civilized world a warmer interest in our sufferings and in those eventful scenes, which, contrary to every hope of success are renewed by Spanish vengeance throughout every part of the Continent of Columbia. The favourable impression naturally produced by our conduct in the latter years has had its effect on the public mind in Europe, and the case is perhaps not remote, of the disposition felt by a certain Nation to admit us to a rank with it, and thus secure to it the gratitude of a people whose friendship is not to be despised. We cannot easily persuade ourselves that the United States of North America are willing to renounce the glory of meriting above all others, our gratitude by their formal acknowledgment of our Independence, pointed out as they are by so many circumstances as the first to take this step with honour; if however, motives of interest or policy dictate the necessity of deferring this public testimony of the respect due to our virtues and of the disposition relative to our future destiny, we shall pursue our illustrious career, without losing courage, or estimating any sacrifices too high as the price of our Liberty

"Such, Most Excellent Sir, are my sentiments and those of the worthy People over whom I have the honour to preside, which I entreat of you to submit to the consideration of the Congress, provided that step meet your approbation. I formerly transmitted to you the Manifesto published by the Sovereign Congress of these Provinces on the declaration of their Independence of the Mother Country, the King of Spain his successors and of every other Power whatsoever; and I likewise accompanied it with several other copies to which I request you will be pleased to give the direction which may appear most suitable to you." Juan Martín Pueyrredón, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of South America, to James Monroe, President of the United States, January 14, 1818. Manning I, 370.

Aguirre notified Adams on March 29, 1818, from New York, that he had just received despatches and was now "specially charged by my Government to promote so far as in me lies, the acknowledgment of its Independence by the United States . . . " *Ibid.*, 375.

apparent that Aguirre had never had any instructions hitherto to solicit recognition, nor indeed to justify any of the representations which he had been making as if he were a recognized diplomatic official. His unauthorized conduct had just secured the rejection of the request which his government now actually did charge him to present. Perhaps it is because he realized this, that he did not personally go to Washington for the purpose: he sent Pueyrredón's letter from New York, where he had received it.

The Government had won a striking victory in the overwhelming defeat of Clay's motion. Adams had easily fended off Aguirre's unauthorized importunities and divined their source. But he was as eager as Clay to recognize the independence of the United Provinces, as soon as it could be done conveniently to the diplomatic interests of the United States. At the end of the session of Congress he wrote to the United States Minister in Spain that the debates in the House of Representatives had shown the great and increasing interest felt in the events of South America: "The part pursued by the Government of the United States in this contest, has been unequivocal Neutrality. None of the Revolutionary Governments has yet been formally acknowledged; but if that of Buenos Ayres should maintain the stability which it appears to have acquired since the Declaration of Independence of July 9, 1816, it cannot be long before they will demand that acknowledgment of right—and however questionable that right may be now considered; it will deserve very seriously the consideration of the European Powers, as well as of the United States, how long that acknowledgment can rightfully be refused."[1]

The year 1818 was probably the most taxing of all John Quincy Adams' career as a diplomatist. No American Secretary of State had ever handled a group of problems of more vital importance to the nation since its independence: the negotiations with Spain

[1] J. Q. Adams to George W. Erving, Washington, April 20, 1818. Manning, I, 61.

to secure Florida, and the West on the southern frontier; the negotiations with Great Britain, to secure the West on the northern frontier; the question of the independence of the Latin American states; the attitude of Europe toward the New World, with Great Britain a special question mark, and the Holy Alliance a puzzling menace. These questions called for the broadest experience and deepest understanding. It is fortunate that one of Massachusetts' greatest men, and our nation's greatest Secretary of State, held office at this time.

When Congress rose in April, 1818, Adams was most anxious about European, particularly British, attitudes toward the claims of the new American states for recognition. He feared that recognition might bring war with Spain and one or more European powers; he did not yet know the position that Great Britain, Spain's old ally, would really assume in case of a move by the Holy Alliance to assist Spain in restoring her sovereignty in the New World. He had in his desk a copy of a lengthy memoir from the Court of Russia, which supported a proposed mediation by the Holy Allies between Spain and Portugal to settle their territorial differences in South America as a first spectacular step to extend the principles of the Holy Alliance to the New World by co-operating with those two Iberian monarchies to extinguish all insurrection in South America, and incidentally to abolish the slave trade.[1] Recognition by the United States of the independence of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata in the year 1818—an independence which Adams was persuaded they would shortly be in a position to demand as of right—would have had to be made in the face of this ominous possibility of European intervention to stop it. A premature recognition might pre-

[1]Russian Memorial on the Negotiation relative to the Question of Río de la Plata, and, in general, of the Pacification of the Colonies; for communication to the interested Courts and to the Cabinets of the Mediating Powers, Moscow, November, 1817. Manning, III, 1853–1859.

cipitate more harm than good, not only to the United States, but also to the United Provinces, by bringing all Europe into the war. This was the position of Adams until he was sure of the attitude of the European powers. While pressing Spain for Florida, he spent most of the year 1818 trying to find out, through our representatives at the European capitals, what Europe, notably England, would do; particularly, would it consider recognition of independence by the United States as an act of hostility to Spain, and in case Spain should declare war, in consequence, against the United States, would any or all of those powers take part with her in it? In directing our ministers in Europe to make these soundings, Adams at the same time instructed them to make it clear that the United States would join in no plan of pacification founded on any other basis than that of the entire independence of the South Americans.[1] Thus the recognition of the United Provinces now involved more than the negotiations between Adams and Onís; it concerned the question of Europe and America in the broadest sense; it seemed a matter of peace or war for the United States. It also included two other subordinate problems: could the Buenos Aires Government be persuaded to stop the abuse of its flag by illegal and licentious privateers, even actual pirates? and could the United Provinces, liberated by their heroic struggle from Spanish military control, redeem themselves from internal anarchy?

By the summer of 1818 Adams had become persuaded that the five great European allied powers could not agree on any coercive measures to restore Spanish sovereignty in America, because the real policy of Great Britain was to promote the cause of independence although to delay acknowledging it, for fear of offending Spain. "They will take special care," noted Adams anent the British Government, "that

[1]Manning, I, 63–75, 103, and Vols. I, II, III, *passim*.

the European Alliance shall take no active measures against the Independents . . . There can be no doubt but this appeal of Spain to the thunder bolts of the Allies will terminate in utter disappointment."[1] This was proven later in the year by the conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, when the proposed mediation failed because England, who had initiated it at the request of Spain, refused to countenance the use of force to carry it into effect. In July the *Congress* came back from Buenos Aires, bringing the commissioners, who were unanimously of the opinion that subjugation of the United Provinces to Spain was impossible, though less certain about the internal stability of the country.[2] Monroe was able to announce to Congress when it reassembled in November, 1818, that no forceful intervention by Europe was likely, and that there was "good cause to be satisfied with the course heretofore pursued by the United States . . . , and to conclude that it is proper to adhere to it, especially in the present state of affairs."[3] The Secretary of State was nevertheless preparing the way for recognition. While engaged in the final phases of his negotiation with Onís, he instructed Richard Rush, Minister in London, stating that it was the President's intention to recognize the Government at Buenos Aires at no late date, "should no event occur which will justify a further postponement of that intention," and invited Great Britain to do the same in concert with the United States.[4] Every schoolboy in the United States recalls that Great Britain persistently refused to join the United States in such a recognition.

