

PRESIDENTS IN DANGER.

CONSPIRACIES AGAINST THE RULERS OF
SOUTHERN REPUBLICS.A YEAR'S RECORD SHOWS ONE ASSASSINATION,
ONE NARROW ESCAPE AND SEVERAL
OTHER UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS—
AN OBSERVER'S NOTES.

It so happened that I was in the city of Montevideo last August when the President of Uruguay, General Borda, was killed by the bullet of an assassin, and that I was in the city of Rio de Janeiro last month when the President of Brazil, Dr. Moraes, barely escaped assassination at the hands of a conspirator armed with dagger and revolver; and that while at Rio I heard of the attempt upon the life of the President of Mexico, General Diaz, and of the unsuccessful plot to kill the President of Guatemala, General Barrios, and of the perilous situation of the President of Ecuador, General Alfaro, who has twice this year been marked for murder; and since I came to New-York I have heard of the arrest of a part of the gang of conspirators charged with designs upon the life of the newly elected President of Venezuela, General Andrade, as also of a conspiracy in Colombia, and another in Honduras, besides the one in Nicaragua against President Zelaya.

In nearly all the countries through which I travelled, from the Rio de la Plata in the south to the Rio Grande in the north, there was talk of conspiracies to cut short the career of men holding the office of President in American republics.

A SINGULAR STATE OF THINGS.

It is a singular state of things, for the Presidents of these republican countries are chosen by the people who live in them. In every case it is provided that they shall be elected by a majority of the voters; but, then, it is to be said that I was led to believe that this provision, which appears in the Constitution of each of them, is very often recklessly disregarded. I heard of one President who gained his office by revolution, and of another who gained it by corrupting the army, and of another who seized it in the night-time, when the watchdogs were asleep. The history of the countries I have visited this year is full of extravagant incidents, plenty of which are gory.

When I spoke of this to an intelligent native of Uruguay whom I met in Montevideo he told me, in an impetuous manner, that the North Americans of the United States were debarred from any criticism in the matter, as they themselves sometimes disposed of their own Presidents by shooting them; and he illustrated his remark by mentioning the names of Lincoln and Garfield. I tried to explain to him that these two cases could not be brought into comparison with the others that had been spoken of. These Presidents of the United States were not the victims of a widespread conspiracy, as was the late President of Uruguay, or as had been so many other Presidents in South and Central America. The murder of Abraham Lincoln was a deed for which its perpetrator alone was responsible, and the same thing can be said of the murder of General Garfield. In neither case was the assassin backed up by any portion of the people of the United States. In each case the criminal deed met with universal reprobation. The two assassins of Presidents in the United States had no sympathizers; they did not act in the name of any organized community of plotters; they were not the representatives of any political party. In neither of the cases which he had mentioned was revolution the result of President-killing.

A DIFFERENCE IN URUGUAY.

It is different in Uruguay, for example, where for over a year President Borda had knowledge of the existence of an extensive conspiracy against his life, in which many army officers and politicians were implicated.

It is possible that the explanation contained in my remarks upon the assassinations of Lincoln and Garfield made an impression upon my Uruguayan acquaintance; but, even after he had listened to me attentively, he expressed the opinion which he had formerly entertained about violent occurrences in the politics of the United States.

When I was in Montevideo, near the end of August last, at the time of the murder of President Borda, I was greatly surprised by the absence of excitement over the tragedy. The daily life of the city proceeded in the ordinary way. The gayeties of the people were but slightly interrupted. It was Wednesday, August 25, the day of the celebration of the seventy-second anniversary of the independence of Uruguay. The news of the incident did not put a stop to the fêtes that marked the occasion. In a part of the city which I visited "the band played on." If there was any grief in Montevideo the evidences of it were not discernible. The multitudes in the streets and at the hotels seemed to be wholly unaffected. Men spoke lightly of the incident, and I can say that I heard not a word of lamentation on account of it. The gossipers had apparently taken an interest in the dramatic features of the murder, for the shot that killed Borda was fired at him as he left the cathedral, where there had been religious ceremonies in honor of the country's independence. Occasionally you heard some words or noticed some signs of apprehension, for no one could say whether a revolution would follow the incident of the day, or whether the gang of conspirators would perpetrate other crimes, or whether order could be preserved by

the fragment of the army that remained in the city. "Truly, is he killed?" asked one man, who added, "Then we shall have peace in Uruguay."

NO SYMPATHY TO BE EXPECTED.

