A HISTORY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

JOSÉ DE SAN MARTÍN

From the engraving published by the Archivo General de la Nación Argentina

A HISTORY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

BY

F. A. KIRKPATRICK, M.A.

Reader in Spanish in the University of Cambridge
Corresponding Member of the Junta de
Historia y Numismática Americana

With an Introduction by

HAROLD TEMPERLEY, LITT.D., F.B.A.

Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1931

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107455610

First published 1931
First paperback edition 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-45561-0 Paperback

DEDICATED

by permission

WITH GREAT RESPECT

TO

H.R.H.

THE PRINCE OF WALES

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAITS

MAPS

PREFACE

THIS book is, in the first place, intended as an attempt to interpret to English readers the history of the Argentine people, and in some degree to interpret the character of that people as illustrated by their history: with a view to a better understanding, an endeavour is made throughout to present the Argentine rather than the European point of view, to examine matters from within rather than from an external standpoint. A second object is, by means of a Spanish version, to make known to Argentine readers the sympathetic interest with which the astonishing advance of their nation from its first small beginnings is viewed in England.

Englishmen have made a notable contribution to that advance. The material side of their contribution is fairly familiar: English capital invested in Argentina exceeds five hundred millions sterling; three-fourths of the railways are British; and Englishmen have played their part in the development of the land; 'Hereford', 'Shorthorn', 'Durham', 'Lincoln', 'Romney Marsh', are everyday names on the lips of Argentines. This tangible and material work of the British has had an influence which is much more than material. The services rendered to the country by the Royal Mail Steampacket Company during its century of active life are such as cannot be measured by statistics. The railways have furthered political union, peace and order; the English estanciero has brought with him a long tradition of cultured country life. Dr Alejandro Bunge, the distinguished Argentine economist, bears emphatic testimony to the influence exercised upon Argentine life by the high standard of integrity which has prevailed in commercial intercourse with the British.

But there is another and a wider aspect of intercourse with Great Britain. The connexion between the two countries has been singularly intimate ever since the British invasions of 1806–7. Those invasions, which were attacks upon Spain as the ally of Napoleon, left no resentment behind them. On the contrary, the combatants learned to know and esteem one another. Three years after the close of that episode, when an independent Government was set up in Buenos Aires, the British merchantships anchored in the river were dressed with flags; British warships, similarly flag-dressed, fired a salute, and British naval officers landed to take a prominent part in the official celebrations. One of the first acts of the new Government was to send an emissary to England, and the amity of Great Britain both during and after the struggle for emancipation was the leading factor in the relations between Argentina and Europe. The generous policy of Canning has never been forgotten in the River Plate; and the Treaty concluded with Great Britain in 1825 is a notable landmark in the early history of the Republic. Individual Englishmen also played their part as volunteers in the struggle for independence; and the many books written by English travellers in the River Plate in the early days bear witness to much intelligent intercourse.

Relations of this kind have continued and developed throughout the hundred and twenty years of Argentine independence. A visible and picturesque example of the fact is furnished by the prevalence of English games and sports. 'You English', remarked an official of the Pan-American Union to the present writer, 'have done a wonderful work in introducing football into Argentina.' And he went on to emphasise the value of the game in the formation of character and in the education of youth.

But Englishmen, in characteristic fashion, have not talked much about themselves. They have made little deliberate effort to make known to the Argentines the literature, the art and the culture of Great Britain. Whereas in the United States, in France and in Germany voluntary societies and official organisations vie with one another in cultivating social and intellectual as well as commercial relations with Argentina, any movement of the kind in England is recent and occasional. While from those countries men of science, professors, lecturers and public men make frequent visits to Argentina, it is rare, if not unknown, to hear of such visitors from Great Britain. Yet any effort of this kind is welcomed, as is shown by the numbers who visited the exhibition of modern English art which was held in Buenos Aires in 1928.

The present book is meant as a small contribution towards filling the want. Its inception and production are due to Sir Malcolm Robertson, who was the first British Ambassador to the Argentine Republic; to Dr José Evaristo Uriburu, the first Argentine Ambassador at the Court of St James'; to Mr H. Reincke and to a group of Englishmen and Argentines who desire that the two countries shall be better known to each other. The character of their intentions is best indicated by the fact that they turned to the University of Cambridge for the accomplishment of those intentions.