In anticipating the ultimate recognition of the independence of the United Provinces, we must not lose sight of Aguirre, who had urged it so prematurely and undiplomatically. After the rejection of his ill-timed

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[1]J. Q. Adams to Thomas Sumter, Jr., Washington, August 27, 1818. *Ibid.*, I, 79.
[2]J. Q. Adams to Richard Rush, July 30, 1818. Manning, I, 74.
[3]Message of November 16, 1818. Manning, I, 81.
[4]January I, 1819. Manning, I, 85.

requests for recognition, his protest at the occupation of Amelia Island and the retrieving of his credentials from the Secretary of State, he had left Washington late in January for New York, to attend to the completion of the frigates. Adams' complaint that he held no diplomatic title impelled him to ask from the Supreme Director of Chile larger powers and a commission as *chargé d'affaires*.[1] At the same time, he resigned his honorary title of War and Marine Commissioner of Buenos Aires, explaining that he preferred the title of a simple citizen of his country.[2] Presumably this was because, pending his possible elevation to a diplomatic title, he wished to remove from his person any imputation of official character, the better to get around the neutrality laws. In New York he found the frigates finished and anchored. The contractors would not turn them over to him until they were paid, according to their agreement, the second 100,000 *pesos*. Expenses were mounting up every day. In desperation, Aguirre sent Gómez to Buenos Aires to explain his predicament and to get the second 100,000 *pesos* sent to him according to the terms of San Martín's contract.[3]

The summer dragged on and no money came from Buenos Aires far away. Agents of the Spanish consulate easily ferreted out the facts about the armed ships. Onís sent in complaints to Adams documented with a formidable number of unexceptionable depositions.[4] Before the Secretary could reply, Aguirre's enemies had procured his arrest for violation of the neutrality law by fitting out armed vessels intended to cruise against a prince with whom the United

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[1]Aguirre to the Supreme Director of Chile, *Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones y Culto* (Buenos Aires), *Misión Aguirre*, 1818.

[2]Aguirre to the Secretary of the Department of Government, N. Y., March 17, 1818. *Ibid.*

[3]Aguirre to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces of South America. New York, March 17, 1818; Aguirre to the Supreme Director of the State of Chile, New York, March 18, 1818. *Ibid.*

[4]Onís to the Secretary of State, Bristol, July 27, 1818. Manning, III, 1971–1977.

States remained at peace. He spent only four days in jail before he was released by an order of Judge Livingston on the ground that it had not been proven that the ship was intended for hostile operation or that the guns in its "cargo" were other than articles of commerce.

Onís lamented the money spent in vain on prosecution of a case where justice was impossible.[1] Aguirre on his part, was sore at his brief incarceration—although not so indignant as a twentieth-century Argentine writer about the mission[2]—and discouraged at the rapidly accumulating expenses of maintaining the idle ships still unpaid for. He hurried to Washington to see Adams again. He protested his arrest, explained that without protection from the government he could not carry on against the harassments of his enemy, and offered to sell the frigates to the United States Government.[3] The proposal was politely declined. Adams explained that since Aguirre had never presented credentials or commission of a public minister, he enjoyed no diplomatic immunity before the laws of the United States. The Secretary not unkindly went out of his way to state that the President was of the opinion that "Buenos Ayres has afforded strong proof of its ability to maintain its Independence, a sentiment which, he is persuaded, will daily gain strength with the powers of Europe, especially should the same career of good fortune continue in its favor. In deciding the question respecting the Independence of Buenos Ayres many circumstances claim attention, in regard to the colonies as well as to the United

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[1]For the indignant report of Onís to his government, see Onís to Pizarro, No. 139 of August 6, 1818, with enclosed statement from the Spanish Consul in New York, Tomás Stoughton. "I think the attached documents are sufficient to persuade Your Excellency of the state of affairs in which we find ourselves and that we cannot hope for justice from these gentry." *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid) Estado, legajo 5643.

[2]Palomeque, *op. cit.*

[3]Aguirre to the Secretary of State, August 10, 1818. National Archives (Washington), Division of Department of State Archives, series *Argentine Republic, Notes*, I, pt. 1, fol. 77. J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, August 8, 1818.

States, which make it necessary that he should move in it with caution."[1]

Despite the failure of his inopportune excursions into the field of diplomacy, and, notwithstanding all of these harassments and vexations, Aguirre actually sailed away from New York early in September with his two cruisers, the *Horatio*, Captain Joseph Skinner, and the *Curiacio*, Captain Paul Delano, with crews recruited in the United States. Their armament was shipped to Buenos Aires separately in merchant ships.[2] The promised second 100,000 *pesos* never arrived, but he somehow borrowed money enough, on notes due upon the arrival of the ships in Buenos Aires, to satisfy temporarily his creditors.[3] The frigates reached the Río de la Plata early in November. After much delay, the *Curiacio* took on its armament and sailed for Chile, where it arrived, June 23, 1819, in time for the new campaign then under way for the liberation of Perú, in which the frigate participated under the name *Independencia*. Captain Skinner of the *Horatio* refused to deliver up his ship in Buenos Aires until he received payment for a note of 69,541 *pesos*. Before the local authorities could overreach him and seize the ship, he cleared out for Río de Janeiro, where he finally sold the frigate to the Portuguese Government to satisfy the debt.[4]

Lima surrendered July 21, 1821, to San Martín, whose army arrived on a fleet commanded by the English Lord Cochrane, under the Chilean flag, but Aguirre never got his bonus. We infer from the latter's papers that Pueyrredón was not content with his conduct in the United States, particularly his inexpedient protests

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[1]Adams to Aguirre, Washington, August 27, 1818. Manning, I, 76.

[2]Pueyrredón to San Martín, November, 1818, *Documentos del Archivo de San Martín*, IV, 601, cited by Carlos Ibaguren, *En la penumbra de la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1932).

[3]Palomeque, I, 122, prints a summary of Aguirre's expense account, itemising the loans.

[4]Diego Barros Arana, *Historia Jeneral de Chile* (Santiago, 1893), XII, 285.

about Florida.[1] He got precious little thanks for his work. The Buenos Aires Government took exception to his accounts, in which he claimed that somebody, either the government of Buenos Aires, or that of Chile, owed him personally 52,098.18 *pesos*. Years later, in 1833, he was paid 24,729.79 *pesos* by the Argentine Government. In this way he drops out of history.[2] As a diplomatist he had not been much of a success, because he exceeded his authority, but he certainly accomplished the real object of his mission: the delivery of the frigates; and the escape of the *Horatio* from Buenos Aires was not his fault.

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[1]On being informed in March, 1818, by Messrs. Bland, Graham and Rodney of the reasons for occupying Amelia Island, Gregorio Tagle, the Secretary of State at Buenos Aires, declared that "the removal of those establishments could not fail to be attended with good consequences to the patriot cause, . . . ; and, therefore, his Government could certainly only see in that measure of the United States the manifestation towards it of the most friendly disposition." Manning, I, 386.

Immediately upon Aguirre's return to Buenos Aires, the Supreme Director called upon him (November 10, 1818) for copies of the correspondence initiated by him for recognition of the United Provinces by the United States. In transmitting the documents Aguirre expressed a belief that they might create some doubts, and went to great lengths, and very disingenuously, to explain his protests about the occupation of Florida. He had been notified of it, he declared, by Messrs. Rodney and Bland before they departed on the *Congress* (in November, 1817); his belated protest (only after the opposition had raised its voice in Congress) he explained as due to the publication, two months later of the Act of Congress of 1811 (January 15, 1811) under authority of which the occupation took place, and was made more necessary by the threats of Adams and the passionate and shameless way in which he defended the occupation and resented any protest. Aguirre took credit for his protest having caused the government to state in the public newspapers that the "American general" had exceeded his instructions in occupying Florida. Here he is alluding to Andrew Jackson's later penetration of Florida to St. Marks in April, 1818, not to Amelia Island. We may be sure that Aguirre's earlier protest about Amelia Island had nothing to do with the government's attitude toward Jackson's invasion; as a matter of fact, we recall that John Quincy Adams rigorously and successfully defended Jackson's action. Aguirre al Secretario de Estado del Gobierno de las Provincias Unidas, Buenos Aires, January 13, 1819. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 9.

