

SOUTH AMERICAN TRADE.

WHAT THE DELEGATES TO THE GREAT CONFERENCE THINK.

The Spanish-American Countries Are Developing Fast, but Their Trade Goes to Europe—English, French, German and Dutch Investments There.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10.—As I mingled last week with the delegates from South and Central America who were in this city attending the American congress, heard them talk of their countries and industries, and noted that almost without exception they were men of superior education and attainments, the lesson was brought home to me, as I dare say it was to many others, that it is the height of conceit for us to call ourselves, as we do, "the Americans." There are other great countries and peoples on this continent. We are not the only Americans.

The United States has less than one-half the population of the western hemisphere, and by no means all of the culture, progress, literature, art and material resources. We do well to cultivate the acquaintance of our neighbors to the south, who are just now blossoming and blooming both industrially and politically. The delegates from these southern countries are now seeing what we somewhat narrowly term America. They are visiting our cities and towns, our manufacturing establishments and our farms. Doubtless they will see much and be greatly interested, but with some curiosity concerning the commerce and industries of their own countries I made inquiry of one of the most intelligent of the delegates from South America, one who has traveled from Patagonia to British America.

"This is a great country, a great country," said he, "but we have some great countries, too. You people do not know us; we do not know you. It is not so easy to get from our country to yours. We go often to Paris, to London, even to Berlin, but rarely to New York or New Orleans, which are much nearer. Just now the English appear to be closer to us than any other people. They are investing in our railways, our mines, our stock farms, our steamships, our factories. They pour out money like water for all our securities, corporation as well as governmental. There is apparently no limit to the confidence they have in our future, as there seems to be no bottom to their purse. Will they lose on some of their investments? Ah, sir (and the delegate twisted his black mustache and shrugged his shoulders), no one can tell that. Some have already lost; others are likely to lose. But, no matter. Is it not so in all ventures? And if the English and French lose some money in our enterprises, do they not get all of our trade?"

"We think you people of the United States slow and unenterprising, because you do not come down and invest with us and trade with us as do the English and French. For instance, I was talking not long ago with your consul at Maracaibo, Venezuela. For a long time he endeavored to persuade capitalists of the United States to invest in a proposed railway from Maracaibo to Merida, traversing the rich coffee regions of the Cordillera. But his suggestions bore no fruit, except in Paris, where a company was organized to build the railway. The Venezuelan government guaranteed 7 per cent. interest on the capital and granted other extraordinary privileges. The company has made a very nice thing of it, and you Americans might just as well have had the profit, for it is an actual fact that it was the suggestion of French and republished in Paris, which led the Frenchmen into their highly successful venture.

"By the way," continued this delegate, "Venezuela is a very interesting and prosperous country, as no doubt Dr. Francisco Antonis Silva, the delegate, would be glad to tell you if he could speak English. There is one district of Venezuela in which the breeding of goats is the chief industry. In another district nearly all of the inhabitants find employment in gathering the beans of the dividivi tree, which are crushed and distilled for the large quantities of tannin which they contain. In still another district many of the people earn a livelihood gathering gums, balsams and orchids from the forests. Petroleum, asphalt, gold and silver are some of the treasures to be found in the earth in that country, and the forests contain vast quantities of mahogany.

"American engineers stand high in the estimation of the people of South America. Since Meigs constructed those wonderful railways in Peru our people have thought nothing too difficult for the genius of the United States engineer to overcome. In San Salvador, a little republic of which I dare say you have heard but little in this country, an American engineer, Mr. Brannan, is doing some remarkable work in railway building. American engineers are employed on many works in Chili, Peru and the Argentine Republic, and an American company is building a railway in Honduras. Probably it will not be a dozen years before railway communication will be established direct from New York and Chicago, via the city of Mexico, with all the central and South American capitals. A new era has dawned in our life, and it is the era of rapid progress. We also have much confidence in the completion of the Nicaragua canal, now that an American company has earnestly taken hold of that great project.

