

**NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA. A
DISCOURSE DELIVERED BEFORE
THE RHODE-ISLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, DECEMBER 27, 1865**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649198238

North and South America. A discourse delivered before the Rhode-Island historical society,
December 27, 1865 by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

DOMINGO FAUSTINO SARMIENTO

**NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA. A
DISCOURSE DELIVERED BEFORE
THE RHODE-ISLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, DECEMBER 27, 1865**

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

RHODE-ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

DECEMBER 27, 1865.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY,
DOMINGO FAUSTINO SARMIENTO,
ARGENTINE MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES.

STANFORD LIBRARY

PROVIDENCE:
KNOWLES, ANTHONY & CO., PRINTERS.
1866.

St

50
246 n

211454

STANFORD LIBRARY

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

OF

HIS EXCELLENCY DOMINGO FAUSTINO SARMIENTO

TO THE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND,

DELIVERED DECEMBER 27th, 1866.

MR. PRESIDENT :

Some years ago, Col. Mitre and I received, through my friend Mr. Edward A. Hopkins, the diplomas of honorary members of this society. It was my duty on coming to the United States, to occupy the seat you have offered me here, if for no other reason, at least to express my gratitude. My honorable friend, your Vice-President Arnold, has been kind enough to procure me the opportunity of thus doing, by arranging this special meeting. Many years have now accumulated over my head; and I have travelled some thousands of leagues during a life of almost constant movement, and of too much attrition with men of diverse societies, to yield to the temptation of believing that I have any title to distinction.

Our colleague, Don Bartolomé Mitre, is now a General and President of the Argentine Republic. His Majesty the Emperor of Brazil considers him a worthy ally, and perhaps at this moment the same field tent covers their heads. I recall this fact to justify your election, although this General Mitre is also a historian, a poet and a publicist, the only titles of value in this assembly.

I will not carry the affectation of modesty so far as to insinuate that I have no claim to a similar consideration; for some of your book shelves contain traces, if not profound, certainly numerous enough, that I also have gleaned in the field of letters, and turned over at least, those materials of which history is formed. Within a few days I have added thereto the "Life of Lincoln" in Spanish, as a proof that I would add my grain of sand to the examination and generalization of those facts which most nearly interest you, because they interest us also. But I do not admit that our election to your society was caused by a previous knowledge of our historical labors. The ocean is a bad conductor of South American thought, which cannot presume to ask, like a cacique of the king of *Bambara* in Africa, what the queen of England, who probably was ignorant of his existence, said of him. But a few years since, even a grand historian of England, notwithstanding the community of language, asked with disdain, "who reads an American book?"

But even as there can be no effect without a cause, it also happens that extremes meet, and contrasts establish affinities; and it may be that between the Rio de la Plata and Narraganset Bay; between Buenos Ayres and Providence; between the northern and southern extremes of America, those currents and mysterious attractions exist, which science is wont to meet with between different substances. Perhaps it may thus be explained how a South American is found seated among the members of an historical society of one of those states which compose the Pleiades of New-England;—Danaides whose vase is not bottomless, like that of the ancient ones, judging from the wonderful wealth which their industry and economy have accumulated.

I had hardly visited your picturesque city when I met Mr. George E. Church, whom I knew as a civil engineer in Buenos Ayres, where he was commissioned by the government to inspect our frontiers; and wrote an important report indicating a simple plan of defense against the savages, based upon the study of our geography. Here, I find him a Colonel of Rhode Island soldiers, who went forth at the call of liberty in danger; as he has seen us in our country with sword buckled on for the

same cause. Perhaps Mr. Church remembers with sympathy, that people to whom he lent his intelligence, as also, the names of those who knew how to appreciate his talent.

A little later I learnt that Mr. William Wheelwright, the contractor of railways which are carrying to the Pampas the civilizing snort of the locomotive, where formerly the neighing of horses alone was heard, is a native of Newburyport. Then the connection between your republic and ours became more sensible, because the progressive genius of this son of New-England, has made the two countries of Chili and the Argentine Republic, his own field.

