

# SOUTH AMERICA IN 1904.

Minister Barret, Fresh From Argentina, Talks of Our Sister Continent.

The "Yankee Peril" and the Monroe Doctrine—How We Stand Among the Argentine Republic or the United States of South America—A New Race in Formation—South America's Biggest City—President Roosevelt Among the Gauchos—American Trade and How it Should be Pushed.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, D. C.—I have just had a talk with the most strenuous of the most strenuous diplomats of this most strenuous administration. President Roosevelt is noted for his strenuousness and he delights in strenuous foreign assistants. The diplomat I refer to is John Barrett, the new minister to Panama. Mr. Barrett has had to hustle for his existence. He was born amid the rocks of Vermont 38 years ago, and he began his business life in his shirt sleeves. At 19 he entered Dartmouth College and worked his way through, paying his expenses by setting type, running a boarding club, taking orders for gentlemen's clothing and teaching school between times. He graduated with his class and then hustled for fame and money as a newspaper correspondent. As such he visited South Africa, the Sandwich Islands, Japan and China, writing his much about Asiatic trade that his friends in Portland, Or., where he was located, asked President McKinley to make him consul general to Yokohama. This place, however, had been given away and in its stead Barrett was made minister to Siam. This was 10 years ago, and he was not then 28 years of age.

He made a good minister and was acting as such when the war with Spain broke out. He then resigned to become a war correspondent in the Philippines. A year or so ago President Roosevelt made him consul general for the Asiatic department of the world's fair, the excellent Chinese, Japanese and Indian exhibits being due to his work in that capacity. A year or so ago President Roosevelt offered Mr. Barrett the mission to Japan. He refused that, but accepted the position of minister to the Argentine Republic, which he gave up to represent our government in the republic of Panama.

I met Mr. Barrett during his stay here at Washington just prior to his departure for his new post. He was full of new matter relating to South America, and especially to the Argentine Republic, and this formed the subject of our conversation. Said he:

**THE YANKEE PERIL.**

"During the past six months I have traveled quite extensively in South America and have met leading men from nearly every republic. I have been in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, and while in Buenos Ayres I came into frequent communication with prominent Chileans visiting that city or passing through on their way to Europe. I think I can safely say that our sister continent is very much in favor of the canal, and that the most of its people approve of the part the United States has taken in building it. When the news of the revolution in Panama first came there was some excitement concerning it. A few alarmists talked of the 'Yankee peril' and the danger of the United States attempting to place possession of the South American continent. This talk died out very quickly, and when the real story of the revolution and the action of the United States

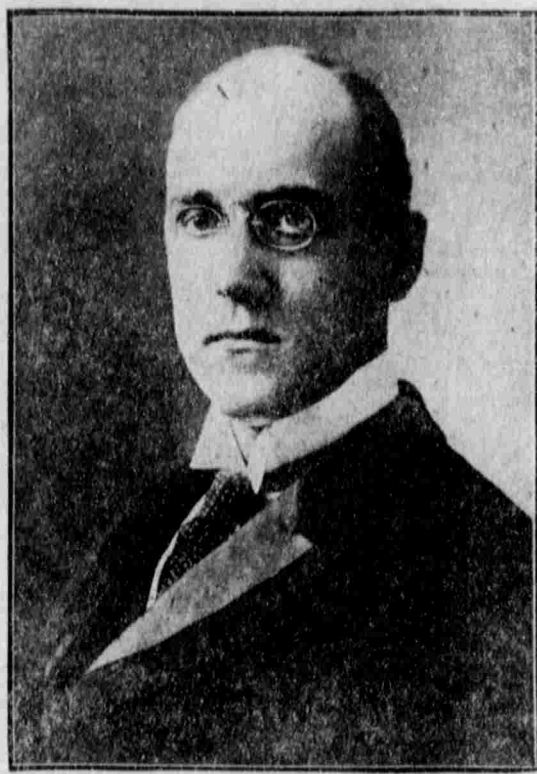
were published public sentiment changed. The political reaction that in canal would be a great help to the continent, and they are very anxious to see the work pushed as rapidly as possible."

