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W. Pennell, Esq.

Dec. 29, 1860. At East Moulsey, Surrey, aged 95, William Pennell, Esq., formerly Consul-General for the Empire of Brazil.

Mr. Pennell was Consul at Bordeaux at that interesting period of European history when the first Bonaparte made his escape from the island of Elba in 1815. On this occasion there was in that place upwards of £80,000 worth of property belonging to the French government, which had been captured by the British army, and which was in danger of falling into Bonaparte's hands.

This property Mr. Pennell, at great personal risk, obtained possession of, and paid the amount into the British Treasury the day before General Clausel with the French army entered Bordeaux, and to his great disappointment found the treasure gone. For this important service Mr. Pennell never received any salvage, and was only allowed the paltry reward implied in a commission of 2½ per cent, from the British Government, although at that time no salary was attached to the office of consul and the fees were altogether insignificant. His services were highly appreciated by the Royal Family of France, and the Duchess d'Angouleme presented him with a ring, containing a single diamond of the value of a £1,000, as a souvenir. This ring he has left as a heir-loom in the family.

In 1817 Mr. Pennell was appointed Consul at Bahia, and was promoted to be Consul-General at the court of Brazil in 1829, which office he continued to fill till its abolition. On many occasions during his official career he received the warm commendation of his superior officers, and more especially the strongest expressions of approbation from those enlightened statesmen, Mr. Canning, Lord Aberdeen, and Mr. Gordon. After the war with Brazil and Buenos Ayres a warm dispute arose between England and Brazil respecting British vessels captured by the Brazilian men-of-war, and it was through the judicious suggestions and intervention of the Consul-General that the making reprisals was averted, and the consequent injuries which would have resulted to our trade were avoided. During his residence in Brazil, through a time of great political excitement, revolution, and danger, Mr. Pennell had the good fortune to command the esteem and respect of all parties : and there are those living both in Portugal and Brazil who still entertain a grateful recollection of the asylum afforded them under his roof when their lives were jeopardized by the madness of opposing factions. Of Mr. Pennell's hospitality it may be truly said it was that of the " fine old English gentleman," without stint, and given with unostentatious liberality ; once a week he kept open house, and these reunions were crowded by the British, French, and other foreign naval officers on the station, as well as by the British and distinguished natives and foreigners resident in the country. Alas ! these are now reminiscences of bygone days. Through some mysterious and unknown agency the climate, which was formerly one of the most healthy within the tropics, has of late years become infected with fever and diarrhoea, which have in a great measure put an end to those agreeable and happy meetings, where there was such pleasurable and exalted interchange of sentiment and information.

It is a curious and singular fact that during the long career of Mr. Pennell as a public servant, he has not cost the country a single shilling, as the interest of the money saved by him at Bordeaux from the clutches of Bonaparte's general would more than doubly pay the whole of his salary and retiring pension up to the time of his death. This was a great satisfaction to him, and we trust his country will not think he has been an unprofitable servant.

In politics Mr. Pennell was of the Canning and Huskisson school. He was a man of a most happy disposition, and his great pleasure and delight through life was to promote the happiness and contribute towards the prosperity of others. With the exception of his eyesight, which rather failed towards the last, he retained his faculties to the end.

Mr. Pennell was sprung from a very respectable family in Devonshire. He married Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. James Carrington, Prebendary of Exeter, by whom (who died at an advanced age in 1854) he had twenty-two children, many of whom survive him ; upwards of a hundred lineal descendants are now living to mourn his loss. Of his daughters, the eldest married, in 1806, the Right Hon. J. W. Croker; another married Sir Anthony Perrier, for many years English Consul at Brest; and the youngest is the wife of Sir George Barrow, Bart.