

population sufficient for their own future defence; such were the United States of America when British colonies, and are at present the British possessions in India, Canada, and the Spanish colonies in both the Americas. The second class will include those colonies which are suitable to commercial purposes, but which contain no commanding position, either for their own protection or that of the general interests of the parent state, and which are not of sufficient extent to produce a population capable of their own defence: such, with perhaps the exception of Cuba, are all the islands of the Caribbean Sea, and the greater part of those in the Indian and Mediterranean Seas. The third class will consist of those possessions which, being either islands or insulated positions of strength, are occupied by the parent state, for the purpose of protecting its commerce and maintaining its ascendancy in the neighbouring seas; such are Malta, Corfu, Gibraltar, and the Cape of Good Hope. It must be evident that the two latter of these classes can never be in a situation to maintain their independence; they consequently can never attain the age of manhood as defined by M. de Pradt. Those general principles, therefore, which may be termed the philosophy of colonization, are only capable of application to the colonial establishments of the first class. With these restrictions we may admit with M. de Pradt, that "the independence of colonies is innate, that it arises from the natural order of things; and is the necessary consequence of their arriving at a certain degree of maturity."

The world has hitherto had so little experience

of the effect of these principles, that an unusual degree of interest will attach to the development of their results, in the momentous question now at issue between Spain and her colonies. We have as yet indeed but one instance of their complete operation, but as the natural progress of events was impeded by fewer restrictions in the country which affords it, than in any other colonial establishment, it offers a fair criterion for our judgment of their probable effects in the countries which now engage the attention of the world.— The natural causes which conduce to the attainment of colonial maturity are, however, subject to the influence of such a variety of incidental circumstances, that we are not to expect much uniformity, either in the mode or period of their agency. We find, accordingly, that the Spanish colonies, which have been established for more than three hundred years, are now only partially emerging from the state of vassalage and dependence, whilst British possessions, founded one hundred years subsequently, after having passed through the different stages of colonial progress, have for nearly half a century enjoyed the blessings of independence, and have already attained a degree of power and political importance which enables them to assume a station in the first rank of nations.

These different degrees of rapidity, in the progress to colonial maturity, are in an inverse ratio, both of the strength of the mother countries, and of the extent of their colonies in this quarter of the globe, and have arisen rather from the depressed state of the colonies of Spain, than from any superiority in her means to retain them in

subjection. We must therefore seek their origin in the injurious effects of her colonial system.—As the treatment which the colonies of these nations experienced in their infancy, will probably give a decided difference of character to their more mature age, a brief comparison of the systems adopted by the governments of England and Spain, in the first establishment and subsequent administration of their American settlements, will perhaps assist our investigation of the consequences of this wide and simultaneous diffusion of independence.

The first settlers in the Spanish colonies were the bold and enterprising adventurers who had achieved the conquest of those countries, accustomed to the habits of carelessness and dissipation induced by a life of continued hardship and danger, they had neither industry to cultivate the soil, nor patience to await the slow returns of commerce. Stimulated by the desire of immediate wealth, the precious metals were the only objects of their search, the only incentives to their activity. The government of Spain imitated the example of her subjects, and, allured by the dazzling prospects of wealth thus suddenly unfolded to her view, claimed a portion of the spoil, and encouraged by her regulations the continuance of a system so lucrative to the individuals immediately concerned in it, but so detrimental to the general interests of both the conquerors and the conquered. The whole system of the colonial policy of Spain originated in this spirit, and the restrictions and disabilities under which the colonies have so long laboured, resulted from the rapacity and jealousy which it engendered.

More than a century posterior to these events the first British colonies were established in America. The original settlers were men of independent spirit, and industrious habits, who, discontented with the religious or political institutions of their native country, sought freedom in the asylum of these uncultivated deserts, where they became, at once, the proprietors and cultivators of the soil. The government soon perceived the value of these possessions, and fostered their infancy with a liberality worthy of a free and enlightened people, requiring only an acknowledgment of its supremacy in return for the protection it afforded, and leaving them perfectly unrestrained in the regulations of their internal policy.

The Spaniards found the inhabitants of the countries they invaded, collected in populous cities and considerably advanced in civilization.—A mild system of treatment might have converted them into faithful allies or useful dependents, but, instead of attempting any conciliatory measures, they attacked them without provocation, and sacrificed them without remorse. Those who escaped the sword, were made use of as the implements of avarice, with such an unfeeling and prodigal barbarity, that they sunk under the hardships imposed upon them, with a rapidity which astonished even their ruthless oppressors. In the islands not a vestige of the original inhabitants remains, and it is probable that many regions of the continent suffered the same extreme of depopulation, as the insatiable thirst of their new masters for the precious metals subjected them to severer tasks and labours more destructive to the

human frame. Occasional symptoms of remorse were indeed exhibited, and in the moments of compunction, regulations, dictated by humanity, were framed for the protection of the wretched natives, but in regions so remote from the seat of legislation, these salutary laws became too often ineffectual, when opposed to the interests of the resident oppressor.

The British settlers, on the contrary, approached the theatre of the future greatness of their descendants, bearing the olive branch of peace; their only instruments of conquest were the axe and the plough. They sought not to oppress or subjugate the native occupant of the soil, who received them in the arms of friendship, and, quietly receding into his boundless forests, left them undisturbed possession of the country necessary for their subsistence.

The Spanish government founded its claim to its new possessions on the right of conquest.—Equally regardless of their interests and their distresses, it parcelled them out amongst the conquerors, and, eager to make them subservient to the immediate purposes of revenue, claimed a portion of the profits of the new possessor, and exacted from the wretched native a tribute wrung from the hard earned wages of his toil. England never levied any direct tax upon her transatlantic dominions; the only financial advantages she derived from them, were such as resulted from the extension of her domestic commerce.

The effects produced upon the colonies by commercial restrictions have been also equally unfavourable to the dependencies of Spain. The principle of exclusive trade seems ever to have been

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considered as the essence of a colonial establishment, and, although necessity has in some few instances extorted some relaxation of its rigour, it has formed a prominent feature in the colonial system of every European power. This may be considered as the price paid by the colony for the protection and support of the parent state, it is undoubtedly injurious to the colony and will eventually form one of the most powerful causes of separation, but its influence may be modified by a variety of circumstances which have a tendency to mitigate the severity of its operation.—The value of the colony consists not only in the quantity of its own actual produce, but also on the quantity of the produce or of the manufactures of the mother country, of which it causes the consumption, and by which means it becomes the source and efficient cause of production. It is therefore evident that the mutual interest of both parties requires the extent of the colonies to be proportioned to the industry of the mother country, as well as to its means of affording them protection. If this is not the case the wants of the colony will be either scantily supplied, or the price of the articles they require will be greatly enhanced by the circuitous channel through which they have to pass, and the monopolies to which they will be subject in their course.

It is owing to this cause that the system of colonization has been so much more beneficial to England than to any other nation of Europe.—The demands made upon her industry have been at all times answered with a promptitude equal to their extent, and have proved a fruitful source

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of her internal riches and prosperity: her colonies have likewise reaped an equal benefit from the connexion by the ready market which she opened to their produce, and the ample supply she afforded them of every article of necessity or luxury. These circumstances left them little cause to regret the restrictions upon their intercourse with other nations.

When Spain first acquired possession of her American settlements, she was the only manufacturing country in Europe, and the produce of her industry was sufficient to answer their growing demands, and purchase the commodities which flowed in upon her from the newly discovered world. It might have been expected that her population, invigorated by this reciprocation of advantage, would have increased in number and in wealth, in proportion with the growth of her colonies, and that her government would have received as great an increase of strength and power from these acquisitions, as other states have derived from a similar source.

In little more, however, than a century from the first discovery of America, Spain exhibited a spectacle which convinced the world how little a sudden influx of wealth conduces to the greatness and prosperity of a kingdom, if unaccompanied by corresponding habits of industry among its people.

The monarchs who succeeded to the throne, without inheriting the genius of Charles V. elated by the notion of their inexhaustible resources, engaged in extensive and complicated operations in every part of Europe, and Spain was drained by

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of her population and her treasure, in support of the extravagant schemes of their ambition.

Her manufacturers likewise became dissatisfied with that moderate increase of wealth, which flows gradually from the patient and persevering exertions of industry, and flocked with eagerness to those regions from whence opulence issued in so copious a stream.

To complete the exhaustion of the kingdom, and the annihilation of its domestic trade, the impolitic decree of Philip III. expelled at once nearly a million of his most industrious artisans, at a time when every exertion was necessary to increase their numbers, and renovate their vigour.

Such was the paralyzation of Spain from these causes, that every species of internal industry was neglected, and she was unable to supply the demands of her colonies without having recourse to the manufactures of other nations. From that moment she ceased to be any thing more than the agent through whose hands the precious metals were distributed to reward the activity and industry of her rivals. The consequence of this system of things to Spain herself has been sufficiently manifest, she now scarcely exhibits a trace of that gigantic power which once prescribed laws to the different courts of Europe. "*Indignum et notum olim, nunc tantum auditur*." Its effects upon her colonies have been still more deleterious, when the reciprocity of benefit which can alone make the restrictive system tolerable had ceased, she substituted, in its place, penal and sanguinary laws of utter seclusion. Jealous of the interference of other nations, she wished to make herself

The sole medium of intercourse between these extensive regions and the rest of the universe. To effect this it was necessary to fetter the mind as well as the body, to add the chains of ignorance to those of despotism, and the colonies were impoverished, oppressed, and degraded, to prevent their acquiring a knowledge of their own importance in the scale of creation.

This line of conduct was well calculated to alienate the affection of the colonies: but the very acts of despotism and oppression which excited the desire of separation, retarded likewise the progress of independence, and prolonged the period of their infancy. The British colonies, on the other hand, being restrained only by that wholesome exercise of parental authority which preserved their tender age from the indulgence of injurious excess, acquired a vigour and strength of constitution, favourable to the attainment of maturity, and prepared them for an early display of their natural strength. It cannot, however, be supposed that the extensive possessions of Spain could be completely closed against the intrusion of more liberal ideas. The introduction of the gross materials of commerce may indeed be prevented by fiscal regulations, but the subtle elements of intellectual light will elude the utmost vigilance of despotism. A new race of beings had sprung into existence in these countries, whose energetic character formed a striking contrast to the listless apathy of the native Indian. The Creole descendants of the original settlers and of other European emigrants, began now to form a considerable part of the population, and the system of colonial administra-

tion adopted by Spain, pressed particularly hard upon this class of her subjects. Some modification of it was therefore necessary to adapt it to this change of circumstances, but she persisted in a pertinacious adherence to her established maxims of extortion and oppression.

It is well observed by M. de Trudt, that "Europe has no interest in any population that has not European habits," "and that she should apply herself, in her colonial discoveries, to multiply European population and European habits." It is therefore to the Creole race, that we must look for the supply of those materials of future independence, which shall be beneficial to the colony, and render it permanently valuable to the parent state. So long as the colonial union continues to subsist, the Creole forms the firmest support of the power and interests of the mother country, and when the period arrives that sovereignty is exchanged for commercial intercourse, the habits, which he has acquired and diffused, constitute the strongest bond of future connexion. Justice and policy combine therefore to demand for him liberality of treatment and a participation in the power and wealth of his native land. But so jealous has the court of Madrid ever been of encouraging any symptoms of independence in her colonies, that for a long time every situation of trust and emolument was invariably filled by Europeans, and the descendants of this favoured race, if born in those proscribed regions, seemed from that circumstance alone to have forfeited all claim to the favour and protection of their government.