[2]Palomeque, *op. cit.* prints in appendix the *expediente* of documents representing Aguirre's claim, which was passed on by Buenos Aires to the Chilean Government, although both governments had guaranteed his debts. Aguirre defended his claim personally in Chile. After examining his accounts a Chilean commission threw out several large items, and claimed that Aguirre really owed Chile 89,937 *pesos!* He returned to Buenos Aires without satisfaction. In 1832 an Argentine commission found that he was entitled to 24,729 *pesos*. This was paid to him in 1833 by the Argentine Government and charged up to Chile. (I have no record of its ever having been paid by Chile.) Aguirre continued unsuccessfully to press Chile for full payment of his claim until his death in 1843.

IV

In this essay we have been describing the early missions from Buenos Aires to the United States, with only incidental mention of the representation of the United States in the Plata region, which is so much better known, thanks to both North and South American historians and voluminous publication of official correspondence. It is my purpose here to touch on this merely enough to make clear the history of the early Buenos Aires missions. It is necessary only to recall that since Poinsett's arrival in February, 1811, the United States had maintained there a succession of consuls, and a series of special executive agents in Buenos Aires. We remember that the sending of consuls to that port, as well as to Chile and Venezuela, followed a well-established practice of despatching similar officials to Spanish colonial posts, New Orleans, Havana, and La Guayra, before the outbreak of the revolutions. Spanish authorities admitted them, from time to time, according to necessities of war, and they functioned informally as "Agents for Seamen and Commerce," without *exequaturs*.[1] Poinsett received his commission as Consul General for Buenos Aires, Chile and Perú when the United Provinces of the Plata still professed allegiance to King Ferdinand, but the local revolutionary government readily recognized him and succeeding consuls and vice-consuls, and such recognition, with *exequaturs*, continued in practice after the Declaration of Independence of 1816. The government of Buenos Aires, of course, was eager to accept any practice which might imply even in a very strained sense a recognition of its sovereignty.

Poinsett, it will be recalled,[2] at first was a special agent, before he became a consul. Another special agent was Colonel John Devereux, who went out to Buenos Aires on business of his own in 1816.[3] We

[1] See p. 13, note 2, above.

[2] Above, p. 14.

[3] Henry Merritt Wriston, *Executive Agents in American Foreign Relations* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1929), 414.

have noted how he involved the United States Consul, Thomas L. Halsey, in an abortive $2,000,000 nine per cent loan agreement with Pueyrredón, later repudiated by the United States.[1] William G. D. Worthington was appointed in 1817, as a special agent in Buenos Aires, Chile and Peru, to disavow the acts of Devereux, and to report on the revolutionary movement. "The real as well as the ostensible object of your mission," said his instructions, "is to explain the mutual advantage of a commerce with the United States, to promote liberal and stable regulations, and to transmit seasonable information on the subject."[2] In exceeding his own instructions, Worthington soon outdid Devereux, whose indiscretions he had been sent to disavow. With no more authority than the sentence just quoted, he proceeded to draw up with Pueyrredón's government a set of articles which was almost a provisional treaty of amity and commerce.[3]

The Buenos Aires authorities naturally looked upon the Worthington agreement as a big step toward acknowledgment of their independence. It is quite understandable that Pueyrredón, who had been careful hitherto not to instruct Aguirre to solicit recognition, should now[4] despatch to President Monroe a formal request for such, in the letter which arrived, as we have noticed, after the agent Aguirre's unauthorized importunities had been turned aside by Adams, and

[1]Above, p. 51, note 1. Probably the repudiation of this loan agreement alienated Halsey from favor in Pueyrredón's eyes. Later, his contacts with the revolted General Artigas, the father of Uruguayan independence, in the *Banda Oriental*, produced an order for his immediate expulsion from Buenos Aires (not however immediately executed) and a request to President Monroe in 1818 for his recall, which was immediately complied with.

[2]Wriston, *op. cit.*, 415.

[3]"Twenty-four Articles between the United States and the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata concluded by Mr. Worthington and Mr. Alvarez on the 1st of January, 1818, at the City of Buenos Aires," constituted an agreement to ameliorate "as far as possible the condition and intercourse of the two countries during the actual war which now exists and still appears likely to continue between the said Provinces and His Catholic Majesty, but not to violate in any manner either expressly or by implication the neutral obligations which the United States may owe, according to the law of nations, to the King of Spain and the said Province of Buenos Aires." National Archives (Washington), Division of State Department archives, series Argentine Republic, W. G. D. Worthington, April 26, 1817–July 9, 1818. Folio 59–61.

[4]January 14, 1818. Manning, I, 370.

just after Clay's motion for recognition of the United Provinces had been voted down so decisively in the House of Representatives. The Supreme Director followed this up by arranging for a more adequate and complete diplomatic representation at Washington than that furnished by Aguirre, whose business had been to procure the ships-of-war for San Martín's campaign for the liberation of Perú.

The new appointment of a deputy (*diputado*) in Washington originated with Don Gregorio Tagle, Secretary of State in the government of the United Provinces. He had made a voyage in 1816 to North America, of which no record has turned up, other than his own mention of it in this instance, for the purpose of outfitting and commissioning privateers. His observations of the United States and its people, and their attitude toward the independence of South America, had convinced him that all that was needed to bring this to a head was the impulse of some person of competence and brilliance (*brillo*). For this purpose he recommended General William H. Winder, a citizen of the United States in Baltimore, who, with his entire family, including a buxom wife and six sturdy sons, was a fervent friend of independence and of the privateers. He would be a splendid advocate of the Cause in North America.[1]

Mention of General William H. Winder does not recall to the members of this Society any shining clouds of glory. We remember him as an able and respected Baltimore lawyer who injudiciously accepted a military command in the War of 1812, a responsibility for which he had no experience or talent. He led a brigade at the capture of Fort George, Ontario, in 1813, where General Winfield Scott "fought nine-tenths of the battle," but ten days later he unwittingly walked into the British lines during the dusk of the evening, in the disastrous affair of Stony Creek, and was taken pris-

[1]Gregorio Tagle, Secretario de Estado, al Supremo Director, Buenos Aires, Feb. 19, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

oner. We cannot say that the British commander shrewdly gave him a short parole, in order to get him back in the American army, but unfortunately it did expire just in time to allow him to command the militia forces in front of the British advance on Washington in 1814. There he was routed in one of the greatest exhibitions of military incompetence in all our history. We remember the vivid passages in which Henry Adams described Winder's inglorious day at the battle of Bladensburg, the capture of Washington and the burning of the Capitol that followed. But Tagle's opinion of Winder had been formed not by an historian still unborn, but by Winder himself, entertaining his client in the bosom of his family in times of peace, of piping peace made all the more agreeable by the pleasant profits of defending, before sympathetic juries, Baltimore privateers that flew the flag of Buenos Aires and were manned by local boys.

Pueyrredón promptly accepted the nomination. He announced the appointment of Winder in a letter of February 25, 1818, to the President: "The authorized intervention of a person who unites probity, distinction and public esteem with high rank, can do no less than produce results favorable to the reciprocal interests and relations which happily exist between the States over which you so worthily preside, and the provinces under my command."[1] To Winder he forwarded a title of citizenship in Buenos Aires, together with an appointment as Special Deputy of the United Provinces near the Government of the United States, for which credentials were enclosed. His only instructions were that he lend his "protection" to the activities of a Consul General, Don David Cortez DeForest, the bearer of the papers. A flattering and fulsome letter stated that the exploits of the "hero of Canada"

[1]Pueyrredón to the President of the United States, Buenos Aires [Feb. 25, 1818], National Archives (Washington), Records of the Department of State, Argentine Republic Notes. Vol. I, pt. 1, fol. 72. This is endorsed "translation to the Secretary, May 7 [1818].

were not unknown along the Río de la Plata![1] There was no vulgar mention of emolument in dealing with a man of so much *brillo* as Winder of Bladensburg.

