

difficulty granted us, almost of no avail, and our legislators lost no time in proscribing the slave-trade for ever. The Spaniards have not been tempted to follow this example; but it must be allowed, as their apology, that if the slave-trade was tolerable in any part of the globe, it was in the Spanish dominions: and it is but justice to confess, that the nation more than any other accused of having stained the New World with its cruelties, is, with the Portuguese, that by which slaves are treated with the greatest mildness; as if, from pure humanity, they wished to expiate or recompense the crimes of their forefathers. But let us return to Trinidad.

The court of Madrid has lately taken so spirited a part in the welfare of this colony as cannot but be applauded. She has granted it a liberty of which there is perhaps no example on the globe. Before the American war the colony was almost deserted, and consequently uncultivated. Government has opened its ports to all foreigners without distinction. It has invited them to come and settle there with their capitals, their industry, and their negroes. It has exempted from duty whatever the Spaniards export, whether from this colony or from the neighbouring coast of Terra Firma, and has imposed only a very moderate one on goods shipped by foreigners for a port that is not Spanish. It has done still more; it has confided the government of Trinidad to a

man equally enlightened as benevolent; I mean *don Joachim Chacon* \*.

This produced a prosperity equally rapid and brilliant. The soil of Trinidad is proper for all sorts of colonial productions. Cocoa, indigo, cotton, and coffee have been tried, but could not be preserved from the ravages of the grub and the fly, which swarmed there: the culture of those articles, therefore, was obliged to be abandoned. But the cultivation of sugar is there already in a most flourishing state. Seventeen or eighteen years ago it would have been difficult to find twenty sugar-houses. In 1796 there were more than three hundred and sixty. From several West India islands, particularly from ours, the malcontents fled to Trinidad, with all the negroes that would follow them; and it is no exaggeration to say, that the colonists amount already to sixty

\* The event has proved, or at least induced a belief, that his courage did not equal his wisdom. He commanded at the defence of Trinidad when the English, with very little trouble, made themselves masters of it in 1798. Soon after their governor of St. Vincent went to inform himself of the real state of this new conquest, and to ascertain whether the importance which its intrinsic value stamped upon it was not equalled by that which it derived from its geographical situation. The report which he made to the British ministry on his arrival in London so riveted their attention, that it was easy to foresee that the irrevocable possession of this valuable colony would make one of the *sine quâ non* conditions of a future peace.

thousand—Spaniards (who are the least numerous), Americans from the United States, and particularly Frenchmen, emigrants as well as patriots. There, in one of the most delightful climates in the world, on a virgin soil which repays with usury their industry, they forget all disputes, and live in peace under a wise government, which disperses equally, and with an impartial hand, both happiness and protection. New comers receive, in advance, utensils, instruments of culture, and even a capital, but are strictly obliged to pay for them at the expiration of three years. If they take a capital with them, they buy such marked-out plantations as are to be sold; or else, in the name of the king, a grant is made to them of the lands that have not as yet been purchased, which they pay for when brought into a state of production. The privileges to which these new colonists owe their prosperity were in 1796 extended for eighteen years. A shorter period will exhibit\* the

\* Such was the situation of Trinidad when the English took it. Now that the peace of Amiens has made it their property, they will not fail to reap all the advantages it is capable of furnishing; one of the principal of which will be the possession of a colony situated so near the Spanish continent as to furnish it abundantly with the productions of their industry: but perhaps they will not neglect it on other accounts. Trinidad, on which Nature has lavished all kinds of riches, contains many treasures worthy the attention of naturalists. In order to make a beginning towards exploring them, our government, with the consent

island of Trinidad more flourishing than any other colony in the New World.

of the court of Madrid and a safe-conduct from England, in 1796, fitted out for that colony *la belle Angélique*, under command of captain Baudin, having on board several of our literati skilled in natural history, and particularly in botany. What circumstances permitted only to be planned will certainly be completed by the care of the British government, and the sciences, at least, will lose nothing by the change of dominion which this colony has experienced.