Every thing therefore conspired to render the

dominion of Spain unprofitable and burthensome to her colonies. Their commerce was not only restricted to the mother country, but was still farther fettered by the monopolies granted to particular cities and companies or merchants: they were compelled to accept for their own produce whatever the monopolist thought proper to offer, and to proportion the quantity of it to the scanty demand rather than to their capability of production. At the same time they were obliged to pay for European merchandize any price demanded by the privileged vendor, and they were even then but imperfectly supplied, as it became the interest of the merchant to create an artificial scarcity, for the purpose of exacting a more exorbitant profit. The articles of European commerce therefore came to them so dear that they could afford to purchase but little, and at the same time their own agriculture was kept in a state of the most abject depression for want of sufficient encouragement. The weight of these burthens was likewise rendered still more insupportable by the excessive tax levied by the crown on the importation of every article of foreign manufacture.

As the population of the colonies increased, Spain found it necessary to adopt stronger measures and greater precautions for the preservation of her power; and their operation still farther multiplied the causes of dissatisfaction. By such means the seeds of discontent were disseminated over the whole of these vast regions, and nothing but a genial season was wanting to promote their vegetation, and cause them to bring forth the fruits of emancipation and independence. Circumstances

at length occurred which presented the favourable opportunity, and the avidity with which it was seized manifested the deep sense they entertained of the oppressions under which they laboured. The French revolution, that fruitful source of so many temporary changes in the governments of Europe, gave the necessary impulse, and a convulsive shock, which threatened the utter subversion of the power of Spain, was felt simultaneously throughout the whole extent of her transatlantic dominions.

This effect was not produced by the influence of the political tenets which characterised that eventful period, but resulted merely from the removal of those impediments which obstructed the operation of the natural causes of colonial separation. The hopeless war with Great Britain, in which Spain was involved at the instigation of her imperious neighbour, interrupted the intercourse with her colonies, and subsequent events proved so disastrous to her marine that she lost the power of affording them further protection, they were therefore driven to a reliance on their own resources for defence, and were not long in discovering that the same strength which enabled them to resist the aggressions of a foreign foe, would likewise protect them from the despotism of domestic tyranny.

The Spanish part of the South American peninsula may now be considered as divided into four distinct governments, viz. Buenos Ayres, Chili, Peru, and the government which comprehends the provinces of Venezuela and New Grenada.—Very little communication was maintained between

tween these provinces whilst subjects of the same monarchy, for to the natural obstacles of boundless deserts and impassable mountains was super-added the jealous interdiction of mutual intercourse. We must not therefore be surprised at the want of concert in their early operations — The opposition presented by the power of Spain to their patriotic efforts varied likewise with the different value which she had attached to provinces more or less productive of the precious metals, and it was not to be expected that they would at first be all equally prepared for this important change in their condition, or equally successful in surmounting the difficulties with which they had to struggle. Such, however, is the extent and natural resources of each of these grand divisions of territory, that they have little to fear from the attempts of Spain to reduce them to their former state of subjection, and, so well defined are their limits by the hand of nature, that no cause of dissension is to be apprehended from a collision of their interests.

The various combinations of circumstances to which these nascent states have been exposed, in their slow progress through the different stages of colonial existence to their present state of maturity, are likely to produce a decided influence on their future character, and demand the serious consideration of those who desire to form a true estimate of their individual importance. The limits I have prescribed to myself in these remarks will not admit of such an enquiry, but a brief outline of events, many of which have fallen under my personal observation, may not be unaccepta-

ble to those who are desirous of obtaining information on this subject.

The province of Buenos Ayres first displayed the banners of independence, and has therefore the first claim to our notice. This province, in common with many other Spanish possessions was originally occupied rather with the view of guarding the avenues to the more valuable colonies, and preventing the interference of other European settlers, than with any prospect of immediate advantage. It afforded the Spaniards none of those riches which were the objects of their cupidity, and was therefore long suffered to languish in obscurity. At length, accident rather than design, contributed to develop its natural importance, for the horses and cattle imported from Europe, by the original settlers, multiplied with such extraordinary rapidity, that they soon covered the fertile plains of the interior with innumerable herds, and the colonist was enabled to carry on a lucrative trade in the supply of the provinces on the western shores of the peninsula, with those useful animals. In the middle of the last century, Spain likewise thought proper to permit some relaxation of the rigor of her mercantile system, and the pastoral riches of Buenos Ayres affording the materials of an extensive foreign commerce, this province made a rapid progress in opulence and population.

The mild and salubrious temperature of this region seems to have been as favourable to the perfection of the human race as to that of the inferior animals. The aboriginal inhabitants were remarkable for the strength and symmetry of their per-

does, and displayed a determination and vigour in their resistance to the invaders which rendered their subjugation difficult and doubtful. The continual necessity, likewise, under which the colonist found himself, of guarding against the attacks of the numerous enemies with which he was surrounded, combined with the effects of the climate to engender those warlike habits which have ever since distinguished the natives of this province.

Buenos Ayres held out also fewer temptations to the European adventurer, and consequently the Creole race acquired a greater degree of influence and power, and were free from the intrusion of those transient inhabitants, who, intent only on the acquisition of wealth, have no community of interest with the native, and form one of the greatest obstacles to the establishment of colonial independence.

From these several causes, the province of Buenos Ayres had attained a greater degree of maturity than any other of the Spanish colonies, and the progress of public opinion had already begun to manifest itself, when the unsuccessful attacks of the British, in the years 1806 and 1807, brought into full action its latent powers, and burst the feeble bands by which this colony was still attached to the crown of Spain. From this period, may be dated the extinction of the Spanish power on the banks of the Plata. After some unimportant domestic struggles, a provisional junta was established in the year 1810, which has since resigned its powers to a government of the republican form, founded on the basis of a regular constitution.

The contest between this state and the mother country is still nominally continued, but their separation may be considered as complete. Its infancy has indeed been threatened by the extensive warlike preparations whose "dreadful note" has so long been echoed through the ports of Spain, but the extraordinary circumstances which protracted the departure of this force, and the pestilence which caused its subsequent dispersion, have in all probability induced the government to abandon the project. Had this formidable armament reached the point of its destination, its success would have been at least doubtful; for if we consider that Buenos Ayres, when unprepared and nearly destitute of military defence, could effectually oppose a British force, as powerful as any which Spain could have sent against her, it is not unreasonable to conjecture, that this latter power would have failed to make any serious impression upon her, now that she has for twelve years been employed in organizing the means of resistance.

It is not yet possible to determine the extent or boundaries of this government. When subject to Spain, it was the most extensive in the new world, but the valuable district of Potosi has been since seized upon by the governor of Peru, and the insurgents under Artigas have occupied all its northern provinces. It is probably neither the wish nor the interest of Buenos Ayres, to recover those possessions, as their remote situation would always render their occupation troublesome and precarious. The subdivisions of territory which may hereafter take place, in these

extensive regions, are not however likely materially to affect the interests of Europe, for, as their only outlet is the river Plata, they will be virtually nothing more than provinces of the power which commands the navigation of that river.— If Artigas, indeed, should succeed in forcing his way to the Atlantic through any part of the Brazilian territory, or by the capture of Monte Video, he will prove a formidable rival to the Buenos Ayreans, but, till such an event takes place, his intercourse with Europe will be entirely subject to their control, and his country can scarcely be considered as a separate government.

The difficulties attending the navigation of the Plata, and the insecurity and natural obstructions of its harbours, seem likely to oppose insurmountable obstacles to the acquisition of maritime power, by any of the countries watered by this river and its tributary streams. Their dependence on foreign intercourse for so many of the luxuries and conveniences of life, will, therefore, naturally induce them to seek the friendship and alliance of the nation that enjoys a superiority of naval power, and commercial privilege is the only return they can make for her protection. Under any circumstances, the present age of these countries would be the agricultural, but the extreme fertility of their soil, and the extensive plains in which they abound, render them so peculiarly adapted to pastoral and agricultural pursuits, that they seem likely to be arrested in their progress towards the more advanced stages of society. They will, therefore, become valuable customers to the looms and smithies of Europe, and will, in return, supply her

manufacturing nations with many articles of raw produce, for which they are now dependent on the caprice or interested indulgence of jealous rivals.

The population of this government is at present by no means proportionate to its extent, but its rapid increase may be anticipated as soon as the demand for its agricultural produce shall be sufficient to give value to the exertions of the labourer. England and all other European nations, who possess colonies in the tropical regions of the western world, are deeply interested in encouraging this branch of the commerce of Buenos Ayres; for the extraordinary return, with which the richness of the soil rewards the labours of the husbandman, will probably enable him to produce wheat at a price which, notwithstanding the greater distance of carriage, will allow it to come in competition with that of the United States in the tropical markets. Such a competition would form a counterpoise to the preponderance which this latter power is acquiring, by the dependence of so large a portion of the world upon her supply of this necessary article of human consumption; and which, if not counteracted, will at no distant period render her absolute mistress of the riches of these extensive regions.

Passing westward from Buenos Ayres, we arrive at the towering Cordilleras of the Andes, which form a natural barrier between the countries on the eastern and western shores of this vast peninsula. The unequal distances at which this stupendous range of mountains is situated from the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, give a de-

aided difference of character to the countries lying on its different sides. This influence is not confined to those districts of the interior, whose remote situation precludes them from the advantages of foreign intercourse, but extends itself likewise to the inhabitants of the coast. It originates in the majestic grandeur of these regions, for the torrents which roll from the summits of the Andes, in traversing the immeasurable tracts of country which lie to the eastward of these mountains, collect themselves before they reach the Atlantic into the mighty streams of the Orinoco, the Marañon, and the Plata. These rivers empty themselves into the ocean, through the broad expanse of estuaries whose navigation is obstructed by dangerous shoals, and exposed, without protection or shelter, to all the fury of the conflicting elements: circumstances, as has been before observed, which will probably prevent these countries from ever attaining any great degree of maritime importance. But, on the western side of the Andes, the rivers have a shorter course to perform before they reach the ocean, and there is not time for such an accumulation of their waters. Hence, on the shores of the Pacific, we meet with innumerable rivers capable of affording secure anchorage for shipping, and calculated to produce, in a considerable part of the population, habits highly favourable to the production and growth of naval power.

The state of Chili is the most southerly of the Spanish colonies on the western coast of the Peninsula, it is defended on its eastern side by the impenetrable barrier of the Andes, on the south

it is bounded by the frigid regions of Magellan, and it is separated from Peru by the desert of Atacama. This country was first invaded by Almagro, the companion of Pizarro, soon after the conquest of Peru. Accustomed only to the feeble resistance of the effeminate Peruvians, the Spaniards were not prepared for the obstacles opposed to them by the strenuous resistance of the Chilose, and the expedition of Almagro was defeated with great loss. Many subsequent attempts met with a similar want of success, but the country was eventually occupied by them, although its conquest appears never to have been complete.

Chili extends itself along the shores of the Pacific, from the tropic of Capricorn across half the width of the southern temperate zone, and, situated between nearly the same parallels of latitude with Buenos Ayres, enjoys a similar salubrity of climate. Its territory, however, is by no means so extensive as that of Buenos Ayres, for the proximity of the Andes to the Pacific so contracts its breadth, that it in no part exceeds 300 miles.

Every circumstance contributes to render this region the most delightful of any in the western world, equally removed by its geographical situation from the extremes of heat and cold, its climate is still farther tempered and freshened by the alternate action of the breezes, from its mountains and the ocean. The exuberant fertility of the soil supplies a profusion of all the necessities and luxuries of life: its northern provinces affording all the varieties of tropical produce, and the gramma and fruits of Europe imported by the

Spaniards, having found in the southern and the mountainous parts, a clime highly congenial to their growth and perfection. The produce of the olive and vine is not inferior in quality to that of their native soil, and the return of the crops of grain is unequalled in any other part of the world: Its mountainous districts abound likewise in mineral products: the precious metals are found in abundance, and no country has a richer supply of those which contribute to promote and assist the industry of man.