David Curtis DeForest, who now steps into the picture, was an adventurous Connecticut Yankee, like John Ledyard before him. Ledyard's journeyings had been to the Northwest Coast, China, Russia, and the distant steppes of Siberia. DeForest, a robust swarthy hulk of a youth, roamed the North and South Atlantic, the great plains of Rio Grande do Sul and the Plata, and the pampas of Patagonia. Born at Huntington, Connecticut, in 1774, he established himself, after a most adventurous career, as a prosperous merchant in Buenos Aires in the days of the Spanish viceroys, when, we are so often given to understand, all commerce was closed to foreigners. His biography[2] reveals that North American ships with the Stars and Stripes were frequenting that port in the very first years of the century.[3] By 1809 the young man had already acquired a competence. In December of that

[1]Buenos Aires, Feb. 25, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

[2]J. W. DeForest, a nephew, had access to some business ledgers and correspondence and other papers of DeForest, which he uses in the chapters devoted to him in *The DeForests of Avesnes* (New Haven, Conn., 1900). Mr. L. Effingham DeForest, a descendant, has kindly furnished me with notes and transcripts from David C. DeForest's accounts and letterbooks which were made for the biographer by Col. George Butler Griffin, the son of one of D. C. DeForest's daughters. Mr. L. E. DeForest published two letters of David C. DeForest, written in 1802 from Montevideo, which narrate his early wanderings in Brazil, and the *Banda Oriental*. See "A Trip Through Brazil in 1802," *Brazil* (N.Y.) Year IX, No. 101, March, 1937. Most important of all, I have been privileged to read eight volumes of a personal journal, 1800–1818, and nine volumes of letterbooks, 1798–1825, of David C. DeForest. These documents, hitherto unexploited by historians, were in the possession of Mr. Frederick Hill of Catskill, N. Y., a great-grandson of DeForest and have been recently acquired by the Sterling Memorial Library of Yale University. I am now preparing an article on DeForest, expanded by the use of these personal papers of his.

[3]In 1807 DeForest suggested to the Department of State the advisability of sending a commercial agent to Buenos Aires. National Archives (Washington), Division of Department of State archives, Miscellaneous Letters, October 4, 1807. Dr. Lewis Hanke called my attention to this document, which is also in the DeForest Letterbooks. In 1811, DeForest tried unsuccessfully for appointment as United States Consul to Buenos Aires, or to Río de Janeiro. DeForest Letterbooks.

Charles Lyon Chandler published some notes on "Early River Plate Voyages, 1798–1800" in the *American Historical Review*, XXIII (July, 1918), 816–826, showing that the first recorded vessel flying the flag of the United States in the Plata estuary was the ship *John*, Captain Day, of Philadelphia, which arrived at Montevideo in November, 1798. The first at Buenos Aires was the *Palmyra*, admitted to Spanish registry. Chandler lists a number of arrivals at Montevideo and Buenos Aires between 1799 and 1807.

year he was suddenly expelled from the country by the Spanish viceroy Cisneros. Before this he had prudently transferred some of his funds to the United States, an example which many a later resident of Latin America has done well to imitate, before the recent reversal of the trend. After a visit to England, he returned to his home town of Huntington, in 1811, where he promptly married Julia Wooster, one of the belles of Connecticut, then a "blonde sparkling girl of sixteen years," "a golden-haired woman with a skin like roseate snow," to use the sedulously chosen words of the nephew biographer.

The Revolution of the 25th of May, 1810, cleared the way for DeForest's return to Buenos Aires early in 1812. His business prospered again, thanks to favors of the government. By this time he was a citizen there and doing well, too. In the autumn of 1815 he secured an agency for distributing letters of marque in the United States, and lent his name technically to the ownership of four privateers commissioned to cruise against the commerce of Spain, and fitted out, one by John Jacob Astor of New York, one by George Crowninshield of Salem, one by Thomas Tenant of Baltimore, and one by d'Arcy and Didier of Baltimore.[1] DeForest, records his biographer, netted ten per cent of the sales of prizes taken by these vessels, and it ran into big money. In the spring of 1817, he decided to quit and go home. He sent his wife and four small children ahead of him on the big *Aurora*, Captain Searl, for New Haven. After winding up his business, he followed in February, 1818. It was on this occasion that Tagle made him Consul General, and bearer of the despatches to General Winder. Of all this, Aguirre, still in the United States, remained uninformed until apprised by DeForest himself from Baltimore.[2]

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[1]J. W. DeForest, *op. cit.* It may have been in connection with these craft that Tagle made his way to the United States in 1816.

[2]Aguirre to DeForest, New York, May 5, 1818. He acknowledged DeForest's of April 30, and stated that he would have been glad to felicitate him earlier upon his appointment as Consul General if the Buenos Aires Government had notified him. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires). S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

DeForest's instructions of February 24, 1818, placed him under the governance of general regulations and obligations of consuls, gave him power to appoint vice-consuls, and stated that until an "ambassador" or other functionary should be despatched to the United States, he, the Consul General, would undertake to secure the recognition of independence by the United States, and promises for succours. He had powers to distribute letters of marque for privateers, and: "In case our corsairs should take some island suitable as a base and to which none of the recognized nations should have any right, the said Consul is empowered to set up such a municipal government there as may seem best to him, taking possession of the island in the name of this government." Finally, he was to concert all his proceedings with General Winder, in whose talents and liberal sentiments much confidence was placed. A supplementary mandate authorized him to treat and negotiate with the chief of any country where it might be convenient to fit out privateers.[1] Nothing was said about a salary for the Consul General, nor even expenses. Was he not a rich American?

The newly appointed Consul General bore a letter from Pueyrredón to President Monroe, stating that in conformity with the articles[2] agreed upon with citizen William G. D. Worthington, the agent of the United States in these provinces, he had nominated citizen David C. DeForest as Consul General to the United States, with the powers specified in his commission and instructions respectively.[3] DeForest's credentials were thus based on the unsafe authority of Worthington's unauthorized agreement, and we may

[1]Instructions for DeForest as Consul General in the United States. Draft, Buenos Aires, February 24, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

[2]Article 18 provided for consuls, vice-consuls and vice-commercial agents of either party to reside in the territory of the other and to enjoy all the rights and privileges belonging to them by reason of their function. Article 24 pledged both parties to use their best efforts with the Powers to encourage the abolition of the African slave trade!

[3]Manning, I, 378.

presume that the alert John Quincy Adams would not fail to note this, should he find it convenient to do so.

The ink was scarcely dry on DeForest's instructions when Tagle received the special fact-finding commission from the United States, Theoderick Bland, John Graham and Caesar A. Rodney, who landed at Buenos Aires on February 28, 1818. They found the Secretary ready to accept their representations on everything. He told them that the government thoroughly approved the step which the United States had taken in occupying Amelia Island, and disavowed any authorization on its part to the adventurer, MacGregor. When they represented to him the depredations on the commerce of the United States by the illegal privateers flying the flag of Buenos Aires, and expressed a hope that the government would stop the abuse of its commissions, he replied that hitherto no formal complaint had been made, but his government would afford redress upon representation and proof of the injury.[1] These assurances of course, did not correspond with the confidential instructions just issued to the newly appointed Consul General to the United States.

DeForest was distinctly the ablest person who sought to represent the Buenos Aires Government in Washington during these early years of informal contacts, and no less disingenuous than his chief, Gregorio Tagle. His first act was to deliver the papers to Winder, who immediately informed the President of the appointment, and asked what to do about it.[2] During the war with England, Monroe had been Secretary of War, and he and Winder had remained on most friendly terms since then, perhaps because of their mutual confidence in each other's military com-

[1]It "had taken every possible precaution in its power in such cases; that it had established and promulgated a set of rules and regulations for the governance of its private armed vessels, . . . ; and that it had, in all cases, *as far as practicable*, enjoined and enforced a strict observance of those regulations and the law of nations." Report of Theoderick Bland, November 2, 1818. Manning, I, 386. Italics inserted.