## CHAPTER IX.

*What the Spanish government had done for the Philippine Islands and for Mexico. Working the mines.*

LOUISIANA and Trinidad are not the only colonies of which in later times the Spanish government has undertaken the regeneration. There is one at the extremity of Asia that appears to accuse the mother country of a backwardness in seconding the advances of Nature. I mean to speak of the Archipelago of the Philippines, which, including the islands of Mariana, comprehends a territory of greater extent than France, Spain, and Italy together. Not only all the necessaries of life abound there, but these islands produce also timber for building, woods for dyeing, iron and steel-mines, and rivers which extend very far up into the country. Cotton, indigo, tobacco, and sugar succeed there, and the vegetable kingdom displays an undescribable luxuriance. Sonnerat, in 1781, brought from thence nearly six thousand plants till then unknown in Europe. Gold is found in the sand of some of the rivers. The number of subjects who acknowledge the Spanish sovereignty amount to more than a million,

without reckoning the savages who live in the woods, whom it would be very difficult to count.

Persuaded that it was impossible to establish a direct and continual trade with a colony at such a distance, the kings of Spain had confined themselves to connecting it, by means of the port of Acapulco, with the western coast of Mexico. Every one knows the famous *Nao*, that annually makes the passage from the Manillas to Acapulco across the South Sea. It was scarcely by any other than this devious track that Spain had a communication with the Philippines; a communication unprofitable to her European subjects, and whose principal advantages were reaped by the Chinese, the Armenians, and the other nations that frequent the eastern seas. The revenue was not at all profited by it; on the contrary, the charges of administration absorbed more than the trifling receipts at the custom-house. The inhabitants of the Philippines, uncultivated and without industry, had no other revenue than the commission trade which their situation promoted. Like European Spain in its decline, the island of Luçon, which is the principal of the Philippines, was nothing but a channel by which the Mexican piastres passed to the Indian nations; insomuch that money was very scarce in these islands, although, since their conquest, this indirect commerce had brought there incalculable sums in silver.

Their defence was as much neglected as their interior improvement. It is well known with what ease they were taken in the war of 1756 by the same Draper who commanded at Minorca under general Murray when that island surrendered to the duc de Crillon. Spain profited by this lesson. Charles III fortified the port of Cavite, at the extremity of which is Manilla, the capital of the island of Luçon, and the seat of government; and in security awaited, during the American war, a fresh attack by the English in these latitudes.

At the same time the minister for the colonies employed himself in exciting the industry of these islanders, who, in spite of that apathy which the allurements of gain can alone resuscitate, have the greatest aptitude for manufactures, agriculture, navigation, and even ship-building. Cotton manufactories had been established at Manilla, and succeeded there: and more than once the question had been agitated during this century, of reviving this colony by means of a company.

In 1733 the minister Patinho proposed to establish one which should last twenty years, to which privileges were to be granted that appeared incompatible with the Spanish colonial laws. The opposition, however, did not come from the inflexible council of the Indies; but the court of Spain was obliged to give way to those maritime

powers, who maintained that this establishment was contrary to treaties ; that Spain could not go to the Indies by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

In 1767 a minister of finance, Musquiz, otherwise very little enterprising, conceived a more bold project, that of establishing a mixt company, composed of Frenchmen and Spaniards, that should carry on trade to the Philippines in concert ; a commerce from which we should have derived the most advantage from blending it with that of the East India company. The duc de Choiseul, who was very fond of all great plans, who moreover believed that his ascendancy over the marquis de Grimaldi rendered every thing possible to him, received this idea with enthusiasm ; but it was not proceeded on.

It was revived in 1783, but under another form, and by three different persons. One was Mons. d'Estaing, who was willing to pay off the dignity he had just obtained by some marked proofs of zeal towards the Spanish nation. Soon after, the prince of Nassau-Siegen, who in his voyage round the world had imbibed some elevated ideas, proposed to revive the Philippines by inviting colonists from Europe, by opening one of its ports to the Chinese, who want nothing but a resting-place in these latitudes ; by establishing a force sufficient to keep in awe the Mahometan pirates, known by the name of *Mores*, who infest the coast of the

Philippines, and which Spain could not extirpate, although she sacrificed two hundred thousand piastres annually in a war with them. He also offered to preside at this establishment himself. His proposal, however, was coldly received; and it was reserved for M. Cabarrus to succeed where so many before had failed.