## MONROE DOCTRINE IN SOUTH AMERICA.

"How do the people down there look upon the Monroe doctrine?" I asked. "They approve of it," said John Barrett. "They realize that they have a strong friend in the United States, and that it is our intention to aid them in resisting any encroachments on their territory by European powers. I think the relations between the United States and South America are growing more friendly every year, and that if we could have better transportation and business association we would rapidly become united along many lines of policy. As it is now the chief business of South America is with Europe. The best steamship lines go from the east coast directly to Europe, and there are no fast passenger steamers between us and Atlantic South America. This fact is a great hindrance to American trade as well as to closer business and social relations. I was talking with Mr. Roca, the president of the Argentine Republic about this matter, not long ago. He said that if we could have as good steamers from Buenos Ayres to New York as now pass between Buenos Ayres and the European ports there would be a rapid growth in the trade of Argentina with the United States. It would not only better the trade, but the political relations of the two continents. As it is now, the travel and business of Argentina is altogether toward Europe. The round trip to Europe can be made in 50 days, and a business man can get to his office within that long after he sends his order. It takes from 75 to 80 days to do any kind of business between Buenos Ayres and New York, and the result is that the European firms have the business trade. If we had good steamers, instead of going to Europe and back direct, many of the Argentines would go there or come home by way of the United States. They would get acquainted with our country and people, and enormous increase of business will follow."

**ARGENTINA WOULD HELP.**

"We Americans are not in favor of subsidies," continued Mr. Barrett. "We do not believe in fostering one industry at the expense of others, and the people would not consent to the government giving a large bounty to any steamship line. I do think, however, that the United States could afford to try a good round sum for a fast line of mail steamers to the east coast of South America. If she will do this I am assured that the Argentine Republic will come forth and pay her share. In time the business will so grow as to make such a steamship line self-supporting. There is now considerably more than \$100,000,000 worth of trade between the United States and Atlantic South America. We have a large trade with Brazil and our exchanges with Argentina annually amount to about \$16,000,000. We sell also to Uruguay and Paraguay and with the establishment of fast ships we would have a chance at a great part of the commerce between these countries and Europe."



JOHN BARRETT,  
Our New Minister to Panama.

"But does this commerce amount to much?"

"Yes, and it is growing every year. The foreign trade of the Argentine Republic is now annually worth \$300,000,000. This is far more than the foreign commerce of China, with its 400,000,000 inhabitants. Every Argentine family is equal to five Chinese families as far as its purchases of foreign goods are concerned. There are only 5,000,000 people in Argentina, but they are white people, with the same wants that we have and with the money to satisfy those wants. The country is growing fast in population. It will have 15,000,000 instead of 5,000,000 within a few years, and its foreign trade will be worth more than \$1,000,000,000 per year. It is a great country."

## THE UNITED STATES OF SOUTH AMERICA.

"Tell me something about the Argentine Republic, Mr. Barrett?" said I.

"I hardly know where to begin," said the minister. "Argentina is an empire of enormous possibilities. It is to South America what the United States is to North America. It is a white man's country with a white man's climate. It lies at about the same distance from the equator that our country does, and it raises similar crops."

"Argentina has a vast area of fertile lands. If you will take all the United States east of the Mississippi and the tier of states which lie directly west of that river—that is, Minnesota, Iowa,

being made out of the best element of the Latin races with a sprinkling of Anglo-Saxons, just as we have the best of the Anglo-Saxons with a slight sprinkling of the Latin. The original settlers of Argentina came from Spain, but they were mostly from the northern part of that country and their children and children's children have grown up in the colder regions of South America. They have been improved by the more invigorating climate or Argentina. Another large element is the Italian, which is composed of immigrants from northern Italy, and another is French. More than one-third of all the people in the country are foreigners, and 75 per cent of the foreigners are Italians. About 92 per cent of the immigrants have been of the Latin race, the remaining 8 per cent being made up of British, Danes, Swiss, Portuguese and Russians. All of these different elements are mixing together. The races are intermarrying and out of them will come the Argentine race of the future. The new generation in all cases seems to be proud of being Argentine, just as the children of our immigrants are proud to call themselves Americans."