[2]Winder to Monroe, Baltimore, May 3, 1818. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XII (1932), 458–459.

petence, or lack of it. Monroe replied that if Winder took the appointment it would be highly acceptable to the government, particularly to the executive, which would feel free to communicate with him on all subjects interesting to both parties.[1]

Despite the President's encouragement, Winder did not accept the commission, perhaps for the reasons which had led DeForest to suggest to Tagle that a retainer would have been appropriate.[2] Such seems to be the way of lawyers. In declining the honor, he declared that DeForest appeared to have the necessary qualifications, and he promised to aid him with his advice and judgment. He added some lengthy and well stated comments on the attitude of the United States toward Hispanic America, along the lines of the counsel just received from Monroe, and urged the Buenos Aires Government to conserve the advantages of the neutral position of the United States.[3]

On Winder's advice DeForest proceeded immediately to Washington to present his credentials as Consul General. The Worthington agreement had preceded his arrival by several weeks. It had greatly displeased the President. "Dismiss him instantly," he ordered the Secretary of State. "Recall him. Dismiss him! Now, to think what recommendations that man had! Dismiss him at once, and send him the notice of his dismission by every possible channel. Send it to Halsey [the Consul], although Halsey himself is recalled. However, the Commissioners, when they arrived there, will have set all right."[4] Naturally this unauthorized document made Monroe's Government cautious about dealing with DeForest, lest it

[1]Monroe to Winder, Washington, May 11, 1818, *ibid.*

[2]DeForest to Tagle, Baltimore, May 17, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

[3]Winder to Tagle, Baltimore, June 5, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8. Winder sent the President a copy of his reply. Winder to Monroe, Baltimore, July 23, 1818, in Johnson Collection of the Monroe Papers, Library of Congress. Miss Mary M. Kenway, in printing this exchange of letters between Monroe and Winder, notes a calendar in the Library of Congress of Monroe Papers still in private hands, which contains a copy of the letter of June 5, 1818, to Tagle.

[4]*Memoirs* of J. Q. Adams, March 28, 1818.

thereby sanction the agreement and recognize out of hand the independence of the Buenos Aires Government.

On May 7, 1818, the Secretary of State received DeForest, whose credentials rested on this unauthorized instrument.

"Under existing circumstances," Adams explained, after the usual exchange of amenities, "it has not been thought prudent to recognize the Government of Buenos Aires. Further, the supposed treaty which Mr. Worthington assumed to make is without any authority and has not been approved by the President. Consequently we cannot receive you formally in your character of Consul General, but you are at liberty to seat yourself down in any part of the United States and to act in your official character in the same manner as if you were received in due form. You may correspond with this Department and you will receive all proper attentions and respect from the Government."

"All the Americans in Buenos Aires think Mr. Worthington's treaty very ridiculous," responded DeForest, "done solely with a view to making himself seem important; but he will doubtless make a similar treaty in Chile."

"Since a Consul from this country has been appointed to Buenos Aires," he observed further, "the Director, Mr. Pueyrredón, thought there would be no difficulty in receiving one here. I myself am a citizen of the United States, and have returned to remain here. I have no intention ever to go back to South America. I didn't ask for my appointment; it was given to me in order to prevent irregularities like those which have been committed by privateers under the flag of Buenos Aires, which the Director highly disapproves. After all, mine is only a mercantile agency. It can't be considered in the same light as one of a political nature. Shall I show you my commission? Or, if I apply in writing for an *exequatur*, shall I receive an answer?"

"It will be unnecessary to write," said the Secretary. "It would be more consistent with delicacy if we understand each other orally. But if you prefer to write, I will answer you to the same effect as what I now tell you."

"I shall accept with pleasure," replied DeForest, "the acknowledgment made, though informal, and hope that the relations of the two countries may, ere long, be placed on a more intimate footing."

"I want to say further," he declared, doubtless referring to Aguirre's ill-advised protests over the occupation of Amelia Island, "that I am confident that the government of South America[1] is not disposed to urge any point which might be disagreeable to this government, and so I shall be studiously cautious not to take any step calculated to embarrass its measures."

"Does your commission interfere with Mr. Aguirre's?" asked Adams.

"No. Mr. Aguirre's commission is merely to procure arms and naval stores, and an armed vessel. He has no authority to ask for the acknowledgment of his government and he knew it was not the wish of the Director to press this government upon that subject. Other persons here have instigated him to do that."

"Will it be all right for me to see the President?" he inquired at the end of the interview.

"I have no doubt it will be," said Adams. "I shall mention your wish to him tomorrow morning. No doubt if you call at the house you will be received."[2]

In this first interview DeForest had masked the real

[1]The phrases "United Provinces of the Río de la Plata," "United Provinces of South America," "Government of South America," etc., were all used with little distinction, to designate the Government of Buenos Aires; but Adams, later in December, urged DeForest that a government should have a fixed and appropriate name. He did not recall the various analogous differing terminologies through which the United States of America had confirmed its official name.

[2]I have reconstructed this interview from the account in J. Q. Adams' *Memoirs* for that date and from DeForest to Tagle, Baltimore, May 17, 1818, *supra*. For the benefit of the critical student, I wish to explain that remarks above put into quotations, and not found in the *Memoirs*, are taken from DeForest's despatch. The two accounts do not disagree, but rather supplement each other. DeForest, however, includes all conversation as of the interview of May 7.

object of his mission: to seek recognition; to give out letters of marque; to look for a privateering base. He ventured a little further in another conversation the next day. Of course, he did not reveal his instructions to take possession of some island as a base for privateering operations.

"If the Government of Buenos Aires should send an expedition to take Florida," he asked Adams outright, "would the Government of the United States take any measure to prevent it?"

"The same law by which we took possession of Amelia Island applies in such a contingency to all Florida," the Secretary answered emphatically. "It has been in existence ever since 1815 [*sic*], and it expressly provides that no foreign power be permitted to take possession of that province or of any part of it. The United States have a claim upon it for indemnities which have long been due from Spain, and they cannot suffer it should be taken out of their hands by a third party."

"The Government of Buenos Aires had no concern in the late transactions at Amelia Island," DeForest vouchsafed, "and were entirely satisfied with the steps taken there by the United States. But the possession of a port in the Gulf of Mexico would be of great importance to them as a means of annoyance to Spain, and unless they can take Florida they can have no port upon the Gulf to which their privateers can resort."

"Congress passed its law without any intention to injure the interests of Buenos Aires," replied Adams; "while it remains in force the President is bound to execute it. The Commissioners to South America have been instructed to give every suitable explanation upon that subject. No doubt they have done so at Buenos Aires."

DeForest decided to let his reception as Consul General rest, for the time being at least, upon these conversations with Adams, without any further ex-

change of notes. He then went to the President's house, where he was received in the most friendly fashion. Monroe assured him that he regretted most sincerely the causes which prevented a formal recognition, and hoped that these would soon be removed. He observed to DeForest (what he wrote in answer to Winder): the world was in such a state that much caution was necessary; all that could be done at this moment was to place relations with Buenos Aires upon an equal footing with Spain.[1]

After these discreet beginnings, DeForest decided to wait until the next session of Congress before doing anything more. Perhaps coached by Aguirre, whom he visited in New York, he had discovered that the great question of South American independence had become much mixed up in the party politics of the United States. He returned to Baltimore and proceeded on a tour of the north and east.[2] At New Haven he seated himself and family down to make their home. On the northwest corner of Church and Elm Streets, fronting the Green, he started to build a pretentious house. By the opening of Congress in November, 1818, he was again in Washington, with his attractive young wife, for the winter season. He hoped that the return of the Commissioners from Buenos Aires, and the increasing public sympathy for the South American revolutionists, might precipitate a move in Congress for recognition. He conferred with Henry Clay, leader of the opposition.