The fact of the matter is that any kind of sympathetic manifestation could hardly be expected under the circumstances that then existed. The sanguinary civil war between the Blanco party and the Colorado party, which had lasted for nearly a year, and had brought death or sorrow into thousands of the homes of Montevideo, was still raging, though apparently approaching its end, to the discomfiture of the Government. It had been through President Borda's folly that the war was precipitated, and through his obstinacy that it was kept up for so long a time. Two previous attempts to assassinate him had been made. In April of last year a student fired an unsuccessful shot at him, and in May of the present year he had a narrow escape from death by dynamite. It was a bad government that he gave to his country, and there is no doubt that Uruguay was glad to get rid of him.

It was very soon after his death that satisfactory terms were offered to the party in revolt, which had been fighting so long against him, and that peace was declared in Uruguay. On the day of his death the place which he had held was assumed by the President of the Senate, in accordance with the Constitution, and the feeling in Montevideo was more satisfactory and more pacific than it had been for the previous three years of his administration.

I have learned since I came to New-York that an attempt had been made to assassinate the new incumbent of the Presidential office, Senator Cuestas, but it was a failure. All was quiet at Montevideo and on the Rio Negro when I took ship in the last week of October for Rio de Janeiro.

REJOICING IN BRAZIL.

I found that there was rejoicing at the capital of Brazil when I got there, because of the triumph of the Brazilian army over the embattled "fanatics" in the State of Bahia. But before the end of the first week of my stay in Rio the city was thrown into a state of consternation by the attempt to assassinate the distinguished President of the republic, Dr. Moraes, or, to give his full name, Prudente de Moraes Barrios. The condition of the public mind there when the news of the murderous attempt became known was very different from that which existed at Montevideo after the shooting of Borda. The great Brazilian city was in a panic. There was mourning; there was hot blood; excited people rushed through the streets, or formed into groups, or made their way to public places. Men consoled with each other, and I saw a woman weep as she entered a church, probably to pray for divine protection. Some believed that the President had been murdered, while others were eager for the dispatch of the murderer. Some said he had been killed in revenge by an agent of the defeated fanatics of Bahia; others circulated reports of a more alarming character, to the effect that a revolution was at hand, and that the President had been marked as the first of its victims. I doubt whether there was more

agitation in the city of Washington when President Lincoln was shot than there was at Rio last month when the populace heard of the desperate assault upon President Moraes. There was a sense of relief within an hour after it became known that the President was safe, though the would-be murderer had stabbed his brother and some one had shot to death the Minister of War, both of whom had defended the President against his assailant. The news of the President's fortunate escape had a quieting effect upon the city, though the fear that some dread event was impending lasted for days.

A WIDESPREAD CONSPIRACY.

That the incident which stirred up Rio on the first Friday in the month of November was the outgrowth of a widely spread conspiracy against the Government is certain, and that the killing of President Moraes was to be the signal for a revolution is probably true. By the promptitude of the authorities the carrying out of the revolutionary programme was prevented; a state of siege was declared at Rio; the regiments in garrison were held ready for service; bodies of troops patrolled the streets; Congress made provision for all emergencies and a large number of suspects were imprisoned.

There is no doubt that the ramifications of the conspiracy extended over a large part of Brazil, and the evidence of the truth of this statement can be found in the numerous arrests that were soon made under martial law. Members of both houses of Congress, military officers, public officials and many other persons were arrested upon the charge of complicity in the conspiracy. It was rumored at Rio that Mello, the private soldier who wielded the dagger, had confessed that he acted as an agent of the leaders of a gigantic conspiracy, in which hundreds of the functionaries of the Government, and even the Vice-President of the republic, were concerned. There were other alarming revelations, some of which have got into print since I left Brazil, and it would seem that they are credited by the authorities, who have recently extended martial law over three or four of the States.

When I took steamer at Rio for the North last month the city was yet in a state of uneasiness, but the power of President Moraes was made manifest on all hands, and the Government seemed to be very strong. Several of the battalions of troops which were previously engaged in quelling the revolt of the Bahia fanatics had returned to the city, and the arrival of other battalions was daily expected.

I was far better assured of the safety of the Brazilian Government when I left Rio than I had been of that of the Uruguayan Government at the time I left Montevideo.

Of the five or six other attempts to kill American Presidents that have been made this year I know very little beyond the published reports. But I may say that all of them, with a single exception, have been associated with extensive political conspiracies, and not one of them has been successful. The exception of which I speak is that of General Porfirio Diaz, the President of Mexico. In his case there was not any conspiracy. J. S.

THE HISTORIC STRAND.

SOME OF ITS THEATRICAL ASSOCIATIONS
—THE PLAY STILL THE THING—A
NEW PEG WOFFINGTON.

London, December 15.

