

incredible. The arrendadores employed a whole army of "ejecutores" to collect the taxes in detail, who cruelly oppressed the people. Antolin de la Serna says, that their number was 150,000, and the annual amount of their profits 550 millions of reals. Don Miguel Osorio says, that they extorted annually from the people 60 million dollars *por las justicias*, and a large sum besides, under cloak of the royal service. From him who could not pay 5 they took 20, while from him who could pay 20 they took but 5. The arrendadores afterwards became contadores, and finance ministers, and shielded the iniquitous system. But public opinion condemns them. "*Arrendadorcillos*," said the proverb, "*comer en plata y morir en grillos!*" Cervantes, by the mouth of Sancho Pança's wife, says: "I will not stop till I see you an *arrendador* or an *alcabalero*, offices which, although the devil takes those who fill them, in fine have the holding and making of money." Quevedo affirms that the system was like knocking down a house to hunt for money amongst the stones, "*y dar al principe á comer sus propios mimbros.*" Again he says, "*los principes que se entregan á arbitristas, por dejar de ser pobres, dejan de ser principes.*"—"Princes, who farm their revenue to cease to be poor, cease to be princes."

The principal Moderado financiers are the present Finance Minister, Don Alejandro Mon, the Marquis de Casa Irujo, Don Pio Pita de Pizarro, Don Javier de Burgos, Don Ramon Santillan, Don Alejandro Olivan, Don Antonio Jorda, Don José Maria Perez, and the late Minister, Carrasco. The most eminent

financiers on the Progresista side are Señores Calatrava, Mendizabal, and Ayllon. There are several capitalists, besides, of professedly neutral politics, and who find their account in this neutrality by entering into enormous and lucrative operations with successive governments. Amongst these are Señores Salamanca, Carriquiri, O'Shea, Campana, Alvarez, Barcenas, and Matteo. Campana lately proposed to the Minister to negotiate a loan of fifteen millions sterling! The politicians of the Puerta del Sol attribute to the handsome equipages and fine establishments of most of the gentlemen who figure in the foregoing lists, the non-productiveness of the thirty millions sterling of Bienes Nacionales. "*Comen* (they say) *dinero a dos carrillos.*" "They eat up money in both cheeks!" All have been Finance Ministers, or in high office at the Treasury. Don Ramon Maria Calatrava enjoys the purest reputation amongst them, and is regarded as a man of inflexible integrity. He was the first to exterminate the nefarious system of financial jobbing, opening everything to honest contract, and *bonâ fide* competition. Before his time, there was a nominal public competition, but unfortunately a mere blind; the whole being privately arranged between the favoured capitalist or capitalists, and the Finance Minister. It is a delicate thing to say that the Minister often had his per-centage, but it was almost always the practice for him to enter either directly or indirectly into every beneficial operation, having a share whether nominal or real of every loan advanced to the Government, and enormous interest, of 20 or 30 per cent. upon sums of

money lent to himself! Señor Calatrava exterminated the system of jobbing very effectually, so far as he was concerned, last spring, by making the contract for the quicksilver mines of Almaden really the subject of fair competition. M. Weisweller, agent for the house of Rothschild, thought that, as usual, he would have it all to himself; but found it "salted" upon him so outrageously by a rival bidder, that he affected to withdraw finally from the transaction. He, however, returned to the field when the bidding was over, and took it off his competitor's hands, paying, of course, the whole of the advanced amount; and by this act of simple honesty of Calatrava's, the nation was an immense gainer. I must add, that in my previous list of financiers, the Marquis of Casa Irujo, and the present minister, are likewise above suspicion, being men of elevated character and large fortunes.

The late finance minister, Carrasco, came forward with a number of showy and sounding plans, of which little may be said, as nothing like a result was ever seen. It is the general failing of Spanish politicians to be magnificent in words and showy on paper. They appoint scores of commissioners of inquiry, and cut huge splashes in the *Gazette*, but there an end. They think no more of them than the readers of these fine flights of optimism when a new nine days' wonder arises to make the old forgotten. Besides, as permanence is not the characteristic of office in Spain, the finance minister, like other authors, commonly writes for the trunkmakers. A Spanish minister is like the preface to a book, or the prologue to a play, or like