Galvez, whose restless jealousy had imperceptibly accustomed itself to behold a young Frenchman contributing to the regeneration of his country, much wished to concert with him that of the Philippines. They took advantage of the inclination of the Spaniards towards useful enterprises, to forward the adoption of the project of a direct trade from Spain with these islands.

Circumstances were propitious. After several fluctuations, credit and confidence seemed to be consolidated: the Spaniards began to get acquainted with speculations of risk. The moneyed men, grown less timid, employed at last their capitals in a trade which distrust and habit had hitherto proscribed. The company of the Carraccas was dissolved, and its share-holders, ready to recover their capitals, must needs wish for a convenient mart. This was the time to attempt the establishment of a new company, which, formed under the most happy auspices, should revive both enterprise and avarice. The plan was discussed and determined on in July 1784, by a

*junta* composed of different members of administration, at the head of which was the minister for the Indies. It was proposed to constitute, for trading to the Philippines, a fund of eight millions of hard piastres, divided into 32,000 shares of 250 piastres each : and it was represented that Spain would have great advantages over other European nations, in carrying from America directly to Manilla the piastres, which other nations could convey thither only by a circuitous route. It was endeavoured to be proved, that Spain, being thus enabled to procure the East India goods, of which Europe is so desirous, at their very source, would buy them much cheaper, supply her colonies and her European subjects with them, and open a mart for her merchandise with other nations.

The plan was approved by the *junta*, and afterwards by the king, who, as well as his family, purchased shares in the funds of the new company. Twenty-one millions of reals, as we have said, were raised on the profits of the bank ; and to prevent the ardour which had been excited from cooling by delay, directors, and others to be employed in the new establishment, were immediately chosen ; and the edict of its foundation was registered and published. It was resolved, that the vessels employed in this trade should sail from Cadiz, double Cape Horn, touch on the coasts of Peru to take in the piastres required for their

purchases, then proceed to the Philippines across the South Sea, and bring back their returns direct to Cadiz by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

There was one circumstance which seconded this zeal, this precipitation, which seemed to form a strong contrast with Spanish inactivity, and in which a mixture of French spirit was discoverable. The *gremios*, a company of whom we have already spoken several times, which extends its speculations every where, and obtains from the minister all favours, all privileges, all commissions, but which may be reproached, especially in later times, with being more engaged in making the fortune of its managers than in watching over the safety of the capitals intrusted to it; these *gremios*, I say, had already attempted some expeditions to the Philippines; and, notwithstanding their bad success, they were preparing another when the project of the new company was discussing. They had been invited to become partners in it; but they eluded the proposal, and even hastened the departure of the vessel they had fitted out for Manilla. The elements, however, more favourable than their measures to the views of the minister, obliged it soon to return to Cadiz. It had sustained considerable damage, and would require much time to repair and refit. Government offered to buy vessel and cargo, and the offer was accepted. Behold, then, the first expedition un-

undertaken by the company of the Philippines, at the very moment of its formation.

This company had, like all other new establishments, enthusiastic declaimers in its favour, and bitter censurers. These could not conceive how Spain, who had colonies situated much nearer to her, that were destitute both of population and industry, could think of raising to a flourishing condition her most distant possessions. They were astonished that a commercial enterprise, which was expected to extend its branches to the most remote parts of Asia, should be confided to three directors who had never passed the Cape of Good Hope, and whose knowledge of the East Indies was founded on imperfect or suspected information. They were of opinion that the Spaniards never could struggle with success against experienced nations, who had over them every possible priority. They saw in this enterprise only additional means of squandering away the metals, of which they were but the temporary depositaries. Every place was occupied in the ports, in the counting-houses, and in the markets of India. Were the Philippine company about to carry their speculations as far as China; she would certainly find there many dangerous rivals; and What would she bring back? Tea. The Spanish nation hardly knows the use of it. Other nations have the means of procuring it direct, and would certainly not encourage this trade. Would they



bring porcelain back? This is a very cumbrous article, and few opportunities would occur of disposing of it. Would they bring back silk goods? Would she hurt the home manufactories? Of these several arguments the last appeared the most plausible. But no sooner did the edict which announced the establishment of this company appear, than the manufacturers of Catalonia addressed government with the most pressing remonstrances against it.