"It is my belief that this congress, and the visit we are to make to your manufacturing centers, will greatly stimulate commerce between the United States and our southern countries, even if nothing more tangible than a more intimate acquaintanceship comes from it. I am sure if Americans knew the opportunities for money making that are open to them, in South America especially, they would be more swift in taking advantage of them. We have rice fields in which the grain is threshed out in mortars with stone pestles, simply because

the people have not the money with which to buy hulling machinery. Much of our wheat and other small grain is harvested with primitive appliances, because we have no machines at hand to do the work with. There are mines which promise rich returns.

"Already the people of the Argentine Republic owe a debt of gratitude to you Americans. It was from your country that the first advances were made toward improving the breeds of sheep and horses down there. The pioneer in that business was a Mr. Eels, of Vermont, whose merinos have already greatly improved the quality of the wool on many big farms. A man from Michigan, Mr. Sumner, arrived in the Argentine not long ago with a herd of magnificent Hereford cattle. Your horsemen may be interested in knowing that the Argentinians are infatuated with American trotting horses, which find a ready market there. Fabulous prices are paid for some animals by gentlemen of Buenos Ayres, but I am sorry to say that when last in that city I was told a number of gentlemen had been shamefully imposed on by Yankee horse traders. The animals sold them had long and brilliant pedigrees, traced back to distinguished thoroughbreds, but when put in races against Argentine half breeds they failed to get a place. As you may easily imagine, Buenos Ayres is not now a promising market for American trotters. The Argentine gentlemen who have paid from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per animal for the refuse of New York auction stables are now pretty careful what they buy.

"A singular fact with reference to the recent great boom in building, railways and manufactures in the Argentine Republic is that practically all of the lumber and timber used there has been brought from the United States. While there is a large forest of soft woods in the country, they are so remote from the rivers and the coast that it has been found cheaper to import from North American ports. Buenos Ayres has a splendid harbor, which is constantly crowded with shipping from all parts of the world. I say all parts. Perhaps I had better except the United States. Though a large number of sailing vessels from American ports arrive at Buenos Ayres each year, but a small number of them fly the flag of the United States. Among hundreds of steamers in that port I have again and again looked in vain for the flag of your country. While the trade of the Argentine Republic with the United States is growing rapidly, I believe there are not more than one hundred Americans in the whole republic. There are thousands of Englishmen, Frenchmen and Italians.

"Every time I sit down to dinner here and drink a cup of coffee I think of the fact that you are the greatest coffee consuming country in the world, while the Central and South American countries represented in this congress are the coffee growers for the whole universe. Therefore if we should 'over the coffee' reach a better understanding of our reciprocal trade relations, it would be most fitting. I am told that the people of the United States consume more coffee each year than Germany, Great Britain, Austria and France combined. Four-fifths of your requirements are produced in Brazil and Venezuela, and nearly all of the remaining fifth in Guatemala, Mexico, San Salvador, Columbia, Costa Rica and Hayti. Brazil alone supplies one-half of what is regarded as the average annual coffee crop of the world. I believe American enterprise and American machinery are needed in this industry. Why, the best Brazilian plantations depend almost entirely upon the hoe. They use the plow very little. The coffee farmers know little or nothing about conserving the soil. It is never enriched, and the art of rotation in crops, so commonly practiced by your farmers, is almost unknown to ours. Coffee is, in many sections, the only crop, and when disaster comes to that, as it does sometimes come, both planter and merchant find themselves on the verge of ruin.

"During a winter's residence in Cuba I became somewhat familiar with the coffee industry there. It is a wonder to me that a greater number of Americans do not engage in that business.

"All over South and Central America there are fine opportunities for your capital and your men of ability and energy. Take, for instance, the Argentine Republic. American trade with that country is confined chiefly to lumber and petroleum, though something is being done in agricultural implements and machinery. American pianos, cook stoves, beer and salt and canned fish are also finding a market there. But in the whole of the Argentine Republic there is not one distinctive American importing house. A number of wealthy firms handle American goods, but they are either English or German houses, which do business with the United States simply because it pays them to do so. Consul Baker, of Buenos Ayres, told me last fall that of more than a million dollars' worth of cheese imported by the Argentinians last year just a thousand dollars' worth came from the United States. Your country sends great quantities of cheese to Europe, and Europe sends cheese to South America. So with hams. You export hams by the shipload, but you do not export to us. Of 216 tons of hams shipped to Buenos Ayres last year only thirteen tons came direct from the United States, though nearly all of the imported hams were grown and cured in your country and exported to England, of whom our people purchased.