the Chorus in Shakspeare's Henry the Fifth. He comes in with a flourish, makes his bow and his speech, and then *exit*, to make room for other actors. This unhappy ministerial mutability is the great impediment in Spain to effective administrative reforms, and should even make one disposed to accept a substantial despotism for the sake of a strong government. The whole work of Spanish financial regulation remains to be accomplished. The entire scheme of taxation has to be considered; the mode of assessment, levy, collection; the system of keeping accounts, of inspecting, controlling, and auditing; the treasurer's office, with all its ramifications throughout the provinces; the National Debt, both foreign and domestic; in short, the entire finances of the country have yet to be reorganised. It is enough to state that the Culto y Clero tax is now two years in arrear throughout Spain; that there are six years' arrears of purchase-money of the Bienes Nacionales, and that the same irregularity exists in almost every department of the Treasury. But so long as the present system is continued of turning out all the most experienced and valuable clerks whenever a new ministry comes into office, it is evident that administrative reform, or even administration, is impossible; and when we see a dilapidating intendente like Gonzalez Bravo's father turned out of the Treasury for malversation in April by Calatrava, and turned into it again, by the dilapidator's own son, in the December following, the friends of Spain have little left but to hide their faces in their mantles, and resign themselves to despair.

There is one portion, however, of Señor Carrasco's

administration, for which he deserves considerable applause, and for which his name—albeit, in old Spanish, it signifies “hangman”—will hereafter be gratefully remembered; the resolute and energetic firmness with which, in despite of entreaties, overtures, and intrigues, he annulled the notorious contract of Señor Salamanca—a contract which stands alone in the annals of impudence—by which 400,000,000 of reals, or 4,000,000*l.* sterling of the national revenues, existing and future, were to have been irrevocably alienated, and the bulk of this enormous sum undoubtedly to find its way to Queen Cristina and other worthies, as a reimbursement for the expense of the pronunciamientos of the previous summer, on the flimsy pretext of constructing roads. Carrasco made the total withdrawal of this monster scheme of iniquity a condition *sine quâ non* of his remaining in office; and for this and his positive declaration never to permit the alienation of the monastic property to be revoked, his administration, however short-lived, is entitled to favourable notice. He has merited at least the praise of activity: a rare quality of finance ministers in Spain, where the Marquis del Campo, intendente of revenues to Philip V., was so hopeless an invalid, that it was said he was “more employed in discovering remedies for his own disorders than for those of the Treasury.”

Spanish finance ministers, for the most part, bear a singular resemblance to King Joseph Bonaparte, who, when he had possession of Madrid, flourished away with the finest laws and regulations in the *Gazette*; issued his decrees, both administrative and monetary, in rapid succession; organised military corps; ap-

pointed generals, magistrates, *employés*, and lavished pensions and rewards. To be sure, they were nearly all imaginary; but the object, being to impress Europe with a sense of the firmness of his government, was perhaps for the moment attained. The modern finance ministers are likewise particularly good reformers upon paper, and are not, I suppose, to be blamed for the one little drawback, that their plans are never executed. Their policy shines with lunar brightness. The fault in great part lies with impudent and lazy *employés*, who know that few ministers have so much as a twelve-month's lease of office; and if the head of the department be stern and rigid, immediately intrigue for his removal. The provincial intendentes are still worse than the Madrid *empleados*; and there are at this moment 100 millions of reals, or a million sterling, of Bienes Nacionales sold and passed into the hands of the purchasers, though, because they were the intendente's favourites, the money has not yet reached the treasury.

The post of Finance Minister was not altogether a bed of roses at some former periods in the history of Spain. In the fourteenth century the finances of Castile were confided by Pedro the Cruel to one Levi, a Jew, (one might suppose there was question of some modern London bill-broker;) and Levi being immensely rich, the King all at once became for the first time in his life extremely religious. The opinions of his Minister upon speculative dogmas of faith were so outrageously heterodox, that Pedro declared it impossible to overlook them. Levi's death-warrant was signed by his sovereign, and he died upon the wheel! Pedro subsequently boasted of the amount

of wealth which this transaction brought into his treasury; and expressed his regret that he had been so injudicious as to permit the torturers to abridge the sufferings of his victim, before obtaining from him an explicit avowal of the place where all his riches were concealed. The tooth-drawing exploits of our own King John towards Jewish financiers were of a similarly encouraging character, and their remembrance must be solacing and satisfactory to the Mendizabals and Carrascos. Pedro the Cruel had also some interesting ways of paying old debts. His relation, Don Juan d'Aragon, who had long filled the post of minister, having applied for payment of his salary, was ponniered by Pedro at the moment of presenting his account.