## THE METROPOLIS OF SOUTH AMERICA.

"How do the people live in Argentina, Mr. Barrett?" I asked, "on farms or in cities?"

"There are a great many on the farms," replied the minister, "but by no means so large a proportion as in the United States. About one-fifth of all the people in the republic live in Buenos Ayres and its suburbs. That city is by far the most important in the country. Rosario comes next, with 100,000 and Tucuman in the far north with 50,000. Cordoba has, I judge, about 60,000."

"Buenos Ayres is a wonder," continued Minister Barrett. "It is the highest city on the South American continent, the biggest Spanish-speaking city in the world. It has 915,000 within its borders and with its suburbs it numbers more than a million. It is a progressive city and is as up to date as any city on the North American continent. It has excellent street cars and electric lights, and its sanitary condition is as good as that of the cities of the United States. It is a town of wide streets and big buildings. It has libraries, literary societies and good public schools. It has good newspapers, and the 'La Jorja,' 'La Prensa' has the finest newspaper building of the whole world. It is a city of big banks, of enormous capital, of stock exchanges whose business runs into the tens of millions, of fine clubs and of five twentieth century people. In the other capitals of South America the people stop business from 11 until 2 for breakfast and a siesta. Buenos Ayres does not have a siesta, and the streets are thronged from daylight until dark. Indeed, the town makes me think of New York and Chicago rather than the ordinary South American city."

## ROOSEVELT AMONG THE GAUCHOS.

"What do the common people among the Argentines think of us, Mr. Barrett?" I asked.

"They are very much interested in the United States," replied Minister Barrett. "I traveled over a great part of the country, spending some time on the farms, or estancias, and meeting all classes of the people. I talked now and then with the gauchos, or cowboys, and

was surprised to find they knew so much about the Yankees and even about President Roosevelt. I remember one large ranch that I visited. I was the first they were ever to have ever gone to that part of the country, and when the cowboys learned that I represented the United States and had come from North America they wanted to see me. There was a great crowd of them employed on the estancia. They came together and I made a speech to them through their foreman, in which I said I should be very glad to answer any questions they would like to make as to my country or its people. They were much interested, and, though very backward at first, they finally said there was one thing they were sure they knew, and that was whether I was personally acquainted with the President of the United States, Mr. Roosevelt. I told them I had the honor of knowing him personally and being one of his friends. They then asked if it were really true that he had lived part of his life as a cowboy and could really ride a bucking horse. I told them it was so, whereupon they were all delighted, evidently thinking that it must be a free country where a cowboy could become President."

## AMERICAN TRADE IN ARGENTINA.

"The conversation here turned to American trade with the Argentine Republic, and I asked Mr. Barrett what should be done to increase it."

"I have already told you that we need new steamship connections," was the reply. "I think we should have more American firms in Argentina. Our biggest institutions should have their branch establishments there, and they should draw the country with them even as men. The American will work two hours where the Argentine agent works half an hour, and he will do much more business in the same time. As it is now the field is comparatively new, and Argentina is a country like ours, a new land, with a pushing people. There are great possibilities for American trade, but energetic Americans are needed to build it up and to fight for it in competition with the English and Germans, with the Italians, Spanish and French."

"Some of them have as much as \$50,000,000, silver, on deposit at one time. There is one bank which has a capital of \$50,000,000. The American bank would be able to do business in large cities, and it would find plenty to do. It would control the exchanges on New York, and would form a place where Argentine exporters could inquire about the business standing of firms in the United States, and where our exporters could ascertain the business standing of men in Argentina. This is one of the great troubles with our trade at present. Most of it is carried on through foreign hands, and information as to the responsibility of purchasers is lamentably lacking."

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