We can come to no conclusion from the unfortunate result of this first expedition. It arose from a circumstance which will not occur again. Before the commissaries of the company were arrived at the Philippines to make their purchases, Galvez, faithful to his mania of exclusively directing every thing that belonged to his administration, had invested the governor of these islands with this commission. He, a stranger to mercantile concerns, had nothing to present but tea, muslins, and such goods as were the refuse of other nations; so that the first cargo, the result of this ignorant experiment, remained unsold at Cadiz in 1792.

The plan of operation which followed succeeded better. Of three ships sent out at the same time by the company, one, it is true, received great damage, which was repaired at the Isle of France; the two others returned safe to Cadiz towards the end of 1787, where their cargoes were purchased

with eagerness, and some articles fetched fifty per cent. more than they were valued at on their arrival. Malevolence would not allow that the untoward prognostics were falsified by this first return. She attributed it to the attraction of novelty, and to the scanty supply of goods brought by the company's vessels. She maintained, and not without some probability, that if this taste was once established, the smugglers would soon furnish the same articles better and much cheaper.

It is singular enough that this trade should have found supporters even amongst the Spanish ministry. Lerena had sworn the same hatred to the Philippine company as to the author of it; and there is no doubt but that this sentiment dictated to him some measures, which he coloured over, but very awkwardly. He gave leave to all dealers to import muslins in competition with those of the company. He had laid a duty of twenty-three per cent. on all East India striped and printed linens bought at Canton. This gave to these linens, which are of an inferior quality, formidable rivals in those of other nations who trade to the East Indies. They are indeed totally prohibited in Spain: but it is well known that for a premium of twelve per cent. any goods may be introduced. The admirers of foreign muslins have therefore an advantage of at least eleven per cent. in preferring them to those of the Philippine company.

With such measures, it was not likely that this establishment should prosper; and yet it supported itself in spite of so many impediments. In 1792 her capital was still entire; and her shares, after having been sold at fifty per cent. discount, were again at par. The directors had balanced their accounts, and were convinced that, even with the loss on the sale of the first returns, and several other misfortunes, the company would notwithstanding be gainers.

Since that time several measures have been adopted, which have produced advantageous results.

The extension given by the king to her trade put her at once in direct connexion with the ports of the Caraccas, of Maracaibo, and Buenos-Ayres, with Mexico, Peru, and the East Indies; which opened a vast career to her navigation from the end of 1793 till the end of 1795.

Her trade, imports as well as exports, with the Caraccas and Maracaibo, including the cocoa carried by her vessels to Vera

Cruz, had produced a profit of	3,835,907	24
That of Buenos Ayes . . .	27,863	
Peru . . . . .	178,992	11
The East Indies . . . . .	9,816,575	13
Her profit in the exchange . . .	1,223,069	33
Total profit for two years . . .	15,082,408	23

This sum, diminished in part by her losses in the trade with Mexico, by the expenses of ad-

ministration, by the calamities of war, which had destroyed her property in Guipuscoa, by the capital and interest of her different debts; and augmented on the other hand by the overplus of her last balance, would be reduced, every thing considered, to the sum of 10,516,576 reals.

Notwithstanding the disasters of war, and many other losses, the company possessed in property of different kinds, towards the end of 1795, in several places in and out of

Spain, a capital which was

	reals.	mar.
valued at . . . . .	77,517,005	25

Until now (the end of 1805) she has paid only three dividends of 5 per cent. (in 1793, 1795, and 1796.) For the last seven years the embarrassments of her trade, and the fatal diversions of war, have obliged her to suspend making any more dividends.

She has however been favoured on another side by several circumstances. Her purchases in India, which had amounted to 48,588,714 reals, have brought her, notwithstanding the sale was retarded for three or four years, a nett profit of 9,816,575 reals 13 mar. They consisted chiefly of muslins of all sorts, white cottons, silks, pepper, sugar, indigo and tea, salt-petre, &c. &c.