The sub-letting of revenue contracts, which still prevails in Spain, is unhappily destructive of that unity and vigour which constitute so much of the essence of good government. Each contract creates a powerful organisation, independent, and often defiant, of successive administrations. The contractors *will* cut out the pound of flesh, little solicitous how much blood they may draw in the operation; and the latter expression is not figurative, for they must have their standing armies to contest and, if possible, put down the contrabandists—an army of revenue officers armed and prepared for slaughter. What a machinery here for political influence, for promoting revolution and aiding insurrection! The evils of “an empire within an empire,” and of a house divided against itself, are here to perfection realised. In the pronunciamientos against Espartero, the salt contract, managed chiefly

by the Regent's enemy, Salamanca, took a very influential and decisive part. The contractors' agents in every part of Spain were in constant correspondence with the metropolis, their travellers and collectors traversed every district: intelligence coloured to suit the Anti-Ayacuchos' views was thus rapidly and widely disseminated, a spirit of dissatisfaction with existing things was promoted, and (still more vitally important) funds were supplied throughout the country to make and support the insurrection. The Duke of Victory, as he ruled and fell, might have exclaimed, "*Et sale labentes artus!*"

Señor Carrasco's tobacco contract created, until it was rescinded, a far more complicated and powerful machinery, and gave to individuals, unconnected with the responsibilities of government, a degree of influence and weight in the state, prodigious to contemplate, and fearful in its possible consequences. The contractors would have wielded almost sovereign powers, and have had at their uncontrolled command both a fleet and an army. They would have a revenue greater than any fifth-rate European power, 120 millions of reals, or £1,200,000 sterling. With the collection of that revenue 5,000 persons were in various shapes connected; and the contractors, with a view to the efficiency of the service, had scattered through different parts of Spain 10,000 stand of arms. Along the coast, too, their armed vessels would soon have been seen in every direction, and the new designation for these *écumeurs de mer* was "*aduanero del humo,*" or the smoke-tidewaiter. The floating *matériel* of the contractors in the Mediterranean, and

the Bay of Biscay, was 500 pieces of artillery. Governments by-and-by would have done well to put themselves under these gentlemen's patronage; for a serious difference with so imperial an interest, would be like a declaration of war with France. It was not without reason that at Alicante, Señor Alcaraz, the government-inspector, refused to give up the stores and guard-boats to the company's officer, Campos, son-in-law to the late vice-president of the revolutionary junta, enlarging on the danger of intrusting to such a person a force of ten armed vessels and 400 carabineros, horse and foot.

The lazy system of farming out the revenue still prevails in every part of the Peninsula. The ruinous practice extends down to the minutest items and the smallest heads of municipal taxation; which, instead of being collected by receivers appointed by the *Ayuntamiéntos*, are disposed of by auction, and stripped by this slovenly means of a large per-centage. It is still precisely as in 1594, when Cervantes was despatched with a commission from Philip II. to the kingdom of Granada, to look after the missing proceeds of the royal *tercias* and *alcabalas*, or proportion of ecclesiastical tithes and per-centage on sales. Instead of appointing intelligent and responsible collectors, subjected to an active supervision, the man of straw, who has the impudence to bid, is too often preferred to the man of substance; and the man of substance will not take the contract unless at a price by which the revenue is robbed. At Cadiz, as a sample of the system, the *Ayuntamiénto* disposes by *subasta*, or public auction, of the shops and stalls of the Squares

of Isabel II. and San Fernando, of the dependencies of the Plaza de la Constitucion, of the sale of water from the reservoirs in the Squares of La Libertad and General Mina, of the vessels plying beneath the North Wall, of the standings in the Casa de Matanza, or city slaughter-house, of the tax levied on all heads of cattle, &c., on their entrance, and of the rents of small shops near the Plaza de la Libertad; from all which they would realise thirty per cent. more, if they were not too lazy to collect them.

The unhappy financial condition of Spain leads, as might be expected, to the most saddening results. Enclaustrado members of religious orders, friars and canons connected with the first families in the kingdom, are too often compelled to subsist upon genteel beggary. The promised government incomes were at best but a miserable subsistence, and these are, for the most part, years in arrear. It would wring tears from the hardest eyes to see the plight of these religious men, of whom many are venerable and most respectable. Of old *militaires* there are likewise countless numbers, whose pensions are paid so irregularly by the State, that they become a burthen on the community. Many a man who has held a captain's commission is reduced to literal beggary; and the daughters of such a man, after his utterly unprovided death, sometimes seek a support in prostitution! I speak of facts too well established. Political mutations have placed vast numbers of military, as well as ecclesiastics, on the retired list; their *titulos* are discounted by usurers at a sacrifice of eighty per cent., and often they cannot get a penny in the pound!