President Monroe by now had his mind almost made up for recognition. But the divided reports of the Commissioners cast much doubt on the stability of the Buenos Aires Government. John Quincy Adams felt that this afforded ample reason for going slow. The negotiation with Onís was at last offering some promise of success for the acquisition of Florida and

[1]DeForest to Tagle, Baltimore, May 17, 1818. *Supra.* DeForest, writing even a week later, places the interview with the President as May 9. Adams notes it in his *Memoirs* as May 8, but says nothing of the conversation.

[2]DeForest to Tagle, Boston, August 20, 1818.

expansion of the western frontier. Another reason impelling Adams to delay action was the mediation then under way by the European allies between Spain and her revolted colonies. "It is our true policy to let this experiment fail," he noted, "without attempting to disturb it, which might unnecessarily give offense to the allies; and after it shall have failed, as fail it must, we shall then be at perfect liberty to recognize any of the South American Governments without coming into collision with the allies."[1] Adams resolutely refused, meanwhile, to make any bargain with Spain not to recognize the independence of the revolted colonies as a price for Onís' signature of the treaty that was expected to yield the coveted Florida and a new frontier line through to the other ocean. At the same time, upon Monroe's impulsion, he went through the motions of requesting France and Great Britain to unite with the United States in recognizing the revolted provinces. This would consume time. If accepted, contrary to Adams' expectation, so much the better.

DeForest, after talking with Clay, was now determined to push the Government to acknowledge him formally,[2] and to get his representations into writing, so that Congress could call for the record, and it could be thus printed for popular appeal. After a written solicitation to the Secretary of State, he appeared at the Department for a long conference, on December 14, 1818. Again the Secretary explained that the President thought the time had not yet come for such a formal recognition as would be signalized by an *exequatur* to him as Consul General. At the proper time, however, acknowledgment "would not be withheld," although any recognition by the United States would not decide the extent of territory claimed by Buenos Aires, such as the *Banda Oriental,* Santa Fé,

[1] J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs,* November 7, 1818.

[2] DeForest to Tagle, December 12, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8. DeForest to Adams, December 9, 1818. Manning, I, 515.

and Paraguay, where separatist movements had gained headway.

It was now agreed that the substance of this should be recorded in notes passed between the two men.[1] This was done, and the Secretary added another note protesting against the excesses and irregularities of Buenos Aires privateers and their violation of the neutrality laws.[2] Adams suspected that DeForest himself was commissioning privateers, but could not prove it.[3] We know that he had instructions to do so, and that in the past he had grown rich at that business. Throughout the rest of his life he remained engaged in claims relating to his privateers and agencies for others.[4]

In the interview of the 14th, DeForest had asked if it would be proper to appear at the President's drawing room. He met no objection. On Christmas Day he and his wife presented themselves.

DeForest was very proud of the impression made by his wife at this *soirée*. He wrote to his little daughter, Pastora, back in Connecticut, that mamma had been the most elegantly dressed woman of all. People had admired her so much that papa was afraid of losing her. "She was called the Buenos Aires beauty, and a great many people thought she was a native of that, your native country. May you excel your mother in everything, my little Darling."[5]

The Spanish Minister did not share this pride. He had been horrified to discover himself at the same meeting with such people. A despatch of his in the Spanish archives dutifully describes his official embarrassment:

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[1]The interview is recorded by both men, without any substantial discrepancies: in Adams' *Memoirs*, December 14, 1818, and in DeForest to Tagle, Georgetown, December 18, 1818. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

[2]Adams to DeForest, January 1, 1819. Manning, I, 88.

[3]J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*.

[4]His attorney was Judge David Daggett of New Haven. In the Daggett papers at Yale University Library there are a few letters from DeForest about privateering matters. The DeForest Letterbooks have more of such matter.

[5]December 30, 1818, cited by J. W. DeForest *op. cit.*, 148, under date of December 30, 1819.

"Last Wednesday, finding myself at what is called here the Drawing Room, where the President and his wife hold court together, I saw rather a nice looking lady in the *salon* beside one of my daughters next to the fireplace, which is the spot of most distinction at this time of the winter. I noticed that she seemed to feel at home, and that a great many people were paying homage to her. When I asked who that person was, I was told that she was Mrs. Forest, the wife of the Consul General of Buenos Aires, and they pointed out to me, near her, an uncouth, rough-looking man, six feet six[1] in height, saying that he was her husband, a millionaire, who a few years ago was a stable-boy in this country. Without saying anything, I immediately picked up my daughters and went home, with the British Minister following after me—although conceivably the latter might not have been leaving for the same reason. This is the second time that I have encountered such gentry in this court. The first was in the time of the previous President, Mr. Madison, when I met up with the famous Gual, who then called himself Minister of Cartagena and Caracas, but having then shown my disgust to people who could suggest to the President that he ought not to return, I didn't see him any more. I don't think this will be the case now, because DeForest enjoys a high degree of protection, above all by Clay's party, and the Government does not care to collide with *him* . . . "[2]

These appreciations are belied by the portrait of DeForest which, with one of his wife, hangs in the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts. Samuel F. B. Morse painted a fine and distinguished gentleman. The "Buenos Aires beauty" appears in the same dress she wore at the President's levée. This portrait makes the husband appear much younger than a second one painted at the same time by Morse, and presented by DeForest to

[1]DeForest was actually 5 feet 11½ inches in height, as shown by his military record. DeForest Letterbooks.

[2]Onís to Casa Irujo, Washington, December 29, 1818. *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid), *Estado, leg.* 5643.

the University of Buenos Aires, on request. It now hangs in the *Museo Nacional* of that capital.

DeForest was waiting for Clay's opposition to manifest itself again in Congress. On January 14, 1819, the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting information whether any independent government in South America had asked for the recognition of a minister or consul general, and what reply had been made. Adams sent in the correspondence he had exchanged with DeForest and with Lino de Clemente of Venezuela. He explained that the Government had refused to have any communication with Clemente because he had been one of those who (with Martin Thompson) had signed the commission to MacGregor to take possession of Amelia Island; as to DeForest, his credentials were imperfect because they rested on Worthington's unauthorized articles; "recognition of him as consul general from the United Provinces of South America could not be granted, either upon the stipulation of supposed articles, which were a nullity, or upon the commission of a credential letter of the Supreme Director, without recognizing thereby the authority from which it emanated as a sovereign and independent Power." Adams made clear his suspicion that DeForest was working with the opposition by pointing out that in the previous May the envoy had declared himself entirely satisfied with his informal reception, but that "shortly after the commencement of the present session of Congress" he had renewed his solicitations.[1]

The Secretary, therefore, preferred to keep DeForest at arm's length. "In this affair everything is insidious and factious," Adams had noted while preparing his statement for Congress to accompany the correspondence. "The call is made for the purpose of baiting the Administration, and especially of fastening upon the

[1]Adams to President Monroe, for transmission to the House of Representatives, Washington, January 28, 1819. Manning, I, 88. Carlos Calvo printed translations of these documents in his *Anales de la revolución de la América Latina* (Buenos Aires, 1867), V, 172–179.