With such advantages of soil and climate, Chili seems formed by nature to become the granary of all the countries on the shores of the Pacific; situated between the desert of Atacama and the wheat-bearing regions of Mexico: and now, that the assertion of her independence has freed her from the unnatural restrictions under which she so long laboured, we may expect to see her rise to importance and power with a rapidity proportioned to the magnitude of her internal resources.

Notwithstanding these natural advantages of Chili, it was for a long time less known to the world, and attracted less attention from the mother country, than any other of the Spanish colonies, this neglect of so valuable a province arose partly from her remote situation, and partly from the jealousy and interested policy of her Peruvian neighbours. So long as the Isthmus of Darien was the channel of intercourse between Spain and her colonies, Chili was placed at such a distance, that, at a time when the imperfect state of navigation rendered the passage from Panama to her coast tedious and difficult, no direct communica-

tion could be held with her, and all her trade passed through the hands of the Spanish merchant; in Peru. But, after Spain had found the benefit of carrying on her commerce with the colonies by the route of Cape Horn, a great change took place in the relative situations of these countries, and Chili, now lying in the direct road between Spain and her other possessions on the shores of the Pacific, was enabled to barter her commodities for the goods of Europe, in her own harbours. The advantageous effects of this intercourse were soon manifested by the encreasing riches and prosperity of this province, but, as their attainment served only to make the colonists more sensible of the disabilities under which they laboured, the natural causes of colonial separation began to operate with full vigour. It was not therefore to be expected that the Chilese would neglect so favourable an opportunity of asserting its independence, as that which was presented by the distracted state of Spain.

The first symptom of opposition to the Spanish power was manifested in the year 1810. The spirit of disaffection soon spread itself throughout the country, and has been completely triumphant, notwithstanding the support given to the local authorities by the whole force of the royalists in Peru. The patriotic cause suffered at first some partial reverses, but the decisive battle of Maipo, in which the Royalist army, commanded by the Spanish general Osorio, was annihilated by the Chilese force under St. Martin, may be considered as having completely established their independence. The climate of this beautiful country is

well calculated to develop the faculties of the human race, and its Creole inhabitants are remarkable for activity of body and energy of mind. These qualities, kept in continual activity by the restless disposition of their Indian neighbours, have generated warlike habits, which, aided by the natural defences of the country, will enable them to defy any attempts of the feeble government of the mother country, to reduce them again to the yoke of servitude.

The numerous islands subject to the government of Chili, and its extensive line of coast, in the course of which upwards of one hundred rivers pour their waters into the ocean, give a maritime character to this country, which seems to mark it out as the future seat of naval dominion in the Pacific. The natural advantages of its situation have indeed already been brought into action, by the fortuitous circumstance of an European officer, so eminent for professional skill: as Lord Cochrane, having attached himself to their cause. The presence of his force has given them a decided superiority in these seas, and promises to be productive of still greater and more permanent benefits, by thus early directing their attention to the improvement of this great source of national power.

The province of Peru, situated on the shores of the Pacific, immediately to the northward of Chili, has been always looked upon by Spain as the most valuable of her South American possessions. Her attention has therefore been particularly directed to its preservation, and the extensive colonies with which it was surrounded were long considered merely as the outworks of its de-

fence. From the first discovery of this country, to the present time, its metallic treasure has been the great object of pursuit, and, in the districts abounding with these precious materials, every other exertion of industry has been discouraged and forbidden. By means of this valuable produce, enormous wealth was amassed by individuals, and, as it enabled the government to provide for its domestic exigencies, and maintain other useless dependencies in unprofitable inactivity, little enquiry was made into the probable results of such a system. The great interest likewise which Spain had in a country, where she claimed a fifth part of the only produce that was considered as of any value, necessarily obliged her to retain a numerous band of dependents, for the protection of her rights and the collection of her revenue, and the favourable opportunity presented to these persons of acquiring riches, together with the jealous policy of the government, produced frequent changes, and a continual influx of Europeans into the province of Peru. Owing to these circumstances, there has been less alteration in the relative situations of the different classes of society in this country, than in any other part of Spanish America. All offices of authority under the government, and the greater part of the riches of the country, are in the hands of European Spaniards, and the population, condemned to a toil, ill calculated to promote wholesome habits of industry, are kept in their original state of ignorance and abject dependence. Peru, therefore, notwithstanding its natural riches, has made less advance in colonial age, than any other province.

of the new world, and is consequently less prepared for any change in its condition.

Some symptoms of revolt have manifested themselves in the provinces of this government, but they have been repressed by the power of the capital, which has remained firm in its allegiance to the Spanish crown. It is probable, that if this country had been left to itself, it would not yet have evinced any disposition to break its connexion with Spain, but her obstinate refusal to come to any terms of accommodation with those states, which have already established their independence, will render it impossible for them to leave her in undisturbed possession of Peru. The Chilese have already commenced active hostilities against this remnant of Spanish power in the South American peninsula, and, if it does not speedily receive considerable reinforcements from the mother country, they have every prospect of success; and as the wealth and power of this province are concentrated in Lima, the capture of that city will be followed by the utter extirpation of the despotism of Spain.

In the present state of affairs, it would be difficult to form any probable conjecture as to the future political relations of these states. It is, however, possible, that the superior natural advantages of Chili, its maritime superiority, and the dependence of Peru upon it for many of the necessities of life, will produce a more intimate connexion than that of mere alliance. The extent of this province is not well defined. On the south it is separated from Chili by the desert of Atacama, but its northern and eastern frontiers have

been subject to such frequent changes, that it is impossible to determine their present boundaries. It originally extended to the sterile swamps of Darien, but, in the beginning of the last century, all the country to the north of the River Tumbez, including the districts of Popayan, Quito, and Guayaquil, was separated from it and added to the viceroyalty of New Grenada. In 1778, Potosi and all the country to the east of the Andes, was also taken from it and annexed to the government of Buenos Ayres. It has been before observed that, since the revolution in this latter country, the viceroy of Peru has regained possession of Potosi, and the province of Guayaquil had been restored to his government in the year 1802. This last mentioned country is a valuable acquisition to Peru, for the excellence of its harbour, and the extensive commerce it carries on with all the provinces on the shores of the Pacific, promise to render it a situation of great commercial importance.

The consequence of the emancipation of the three states already mentioned, from the fetters by which the exertion of their natural energies have been so long restrained, will be sensibly felt by all the maritime nations of the world, and if they afford prospects of greater advantage to England than to any other state, it is only in consequence of her superiority in manufactures and in naval power. But the independence of those Spanish colonies of the peninsula, which, situated on the shores of the Caribbean sea, are comprehended under the general title of the "Spanish Main," becomes a subject of particular interest to Eng-

land, as it involves considerations intimately connected with the prosperity and even the existence of her own valuable colonies in this part of the world. The effects likely to be produced upon the English colonies by this event, may be classed under three heads, viz. : a rivalry of produce ; the new direction which will probably be given to the trade hitherto carried on between them and the Main ; and the influence of its example, which, according to the opinion of M. de Pradt, " decides the fate of all the colonies belonging to Europe."

One of the most extraordinary features of the policy adopted by Spain in the administration of her colonies, was her utter neglect of their tropical produce. Whilst in possession of countries capable of supplying the whole of Europe with those articles which habits of luxury had rendered essential to its comfort, she was herself dependent for them upon the colonies of other nations. She sought to draw from her own colonies nothing but gold and silver, and, as she had long ceased to produce the manufactures necessary for their supply, she was obliged to expend their metallic treasure in the purchase, when the newly acquired taste of Europe would have given as current a value to their other produce, and at the same time have encouraged their industry, and prevented her own impoverishment. But the emancipation of these countries will excite a new spirit of enterprise, and generate habits of agricultural industry. Situated in the very heart of the torrid Zone, the low lands on the coast and the banks of the rivers are admirably calculated for the growth and exportation

of all the varieties of tropical produce. Those parts of Guiana which are now subject to England have already become formidable rivals even to Jamaica itself, both in the quality and quantity of their sugars. Nothing, therefore, is wanting, but a sufficient population and an adequate demand to cover all the plains from the mouths of the Orinoco to the banks of the Magdalena with plantations of the sugar cane. Nature has in these regions been so lavish of her bounties, that the present demand for their peculiar produce bears no proportion to their capability of production ; the comparative expence of raising it will, therefore, in a great measure, depend upon the value of labour, and it is a well established fact, that work of every description is executed at a cheaper rate by the hire of free men, than by the forced labour of the slave. It may, perhaps, be some time before this part of the continent attains a sufficient degree of maturity to give full effect to the operation of these advantageous circumstances, but there seems every probability that the produce of our colonies will not eventually be able to stand a competition with that of the countries on the Main.—The restrictions of the colonial system will indeed secure to them the supply of the mother country, but there will be no longer any demand for that part of their produce which has hitherto been carried to the continent of Europe.

In the year 1818, the total amount of the sugar imported from our colonies into England and Ireland, was two hundred and sixty seven thousand hogsheads, of which forty thousand hogsheads came from the provinces of Guiana ; the

home consumption of that year was unusually great, and amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand hogsheads: it appears, therefore, that nearly one fifth of the whole produce of that article remains for exportation, and if so large a quantity as thrown upon the hands of the merchant, it must cause a stagnation of trade in the highest degree injurious to the British colonies. The great quantity of sugar now exported from the Brazils, and the increased cultivation of Cuba, have caused these effects to be already partially felt, although our improvements in the art of refining have in some measure counteracted them, and enabled us as yet to meet these new rivals in the foreign markets. Such an advantage, however, will be necessarily of transient duration, and may be at any time wrested from us by the skill and industry of the continental manufacturer.

The consequences to be apprehended from the new direction likely to be given to the British trade with these countries will be by no means so generally felt. They will indeed cause a revolution in the mercantile relations of Kingston, and the few other places which have hitherto formed the channels of this intercourse, but their influence will not be extended further. It is to be expected that, when the ports of the Main are open to the commerce of the world, British manufactures will proceed directly to the place of their destination, without taking the circuitous route of Jamaica. The warehouses of Kingston will, therefore, no longer form the medium of this supply, and her merchants must again be content with the internal trade of the island. These circum-

stances will affect the individuals who have been engaged in this branch of traffic, but their interests have been so little blended with those of the colony itself, that their removal will not be attended with any serious inconvenience to it, and so long as the manufacturer has the same demand for his goods, the channel of their conveyance must be to him a matter of indifference.

Neither does it appear probable that the influence of the example afforded by the revolution of the Spanish colonies, will produce any similar effects upon those of Britain. In the first place, the British colonies in the West Indies are not of such an extent, or importance, as will enable them to support their independence even if they should think it expedient to assert it. It may, perhaps, be urged, that we have already an instance of the successful exertion of such an effort in a neighbouring island. But independence of this description is as much to be deprecated by the British islands, as the means by which it was effected. It is not the independence of civilization.—The inhabitants of these diminutive states may indeed find protection from an enemy in the fastnesses of their mountains, and the unhealthiness of their climate; but they will never emerge from the state of semibarbarism into which they were thrown by the first effects of their revolution, unless they constitute a link of that great commercial chain by which the nations of the world are connected. But, destitute as they are of means to defend even their coasts from insult, or their cities from pillage, foreign commerce will serve only to render them dependent on the caprice of

every maritime power, and they will eventually be reduced to the necessity of bartering their newly acquired independence in the purchase of alliance and protection.