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## THE COLONIES OF SPAIN.

THE immense colonial empire of Spain has dwindled to the Canary Islands, two of the Antillas,—Puerto Rico and Cuba,—the Philippines, the Marianas, and a speck or two on the northern coast of Africa. It is just 200 years since she lost her grasp of Portugal, with its extensive colonial possessions; Jamaica, Franche-Comté, the Low Countries, the Milanese, Naples, Sicily, followed. Cromwell clipped her of Jamaica, and France of Hispaniola. Tunis, Oran, the Cape Verds—she lost successively. The double crown of the Bourbons and the Family Compact made France more friendly; and Spain had Louisiana ceded to her, but did not long retain it. Pensacola, Florida, Sierra Leone, were transferred to England. In our own days we have seen her gigantic western empire melt away like snow; and the discoverer and conqueror of America, whose possessions both on the northern and southern continent were in extent enormous, left without a shred of territory in the golden tracts where she was once omnipotent. We have seen the tyranny and helpless misgovernment which 150 years ago were unable to defend those sunny regions from the depredations of buccaneers, and the ravages of filibusteros, prostrated, in a few engagements,

throughout all those vast dominions; the torch of a too fruitless liberty borne with lightning speed from new-sprung Republic to Republic, and Colombia, Mexico, Peru, New Granada, Ecuador, Paraguay, the Argentine, wrested simultaneously from their neglectful stepmother, and established in an abused independence.

Cuba is the milch-cow of Spain; and it is the remittances from Havana which, for years past, have mainly enabled successive governments to pay the half-yearly dividends to the English bondholder. An evidence of its flourishing condition may be found in the fact, that the Intendente of Finance at Havana, at the close of the year just expired, authorised the Treasury at Madrid to draw on him to the extent of a hundred millions of reals, or one million sterling,—which, if requisite, he announced might be still further extended. Much as may be said against the abuse of cigar-smoking, the fundholder will scarcely be found to join in indiscriminate censure of the “weed” that enables Spain, with all her wounds open and bleeding, to scorn that detestable practice of *repudiation*, which America, with all her prosperity and unruffled tranquillity, suffers to degrade her national character; and the ragged and wasted Spanish refugee, when the dapper and oily Yankee twits him on the misfortunes of his country, may answer proudly,—“Yes; but we pay our dividends!” Spain, by a singular coincidence, retains in her shrunken colonial empire the two finest tobacco-growing islands in the world, and the bulk of her colonial wealth

consists of her Havana cigars and her Manilla cheroots.

The general administration of Cuba has long been very defective, and as a means of bringing wealth to the mother country the enormous cigar manufactories are the chief available source. But these are indeed immense. Statistical details upon this subject have not long since been presented to the British public, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to repeat them. The customary colonial vices of favoritism and oppression have been exhibited at Cuba lately in a very striking degree, and a formal complaint has been made in the Cortés of "the fatal state of the insular government, the post-office, and its dependencies, since the time of Señor Capetillo, the ancient Administrador; involving the most serious abuses, even to the opening, as it passed through the post-office, of the correspondence of parties obnoxious to the ruling powers."

The appointment of General Leopold O'Donnell as Governor and Captain-General of the island, which was one of the first acts of the Provisional Government, was a selection worthy of Narvaez. This general had been but a very short time in the island, when he found the violence of brigands, and the excesses of the soldiery, to require a strong curb. He adopted instantly the characteristic course of hunting down the offenders, trying them by martial law, and inexorably commanding their execution. These scenes have not since been renewed, but slavery and the slave trade were never more rampant. There are here, as

in all the other colonies of Spain, municipal chambers, provincial deputations, consistorial houses, and most of the other machinery of the Spanish constitution; but these popular bodies seldom take an active part in politics, and generally go with the actual government. There are no colonial chambers, it being a peculiarity of Spain that her colonies send deputies to the Madrid Cortés. Cuba is very well affected towards the mother country, and the people are proud of calling their island "*La bella y pacífica Antilla.*" Its administration is carried on by the Captain-General, assisted by a council of government called the "Real Acuerdo," composed of the highest functionaries, the Archbishop of the Antillas, the Commandant-General of the Apostadero, or chief port, the Superintendent-General of the Real Hacienda, or treasury and customs, the Intendant of the Army, &c. The Governor holds frequent levies at his palace in the royal hall of prætorial audience, and from its balconies addresses the troops at reviews; while the Muelle de Caballeria, or Cavalry-mole, is the scene of much gaiety when ships of war arrive at the island, or distinguished strangers are received in state at their landing. After half-a-century of inaction, they are now building a fine brig-of-war at Havana. The Governor gives audiences to the inhabitants in private disputes, a patriarchal procedure by which much litigation is avoided. Within the last year two or three new ports have been opened to foreign commerce, and a more liberal code with regard to exports has been adopted and carried