Secretary of State the odium of refusing to receive the South American ministers and consuls general. DeForest's notes are cunning and deceptive."[1]

A happy inspiration enabled the shrewd Secretary of State to break up this collusion with Clay. When DeForest next appeared at the Department, Adams deftly reminded him that he was still a citizen of the United States, and hinted that he was liable to prosecution for violation of the neutrality laws.[2]

The hint was enough. It changed DeForest's attitude immediately. He did not care to face a host of lawsuits, the loss of his curiously gotten fortune, perhaps jail itself. He quickly declared himself entirely satisfied with the friendly disposition of the executive, and became straightway convinced, as he told Adams, that the proceedings of Clay, with whom he admitted having talked, and his supporters, had injured rather than aided the cause of South America. He went back to New Haven and finished his house there and never seriously bothered John Quincy Adams any more. Soon afterward the opposition in Congress was conjured by Adams' magnificent diplomatic victory, the Transcontinental Treaty. Spain had yielded Florida and acknowledged a new frontier from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.

The effect of this triumph was to change Clay's tactics to one of milder opposition to the government: on May 10, 1820, the House of Representatives passed his resolution: "that it is expedient to provide by law a suitable outfit and salary for such Minister or Ministers *as the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may send to the Governments of South America,* which have established and are maintaining, their independence of Spain."[3]

For two years more Monroe's Government postponed recognition. Good pretexts for delay still stood to hand: the confusion of anarchical governments in

[1] *Memoirs* of J. Q. Adams, January 20, 1819.
[2] *Memoirs* of J. Q. Adams, January 22, 1819.
[3] Italics inserted.

Buenos Aires, and the continued depredations of irresponsible privateers bearing the flag of that government. These problems eventually cleared up. The European mediation had collapsed. Spain finally ratified the Transcontinental Treaty (February 22, 1821). A semblance of order emerged from chaos on the banks of the Plata. To satisfy complaints of the United States, the government down there revoked all its commissions to privateers (October 6, 1821). Congress, on February 10, 1821, had passed Clay's resolution of sympathy for the revolted provinces, and endorsed recognition of their independence *whenever the President should decide to act.* Now the way was clear for recognition. On March 8, 1822, President Monroe sent in to an expectant and wholly cooperative Congress a message urging an appropriation to support diplomatic missions to the new states. A bill for that purpose passed almost unanimously, May 4, 1822.

Monroe's message prompted DeForest to the last diplomatic effort of his career. He wrote a letter from New Haven claiming for Buenos Aires the privilege of being the first state to be recognized, with himself as *chargé d'affaires* and Consul General. Adams answered that since he was an American citizen he could not serve as *chargé d'affaires;* to be recognized as Consul General he would need a new commission wholly unrelated to the unauthorized Worthington agreement.[1] The honor of being first went to Colombia. Her tactful agent, Manuel Torres, long a resident of the United States, never made the mistake of collaborating with the opposition in Congress. He had gained the complete confidence of Monroe and Adams. The President received him as *chargé d'affaires* on June 19, 1822. Next came Mexico (December 12, 1822), the Central American Confederation (September 10, 1823), the Empire of Brazil, now separated from personal union with Portugal (May 26, 1824). Formal diplomatic representatives were appointed to the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata (January 27,

[1]Adams to DeForest, Washington, May 23, 1822. Manning, I, 159.

1823), to Chile (January 27, 1823), and Peru (May 2, 1826). The American Minister, Caesar A. Rodney,[1] arrived at Buenos Aires before a Minister had been sent from that republic to the United States; but on October 7, 1824, President Monroe received General Carlos Alvear as Minister from the Buenos Aires Government. In a long and intimate conference, speaking in Spanish, the President reviewed the whole of American policy toward recognition of the revolted provinces, and gave an account of the motives and events that had induced him to proclaim the Monroe Doctrine in the previous December. The friendliness and sincerity of the President, and his venerable appearance, made a lasting impression on Alvear, who returned to Buenos Aires with a conviction that the United States was South America's best friend.[2]

DeForest had already begun in New Haven annual celebrations of the national holiday of the United Provinces, the 25th of May. The first of these was held in 1821, with a dinner and toasts at the County Hotel, and an oration at the County Court House. At seven o'clock in the evening cannon were drawn up in front of DeForest's new mansion, which flew the blue and white flag of Buenos Aires, and a national salute was fired to "a Sister Republic." Later a reception occurred in the DeForest house.[3] This he repeated in 1822.[4]

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[1]Enrique Loudet, *El Primer Diplomático Norteamericano en la República Argentina*, Publicaciones del Instituto Cultural Argentino-Norteamericano (Buenos Aires, junio, 1938).

[2]Mr. Thomas B. Davis, Jr., a graduate student at Yale University, is preparing a doctoral thesis on The Missions of Carlos Alvear to the United States.

[3]*Connecticut Herald* (New Haven), May 29, 1821. See also *Columbian Register*, May 26, 1821.

[4]Under the heading, *The Independence of Buenos Aires*, the *Connecticut Journal* thus described the ceremony:

"On Friday evening of the past week, the birthday of this Sister Republic was suitably commemorated in this city. A large number of the most respectable citizens of New Haven, and gentlemen of both branches of the Legislature, assembled by previous invitation at the elegant mansion of David C. DeForest, who was elected First Consul to the United States by the new government. After the usual congratulations, the company partook of a sumptuous entertainment, and the evening passed with much mutual good feeling, and with the highest gratification which the occasion and the appropriate and elegant preparations could inspire.

Of course he had absolutely no authority to request to be recognized as *chargé d'affaires*, as well as consul general. He had received no communication whatsoever from the Buenos Aires Government since the establishment of the new Rivadavia Government in 1821. That government in 1823 decreed the immediate recall of all outstanding diplomatic or consular commissions. On March 13, Rivadavia wrote to DeForest apprising him of the cessation of his office as Consul General in the United States, and instructing him to send home all of his official papers directly to the government, together with any remaining letters of marque with an explanation of the status of any that he had used.[1]

DeForest received this in New Haven on June 15, and immediately notified Adams of the termination of his functions as "*chargé d'affaires* and consul general." To Rivadavia he replied belatedly that "want of a convenient opportunity" prevented him from acknowledging the notice of his dismissal until September 7. It may be suspected that he was playing for time, hesitating to entrust to ordinary conveyance his official archives, documents so highly compromising to him as a citizen of the United States. He therefore awaited a suitable occasion to send them by a con-

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"The following poem was written for the occasion, and read at the close of the entertainment with unmingled applause. We need not add that it is from the pen of the inimitable Percival:

"Hail to the land of the free and the bold,
Where Honour and Justice have planted their throne,
Where the hearts of the meanest can never be sold,
And Order and Liberty reign there alone.
Hail to the souls that can never be slaves,
Who boast of the rights they have won by the sword,
Who fight for their forefathers' altars and graves
And soar, as the eagle, who rescued them, soar'd."

J. W. DeForest, *op. cit.*, 152.

[1]Bernardino Rivadavia al Sr. David C. DeForest, March 13, 1823. *Documentos para la historia Argentina*, XIV, *Correspondencias generales de la Provincia de Buenos Aires relativas a relaciones exteriores*, Emilio Ravignani, editor (Buenos Aires, *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras*, 1921).

fidential person. In his last letter of September 7, 1823, DeForest said that the notice of March 12 was the only communication received from the Government of Buenos Aires since the establishment of the present administration; moreover, that government had not acknowledged receipt of any communications from him, "of which I have made many, most of them in triplicate. Nor does it intimate to me how and when I am to be rewarded for my services during the time I have been in their employ." This farewell epistle, nevertheless, closed on a note of good will: "With my best wishes for the happiness of Buenos Aires, I have the honor to remain . . . David C. DeForest."[1]

The first recognized Minister from Buenos Aires, Carlos Alvear, had instructions to secure DeForest's official archives and bring them home. The latter invited Alvear to New Haven, but the Minister did not come. Thereupon DeForest sent to him in New York three packets of unused letters-of-marque and privateering commissions, and two old surrendered, used commissions, together with the exchanges of notes with John Quincy Adams.[2]

He never forgot his foster-country, the scene of his early adventures, the source of his fortune. His home on the Green in New Haven is remembered for the public celebrations of the 25th of May. In the basement of the new house the brawny man from Buenos Aires had placed a marble tablet, engraved on both sides. On one side was an injunction to future owners of the house always to observe with befitting ceremony

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[1]DeForest to Rivadavia, New Haven, September 7, 1823. *Archivo General de la Nación* (Buenos Aires), S1–A2–A4, No. 8.