"You ask me how American trade in Central and South America can be best promoted. My reply is by the establishment of regular lines of steamers between your ports and ours, giving certain and rapid communication. That is the first step to be taken, and it must be taken by the people of the United States. It is easier for us to cross the Atlantic to London or Paris than to come to New York or New Orleans. The Europeans have sought us out with their steamships, and their commercial agents, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans and Dutchmen are prominent in the commerce and finances of many of our countries. It is not yet too late for the American, if he will only bestir himself."

A Sudden Rise. Englishman—Men rise suddenly in this country I have been told, especially out west. American—They do that, you bet. Englishman—Some get to the top of the tree. American—Yes, sure. I knew a man who got to the top of the tree out there so quick that he had hardly time to say a prayer. He stayed there, too, until they cut him down and buried him. Great country this, sir.—Boston Courier.

No Offense. Big Dark—Nigguh, you's 'r fool! Little Dark—Do yo' call me 'r fool? Big Dark—Dat's what 'r soid! Little Dark—Yo' do! Big Dark—Ise call emmy nigguh 'r fool what sicks likes yo' do. Little Dark—Huh! Den yo' call any nigguh 'r fool! Den I can't considah dat pussen. Good day.—Exchange.

Long on Fork. The position of a broker or commission merchant is not always an enviable one, especially when the principal or customer is on the losing side of the market. At such times the broker is frequently appealed to for advice, and woe to him should following events prove his advice to have been wrong. Sitting in the office of John Peacock, at the Chamber of Commerce, the other day, discussing the probability of doubling a \$10 bill that had unexpectedly fallen into my possession, I was attracted by the restless appearance of a man who rushed up to Mr. P. and exclaimed: "She's down twenty-five cents more, John! What had we best do?" I learned later that the stranger had bought 500 barrels of pork some time before for September delivery at \$12.75 a barrel, and the market had steadily declined to \$9.50. Mr. P. said he hardly knew what to do.

"Well, is the market likely to go much lower?" "I'm sure I cannot tell. It may and it may not." "Well, how low have you ever known pork to go?" "Oh, I don't remember ever seeing it go below \$6." "I would like to know if the blamed thing is going below that now just because I am long of it." "I'll tell you how you can figure on that and be pretty safe," said John. "You can always count on selling the barrels for \$1 apiece and the salt will bring twenty-five cents. So it will hardly get below \$1.25 per barrel." The stranger did some rapid figuring and left with a weary, heated look.—Minneapolis Tribune.

An Autumn Night. Night brings with her a brooding chill, As hastening o'er the eastern hill She softly comes to chase away The dreamlike taint of the day To sleep you seek—oh, blissful rest, Of all our earthly pleasures best! When Earth, with sable curtains drawn, Admits gray bearded, halting Dawn, 'Tis then that from your bed you rise And stand and shiver in surprise To find that by some means unknown The atmosphere has colder grown. You strike a flickering, blinding light, Then seek the close—unseen quite; The mattress then you raise on high And drop again, with weary sigh. You hurry through the house, but come Back to your chamber, cold and glum, You don your clothes against your will, Compelled by the increasing chill. The question still returns, unbid, Where are those extra covers hid? —Exchange.

Tooth-some! Lady—I do not like this set of teeth at all. You told me they would be quite like natural teeth. Dentist—Well, that is the matter with them, madam! Lady—They hurt me so when I eat. Dentist—Just so, ma'am. Exactly like nature.—Judge.

They Could Spare Him. Guide to party just emerged from Mammoth cave—Well, here we are in the daylight once again. But hold! One of your crowd is missing. Is it possible we've lost him in the cave? Member of Party reluctantly—I'm afraid not. He's the amateur photographer.—Chicago Tribune.

She Puts It Away. Mother—Emily, I should think you were getting old enough to put away childish things. Tommy—I know one childish thing she puts away lots of, ma! Emily—What's that, smarty? Tommy—Candy.—Burlington Free Press.

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