Independent, however, of the natural weakness of the British colonies, other circumstances conspire to prolong the continuance of their connection with the mother country. Notwithstanding the remote period of their establishment, they have made but little progress in colonial age, and are still far distant from maturity, affording, in this respect, a striking contrast to the former continental possessions of England, in this quarter of the globe. This protraction of their infancy is in a great measure attributable to their fertility, and the value attached to their productions, by the monopoly they so long enjoyed in the European market. Such causes might naturally have been expected to have been productive of different effects, but the rapidity with which fortunes were acquired, by the early colonists, rendered only a very short residence necessary for the accumulation of enormous wealth. The ties of social affection were but little weakened by this short period of absence, and the early attainment of the object of their emigration rendered them impatient, and gave them the opportunity to return to the land of their nativity, and enjoy in the bosom of their families those newly acquired riches, which enabled them to vie in splendour and magnificence with the first ranks of society in the mother country. They were, however, unwilling altogether to relinquish these fruitful sources of opulence, and in most cases retained possession of their co-

lonial estates, which they committed to the management of agents, who were content for a participation of the profits to exonerate the luxurious proprietors from the burthen of residence. By these means a great part of the landed property of the islands came into the hands of non-resident proprietors, and that portion of the population which is in general most interested in the establishment of independence was not only lost to the colony, but the weight of its influence was thrown into the opposite scale.

Nor is this the only evil, for the absence of this description of persons, who would naturally form a considerable portion of the better order of society, will necessarily produce considerable influence on its other constituent parts. We find, accordingly, that a similar spirit of *colonophobia* has diffused itself amongst those classes of persons who resort to the islands for the purpose of exercising their professional talents, or employing their capital in mercantile pursuits, and general habits are formed of an exclusive devotion to the acquisition of such a competency as may enable them to return to their native land, from what they are apt to consider as a state of exile in a remote and unhealthy country. A majority of the inhabitants therefore do not consider themselves at home, they are strangers only and sojourners in the land, and are inclined to view every unnecessary expenditure, upon objects connected with the improvement or embellishment of the colony, as the means of protracting the happy moment of return to Europe. These habits have impressed a characteristic feature on the British islands, which

cannot fail to attract the notice of strangers, who in vain seek for those social and literary institutions, those public places of resort and amusement, which in other cities form the cement of the different classes of society. This continual fluctuation of so important a portion of the population effectually checks the growth of those principles of local attachment, whose agency so powerfully contributes to generate the desire of colonial separation. But even if such a desire should manifest itself, it is not likely to prevail against the influence of those landed proprietors, and that part of the white population who are personally interested in the maintenance of the present intercourse between England and her West Indian colonies.

The interest excited by these considerations has necessarily attracted a considerable degree of attention to the arduous struggle which the provinces of Venezuela and New Granada have so long maintained in support of their independence. These countries were first visited by Columbus in his third and fourth voyages, but no great progress was made in their colonization, till about the middle of the sixteenth century, and Venezuela was even then considered of such little importance, that it was mortgaged to a company of German merchants in payment of a debt incurred by the government of Spain. These avaricious adventurers, after having ruined the province, by their extortion and cruelty, again abandoned it to its former masters, but, as it did not afford any supply of the precious metals, it was still neglected by the Spaniards, and considered as one of their most

worthless possessions. Being thus left, in some measure, to its own resources, its attention was directed to agricultural pursuits, and in a short time it established a valuable branch of trade in the exchange of its cocoa and hides for the merchandize of Europe, with the foreigners of the neighbouring islands.

The jealousy of Spain being at length excited by its encreasing prosperity, she attempted to interdict this commerce, and, finding her efforts ineffectual, resorted to the expedient of entrusting its management to the vigilance of an exclusive company of merchants, under whose direction it continued to languish, till the distracted state of Europe put an end to the intercourse between Spain and her foreign possessions. The rough treatment, however, which this colony experienced in its infancy, had no prejudicial effect upon its growth, but rather laid the foundation for that vigour of constitution which it has since displayed, and brought it to a degree of colonial maturity which has enabled it to oppose an effectual resistance to all the efforts of Spain, and frustrate her anxious desire to re-establish her dominion over it.

New Granada suffered also for some time under a similar neglect, but, the discovery of her metallic treasures at length brought her into notice, and she has long enjoyed a full participation of all the benefits of the system by which Spain so effectually repressed and fettered the energies of her favoured provinces. It is now ten years since the standard of independence was first raised in these countries, and during a great part of the

time they have been engaged in a destructive and sanguinary warfare with the forces of the mother country. As there was less difficulty of communication between these two provinces than any other parts of the Spanish possessions, they were, from the commencement of the contest enabled to afford one another mutual assistance and support, although they had formed themselves into two separate and distinct governments. They have, however, since their recent successes, declared their determination to form a closer connection, and unite themselves into one state, which, by its name of Columbia, will do that justice to the original discoverer of the western world, that has been hitherto refused him, as if by the common consent of all the nations which have benefited by his genius and intrepidity.

Nothing could be more peaceable or orderly than the first proceedings of the patriots of Venezuela. When they heard of the captivity of their monarch, and the occupation of nearly the whole of Spain, by a foreign force, they assembled a congress for their own government, and expressed their resolution to assist the mother country, so long as she continued to maintain her independence, but to resist the attempts of France to usurp any dominion over themselves. The cortes, however, who had taken refuge in Cadiz, refused to admit their transatlantic brethren to a participation of the blessings for which they were themselves contending, and required that the provinces of America should remain passive, and follow the fate of Spain whatever it might be. They likewise expressed their disapprobation of the con-

duct of the Venezuelians, by adopting the futile expedient of declaring their coast in a state of blockade. This treatment first alienated the affections of the colonists and induced them to form the design of separating themselves from the crown of Spain.*

After the events of the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, which, amongst other blessings conferred upon Europe, restored Ferdinand to his throne, hopes were entertained of a reconciliation between these provinces and the mother country, and a constitution was framed, by which it was intended to place the colonies on an equal footing with Spain. Ferdinand, however, soon evinced an equal want of faith towards his European and his American subjects, and, instead of ratifying this instrument, directed all the efforts of his power to enforce an absolute and unconditional submission. In return for the devotion shewn in his cause, the ungrateful monarch rewarded them with a decree, which, promising oblivion for the past, graciously permitted them

* The following extract from the act of independence published at Caracas, in July, 1811, will convey some idea of the sentiments by which the Venezuelians were actuated:—

Luego que se disolvieron, substituyeron y destruyeron entre sí las varias formas de Gobierno de España, y que la ley imperiosa de la necesidad, dictó a Venezuela el conservarse a sí misma, para ventilar y conservar los derechos de su Rey, y ofrecer un asilo a sus hermanos de Europa, contra los males que les amenazaban, se desconoció toda su anterior conducta, se variaron los principios, y se llamó insurrección, peridia e ingratitud, a lo mismo que sirvió de norma a los Gobiernos de España, por que ya se les cerró la puerta, al monopolio de administración, que querían perpetuar a nombre de un Rey imaginario. A pesar de nuestras protestas, de nuestra moderación, de nuestra generosidad, y de la inviolabilidad de nuestros principios, contra la voluntad de nuestros hermanos de Europa, se nos declaró en estado de rebelión: se nos bloqueó: se nos hostilizó: se nos enviaron agentes a amenazar nos unos contra otros, y se procura desacreditarnos entre todas las naciones de Europa, implorando sus auxilios para oprimirnos.

to return to the chains which they had so recently shaken off. Finding them, however, averse to avail themselves of his clemency, on the terms proposed, he resolved to try other methods, and dispatched General Morillo with ten thousand men, to support his arguments by force of arms.

This sanguinary tool of despotism has shewn himself worthy of the master whom he serves.—The overwhelming force with which he approached, enabled him to regain possession of the greater part of the country, and his progress was every where marked by the blood of those who were most eminent for abilities and information. In his dispatch to the Spanish government, which appeared in the Cadiz Gazette of sixth of January, one thousand eight hundred and seventeen, he boasts, “that he has not left alive, in the kingdom of New Granada, a single individual of sufficient influence or talents to conduct the revolution,” and expresses his determination to perform “his work in exactly the same manner that the primitive conquest was established.”—His success, however, has been but temporary, for the spirit of independence was too widely diffused, and had taken too deep a root, to be eradicated by this sanguinary proscription. The undisciplined levies of the patriots were indeed at first unable to withstand so formidable an opponent, but the patient and persevering gallantry of their leaders soon remedied these defects, and enabled them to arrest the progress of the invaders. The contest has now been maintained with unexampled obstinacy for six years, and has been attended with severe loss to both parties.—

It is however drawing fast to a close, for, after a splendid series of victories, the independents have succeeded in rescuing the whole of the country, with the exception of one or two fortresses on the coast, from the hands of the Spaniards, and Morillo is driven with the dispirited remnant of his force into a situation, where, surrounded by superior numbers, he must either hazard a battle or retire within the walls of a fort, and wait the chance of receiving reinforcements from Spain.—If any considerable force should arrive to his assistance, he will probably be enabled to hold out for some time longer on the coast, but the whole power of Spain would be insufficient to suppress the spirit of hostility and resentment, which her conduct has excited throughout these regions.—The last intelligence from Europe, however, gives us reason to suppose that Spain is no longer in a condition to make any further exertion for his relief, and it is therefore probable that he will be soon under the necessity of abandoning his present positions and retiring altogether from the contest. The expence of fitting out these expeditions must have been ruinous to Spain, but it has not been the only obstacle with which she has had to contend, for the service against the patriots of South America was always so extremely unpopular in the Spanish army, that she was afraid to trust her own troops. Men, trained to arms in defence of the liberty of their own country, are naturally averse to employ them in depriving others of the blessing, and this high spirited sentiment is particularly prevalent among the troops collected at Cadiz for these expeditions*.

* The troops which came out to the Havana, in September 1824.

As there seems to be such little prospect of Spain's being able to resume her dominion over this part of the peninsula, we may indulge, without fear of disappointment, in contemplating the consequences of its independence. The great extent of territory subject to this government, its fertility, and the value of its produce, must necessarily soon raise it to considerable political importance. Communicating with both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and forming by its coast one of the sides of the great Caribbean Gulph, in which it has numerous and excellent harbours, it seems adapted by nature for the pursuits of commerce and the acquisition of maritime power. It may vie also in internal resources with any nation in the world. It abounds in every species of metallic wealth, and, in addition to an abundance of the produce common to all the tropical regions, has that of its own peculiar growth, which gave the first stimulus to its agriculture, and will probably still form the most lucrative branch of its export trade. It affords, likewise, many situations favourable for the production of the European grain and fruits, which have been denied to other parts of the torrid zone, and which the habits generated in these countries, by foreign intercourse, have rendered articles of indispensable necessity. The immediate contact into which these countries will be brought with the principal nations of Europe, by the proximity of their co-

with Don Cagegal, the present governor, sailed from Cadiz with sealed orders, not to be opened till they reached a certain latitude. It was expected that they were bound for South America, and when, upon opening the orders, their real destination was announced, their satisfaction was so great, that it was expressed by three cheers through the fleet.

lonial possessions, and with the United States, by the mutual benefits which will be derived from commercial intercourse, and by the influence which this latter power will have over their communication with Europe, in consequence of the peculiar circumstances attending the navigation of the Gulph, will urge them to improve these advantages of their soil and situation, and excite an activity highly conducive to the development of their natural strength.