[2]DeForest Letterbooks. DeForest did not surrender his private letterbooks in which he had entered copies of all his official despatches. I have not located any letters *received* by DeForest, such as his signed instructions, drafts of which I read in Buenos Aires. Comparison with DeForest's own letterbooks shows that the despatches from him which accumulated in Buenos Aires, and are now preserved in the *Archivo General de la Nación*, are fairly complete.

the anniversary of the 25th of May.[1] On the other side was a legend, like that of a tombstone, recording the names with dates and places of birth, of David Curtis DeForest, his wife and five children (the last born in New Haven). The "Don," as wondering New Haveners dubbed him became a benefactor of Yale College. He was able himself to celebrate only one more *veinte-cinco de Mayo*, before he died from a sudden pneumonia on the 22d of February, 1825. The "elegant house" remained fronting the New Haven Green until 1910 when it was torn down to make place for the present County Court House.

V

What may we conclude from such light on this great movement for emancipation as is thrown by a study of the early missions from Buenos Aires to the United States?

Inevitably the analogy of French policy toward the

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[1]To the owner of this House.
David C. DeForest,
A native citizen of Huntington in
this state; and at present Consul
General of the United Provinces of
South America, of which Buenos
Ayres is the Capital, where he
resided for many years; and
assisted in establishing its
Independence. greeting.
I have caused this
beautiful building to be erected
for your use, as well as mine; &
have taken much pains to accom
odate you, for which you will
never pay; & being no relative of
mine, I demand; that you assemble
your friends together on every
25th day of May in honor of
the Independence of South
America; it being on that day
in the year 1810. that the
Inhabitants of
Buenos Ayres
established a free Government
New Haven. 1820
David Hoadley, Arch't.
Horace Butler, Mason D. Ritter, Sculp.

revolted English colonies of North America suggests itself to the student of the diplomatic history of the United States. In receiving with sympathetic encouragement the agents of the Latin American countries, in opening its ports to their flag, in permitting the export of all kinds of goods, including war materials, the United States recognized the belligerency of the new states, even before formal announcement by the proclamation of neutrality in 1815. It manifested a benevolent patience at the violation of its neutrality laws—public opinion would scarcely have permitted any other attitude on this score—and thereby ran its risks with Spain. This sympathy, stemming from a common ideology, and strengthening that ideology against the restoration of the legitimate monarchical model from Europe, and this source of armament and depot for marine operations, were certainly of significant aid to the cause of emancipation in the remainder of the New World to the south. Here the United States stopped. It did not go as far as France during the North American Revolution; it did not furnish war material from its own arsenals under any guise; it did not, finally, recognize independence before the issue was determined, nor make an alliance with any of the new states to enter the war for the purpose of breaking up the Spanish Empire, as did France in the case of Britain's great colonial war. It stood aside and let the Spanish Empire of Spain fall of its own weight and decrepitude. It allowed its republican example, its lively sympathy, and the succors of its neutrality to stream out to South America within the law of nations.

There was little else that the United States could have done that would have been practical or more helpful. From 1812 to 1815 the nation was at war with Great Britain. After 1815 Europe was restored in force on the formula of legitimacy and avowedly favorable to a restoration of Spanish sovereignty in the New World. Until 1819 it was not possible for

John Quincy Adams to know surely whether the Holy Alliance would compel by mediation the return of Spanish legitimacy in America; he looked for first light on this question from Great Britain, and until 1818 Castlereagh kept him in the dark. Until then Adams could not be sure that recognition by the United States of the independence of Buenos Aires would not be regarded by one or more of the European powers as an act of hostility. If by involving itself in the Spanish American revolutions the United States had foolishly gone to war again in these years, immediately after its recent foolish war with Great Britain, it would have corresponded neither with national interests clearly seen nor with the welfare of the revolted provinces emotionally envisioned. On the contrary: as the warm-hearted James Monroe and the cool-headed John Quincy Adams both understood, it would have cut off the one great neutral storehouse and asylum of republicanism available to the revolted communities.

A universally respected British historian, in a masterly introduction to the very recent publication of selected official documents on *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, concludes that without British diplomatic aid and the assistance of British volunteers in the patriot armies and navies, independence would have taken longer to achieve and have been more costly to Latin America. This may be true. He further insists that the United States contributed nothing more than the force of its republican example: both the example of its original successful revolution against Great Britain, and the persistent visability of its healthy republican life during the period under discussion. The same authority concludes—and to this historians of whatever nationality will certainly agree—that their independence was won by the Latin Americans themselves. We beg, however, to challenge his comparison of the policies of Great Britain and of the United States toward Latin America.

If the United States had done no more than by its

example to keep republicanism alive in the New World while it was being extinguished in Europe it would have merited well of Latin America; such service in itself far outranks that of British diplomacy on this side of the water. But the United States contributed more than the force of its example. In any comparison of the United States and Great Britain in action and policy *vis-a-vis* Latin America from 1810 to 1824, certain strong lights appear on the broad highway of history:

(1) Against the British mercenaries who served heroically in the cause of liberty in South America we may balance the North American adventurers who manned the privateers of Buenos Aires and other states; the activities of both groups were frowned upon by the laws of their own countries.

(2) Great Britain prohibited exports of arms and ammunition to the patriots; the United States allowed it.

(3) Great Britain closed her ports to the flag of Buenos Aires and of the other new states; the United States opened its ports to them.

(4) Great Britain did not recognize the belligerency of the new states until the very last phase of their struggle left no other choice; the United States recognized their belligerency at once, eleven years before Great Britain did.

(5) The efforts of British diplomacy were directed primarily toward the restoration of Spanish sovereignty over the revolted colonies until the patriots by their own efforts had made this impossible; then Great Britain, as the next best choice, worked for the establishment of independent monarchies in the New World under European princes, and achieved this in the one notable instance of Brazil. North American diplomacy actively endeavored to concert, particularly with Great Britain, a recognition by the principal powers of the independence of the new republics. British diplomacy shrank from such a concert, and finally recognized the independence of those republics only after recognition

by the United States, two years earlier, had made it impossible to do otherwise and retain any influence in Latin America. The big test of the essence of policy was when in 1823 George Canning invited the United States to join in a declaration against intervention by Europe in the New World. The United States was willing,—if Great Britain would at the same time recognize the independence of the new republics. Even then Great Britain refused to do so. In the last analysis, that is the one supreme fact in any comparison of British policy with that of the United States toward the independence of Latin America. Finally, the Monroe Doctrine, proclaimed as a result of Britain's reluctance to recognize, was not only a hands-off-the-New World sign to Europe; it was a proclamation of faith in republicanism in the New World and distrust of monarchy in the Old World.

The new states won their independence by their own efforts. For this more glory to their history. In the great *epopeya* of emancipation, all the neutral powers were following primarily their own interests, as every sincere and self-respecting nation ought to do within the law; but the national interests of the United States, freed from the diplomacy of the Old World, coincided more closely with those of the new states than did those of Great Britain with its unescapable commitments to the continent of Europe. The benevolently neutral policy of the United States was of more assistance to the revolutionists of South America than could have been its belligerency in a formal alliance, since it lacked control of the sea; that benevolent neutrality, it is submitted, was more helpful to the cause of emancipation than was Britain's partiality to Spain. And the beacon-light of successful republicanism held aloft in the New World helped to deter the new states from being guided by British diplomacy into the realms of European monarchical legitimacy, that shadowed vestibule leading back to the power-politics of the Old World.