From the coast of the Caraccas she had scarcely brought any thing to Spain but cocoa; which sold at a great profit. Since her first expedition in 1785, till 1796, she had employed sixteen vessels

of her own, the largest of them of 879 tons, the least of 450, except one of 280 only, which sailed from Cadiz to the Isle of France.

Besides this, from 1789 to 1796, seventeen vessels belonging to individuals (the largest of 675, and the least of 165 tons burden) had been sent on her account to the Caraccas, to Maracaibo and Lima, and returned with very valuable cargoes.

At the end of 1796 she had acquired a degree of prosperity which could never have been expected from her beginning. This year had been particularly favourable to her by the advantageous sales she had made of the returns of East India goods and cocoa.

Some years after, the Spanish government, encouraged no doubt by its success, gave the company a new form, augmenting its capital, and bestowing on it new privileges. Such was the object of a royal edict which appeared on the 12th of July 1803, and which is divided into four sections and seventy-four articles.

The first section extends the duration of the Philippine company to the 1st of July 1825. The capital is raised from 8,000,000 of piastres to 12,500,000, and the shares from thirty-two thousand to fifty thousand.

By the same section the king holds 9886 shares, besides the 5935 which he took at the establishment of the company; and this makes his capital

in the company's trade amount to 3,943,250 piastres.

The company has the privilege of selling or negotiating the remainder of the shares left, to complete the capital of twelve millions and a half of piastres. Foreigners might buy them, and they might be transferred by merely an indorsement. The holders could convert them into inviolable property in favour of their heirs.

By the second section it was ordered, that the general assembly of the company, which should take place every year in December, should be composed of persons holding at least twenty shares. Each of them should have only one vote, whatever the number of his shares: however, the province of Guipuscoa, the bank of St. Charles, and the company of the *Gremios* should each have five votes.

The direction of the company is vested in a *junta de Gobierno*, and assembles once every week.

On the proposition of this *junta*, the holders of shares determine the dividend to be paid from the profit of the preceding year; reserving, however, the fourth part at least for accidents.

The *junta de Gobierno* shall confide the interests of the company in Spain and abroad, to such commercial houses as she shall think worthy of her confidence; to regulate the rates of commission, and even establish factories.

Of the members of this *junta*, only three shall be perpetual; namely, the directors of the company, who shall each of them receive a salary of sixty thousand reals.

We omit some other details, that are merely local, in the interior organization of the company.

The third section treats of privileges that have been granted her, and of the duties she has to pay.

Her privilege is exclusive for all the expeditions to the Philippine islands and other parts of Asia, as well as the returns to Spain. She can have no other competitors in her trade, but the men-of-war which the king sends to the Philippines in his service.

The king renounces in her favour the laws which interdict the importation into Spain of muslins and other articles of cotton.

The subjects of the king in the Philippines are maintained in the possession of the privilege of sending annually one ship (*Nao*) to Acapulco, without the company taking any share in the venture. She can only embark in this vessel a fixed proportion of the productions of the Philippines, and make use of its return to bring back from Mexico cochineal and other articles of her trade, without however interfering with the interest of the islanders, who may continue to trade freely from one island to another as well as to China and other parts of Asia.

The Asiatic and European nations likewise may continue to trade with the port of Manilla; but can only carry there the productions of Asia, and take back all those of the Philippines, raw cotton excepted; the purchase of which, and exportation for China and the other parts of the Indies, belong exclusively to the company and the inhabitants of these islands.

In consideration of these advantages, the islanders must sacrifice four per cent. on their profit, to be applied for the benefit of their agriculture and industry as well as that of Spain.

To encourage these two sources of prosperity, the company will send them, on board of her ships and without expense, artificers provided with the necessary utensils, and professors of the mathematics, chemistry and botany, who may wish to go to the Philippines.

The company grants to these islanders the fifth part of the tonnage of every vessel, to convey on their own account to Europe the productions of their soil and their industry, free of duty on leaving the Philippines and also on entering Spain.

The company shall pay no duty for goods, whether national or foreign, which she shall export, either from Spain, or those ports in the Indies at which her vessels shall touch.