A compendium which attempts to comprise in one volume the history of four centuries obviously can lay little claim to extensive research, and must be chiefly based upon the work of Argentine historians. But considerable use has been made of published documents; the third chapter, dealing with a period which has received less attention from historians, is based largely

on documents published by the Archivo General de la Nación Argentina and by the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas. A special debt of gratitude is due to the Director of the latter institution, Professor Emilio Ravignani, and to his colleagues, Señor Cánter and Señor Caillet-Bois. These three historians not only placed at the writer's disposal their collection of printed and manuscript materials, but were always ready to impart, with free generosity, the results of their own researches. The late Señor Mallié, Director of the National Archives, was no less generous in his anxiety to help—particularly in the gift, on behalf of the nation, of all the printed publications of the Archives, which are now to become the property of the Cambridge University Library. The Director of the National Historical Museum, Dr Antonio Dellepiane, spared no pains in showing the collection committed to his charge, and added a gift of his own publications.

Warm thanks are due, for gifts of books and for valuable help and advice, to Dr Ramón C. Cárcano, formerly Governor of Córdoba; to Professor Ricardo Rojas, at that time Rector of the University of Buenos Aires; to Professor Luis Terán, Rector of the University of Tucumán; to Señor Ricardo Freyre, Counsellor of the same University; to Monseñor Pablo Cabrera, Director of the Historical Museum of Córdoba; to Dr Mariano Vedia y Mitre and to Dr Correa Luna. Cordial acknowledgment must be made to Dr Ricardo Levene, President of the Junta de Historia y Numismática, and to his colleagues for their sympathy and encouragement, and also to the Jockey Club of Buenos Aires for permitting the use of their fine Library.

Sir Herbert Gibson was unstinted in placing at the writer's disposal his exceptional knowledge of Argentine and Anglo-

Argentine conditions, in searching out information and facilitating enquiries; he was kind enough to read the proofs of the earlier chapters and made many valuable suggestions. In the passages relating to British and European diplomacy Professor Temperley has freely given help and advice.

Finally the writer is much indebted to the hospitality of the State Railways and of the various British Railway Companies. The managers and officials of those railways, in various parts of the Republic, spared no pains in smoothing travel and in aiding enquiry. The Mihanovich Navigation Company, whose steamboats ply upon the great rivers, were equally generous; as also were the Forestal and the Liebig Companies.

It is impossible to acknowledge individually and by name all the help and encouragement which were accorded to the writer in the Argentine Republic, particularly in the University towns of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Tucumán. The conclusion can only be a comprehensive word of gratitude and of pleasant memories.

F. A. K.

20th November 1930

GEORGE CANNING

From a miniature by E. Scotney, by kind permission of The Earl of Harewood

INTRODUCTION

OVER twenty years ago I was talking at Cambridge over Argentine affairs with one who, even then, was a leader of thought and literature of Latin America, and has since attained great eminence in both. Dr Ricardo Rojas talked with me as to the best method of getting Englishmen and Argentines to understand one another. We could think of no better one than of setting the historians and writers of both countries to study one another and thus sustain and promote cultural intercourse. In this connexion I called the attention of Dr Rojas to two chapters in volume x of *The Cambridge Modern History* which dealt with the wars of independence in Spanish America. We spent the best hours of one Sunday reading them together. At the end both agreed that the author ought to write the *History of the Argentine Republic*. After more than twenty years, the writer, Mr F. A. Kirkpatrick, has at last realised this dream. To write such a book it was necessary to have an intimate acquaintance with the Spanish language and literature, an eye for nature trained by travel in South America, and a comprehensive knowledge of the many specialised works of Argentine historical scholarship. The book bears traces of all these, and is one which should appeal to Argentines and Englishmen alike.

If there is one part of the story on which the author touches a little lightly, it is that of the circumstances attending upon England's recognition of the Argentine Republic. This is quite right, for the aim of the author is to display the Argentine Republic from within rather than from without. But it will perhaps justify me in devoting some attention to that decision, which is inseparably associated with the name of George Canning. The reputa-

tion of that statesman is nowhere higher than in Latin America, and the reason is that he was the political godfather of that continent and introduced it into the 'Comity of Nations'.

