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After details of the 1807 campaign to take Buenos Aires;

At the beginning of June came a reminder of more serious business when 5,000 more troops arrived, led by Lieutenant-General Sir John Whitelocke, WJ-27 who had been officially appointed Commander-in-chief of river Plate operations.

Whitelocke's instructions were to undertake immediately "the reduction of the province of Buenos Aires under the authority of His Majesty," King George III. He soon joined by General Crauford, who had been diverted from Chile, and on June 28, 1807, 9,000 troops were landed to begin the second assault on Buenos Aires.

This time the towns citizens were prepared. Each street was defended by fanatically determined creoles and from the house tops a shower of stones and scalding water poured down on the heads of the attackers. British troops, according to Whitelocke, had never before been faced with "such resolution and perseverance on the part of an enemy".

Whitelocke, as it now turned out, lacked confidence, determination and tactical skill. Having lost a third of his men in the attack - 401 dead, 649 wounded, 1,924 taken prisoner - he decided on July 7 to "evacuate a province which the force I was authorized to calculate upon could never maintain and which from the very hostile disposition of its inhabitants was in truth not worth maintaining." In return he obtained the release of all prisoners, including Beresford and his men. Not only Buenos Aires but the entire river Plate was to be evacuated, and on September 9, 1807, a fleet of warships, transports and merchant-men left Montevideo, bringing to an end Britain's short lived Empire on the banks of the river Plate.

Reaction in Britain was violent. The Times stood on its head and, exactly one year after it had welcomed the original capture of Buenos Aires, described the affair as, from first to last, "a dirty sordid ~~XXXX~~ enterprise, conceived and executed in a spirit of avarice and plunder, without a parallel, except in the disgraceful expeditions of the Buccaneers". Others regarded the British withdrawal from South America as the greatest disaster sustained by Britain since the start of the war with revolutionary France. Inevitably, scape-goats had to be found. The commanding officers were court-martialled. But, whereas Popham got off with no more than a severe censure for mounting an unauthorized expedition, the unfortunate Whitelocke was found guilty of cowardice and treason and cashiered. The fact that he was not shot was popularly attributed to his illegitimate connection with a member of the royal family. Such was the contempt in which his name was held that, years after, there was still a popular toast that ran: "Success to grey hairs, but bad luck to White Lock's".