Those which she has drawn from Asia shall pay, on their arrival in a Spanish port, five per



cent. on the amount of the invoice, and when sent into the interior one third more on this five per cent. All raw materials, such as muslins, handkerchiefs and nankeens, are excepted from this second duty.

The tea and other merchandise from Asia, imported into Spain by the company, pay nothing on re-exportation. They are on a par in every respect with the home productions, even if the company or individuals wish to send them again to South America; in which case the duty paid on entering Spain will be returned.

East-Indian goods, cottons manufactured in Europe that have been confiscated, and prizes taken in war containing prohibited articles, can only be sold to the company.

The fourth section determines the kind of commerce and mode of navigation which the company may adopt.

Liberty is given her to make ventures to Asia, either directly by the Cape of Good Hope, by stopping at Buenos-Ayres, or by Cape Horn; touching at the ports in the South Sea, to dispose of her cargoes. She may bring to Asia the articles she has brought from Europe and those she gets in the South Sea.

Her returns from China and other parts of Asia may come to Spain without touching at the Philippines. If they merely put in for refreshment, they pay no duty.

The company may establish factories on the continent of Asia; and, for this object, export, *free of duty*, silver, fruit, the merchandize of Spain, and even that of foreign countries.

As it is not possible to carry on a trade to Asia only with Spanish and India goods, the company may embark, *free of export duties*, five hundred thousand hard piastres in every expedition.

In time of war she may send every year from Manilla to Lima, and other ports of South America, to the value of 500,000 hard piastres in fruit and merchandize of the Philippines and of Asia, free of duty, on leaving Manilla; but when admitted at Lima and the other ports, the goods from Asia must pay fourteen per cent. on the original invoice, increased with twenty per cent.: and the company, on paying  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., may embark the sum their goods have produced in the American ports, in piastres, and carry them to Manilla; and a term of six months is granted, after a peace, to complete any venture engaged in before hearing the news.

It recommends to her as speedily as possible to re-establish the public sales prescribed for her returns by the former edict; but in the mean time she may continue to have warehouses in Spain for disposing of them by retail.

The new edict grants her the same liberty, as others of the king's subjects, to trade with South

America ; and in Europe to engage in such speculations as she thinks proper to undertake.

Her ships destined for Asia which shall touch at any American ports, may dispose of their cargoes there on paying the duties established in Spain ; but what they take in return for Asia is exempt from duty.

Her vessels shall bear the royal flag, and the officers and sailors enjoy the same privileges as those in the king's service, whose officers may command the company's vessels.

She may build her own ships, or buy them out of Spain free from duty ; and in time of war freight those of neutrals. They shall have the same exemptions as the king's ships, in rigging, ammunition and provisions.

This edict, of the contents of which we have only given an abridgement, discovers a fixt intention in the Spanish government to favour the Philippine company at any price ; and proves at the same time what extent she must have given to her operations since the time of her foundation. No person, surely, could have thought of increasing her capital more than one third, of extending her ventures to countries at such a distance, of loading her with privileges, some of which are injurious to the revenue, and others derogatory to the ancient strictness of the council of the Indies ; if experience had not proved that her establish-

ment must prosper, and would refute the prognostics of her antagonists.

In fact, since 1796, she has given every year more importance to her speculations, particularly in relation to East-India goods and the productions of Peru; and towards the end of 1804, when England declared so suddenly against Spain, she expected the arrival of five frigates richly laden. Four of them brought from Manilla and from Calcutta, where she carried on a direct trade, goods to the amount of TWELVE MILLIONS OF PIASTRES. The fifth returned from Lima with a cargo of nine thousand *fanegas* of cocoa from Guayaquil\*, worth at least two millions and a half of French livres. But it is much to be feared that the calamities of a war, for which her government was not prepared, will give a severe shock to her prosperity, or at least suspend it for a long while.