The recognition of young States was then comparatively a novelty, so that Canning was laying down principles not only for the moment, but for posterity. It is no small tribute to his genius that the doctrine of recognition has changed so little since his day. The view then current on the Continent of Europe, at a time when despots still governed Russia, Austria, Spain and Prussia, was that no recognition should ever be accorded to a revolting State if it called itself a republic. The view adopted by Canning was that it was political stability, not one or other political form, which mattered. All his views had the same massive simplicity. If a district like the Argentine Republic had in fact maintained its independence of Spain for some years, it was absurd for nations to go on saying that it had not. Portugal had indeed recognised the independence of the Argentine Republic in 1821, and the United States in 1822, but—strange as it may seem to-day—the United States was not then very important in the eyes of Europe. Also the United States was a republic, and had an interest in recognising other republics, which England had not. The decision as to the admission of a State into the 'Comity of Nations' has in fact always been determined by the decision of a Power of first importance. Consequently the United States' recognition had produced little effect in Europe. Far more excitement had been shown at some tentative steps taken by Lord Castlereagh in 1822. He had relaxed the Navigation Acts, and had allowed ships bearing the Argentine flag to enter British ports. That was a recognition of a commercial flag, but the establishment of consuls (the final

stage in commercial recognition) was still not granted. But Castlereagh, just before he took his own life in August 1822, had stated that recognition of South American States in the future was a matter to be decided by 'time and circumstance' and that it was no longer dependent upon principle. This was the position when Canning became Foreign Secretary.

On November 8, 1822, Canning wrote to Wellington at Verona: 'Every day convinces me more and more that in the present state of the (Spanish) Peninsula and in the present state of the country, the American questions are out of all proportion more important to us than the European, and that, if we do not seize them and turn them to our advantage, we shall rue the loss of an opportunity, never, never to be recovered.'

In April 1823 a French army invaded Spain. After occupying Madrid, the French reached the last Spanish stronghold at Cadiz, and this news brought Canning on the scene. On October 10, 1823 (the day that he heard that the French had entered Cadiz), he accredited consuls to the chief towns of Spanish America, thus affording them full commercial recognition. It is an interesting fact that he immediately despatched Commissions of Inquiry to Colombia and Mexico, to report on the question of how far they were politically stable enough to justify diplomatic recognition. He took no such step towards the Government of Buenos Aires, for he had long known that she had in fact already won her independence of Spain and was politically stable enough for his purposes.

If the Pyrenees had been passed by the French, they would not be suffered to cross the Atlantic. If Old Spain was to be occupied by Frenchmen, Canning would not allow them in the New World. In October 1823 his interview with Polignac (as men-

tioned on p. 135) caused France to renounce any project of intervention by force in Spanish America. But attempts were made early in 1824 to call a European Congress to discuss Spain's relation to her Colonies. Canning declined to join this Conference, intimating that the question of the independence of the Spanish Colonies was decided and, if Europe could settle such things independently of England on the land, she would not do so across the sea. To make quite clear his resolve to resist by force European aggression in Spanish America, he published in March 1824 the Memorandum of his conference with Polignac.

This, of course, fitted in with 'the Monroe Doctrine'—wherein on December 2, 1823, President Monroe declared the United States could not view with indifference the attempt of a European Power (other than Spain) to intervene in South America by force. The publication of Polignac's Memorandum in March 1824 made clear that England would resist any such attempts by force, but discussions during 1824–5 in Washington revealed that the United States would not commit itself to so strong a declaration but would judge of each such attempt as occasion arose. Whether there was, in fact, any real danger from France or Russia is questionable to-day, though a certain ultra-loyalist party in France was undoubtedly anxious to intervene. But the reality of the danger was believed in at the time, and Latin America was grateful to Canning for his bold stand.

Canning's Consul-General, Woodbine Parish, started for Buenos Aires in January 1824. He carried with him not only commercial instructions but a copy of the Polignac Memorandum for publication in Buenos Aires, and three gold snuff-boxes bearing the portrait of King George IV. He subsequently sent for more snuff-boxes, and for a number of framed portraits of His