We have before adverted to the effects likely to be produced by the independence of this government upon the commerce hitherto carried on between it and the British colonies. But the supply of the Spanish possessions on the shores of the Pacific has also constituted a part of their trade, and, as the channel of intercourse between them was through a country forming part of the province of New Granada, we may take this opportunity of considering the probable influence of the present change of circumstances upon this branch of their traffic, and the course which it is in future likely to take. This trade has latterly been carried on rather by the connivance than the permission of the Spanish government, and has been always subject to the exaction of excessive imposts and the arbitrary regulations of capricious governors, yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, it has occasionally risen to a considerable degree of importance. The difficulty, however, of transporting articles of bulk across the Isthmus is so great, that it would operate as a serious impediment to the intercourse between Europe and the western coasts of the Americas, was it entirely

dependent upon this channel of communication; But, fortunately, the necessity of continuing it in this direction no longer exists, for the improved state of navigation has so far diminished the dangers of the passage round the southern Cape, that it has ceased to be an object of dread, and the experience of seventy years has proved, that even the precious metals may be conveyed with less trouble and risk by that route than across the Isthmus. When, therefore, the independence of Chili and Peru shall have opened the western ports of South America to foreign trade, it is not to be expected that the more bulky articles of manufactured goods will continue to expose themselves to the various inconveniences attending this latter mode of conveyance.

If the passage of the Isthmus was likely to be attended with sufficient advantage, to make the possession of it a desirable object, it might probably be obtained without much opposition. It has long ceased to be of any value to Spain, and her only object in retaining so ruinous a settlement, has been to prevent the interference of any other nation in her colonial affairs. But, if she is stripped of her colonies, this motive will cease, and the towns of Porto Bello and Panama will either be entirely deserted by Europeans, or left to the mercy of any power that chooses to occupy them. They do not, however, offer many attractions to the European settler, for the extreme heat of this climate, acting in union with the continual moisture of the atmosphere, produces noxious exhalations, which render this country more fatal to life than any other part of the American con-

continent. Even the Spaniards, whose native climate in some measure prepares them to withstand the increased temperature of the torrid zone, sink beneath their pernicious effects, and repeated instances have occurred in which nearly the whole of the European population have been swept away. The natives themselves are not exempt from their fatal influence, for they become so enervated and enfeebled, that the slightest degree of exertion is oppressive, and their agriculture is so entirely neglected that nothing but the lowest description of tropical produce is raised from their soil, and they are totally dependent upon foreigners for even the means of existence.

The attention of the enterprising and scientific part of mankind, has at various periods been directed to this spot, by the delusive idea of the possibility of effecting a junction between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, by means of a canal to be cut across the Isthmus, and it seems probable that an opportunity will now be afforded for ascertaining the practicability of such a scheme.— If indeed its execution were possible, the advantages resulting to commerce, from such a diminution of the distance between Europe and the north western coasts of America, the Phillipine islands, and the East Indies, would be incalculable. But nature seems to have intended to erect this as a permanent barrier against the encroachments of man upon her dominion, and has opposed its removal by insurmountable obstacles.

To render this projected communication between the two seas available for the purposes above mentioned, it would be necessary to form

a canal of such dimensions as would admit the passage of a vessel drawing at least twenty two feet of water, that being the least draught of any ship employed in the East Indian trade; and it must be either cut through the solid mass of the Isthmus, upon a level with the two seas, or carried over it by means of locks. The execution of the first of these plans is utterly impossible, for the most level part of the Isthmus is that which forms the bed of the river Chagres; and from the calculations of Humboldt, deduced from the barometrical heights taken by Ulloa, it appears that there is a descent of eighty yards, in the distance of fifty miles from Cruces, the highest navigable point of that river to the town of Chagres at its mouth; and the distance from Cruces to Panama is twenty five miles, over a very irregular and mountainous country. Nor does the latter scheme afford any better prospect of success: for independent of the magnitude of the work, physical circumstances conspire with the configuration of the country to render even its execution of no avail. It must be evident that a canal of this description will be useless, without the certainty of a sufficient supply of water to work the locks, and it does not appear that either at the summit, or in the western descent of this line, any such supply could be obtained, and even the quantity which comes down the river Chagres is so small, that during a part of the year its present navigation meets with such impediments from the want of it, that small boats have great difficulty in making their passage.— This scheme, of opening a communication by water between the oceans, was long cherished by

the court of Madrid, but the Spanish projectors seem never to have entertained any idea of doing more than carrying a canal from Cruces to Panama. Such a partial result might perhaps be attainable, but does not promise any advantages adequate to the expence and difficulties of the undertaking.

Humboldt has pointed the Isthmus out as one of the nine situations in which the Atlantic and Pacific, or the sources of rivers running into them, approach so near to one another as to afford a probability of effecting a passage between them, but, at the same time, he seems to doubt the possibility of overcoming in any case, even the physical obstacles opposed by the face of the country. There are, however, others quite as insurmountable, for these countries must have arrived at a much higher state of civilization before their population can afford a sufficient supply of labourers to undertake such a work. It would at present be impossible to collect five hundred men for this purpose, and the most sanguine speculator can never have conceived it practicable to transport thither any considerable number of workmen, and maintain them in so inhospitable a clime during the execution of the work. Europeans could not support the fatigue of any exertion in this climate, and experience has shewn how ill calculated the native Indians are for this description of labour, by the destruction caused among them, even in more temperate regions, when employed by the Spaniards in any great undertaking. Recourse must therefore be had to the labour of negroes, and, even on the supposition that a suffi-

ent number could be procured in the present state of the market, their first cost would amount to upwards of a million of money, and a fourth part of that sum would be required to supply their annual loss. It would likewise be necessary to maintain a considerable number of troops, for the purpose of guarding and keeping them at work, and the whole of this body of men must be supplied with food from a distant country, and furnished with substantial buildings to protect them from the inclemencies of the weather. The expences attending such an attempt would be utterly beyond estimation.

These are the difficulties presented by the land, but even if they were surmounted, the task would not be completed, for the nature of the coast at the two extremities of this line of communication, raises others which would probably defy the powers of man. The entrance to the River Chagres is obstructed by a bar, which will not permit the passage of a vessel drawing more than twelve feet water, and the Bay of Panama is so full of sandbanks that vessels of burthen are obliged to anchor at Perico, seven miles from the city. Even, therefore, if the Isthmus were cut through, it would be necessary to continue the work for a considerable distance in each of the Oceans, and it is not improbable but that the operation of the same causes, which originally formed these obstacles, would eventually frustrate the whole design. These objections principally regard the plan of opening a passage through the Isthmus for vessels of burthen, but the more diminutive undertaking of continuing the present navigation,

by means of a canal from Cruces to Panama, would be attended with considerable difficulties, and it may be doubted whether any benefit would be derived from its accomplishment. Goods intended for the markets of the western coast of South America would most assuredly never take this route: for although the distance by the way of Cape Horn is greater, yet such a voyage would be performed in a shorter time than by the Isthmus, owing to the tedious navigation of the river Chagres, and the obstructions opposed, by the winds and currents prevalent in the Pacific, to the passage of vessels proceeding from Panama to the southward. To those parts of the American coast situated to the north of Panama, there would indeed be a saving both of time and distance, but the advantage of shipping goods direct for the place of their destination would probably more than compensate for the encreased length of the voyage: for, independent of the expence, there would be considerable risk of damaging the cargo in the frequent shiftings which it would necessarily undergo in the passage of the Isthmus. It seems, therefore, most probable that the trade between Europe and the western shores of both South and North America will take the course of Cape Horn, and that Valparaiso, Lima, and Guayaquil, will form the depots where the valuable products of North Western America and the Philippines will be exchanged for the manufactures of Europe.

Notwithstanding the extent and riches of the possessions which have been thus suddenly wrested from the grasp of Spain, she still retains others

surpassing any of them in importance and wealth; for the vast regions of the Mexicos still acknowledge her dominion. An enumeration of the natural advantages of these countries, and a comparison of their present state, with their condition at the time of their conquest, would exhibit a striking instance of the deleterious effects of the Spanish system of colonial administration, for it may be much doubted, whether they have made any progress in civilization since that period.—In the cities, indeed, the manners and habits of Spaniards have been substituted for those of the native Americans, but the great mass of the population have only been made sensible of the change by the additional oppression and exactions of labour and tribute, to which they have been subjected.

The great distance of the western coast of Mexico from Europe, and the want of harbours on the shores of the Gulph, which forms its eastern boundary, have enabled the government of Spain to enforce her system of restriction and exclusion, with more effect in this country than in South America. Few foreigners, therefore, have ever gained admission into these forbidden lands.—Their avenues have been guarded with as much jealousy as the harem of an eastern despot, and but little information has been permitted to escape, with respect to the habits or sentiments of their population. We know, however, that the authority of Spain in the Mexicos has twice trembled under the revolutionary shock, although the great military force which she has always maintained in these countries, and the activity of

her commanders have hitherto enabled the royalist party to preserve its ascendancy.

It is a singular fact, in the history of the revolution in the Spanish colonies, that the secular priesthood have not only been the most strenuous advocates of liberal principles, but also the most active supporters of the cause of independence in the field. These men, who are generally the sons of the most respectable creole families, and are enlightened by a liberal education, became indignant at their exclusion from the public honours and dignities of their profession. They, therefore, engaged actively in the task of disseminating information among their countrymen, and emancipating them from the oppression under which they laboured. The Spanish government was soon aware of the important effects likely to result from the defection of this class of men, and directed a principal part of its attention to the counteraction of their efforts. It was, however, apprehensive of the consequences of making a public display of their punishment, and therefore doomed them to the silent misery of lingering out their existence in damp and unhealthy dungeons. I have myself shared with them the hardships of such a situation, and have there met with men of this description, who displayed an activity and cultivation of mind which Europeans have not been prepared to expect in the creole inhabitants of Spanish America.

The first serious opposition raised in Mexico against the power of Spain was organized by one of this class of persons, who appeared suddenly, at the head of nearly one hundred thousand men,

and proceeded to the attack of the city of Mexico, which, at that time, was ill prepared for defence. This tumultuary force was, however, arrested in its progress, by the heroism of a Spanish colonel, who, with a small body of men, threw himself into a fort which lay in their line of march, and, by the determined bravery of a defence in which he lost more than half his troops, and was himself severely wounded, checked their farther advance, and gave the viceroy time to arrange measures for the preservation of the capital. The undisciplined army of the insurgents was, however, so dispirited by this unexpected opposition, that they dispersed themselves, and delivered the government from the apprehension of an immediate attack; but the country continued for some time to be covered with smaller parties, who, unable to oppose the Spanish forces, carried on a desultory and harassing system of warfare, and, by cutting off the communication between the different cities, kept up a state of continual alarm.

But the base and infamous conduct of Ferdinand, on his return to the throne, raised a more formidable enemy to the Spanish power in these remote regions. The gallant Mina, who had distinguished himself in the European peninsula, by the activity of his zeal in support of independence, and whose only reward had been proscription and disgrace, resolved to renew those efforts which had proved so ineffectual in the mother country, and attempt the rescue of his transatlantic brethren, from the fetters of despotism and superstition.— This leader was endowed by nature with qualities well calculated for the undertaking in which

he had embarked, for to that military skill and enterprising spirit which inspired his followers with confidence, he united an affability of demeanour which made him so completely master of their affections, that they devoted themselves to his service with a fervency which promised to ensure success. He landed with a small force on the shores of the Pacific, but, soon finding himself at the head of a numerous body of partizans, he advanced into the country and directed his march towards the capital. The invasion of so able and popular an enemy filled the Mexican government with consternation and alarm, and I have been assured by a Spanish officer, who was at that time in Mexico, that it was the opinion of the best informed military men, that, if he had pushed on directly for that city, he would have succeeded in utterly subverting the Spanish dominion in North America. He was, however, unwilling to sacrifice the lives of his undisciplined troops, by risking an engagement thus early with the Spanish regulars, and halted at a city between Mexico and the coast, for the purpose of encreasing his forces, and training them to the use of arms.