May we say with some enlightened observers, that this would perhaps not be a great misfortune for Spain? Without partaking of the prepossessions which attacked the Philippine company in its cradle, May we not at present, as well as in 1784, regard her utility as doubtful, and her suc-

\* The price of the *fanega* of cocoa of Guayaquil is about 60 piastres; that of the Caraccas, sometimes 100. However, the first, notwithstanding its inferior quality, has been imported for some time in large quantities, whilst that from Soconusco, much superior to both, arrives but sparingly.

cesses as more brilliant than solid? Will she not be obliged to renounce the article of tea, which is so difficult to sell in the North, and still more so than ever in England; which finds no sale in the South of Europe, and would find none in Spain without supplanting the chocolate, and thus proving hurtful to the property of many colonies more valuable to Spain than this new company? Will not the sale of Indian silks be hurtful to the home manufactures, which, although they have prospered for some years, still want encouragement? And with respect to the muslins the company brings from the Indies, Would it not be better for Spain to import raw cotton from her colonies, and employ the idle hands of the mother country, than to foster a distant industry, merely to satisfy the unnecessary caprices of her subjects in Europe?

Awake then, Spaniards and allies, to your true interests. The edifice of your prosperity is at least planned, and the ground begins to be cleared from the rubbish which the ignorance of two centuries and some false calculations have heaped up. The building is sketched; be attentive to the foundation, and you may afterwards think of decorating the outside.

What the government has for some time done for Mexico appears at least to be better planned, and incontestable success crowns her efforts. Galvez had a particular affection for this vast and rich colony, the theatre of his industry, his talents,

and some of his extravagancies. She owes to him in a great measure her flourishing state, from which the mother country reaps advantages as well as foreign nations; because the Mexicans, eager for the productions and the luxuries of the old world, and daily increasing in riches and population, present a new opening for the works of European industry.

Galvez encouraged the cultivation of corn in Mexico:—for five-and-twenty years she has grown more than was necessary for her own consumption, and very soon will be able to supply all Spanish America.

Tobacco, the growth of which he introduced into two cantons near the capital, is become in a few years the principal source of revenue which the mother country receives from her colonies.

The miners of Mexico have above all reason to be satisfied with the ministry of Galvez; and, as a mark of their gratitude, have settled on him a considerable pension inheritable by his heirs. For a long while the quicksilver of the mines of Guancavelica, which was at first so abundant, has proved insufficient for the working of the Mexican mines. That of Almaden, the last village in La Mancha, on the confines of the kingdom of Cordova, furnished it almost alone. Galvez, in perfecting the works in this village, has obtained a greater supply of quicksilver. Before him, no more than seven or eight thousand quintals were

procured annually ; he nearly doubled the quantity, and made an arrangement with the miners, by which the quintal of quicksilver, which cost before eighty piastres, was furnished for forty-one. From this a very considerable increase in the produce of the mines resulted. In 1782, they afforded twenty-seven millions of piastres, and would have produced thirty millions, if there had been sufficient quicksilver for working. But whilst these things were going on, a defect in the construction of the galleries in the mines of Almaden having caused an almost total inundation, and suspended the working, the Spanish government concluded, in 1784, for six years, a bargain with the emperor of Germany, which was afterwards renewed, and in virtue of which he engaged to furnish from the mines of Idria, in Austria, six thousand quintals of quicksilver per annum, at the price of fifty-two piastres. By these means the miners have continued their works, which of late years have been more productive than ever. This happened very à-propos for Spain, as it enabled her to sustain the war with France, and would have furnished her with great resources for that in which she is at present engaged with the English, if, before the latter declared themselves, they had not deprived her of a considerable part of her treasure from abroad.

The produce of the American mines, however, is not always all profit for those who work them. Some part of this goes to the revenue. The du-

ties it receives on their produce, either in ingots, or money from Lima, Santa Fe, Carthagena, but particularly Mexico, have varied much since the conquest, and are not more uniform in all the Spanish colonies.

At first a *quint*, or fifth part of all that was extracted from every mine, was demanded; a few excepted, for which the duty was reduced to a tenth, or even a twentieth.

In 1552, Charles V added *one and a half per cent.*, on account of smelting, assaying, and marking; a retribution known in Peru under the name of *cobas*.

Afterwards this *quint* was reduced for Peru and Mexico to a tenth, and for Santa Fe to a twentieth part on the gold, the only metal she had produced for a long time: the *cobas*, however, was continued in all the vice-royalties.