The company was formed in Rhode-Island which first attempted to introduce American industry into sequestered Paraguay, where it met the result which was to be feared from the jealousy and suspicion of those gloomy governors, who, from Dr. Francia to the last Lopez, inclusive, have withdrawn it from contact with the exterior world. A government which expelled dentists because the Paraguayans did not require their services, (so says the official decree,) with much more reason would destroy a growing industry in order to monopolize every fountain of wealth. But even this unfortunate result established relations between Rhode-Island and the Rio de la Plata. I witnessed from the smiling shores of the Tigre, in the Paraná, the launch of the first little steamer which navigated its waters, the property of this company; and those who remember that they sent out her engine, belong to Rhode-Island.

It fell to me as a member of the Senate of Buenos Ayres, to grant the charter for the Northern Railway; and he who planned, organized and carried it out, was then the representative of his Rhode-Island friends, to communicate life and movement to those countries. Now, Mr. Hopkins, whom I have already mentioned, is engaged under another grant of the Argentine government, in an enterprise to canalize the Capitan stream, a small outlet of the gigantic Paraná, thus to accelerate and render more secure our fluvial navigation, and accumulate on wharves and in warehouses, situated at the inner terminus of his railway—the only spot on the coast of Buenos Ayres pro-

ected from all gales—the wealth which descends from the torrid zone.

Not long ago, when on board of the steamer which conveyed me hence to New-York, I met with the young mariner Captain T. H. King, who told me that he would soon sail for the Rio de la Plata, in a steamer owned in Rhode-Island, to build there a marine railway for the repair of vessels of all sorts, like those he had constructed already in Shanghai, in China, with Rhode-Island capital. I therefore believe it is possible that the country where the engineers, the steamers, the machines, and the capital of Rhode-Island, are the American pioneers, may have made known, for some time back, the names of those Argentine public men who have given the most sympathetic reception to this initiative, and among these names—I am proud to say it—figures my own.

Other bonds between these two countries I met with here, which I ought not to pass by. The attentive hospitality of our Vice-President, the Hon. Samuel Greene Arnold, permitted me to look over numerous Argentine documents in his library; among them almost forgotten writings of my own. And in our familiar conversation I discovered that he has traveled South America from one extremity to the other, visited the Argentine Republic, broken bread with the famous tyrant Rosas, and frequented the society of dear friends of mine. In a book of his notes, I saw mention made of the principal incidents of his travels, together with the names and description of places, and the aspect of society, the government, and contemporaneous events.

But what was my surprise on visiting the library of Mr. John Carter Brown, the distinguished lover of books, to meet in Providence with the most complete, abundant, and instructive collection of Spanish authors, above all, those who have written upon South America, from the first days of the conquest to our epoch. After admiring so rich a treasure I could comprehend the praise of the talented English historian, Helps, author of an excellent history of the Spanish conquest, where he declares, that he procured from this library in Rhode-Island, documents upon Spanish America, which the library of the

British museum could not furnish him. But I do not comprehend, unless we appeal to those mysterious sympathies of which I spoke at the commencement, how it is that this treasure, which South America would envy, is found in Providence. If, for example, it was desired to write about the present war between the Argentine and Uruguayan Republic and Brazil as allies, against Paraguay, it would be necessary to come to Rhode-Island to find in the rich collection of books upon the Jesuit missionaries, and the wars between Spaniards and Portuguese on questions of frontiers, the geographical description of each portion of those countries, as well as the causes of subsequent tyrannies, and of the present war, flowing from the theocratic governments of the Guarani Missions.

In reference to my own country, but little good—save the hospitable reception he met with—was the traveller Arnold able to tell you. He visited it in 1848, during the darkest period of its history, when two decades of an ignorant, cruel and barbarous despotism had already run their course, of which we should have had no example in history, if Philip II. during the term of only one reign had not annihilated a nation for three long centuries—perhaps forever.

Mr. Arnold will remember that upon the front of all the public edifices of Buenos Ayres, and upon a red badge which every citizen bore upon his bosom, he could read *mueran los salvajes, asquerosos inmundos Unitarios* (death to the filthy, obscene Unitarians,) emblem imposed by the tyrant upon a subjugated people, through twenty years of assassinations. A brutal soldiery strutted about, in the midst of a civilized society, in the red chirt^{pa}* of the savage indian, as their only uniform. In the place of roads, canals of mud led to the city, in which carts of primitive form drawn by half-tamed oxen, often remained buried forever. The streets, scarcely lit with tallow candles, were pools of stagnant water, with holes and breaks in the narrow sidewalks.

I will not extend this picture of a fossil world, but will ex-

*Waist cloth descending below the knees, used instead of pantaloons.