Majesty, which were duly distributed. These matters are not trivial, for they show that Canning was determined to make clear to the South American States his power to defend them at need, and at the same time to familiarise them with the idea of relations with a monarchical State. In March 1824, as already mentioned, the Polignac Memorandum was broadcast to the world. In April Canning tried a last negotiation with Spain to get her to recognise the independence of her colonies. On its failure he determined to recognise them himself. One of them—the States of the Río de la Plata—stood first both in importance and stability. Even his colleagues who were most opposed to recognition of republics admitted that. Accordingly on July 23, 1824, the British Cabinet decided to negotiate a commercial treaty with Buenos Aires and forwarded instructions and a full-power for the purpose to Parish, the Consul-General. The negotiation of a successful treaty was a foregone conclusion. Woodbine Parish signed the treaty at Buenos Aires on February 2, 1825, and received the ratification of the Government of the States of the Río de la Plata on the 19th. In doing so, he referred publicly to 'this event, which places you (the United States of the Río de la Plata) in the rank of the nations recognised in the World'. Canning, in a rather conservative vein, preferred to make diplomatic recognition depend upon ratification of the Treaty by England.[1] Even that did not take long. Early in May all sorts of rumours about South America began to fill the air in England. The text of the Argentine Treaty got out to the British public, through 'an extraordinary channel', on May 5. The formalities of exchange

[1] This was rather a pedantic view. In fact, recognition was accorded by the mere fact of the signature of a Treaty between a representative of England and one of the States of the Río de la Plata.

of ratifications were completed in London on May 12. On May 16 Canning laid the Argentine Treaty, in the form of a Parliamentary Paper, on the table of the House of Commons, when, we are told, it was received 'with loud applause'. The only comment was, however, that of Sir Robert Wilson, a veteran champion of liberty, who said that a free air was at last breathed in Latin America.[1]

It has been worth while to recount these stages in some detail, because the question of the recognition of other South American States took a stormier course. In the middle of December 1824 the Prime Minister (Lord Liverpool) and Canning both sent in their resignations to the King in order to enforce recognition of the independence of Mexico and Colombia. This step caused their colleagues (including the Chancellor Eldon and the Duke of Wellington) to give way, and the victory was won. King George IV still resisted. He argued that the decision over Buenos Aires had been commercial, not diplomatic, and that in any case it did not carry the other States. But events had gone too far, and on the last day of December 1824 Canning issued a circular to the different European Governments, and a formal despatch to Spain, intimating that commercial treaties would be negotiated with Colombia and Mexico which, when severally ratified, would confer diplomatic recognition on those two countries. Buenos Aires was also mentioned in this despatch as about to receive recognition. It was of course to take months before any treaties could be negotiated with Colombia and Mexico.

On February 2, far away in Buenos Aires, the Treaty securing the recognition of the Argentine Republic, and indeed that of

[1] These details are from the *Star*, the only newspaper which bears traces of inspiration from Canning's entourage.

the other States, too, had already been signed. On that very day in England, the intention of recognising the New World was proclaimed in the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament. The King had reluctantly accepted the decision and pleaded the gout as a reason for not delivering his own speech in person. Ironically enough it was delivered by Eldon—the Chancellor—the greatest opponent of Spanish-American republics. Canning, who had 'called the New World into existence', stood humbly among the crowd of other listening commoners. The storm of indignation this recognition provoked from the Spanish King, from the French Government, from the Emperors of Russia and Austria, was a measure of the services rendered by England to the New World. It will be seen, however, that Buenos Aires enjoyed the peculiar advantage of being recognised without hesitation or dispute. It was the first State to whom overtures involving recognition were made, and its actual recognition preceded that of Colombia by six months and that of Mexico by two years.

The only question that arose was not over the emancipation of Buenos Aires from Spain, nor was it over the question of her political stability as such. Canning had taken that for granted, but in his instructions to Parish of August 23, 1824, he still asked for information 'as to the power of the Government of Buenos Ayres to bind by its Stipulations with a Foreign State, all the Members of the Confederacy constituting the United States of Río de la Plata'. He drew the 'full power' and instructions on the assumption that such a federative union existed and informed Parish that he was not to negotiate the treaty save on that assumption. It was at least partly due to these instructions that the several States of the Río de la Plata moved towards

union and that the law of the Congress (January 24, 1825) placed power in the hands of the Government of Buenos Aires. So here again Canning proved a benefactor.[1] A trace of this uncertainty is however preserved in the letter of King George of January 28, 1826 (the first Royal Letter addressed to any Spanish-American State). He addresses the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata directly as 'Our Good Friends'.[2] The King saluted 'the States' as individuals.