Whilst in this situation, he employed himself in reconnoitring in person the surrounding country, at the head of a chosen troop of about seventy horse. The viceroy Apodaca availed himself of this circumstance, to get possession of the person of his formidable opponent, and surrounded him in one of his excursions, by a body of cavalry, greatly superior in number to his own small force. After a brave, but ineffectual, resistance, the followers of Mina were with the exception of two

Only, cut to pieces, and he himself fell covered with wounds into the hands of the Spaniards — The Insurgents, as soon as they heard of this disaster, selected forty Spanish officers from amongst the prisoners they had previously taken, as hostages for the safety of their general, and, choosing one of them by lot, sent him to the Spanish quarters, with an offer to exchange the forty for Mina: accompanying this offer with the threat that their lives would pay the forfeit of any violence which might be offered to him. The viceroy was however too well aware of the importance of his prize to allow him any chance of giving farther uneasiness to the Spanish government: he therefore ordered him to be shot, and the thirty-nine officers remaining in the hands of the enemy fell an immediate sacrifice to this sanguinary decision. The death of Mina defeated all the objects of this expedition, for his troops were so dispirited by his loss, that they were unable to withstand the attack of the Spanish army, and were soon totally dispersed. Since that time, no serious attempt has been made at revolution in the Mexico, and the Spaniards have so far succeeded in tranquilizing the country that the communication between Europe and the capital, by the route of Vera Cruz, is again free from interruption. It appears, however, that the contest is not entirely at an end, for the splendid accounts of victories obtained by the royal troops, which occasionally make their appearance in the Gazettes of the Havanna, give us at least reason to suppose that some enemies remain to be conquered.

These circumstances, which have come to our

knowledge, respecting the state of affairs in Mexico, favour the supposition that the spirit of independence has taken deep root in the Spanish possessions in North America, and that, notwithstanding their rigorous seclusion from intercourse with the rest of the world, their internal riches and fertility have brought them to that state of colonial maturity which generates the desire of separation from the parent state. The power of Spain is utterly inadequate to oppose any resistance to the operation of such a sentiment, and we may therefore expect, at no distant period, to see the whole of the American continent delivered from the thralldom of foreign dominion.

The emancipation of this portion of the North American continent will in all likelihood lay the foundation for the establishment of several independent states: for the provinces of Guatimala, Guadalupe, New Mexico, and Texas, are so distant from the capital, and have so little natural connexion with it, that there is not much probability of their future union. Guatimala, in particular, although hitherto scarcely heard of in Europe, has advantages of situation which, combined with its natural fertility and riches, promise to raise it hereafter to a high degree of importance. This province has already attained such a height of population, and carries on so extensive a trade with the other countries on the Pacific, that it has been deemed by Spain of sufficient consequence to form a separate government, under a captain general, who is in a great measure independent of the viceroy of Mexico. It is abundantly fertile in all the articles of tropical produce.

and affords some of peculiar excellence, but, independent of these advantages, which it possesses in common with so many other countries of the torrid zone, the local circumstances of its situation, attach to it a considerable degree of future interest.

It extends across the narrow part of the continent, immediately to the north west of the Isthmus, and its coasts, washed by the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, invite the commerce of either hemisphere, and hold out the best prospect of effecting, at some distant period, the wished for communication between them. It is, indeed, already nearly complete, and the Lake of Nicaragua, whose extent and depth renders it capable of containing the navies of the world, forms one third part of its length. This magnificent lake is situated at the distance of about one hundred miles from the Atlantic, into which it pours its waters through the channel of the river San Juan, which falls into that ocean in eleven degrees north latitude; it likewise communicates at its other extremity with the lake of Leon, which is separated from the navigable part of the river Realejo by the short distance of fourteen miles of level country, through which a canal might easily be cut. Realejo itself is the best harbour in the Pacific Ocean, and is capable of admitting vessels of any burthen. The greatest obstacles presented in this line of communication arise from the bar at the mouth of the river San Juan, and some obstructions in its course which render its navigation impracticable by any other craft than small and light boats.

I have not at present an opportunity of knowing whether any actual survey has been made of this country, for the purpose of ascertaining the possibility of overcoming these difficulties; but, if such a scheme is feasible, the banks of the Lake of Nicaragua may at some future period become the emporium of the world; and the fleets of Europe and of Asia may there lie alongside of each other, and exchange the produce of their distant elimes in the very centre of the American continent. It does not, however, seem probable, that such an event will take place during the existence of the present generation, for this fertile and extensive country is too far advanced in riches and population to permit the interference of any of those nations who might, in the present age, be capable of performing this great work, although it has not made sufficient progress to enable it to engage itself in an undertaking of such importance and magnitude.

So magnificent are the prospects which thus open to our view in every part of these vast possessions of Spain, and so generally interesting will be the consequences of their present struggle for independence, that it is difficult to select any one of them as a particular object of our attention. The successful issue of this contest, of which little doubt can be now entertained, will complete the great work of which the discoveries of Columbus laid the foundation, and open such a boundless field to the researches of science and the exertions of commercial activity, that the imagination is bewildered in the attempt to trace the effects of a revolution, which, both in its extent and its im-

portance, is so unprecedented in the history of mankind.

It is not yet possible to determine under what forms these several governments will be ultimately established, those which have already assumed a decisive character, have inclined to that of democracy, and framed their constitutions upon the model of that of the United States. It may perhaps be doubted, whether the circumstances of their previous condition have sufficiently prepared them for the adoption of a form of government so completely representative and elective. The Americans of the United States were from their earliest establishment as a colony trained to the habits of a representative government, and the principal alteration effected in their political state by the revolution was the exchange of an hereditary for an elective executive. But the inhabitants of Spanish America have been so depressed by the despotism under which they have hitherto existed, that the mass of the population are ill calculated for the discharge of those duties which devolve upon them in a democratic form of government, and the sudden transition from a state of political servitude, to the contrary extreme, may be attended with consequences fatal to their future liberty and prosperity. The internal arrangements of these states will, however, have but little influence on their foreign relations, for there can be no doubt of an immediate amelioration of their condition, and a rapid increase of their riches and population under any form of government that they may find it expedient to adopt.

The recent occurrences which have taken place in Spain, and the uncertainty which still prevails, as to their result, render it difficult to form any opinion as to the probable circumstances of its future connexion with these nascent states. There does not however seem to be any cause of apprehension that they will retard the progress of independence; for if the party of Ferdinand even prove strong enough to maintain the present system of despotism in the mother country, still the delay caused by these events, and the disposition thus openly manifested by the soldiery, will prevent him from sending any force to re-establish his power in the revolted colonies. If, on the other hand, the cause of liberty and independence prevails, it cannot be supposed that the constitutional government of the cortes, even if they have the ability, will have the inclination, to make the first display of their power in attempting to subjugate their American fellow subjects to the yoke from which they have so recently effected their own deliverance. Under such circumstances some amicable arrangement may be expected to take place, but as it is not probable that the late colonies will submit to any of those restrictive conditions, which have before proved so injurious to their interests, Spain will have no exclusive advantage in her future intercourse with them; she must therefore necessarily lose her colonies, and she will be a sufferer by the loss, for her system of colonization has not prepared her to derive any benefit from them in their state of maturity.

England has indeed received as great advantages from her commerce with her former colonies as

she did before their emancipation from her domination, and she is still connected with them by ties which political animosity can neither interrupt nor destroy. But Spain having no produce of her industry, and but little of that of her soil, to give in exchange for the wealth of the colonies, will soon lose her importance to them, and must resign into more active hands the rich prize which has so long been the object of her solicitude and care. The commercial nations of the world are therefore all deeply interested in these events, and an unremitting exertion of their energies is requisite to enable them to retain their relative situation in the scale of national power, and protract the natural period of their decline. These agricultural states will for a long time look to Europe for the productions of her ingenuity and labour, and she will receive in return their raw produce, and the precious metals in payment of the wages of her manufacturers. The mutual benefits of this connexion will be incalculably greater than any which have been hitherto derived from the restrictions of the colonial system.

If the above is a correct delineation of the present state of the Spanish colonies in the Americas, and of the consequences which will result from their independence, every consideration of interest and of safety calls upon England to direct her attention to the improvement of the advantages which she has derived from the issue of the arduous contests in which she has been so frequently engaged with all the different powers of the world. We cannot refuse our assent to the opinion of M. de Pradt, that "naval superiority, and superiority

of industry and capital, are the principles of colonial power," and that "the nation which enjoys these superiorities is owner of all the colonies, she need only trade with them," and we must feel a proud exultation in contemplating our own situation in those respects. The independent governments of America are lost to Spain, but by these means they become to England a more valuable acquisition, than if she had discovered a new world, and taken possession of it as a colony. She has paid dear for these advantages, and now that the harvest of her toil is to be reaped, the utmost caution will be requisite to guard against encroachment on this basis of her commercial prosperity. Every thing, therefore, which presents an obstacle to her communication with these countries, becomes an object of important interest, and in this view the cession of the Floridas to a government, which is making rapid advances towards a rivalry of naval power, demands her serious attention.

The Floridas have changed masters more frequently than any other part of the American continent, and have suffered under an equal degree of inattention and neglect from every power to which they have been subject. They were originally considered as the property of England, who founded her claim to them on the right of discovery, Sebastian Cabot having been in her service when he discovered this part of the North American continent. The appellation of Florida was at that time given to a much more extensive region than it is at present, and its eastern parts were occupied by English settlers, but it does

not appear that they ever established themselves in the provinces which are now known under that denomination. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the French occupied several parts of this coast, but its proximity to the valuable possessions of Spain, rendering her jealous of their presence, she dispossessed them of their settlements, and, after some resistance from the natives, succeeded in subjecting the whole district to her dominion. In 1763 this country was ceded by treaty to Great Britain, in exchange for the Havana, which had been taken the preceding year, but it did not long remain in her possession, for, during her contest with the American colonies, Spain again seized it by force of arms, and her sovereignty was finally established by the peace of 1763.

These provinces were long considered as the least fertile part of the American continent, but more recent observations have given reason to suppose that those accounts of their sterility have been much exaggerated. The remarks, which have been already made on the colonial policy of Spain will sufficiently account for the neglect of their cultivation, whilst under her dominion; they produced neither gold nor silver, and it was contrary to her system to give encouragement to any exertions, which had not in view the attainment of these objects of her cupidity. The only advantage, therefore, which Spain ever proposed to herself from the possession of the Floridas was the additional security thereby afforded to dominions on which she set a higher value, and it was this idea of strengthening her Mexican

frontier, that induced her to avail herself of the distresses of Great Britain, towards the close of the American war, and regain possession of this province. But the annexation of Louisiana to the government of the United States, has completely broken down this barrier, and rendered the Floridas perfectly useless to Spain. Conjecture has, therefore, been busy in assigning reasons for her refusal to ratify the treaty for their cession, for it is inconceivable that she should, on this account, hazard a war with the United States, at a time when she has so many other objects to engage her attention. The president of the United States, in his message to congress, assures the world that the principal powers of Europe acknowledge the justice of the claim thus made upon Spain, and are desirous that she should fulfil the engagements of her minister. If this assertion is founded on facts, it is extraordinary that Spain should resist their entreaties, and expose herself to such imminent danger for a possession, which involves her in expense without returning the slightest benefit. But, whatever may be the cause of this repugnance on the part of Spain to ratify the cession, whether it arises from the interference of any other power, or solely from the political chicanery of the court of Madrid, it will give but little uneasiness to the American government; for, if the refusal is persisted in, she will not hesitate to take possession of the Floridas by force, and no person who is acquainted with their situation, and the force which Spain at present has in them, can for a moment entertain the expectation of their being able to resist the attack of so powerful an enemy.