In 1777 there was an alteration in the duties, but only relative to the gold, which throughout America paid no more than 3 per cent.

At length, in 1790, silver mines being discovered in Santa Fe, they were assimilated to those of Peru and Mexico.

Therefore, according to this last analysis, the silver that comes from the American mines pays eleven and a half, and the gold only three per cent. It would appear then, that in order to ascertain accurately the produce of these mines, it would be sufficient to know the amount of



the duties the government receives on their working. This, however, would not come very near; because, in the first place, a part of the produce of the mines is exported in a fraudulent manner without having been converted into money; and further, the returns which come to Europe for the king's account are blended with what he receives from America under other titles. Such are the custom-house duties; the profits from the sale of certain articles, viz. quicksilver, paper, &c., embarked for account of the king, and resold for his advantage. We have therefore been obliged to recur to other channels to be enabled to affirm, as we have done in the preceding chapter, that the produce of the mines in Spanish America amounts, in later times, to THIRTY-FIVE MILLIONS OF PIASTRES per annum.

If, as is very probable, the working of these mines becomes from time to time more lucrative, it would seem that the produce of them at the expiration of a few years will increase the specie in Europe to an alarming degree; but this inconvenience is lessened by the nature of the commercial transactions of Europe with Asia, and particularly with China, where, as is well known, a large quantity of silver and gold is annually absorbed.

However that may be, this progressive increase of metals is incontestably profitable to the individual possessors of the mines of Mexico and Peru, and in some degree to the revenues of Spain, which

increase in proportion with the produce of the mines. But is it equally advantageous to Spain as a nation and as a power?

This difficulty is worth starting.

Supported by the experience of the last century, many enlightened foreigners will not hesitate in resolving this question. They will say, (and they will find beyond the Pyrenees many a good citizen of their mind,) that this excessive increase of specie impedes the actual tendency to prosperity of the manufactures in Spain; that the price of every thing must keep pace with this multiplication; that if the progress of Spanish industry should retain the greatest part of this specie, destined to the present time to pay her balance, it will soon happen that the dearness of labour will again check industry in the midst of her brilliant career, and cause a retrograde motion in that eternal round from which she never can be extricated.

On these principles you would say to the Spaniards, "Far from using any efforts to increase  
" the produce of your mines, shut some of them  
" up; confine the circulation of your metals in  
" the Old World, to a sufficiency for replacing  
" what is imperceptibly wasted; what luxury ex-  
" pends for her gratifications; what avarice swal-  
" lows up, as well in Asia as in Europe; follow  
" the example of the Portuguese, who so limit the  
" working of their diamond mines as not to glut  
" the market; that of the Dutch, who burn the

“ remainder of their spices, after having kept just  
 “ enough for ordinary consumption. The silver  
 “ of Mexico is your diamonds, your spices. If  
 “ you treble the amount, your miners, whose  
 “ hands could be better employed, will have more  
 “ trouble, but you will not be the richer. You  
 “ will only pay three times dearer for the produc-  
 “ tions of foreign industry, which you will never  
 “ be able entirely to do without.”

To these, at least specious, arguments the Spaniards answer : “ We see nothing so frightful  
 “ in the increase of our specie ; the revenue at  
 “ least reaps a clear benefit from it. Besides,  
 “ whilst other states in Europe are busy in increas-  
 “ ing their revenues ; whilst they find in this  
 “ increase the means of providing for any great  
 “ enterprise, either in peace or war, By what fatality  
 “ should Spain alone find her downfall in that  
 “ which constitutes the prosperity of other states ?

“ We shall say as much of our manufactures.  
 “ Whilst their operations keep pace with the  
 “ working of our mines, our specie will at once  
 “ increase with us, as well as with the indus-  
 “ trious foreigner who supplies us with his pro-  
 “ ductions, the surplus of which we send to Mex-  
 “ ico and Peru. We can see nothing formida-  
 “ ble in this perspective ; but, on the contrary, we  
 “ ask, Who are the most flourishing nations ? Are  
 “ they not France and England ; those who with-  
 “ out comparison have the greatest quantity of