It was perhaps difficult to discover the formal sovereign. Such anomalies existed both in the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Swiss Confederation, who were formerly addressed in the same way.

Canning selected a Minister of the rank of peer (Lord Ponsonby) as a special compliment to Buenos Aires and sent him out by instruction of February 28, 1826. He was to visit Brazil (which had an Emperor) on the way, but was specially instructed that England had no 'partiality for existing (i.e. monarchical) institutions'.

'We stand not upon a preference for this or that form of government with which (whatever may be our speculative opinions) we have practically no concern, but . . . upon the broad general principle of non-interference with the internal institutions of other States.'[2]

It is worth while examining what the doctrine of 'non-intervention' meant. For, at the time that England recognised the

[1] References to the records are unnecessary, as most of these details are in F. L. Paxson, *The Independence of the South American Republics*, Philadelphia (1916), pp. 232–41.

[2] Public Record Office, F.O. 118/6: instructions to Lord Ponsonby, encl. to Sir C. Stuart, No. 41 of Dec. 28, 1825.

States of Buenos Aires, of Colombia and of Mexico, they were weak enough. They might, very probably, have been influenced or induced to depend on a strong and wealthy State, like the British Empire. They could have, perhaps, been put into tutelage by a system of loans, which would have permitted interference with their internal institutions, or promoted a perpetual economic penetration. To all these methods Canning was in principle and in practice opposed. He wished the States of the Río de la Plata to be free, happy and rich, and he thought that the best way to enable them to become all three was to leave them alone.

These principles triumphed and it is significant that, since Canning's recognition, the most serious trouble that ever arose between England and the Argentine was over the Falkland Isles, that being a dispute inherited from old Spanish days. The principles of Canning were so exactly suited to an intercourse between a strong, mature state and a rising, infant one, just because they rested on a solid basis of common interest. Canning had renounced political influence to promote commercial intercourse, and the bargain held. Relations could be safe and amity could be lasting since no attempt at interference was made by the stronger Power, and because there was no threat of external force. These principles have remained and the best proof of it lies in the fact that even Lord John Russell, one of the most aggressive of our Foreign Secretaries, maintained them. When the question of the revolt of Buenos Aires came up in 1861, Russell refused to receive one of the representatives of the rebels, and put his views in a minute thus:

'H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] do not at all wish to interfere in B[uenos] A[ires]. We may in concert with France offer our

good offices or, if necessary, mediation but we do not mean to use force to support our friendly counsels.'[1]

This is exactly what Canning wrote to Ponsonby in offering to mediate in the war between Brazil and the Argentine Republic.

It will be seen, therefore, that Buenos Aires, or the Argentine Republic, was of all South American States not only recognised first in point of time, but that she was placed first in point of importance, by Canning. He believed in her future development, in her ultimate political stability, in her immense potential resources. The admiration felt by Latin-Americans for Canning was heartily returned by him. Woodbine Parish, the famous Consul-General at Buenos Aires, was thrown into great agitation in August 1827; for he feared that Canning's ministry would not last. 'And no one but him (*sic*) will take the same interest in South American affairs'.[2] It is this fact which accounts for Canning's renown in a continent which he claimed to have 'called into existence'. He was not only the most American, he was the most Latin-American, among British statesmen.

It is not fitting to suggest that only an Englishman should be celebrated in this Introduction. The careers of two contemporary Argentine figures, of San Martín and Rivadavia, are in themselves full of interest and importance and are interestingly displayed in this volume. Of Rivadavia there will always be critics in the Argentine itself, even though all admit his ability. Because he is unfamiliar in type he is for that reason the more worthy to be studied by an Englishman. With San Martín the case is different. His character—slow, persistent, resolute, austere,

[1] Brit. Museum Add. MSS. 38,987, f. 179: Lord J. Russell, Sept. 7, 1861
[2] Public Record Office, F.O. 95/591: Parish to Stowell, Aug. 25, 1827.

disinterested—is one which Englishmen readily understand and with which they can sympathise. It is by comparison or contrast of such types that nations understand one another. In fact it might be said that no more valuable service could be rendered by this book than to make Argentines understand Canning and Englishmen understand San Martín. It is by such supreme types that nations are properly represented, and it is from the study of such men that nations will learn to understand one another.

HAROLD TEMPERLEY

25th November 1930

ARGENTINA AND ADJOINING COUNTRIES