Public opinion in the United States is strongly and unequivocally expressed in favour of their immediate occupation, but it is not improbable that circumstances may render it the policy of the government to suspend its operations, and endeavour to come to some amicable arrangement. Great Britain must not, however, allow herself to be lulled into security, by any affected moderation of the American government, for a short delay in their occupation will not diminish the danger to be apprehended from such an accession of power to her commercial rival. The Floridas have no means of opposing an effectual resistance to the power of America: whenever the apprehension of a war may induce her to think it advisable, she will issue orders for their seizure, and at present they are not less valuable for commercial purposes than if they were actually in her possession.

These countries do not seem by any means to have merited the neglect with which they have been treated. Their situation, at the southern extremity of the northern temperate Zone, is highly favourable, and their particular form extending on a narrow tongue of land, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulph of Mexico, preserves them from those extremes of heat, which are sometimes experienced in the more northern cities of America. The soil is, indeed, in some parts of the coast sandy and barren, but, in the vallies of the interior, and on the banks of the numerous rivers by which they are watered, it is particularly fertile, and well adapted to the production of cotton, rice, and indigo. They hold out, therefore, as great prospects of advantage to the settler, as

to the government which is so anxiously looking forward to their future possession.

The objects which America has in view in the annexation of the Floridas to the Union are of the utmost importance, both to itself and to all the maritime powers of the world. They are, the removal or gradual extirpation of the Indians, who harass the frontier and interrupt the communication between Georgia and the banks of the Mississippi; the influence which their occupation will give the government over the western states of the union; the abundant supply afforded by these countries of naval timber of the most valuable description; and the commanding situation which America will thereby acquire on the Gulph Stream.

The hostility of the Indian tribes, and the inability of the Spanish government in the Floridas to repress their predatory incursions, are the ostensible objects assigned by the government of the United States for their desire to annex this tract of territory to its dominion, and its pecuniary demand upon Spain afforded a plausible pretext for urging this claim. It seems to be rather hard upon the aboriginal inhabitants of these regions, to be thus hunted from their last possessions on the coast, though it must be confessed that their habits are but little conducive to the tranquillity of any civilized people in their vicinity. A great part of the interior of the Floridas, and the countries on the banks of the Apalachicola and Alabama rivers, are still inhabited by these savage tribes, and their restless disposition is the subject of continual uneasiness to the American government. The possession of the Floridas is, therefore, on this account, an object of import;

ance, as it affords the means of striking at the root of this evil. It is, indeed, in a natural course of decline, for, in addition to the ravages of war, which are not easily repaired in a savage population, the excessive fondness of the Indians for spirituous liquors, and the facility with which they procure the indulgence of this propensity, produces a rapid diminution of their numbers, and will, in all probability, soon cause their utter extirpation. Great credit is due to the American government for the pains it has taken to ameliorate the condition of these people, by endeavouring to bring up their youth to habits of industry. These attempts have, however, failed of producing any salutary effects, for the native indolence and disinclination to labour, by which they were opposed, have presented insurmountable obstacles to improvement, and it has unfortunately happened that those upon whom such attention has been bestowed, have in most cases turned out the most dissipated and refractory of the race.

The annexation of the Floridas to the United States will like wise have the effect of consolidating the American power, and will give the government a commanding position which will operate as a check upon the western parts of the Union, whose interests may, on many questions, be at variance with those of the other states, and whose distance might enable them to oppose any measures of which they disapproved. It will also prevent that interruption to the intercourse between the eastern and western states, which might be apprehended from the hostility of any future possessors of the island of Cuba.

The great abundance of timber which the Fla-

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ridas contain in their boundless forests, is also another powerful motive for their occupation, to a country which is straining every nerve to increase its naval power. The red and white cedars, the pine and the cypress, abound in these countries, but that description of timber which renders them invaluable to a maritime state, is the live oak, a wood of extraordinary durability, and admirably calculated for the purposes of ship-building. The live oak of the Floridas has become essential to the very existence of the American navy: for the common oak of America is of a very worthless description, and the stock of live oak is so completely exhausted in the states of Carolina and Georgia, from whence their naval yards were formerly supplied, that it is said there is not a sufficient quantity left in those countries to supply materials for the construction of a single ship of the line. The trunk of this tree is generally from twelve to twenty feet in circumference, and at the distance of from ten to twelve feet from the ground, throws out four or five horizontal branches of great magnitude and length: it contains, therefore, a prodigious quantity of timber, and by exposure to the changes of the atmosphere it acquires a degree of hardness which resists the edge of the best tempered steel. The inexhaustible supply of this valuable wood which these countries are capable of affording, renders their acquisition a subject of incalculable importance.

Of the motives enumerated as influencing the government of the United States, in its desire to gain possession of the Floridas, the three already

Mentioned are of a domestic nature, and principally concern its own internal policy, but the fourth involves considerations of the deepest interest to all the maritime nations of the world, and particularly to Great Britain, as a considerable portion of her trade, and the very existence of some of her most valuable colonies are dependent upon it.

The important consequences with which the world is threatened, from the occupation of the Floridas by America, arise from the peculiar circumstances attending the navigation of the sea, which is engulphed between the shores of the North and South American continents. Throughout the tropical regions, the prevalent direction of the wind is the same with that of the sun in its diurnal course, and, blowing with regularity from east to west, it forces the waters of the Atlantic into the Caribbean Sea, through which they are carried, till they meet the barrier of the Isthmus of Darien, which returns them to the ocean by a contrary stream through the Gulph of Florida.—Vessels, therefore, from every part of the Spanish Main, have, in shaping their course to the eastward, to contend with the united obstacles of wind and current, and, if to the westward of the seventieth degree of west longitude, find such difficulty in making any of the windward passages, that they are under the necessity of going round Cape Antonio, and proceeding to Europe through the Gulph Stream.

The possession of the Floridas will, therefore, under the present circumstances, enable the United States, at any time, to interrupt the inter-

Course between Europe and every part of the extensive line of coast, situated between Lagaira, in Venezuela, and the southern Cape of the Floridas. They will, by these means, acquire an absolute controul over the trade of the greater part of the province of Venezuela, and over the whole of that of Granada, the Isthmus of Darien, the Mosquito Shore, Honduras, Campeachy, the Mexicos, the vast countries whose riches are poured down the mighty stream of the Mississippi and Western Florida. The landed proprietors of Jamaica will also be entirely dependent on them for permission to transport their produce to the markets of Europe; for, even in time of peace, more than half the homeward bound ships from this island double the western Cape of Cuba, and proceed through the Gulph Stream; and, during war, when they are under the necessity of collecting in large convoys, the windward passage is scarcely ever attempted. It may perhaps be supposed, that it will be a long time before the American navy will be so near an equality with that of England, as to endanger the safety of a British convoy, but it is rapidly on the increase, and, with the advantages of position afforded by the Floridas, it is already of sufficient force to render the passage of a numerous fleet insecure, even if protected by half the navy of Britain.

These momentous results of the cession of the Floridas to America, cannot have escaped the observation of the statesmen of Europe. The Americans are well aware of them, and are indefatigable in their exertions to secure these advan-

ages, they will, therefore, never rest satisfied till they have consolidated their power by the acquisition of the island of Cuba. This is the only position which affords the means of counteracting such an increase of their influence: and to its possession must England look for future permission to navigate these seas, and for that portion of her maritime strength which is dependent upon the cultivation of this extensive branch of her commerce.

The excellent harbour of the Havanna, situated opposite to the projecting Cape of the Floridas, and not more than one hundred miles distant from it, is capable of affording secure anchorage to the whole navy of Great Britain, and is so well defended by nature and by art, that she might defy the united powers of the world to wrest it from her dominion. It has been truly remarked that the whole trade of the Caribbean Sea, of the Gulph of Mexico, and of the western states of America, lies under the guns of this fortress. Its occupation, therefore, together with that of Trinidad and the windward islands, would render England absolute mistress of the coast from the mouths of the Oronoco to Cape Sable, and would enable her, at any time, to cut off all communication by sea between the eastern and western states of the American union.

It may perhaps be thought, that it will be time enough to guard against the dangers to be apprehended from the cession of the Floridas to America, when we have an actual prospect of hostilities with that power, and that our alliance with Spain will afford us the means of availing our-

selves of the advantages afforded by the situation of Cuba. Those who have had opportunities of mixing in the society of Americans since the peace will, however, agree with me in thinking that a war between Great Britain and America is no very improbable event. Elate with triumph at their partial successes in the late contest, the Americans already think themselves on an equality with the British, and are impatient for an opportunity of again measuring their strength with them. The rancorous animosity entertained against England, by the democratic party in the United States, will induce them to urge the government to seize every occasion of annoying her, and the attachment of the federal party to the country of their ancestors has been so much weakened by the events of the late war, that they no longer feel the inclination to repress this spirit of violence. A war with Great Britain might not be convenient to America just at present, but it would be by no means unpopular, and it is an alternative which all parties would loudly call for, rather than relinquish their claim upon the Floridas.

Nor do I think greater reliance is to be placed on the gratitude and good will of the Spaniards, than on the pacific disposition of the Americans. It is very common for the editors of the London newspapers to expatiate on the benefits conferred by us on the different nations of Europe, and particularly on Spain, during the arduous struggle which we so long maintained against the power of France. They have by these means almost succeeded in arguing the good people of England

into the belief, that these nations are penetrated with sentiments of veneration for our magnanimity, and gratitude for the benefits they have received at our hands.

Never, indeed, shall I forget the spontaneous burst of feeling which manifested itself throughout Great Britain, at the first intelligence that a prospect offered itself of rescuing the people of Spain from the military despotism of Bonaparte. However circumstances might afterwards conspire to unite our interest with our wishes, the enthusiasm displayed by all ranks on that occasion sprung from the warm feelings of a liberal spirit, uninfluenced by the sordid calculations of interest. The unanimous cry of the nation was to afford assistance to the oppressed, and we were profuse in our expenditure of blood and treasure in the cause of Spain.

But, however well satisfied we may be with our own conduct on that occasion, it is material to consider what impression it has made in the minds of others, and how far it is likely to influence their future conduct; and I have no hesitation in asserting, that the great majority of both European and transatlantic Spaniards do not entertain the slightest feelings of gratitude or respect towards us on that account. I say this from a personal knowledge of the fact, acquired by an intercourse with Spaniards of both the old and new worlds. There are indeed exceptions, and amongst them I would mention many of the military officers now at the Havanna. These gentlemen entertain more liberal and enlightened ideas, they have fought in the same ranks with

British troops, and duly appreciate their worth and the services they have rendered to Spain.— But the great mass of the people are satisfied, that we entered the contest merely from the interested motives of self-aggrandizement; and modestly ascribe the deliverance of Europe from the scourge which devastated it to the courage and perseverance of the Spanish nation. This sentiment avinces itself on all occasions, and, in proof of it, I would refer the reader to a work published by a Don Juan Nellerro, entitled, a “History of the Revolution,” which is widely circulated in Spain and her colonies. The sole object of this publication is to vilify the motives of England, and to represent every part of the conduct of the British army and its gallant commander in the most unfavourable point of view.

So long, therefore, as this colony remains under the dominion of Spain, we are by no means certain of a favourable reception in its harbours, and, if any change takes place in its situation, numerous rivals will start up to contend with us for its future favours. Our maritime superiority will necessarily create a jealousy in the breasts of other nations, and they will be easily induced to form a coalition to relieve them from its effects. If by such means we should be excluded from the harbour of the Havanna, none of our single ships could possibly pass through the Gulph in time of war, unless it was covered with our cruizers, and no favourable port presents itself for the collection of a convoy, except that of Kingston. It would therefore be necessary for vessels from every part of the extensive coast before described, to work

to windward and gain that port before they could even proceed upon their homeward voyage, and a strong convoy would then be necessary for their protection. But, if the Havana should fall into the hands of our maritime rivals, the whole force of Britain would not be able to carry a fleet in safety through this passage, and would itself soon fall a sacrifice to the attempt. The commerce therefore of England with the Caribbean Gulph, which in its extent and importance promises to be equal to that which it carries on with any other part of the world, entirely depends upon the occupation of this island of Cuba, which becomes, from these considerations, an object of extraordinary solicitude: for there is probably no other spot in the world with which such important interests are connected.