The Strand is a storied mile, rich in precious associations and haunted by benignant ghosts for those with eyes to see them. With two beautiful old churches and the New Law Courts at the bottom, it is not without historic landmarks and beauty of architecture; but in the main it is an unpicturesque street of shops and theatres, with a few hotels set back upon the Embankment. It has not always lacked an air of distinction and pride. At first it was a winding bridlepath through marshes and fields, and then it was a riverside road leading from London to Westminster, through the village of Charing Cross; but under the Plantagenets and in Elizabethan days it was transformed into a splendid street of baronial palaces, with gardens sloping to the water's edge. This old-time Belgravia has vanished from sight, and upon its ruins has been built the prosaic Strand of playhouses and shops, flanked by narrow, dingy streets.

The water-gate of York House and the old Savoy Chapel are almost the only relics of this bygone splendor, for the Somerset House of the Inland Revenue and probate records is not the famous palace where neglected Queens fretted with ennui. The Savoy Palace, Burleigh, Southampton, Arundel, Northumberland and the other great houses of the feudal lords and court favorites have disappeared. The sites of the splendid mansions, with their traditions of pageantry and intrigue, can no longer be identified in the modern maze of the brisk and stirring Strand. The only memorials of the magnificence and power of the barons are the names of the side streets, which make up a fairly complete record of the older peerage. These are still names to conjure with in a dreamland of flashing cavalcades and courtiers in velvet and cloth-of-gold, where trumpets are sounding and intriguers are whispering, and where Wolsey sweeps by in triumph to Whitehall, and Sir Walter Raleigh muses, and Lady Jane Grey is carried off a prisoner to the Tower, and the Duke of Buckingham is pulsant in audacity. The Strand, with all the countless changes of scenic setting, remains the unique triumphal way where Elizabeth has passed after the Armada, Charles II after the Restoration, Queen Anne after Blenheim and Victoria in her Jubilee year. Now a mean and almost shabby street, it has witnessed the most glorious scenes of English history.

ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE STAGE.

The Strand lacks the imperishable literary reminiscences of Fleet-st., but it has the storied associations of the stage. It is a street of playhouses, the natural centre of the modern drama, and for two centuries the great figures of the English stage have known and loved it, and lived in the narrow lanes leading into it. It has been the scene of their triumphs and sorrows, as well as of royal glory and shame. Some of the strangest romances of the stage have been enacted there without the glitter of footlights. In the coffee-houses and taverns their lightest comic byplay has been witnessed by boon companions. Incidents more tragic than the dramatist's art could invent have checked the careers of the beauties of the stage, and in some of the old-fashioned houses now crumbling into ruins Hawthorne's unmannerly scene-shifter, Death, has suddenly rung down the curtain.

One does not think of these things at midnight when the theatres and concert halls are emptying their audiences into the Strand, with its thousands of lights and babel of voices, and when the maddening whirl of carriages and hansom toward the West End has begun. But by daylight there is full leisure for reminiscence and sensibility. Standing at the upper end of the Strand, near Eleanor's Cross, one may hear once a week the bells of St. Martin-in-the-Fields ringing in accordance with Nell Gwynne's bequest; and lower down in the tangle of lanes near Holywell-st., with its gabled houses, he can recall Samuel Pepys's diary entry of a joyous Mayday: "To Westminster, in the way meeting many milkmaids with their garlands upon their pails, dancing with a fiddler before them, and saw pretty Nelly Gwynne standing at her lodging door in Drury Court, in her smock sleeves and bodice, looking upon me; she seemed a mighty pretty creature." There was a high Maypole then standing where is now the beautiful little Church of St. Mary-le-Strand.

Not far away on the opposite side of the Strand is the site of Mrs. Bracegirdle's house, in Howard-st. One of the innumerable company of her infatuated admirers, having pressed his suit in vain, resolved to carry the fortress by storm. Captain Hill, waiting with a confederate, Lord Mohun, near the entrance of Drury Lane Theatre, where she was acting, attempted to drag her into a carriage when she appeared in the street. Her outcries attracted a swarm of spectators, and the two gallants were forced to release her. They followed her to her door in Howard-st., and when it was closed against them stepped into the middle of the roadway and boisterously shared a bottle of wine. From the Strand suddenly appeared one of Mrs. Bracegirdle's friends, the actor Mountfort, to reproach them for attempting to kidnap the stage beauty, and Captain Hill, drawing sword, killed him before her very door, leaving Lord Mohun to make explanations to the



"I WISH YOU'D GET ME A PAIR OF SKATES, PATER."
"PAIR OF SKATES! WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH A PAIR OF SKATES?"
"OH, I SAY! LOOK HERE, PATER; YOU NEVER USED 'EM FOR BOXING GLOVES OR FISHING-RODS, DID YOU, WHEN YOU WERE A BOY?"—(Sketch.)