This island is situated nearly under the Tropic of Cancer, and is equal in magnitude to that of Great-Britain. From the fertility of its soil, the extent of its coast, and the excellence of its harbours, it promises to become, at some future time, a powerful and independent state. It is, however, far from having yet attained the degree of population or power necessary for the assumption of such a character. Not a fourth part of it can be considered as being even occupied, and probably not a hundredth part is under cultivation: its exports of tropical produce are however already sufficient to place it in the first rank amongst the islands of the Caribbean sea.

The effects of the system adopted by Spain in all her transatlantic possessions are particularly manifest in this colony. The principal towns have

been constructed and defended with incredible labour and expence, and the country has been neglected and impoverished. Adventitious circumstances have however contributed greatly to the importance and wealth of the city of the Havana, for it was considered as the harbour of Mexico, and was the place of rendezvous for the galleons from Porto Bello and the flota from Vera Cruz, which for so many years conveyed to Europe the produce of the western world. The riches of this city made it an object of attraction to the piratical adventurers who formerly frequented these seas, and it suffered repeatedly from their attacks. The attention of Spain was, therefore, directed to the improvement of its natural means of defence, and the works erected were supposed to have rendered it impregnable. They opposed, however, an ineffectual resistance to the efforts of British skill and bravery in 1792.

It is extraordinary that England should ever have relinquished so valuable a conquest, but probably her relative strength at that time did not enable her to withstand the anxious desire of Spain to recover it. The Spaniards have always considered this place as the key of their American dominions. After they had regained possession of it, they expended immense sums in the erection of additional works of defence, which are now in such a state of perfection that, if properly manned, they might bid defiance to the attack of any force that could be brought against it.

The climate of this island is salubrious, and its temperature is such that, during the greater part of the year, European settlers might undertake

the labours of the field without danger or inconvenience. It has indeed acquired a bad name by the sickness which is so generally prevalent at the Havana, during the summer months. This may perhaps partly arise from the situation of the city, which stands to leeward of an eminence, which prevents it from enjoying the benefit of the sea breeze; but it is also in a great measure to be attributed to the very dirty state in which the city is kept, and the pools of stagnant mud with which many of the streets abound during the wet season. The present governor has taken great pains to remedy these local defects, but very much remains to be done before the Havana can attain the cleanliness of an English or an American city. The villages of La Salud and Guanabacoa, in its immediate vicinity, are far from being unhealthy, and the more opulent citizens have residences at those places, or retire thither during the times of sickness.

The Havana has, in common with all other old walled towns, the defect of narrow streets, but, as they are all at right angles to one another, there is not from that cause much obstruction to the circulation of air, and the shade which is thereby afforded is perhaps more than an equivalent for the inconvenience. The public buildings and the residences of the wealthy inhabitants have an air of grandeur and magnificence which corresponds with the importance of this city: it is indeed, since the destruction of Cape Francois, the only place in the West Indies which deserves such an appellation. Its public institutions are also numerous and excellent, the hospitals want

indeed that cleanliness and decency of appearance to which we are accustomed in those of our native land, but great allowances must be made for the different habits of the two nations. I doubt whether so great a difference in this respect would be found between the hospitals of England and those of the Havana, as between the residences of an English and a Spanish nobleman or gentleman. The establishments for the education of youth are on a liberal and extensive scale; in the different classes of the university lectures are given on every subject of science superior to those I have heard in any other part of the world except England, and schools, on the systems of Bell and Lancaster, have been founded for the dissemination of knowledge amongst the lower orders of society. The poor are likewise so well provided for by the care of the religious houses to whom that charge is confided, that I never saw a place of the same population where so few beggars are to be met with.

The harbour of the Havana is one of the most secure and commodious in the world. It is formed by an oblong lake of about three miles in length and one and a half in breadth, which communicates with the sea by means of a channel of about half a mile in length and from two to three hundred yards in width. The royal arsenal, which was formerly celebrated for the excellence of its appointments, is situated at its farther extremity, where there is depth of water sufficient for the launching of first rate vessels of war. A line of battle ship and a frigate were built here every year, but, during the administration of the notary,

ous Godoy, this practice was discontinued, and the government has since that time contented itself with purchasing small armed vessels from the Americans. There are at present five magnificent ships of the line, two of them of one hundred and twenty guns each, lying within half a cable's length of the docks, one of them is the ship which escaped after having struck its colours in the battle of Trafalgar. These vessels are an emblem of the waning power of Spain, for they lie here in a state of neglect and premature decay, whilst the Spanish commerce is swept from every sea by the insignificant force of the independents of South America, who have even on more than one occasion blockaded with two or three privateers, the harbour containing this naval force.

There is an excellent commercial quay in front of the city, alongside of which merchant vessels of any burthen can lie to discharge and receive their cargoes, and many other parts of the shores of the lake would, if necessary, afford the same convenience. The channel of the harbour is admirably defended, on its eastern side, in addition to the fortresses of the Moro and Cavagos, there is a battery of twelve guns at the foot of the Moro, on a level with the water, and another of the same number of guns below the Cavagos, fitted up for the purpose of throwing red hot shot, and on its western side there are also four batteries of from twelve to twenty guns each. Upwards of one hundred guns can thus be brought to bear upon it, and there is likewise an apparatus for throwing chains across its mouth: the entrance of a hostile force is therefore rendered almost impossible.

The trade of the Havanna has of late years considerably encreased, in consequence of the freedom it has enjoyed from its port having been opened to the vessels of all nations. The court of Madrid has made several attempts, since the restoration of Ferdinand, to reduce it to its former state: repeated and peremptory orders have been sent out to close the port, but the Cabildo of the city have hitherto contrived to evade their execution, and their enforcement is now probably an effort of which the power of Spain is no longer capable.—The salutary effects of this relaxation of the restrictive system have been manifest in the improved cultivation of the country, and the augmentation of the revenue derived from this island.

It is not more than twenty years since the produce of Cuba was less than that of the small island of Antigua, but in the last year it exported one hundred and seventy two thousand six hundred and fifteen boxes of sugar, and five hundred and eighty seven thousand six hundred and seventy eight arrobes of coffee, which are equal to about thirty five thousand English hogsheads of sugar, and nearly fifteen millions of pounds of coffee. The growth of Jamaica, in the same year, was one hundred and eight thousand three hundred and five hogsheads of sugar, and fourteen millions of pounds of coffee. It appears, therefore, that the produce of Cuba, in sugar, was equal to one third of that of Jamaica, and that its produce in coffee was even superior in quantity. I have not seen any return of the exports of the other British islands, but, upon an average of seasons, the produce of Cuba in sugar would be double

of that of any one of them, and is nearly equal to that of Demerara.

The improvement of the revenue has necessarily kept pace with the increased prosperity of this colony. A few years ago, part of the expences of its government were defrayed by Mexico, but at present, besides the charges of its own government, it supports the Floridas, has materially contributed to the supply of Morillo's army in Venezuela, and has also transmitted an annual revenue to Spain.

This colony has, to all external appearance, remained firm in its allegiance to the crown of Spain, and the loyalty of the Havana has been rewarded by the honorary title of "*siempre fiel*." This submissive deportment is not, however, to be ascribed altogether to the attachment of Cuba to the mother country, but in a great measure to the conviction of its own inability to maintain its independence, and to the dread of the effects of any internal convulsion upon the black population. There is no city in the dominions of Spain, and probably few in any other part of the world where liberal and national topics are more freely discussed, or excite a more lively interest than in the Havana, and the new connexion which the decline of Spanish power will necessarily oblige them to form is looked forward to by all ranks with the greatest anxiety. There is great variety of opinion upon this subject, many of the Cubese wish to connect themselves with Mexico, in the great question of its independence, whilst others, according to their interest or inclination, express themselves in favour of a connection with either

France, the United States, or Great Britain. It is probable, that they would all prefer the first of these alternatives, if they were free from the apprehension of molestation from other powers; for that antipathy mingled with contempt for foreigners, which is so distinguishing a characteristic of Spaniards in every part of the world, is a very prevalent feeling throughout the Spanish dominions in the Americas, and the Cubese consider themselves as bound by national ties to the Mexicans.

In the event of the independence of Mexico, the Havana would be a most valuable acquisition to that country, as it is destitute of any secure harbour on its eastern coast. But Cuba would, by no means, reap an equal benefit from this connexion, for she could expect but little support from Mexico, and her intercourse with Europe and the United States, to which alone she can look for a continuance of her present prosperity, would be always liable to interruption.

The desire of the Cubese to unite themselves with France seems to arise principally from the similarity of their religious worship, which is with them a serious consideration, for this power holds out to them at present but little prospect of any other advantage. Each of these connections, however, is rather the object of their wishes than their expectations, for their general opinion is, that they must fall into the hands either of England or the United States, and they are well aware of the important interests dependent upon the ascendancy which the successful candidate for their favour would thereby acquire.

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The principal objects to which the Cubese themselves have to direct their attention are the attainment of civil and religious liberty, protection to their country and its trade, and freedom from restrictions on their exports. With respect to the first of these considerations, an alliance with England certainly holds out as favourable prospects as any which can be presented by a connection with the United States, for no people on the face of the earth enjoy a more perfect state of political freedom than the inhabitants of the British colonies in the West Indies, and there is no cause for apprehension that England would, in any way, interfere with the religious establishments of a people, who placed themselves under her protection. In the present state, likewise, of the maritime power of the two nations, there can be no doubt of the superior ability of England to afford this colony the protection requisite for its security, and this ability would be firmly established by the possession of Cuba. The last, however, is the delicate and difficult point to be settled, and it has already operated greatly to the disadvantage of England: for the persuasion that the British would place the trade of Cuba on the same footing with that of her other islands has given the American interest a most decided preponderance in the Havana.

This is a question of too great importance to be properly discussed in so summary a manner as that which the limits of these remarks would permit. If, however, any satisfactory explanation could be given of it, it would tend more than any thing to remove the prejudices which are entertain-

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ed by the Cubese against an union with Great Britain. With the view which I at present have of this subject, it appears to me that the imposition of these dreaded restrictions would be equally injurious to Cuba and to England. Was there indeed any prospect of England's being able to secure the monopoly of the sugar trade, by the possession of Cuba, it would be a strong temptation to her to subject that island to the same restrictions as her other colonies, and it might even be done without any injury to it. But the two independent states in Hispaniola, Louisiana, the Brazils, and the other countries of the South American continent, which will now be open to the cultivation of sugar, will afford such a supply of that article, that we shall no longer be able to oblige either America or the continent of Europe to become our customers, and by the attempt we should at once hasten the aggrandizement of these new states, and the ruin of our own colonies.

It may be supposed that Spain herself will not be willing to part with so valuable a possession, but the doctrines of colonial dependence are now too well understood to render her retention of it possible. In the event of her losing Mexico, she will derive but little advantage from this island, except that afforded by its direct revenue, and the extortion of such a sum from a people, who receive no benefit in return, is so manifest a breach of every principle of justice, that it is inconceivable how the Cubese can for a moment submit to such an abuse of power.

The duties on the exports of this island are considerable, but those on the imports are excessive and fall in a great measure on the lower or-

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