into execution. At one of these new ports, Cardenas, five American vessels were lately loading together with molasses. An enlightened policy would produce a rapid development of the resources of this fine island; but in the progress which is generally noticeable, I lament the absence of any advance towards humane and liberal sentiments with regard to slavery. The atrocious traffic never flourished more than it has done under O'Donnell's auspices, and the infamous spectacle is here presented of an exalted military officer fattening on blood-money and base corruption. But the recent conspiracy at Matanzas will probably have the effect of checking this shame of civilisation, and mortal terror may yield what justice would never have conceded. It must be recorded, to Espartero's honour, that he alone of Spanish rulers carried out with good faith the slave-trade treaty of 1835, and that his appointment of General Valdez as Governor of Cuba was so effective for this purpose, that the import of slaves became reduced from 14,000 to 3000 yearly.

Cuba contributes 50,000,000 reals, or 500,000 sterling of clear annual revenue to the Spanish Crown. The island is filled with a thriving population, the planters are daily becoming more wealthy, and their dread of the unemancipated negro population is the only drawback to a pleasant existence. An immense improvement has developed itself of late years in the sugar cultivation, of which the produce has quintupled since the commencement of the present century. Some of the plantations are arranged on a very creditable scale, and the processes pursued at

many of the *ingenios* or sugar-mills have made great strides towards perfection. The general amelioration, both here and at Puerto Rico, within the few last years, is perfectly astonishing; and a nucleus of hope to the friends of the slave may be found in the fact that some planters have taken up the idea that fresh supplies of negroes may be dispensed with, by a more careful maintenance of the large supply which the island now contains, and of their posterity.

Puerto Rico was considered at the first period of its discovery merely as a suitable point to be fortified, with a view to assist Spain in her navigation, and domination of the West Indies. For this purpose the island received from the chest of Mexico, a *situado* of 300,000 dollars to defray the expenses of its government. The insurrection of New Spain a quarter of a century back, brought the loss of this subsidy, and necessity, more than foresight, made Spaniards seek for means within the island itself. Many Europeans, besides, emigrated to Puerto Rico on the insurrection of the neighbouring island of St. Domingo, and of the provinces of New Spain. At the commencement of the present century it contained only the garrison, a few *indigenas* scattered through its fields, and a few thousand slaves. In 1815 its population was 174,000, in 1828, 288,000, in 1840, 400,000 souls. The capital wealth of the island was estimated in 1800 at 3 millions reals; in 1815, at 40 millions; and at the present day it exceeds 100 millions. It yields a net revenue to the Crown of 30,000*l.* a year.

The archipelago of the Philippines was discovered in 1521 by Fernando de Magellanes, and is now divided into 31 provinces, containing 635 pueblos, and 3,285,848 souls. In 1784, there was first created a "superintendencia de hacienda," which in 1829 was transferred entirely to an Intendente. Up to the beginning of the present century the revenue derived from the Philippines did not cover the expense of their maintenance, and a *situado* had to be remitted from Peru. The tobacco of these islands is of excellent quality, and under good administration would yield more than all the other produce. Its growth is so abundant that it might easily suffice for the supply of the neighbouring countries of British and Dutch India, and even for the greater part of the home consumption of Spain. If the islands were planted with tobacco to their full capacity, and a tax imposed on families, Pio Pita says that they would yield between two and three millions of dollars to the State.

The first Company for the development of the natural and commercial wealth of the Philippines was established in 1785, with the sanction and patronage of that very well-meaning sovereign, Carlos III. It was not, however, till the present century that the rule of scandalous neglect, with regard to the colonies of Spain, was at all departed from in this instance; and it was rather the impulse given to this remote part of the world by the energetic spirit of British commerce, than any exertion on the part of Spanish governments, that led even to the moderate progress which has been witnessed. The ports of the Filip-

pires were long closed to foreigners, and it was only through the medium of contraband that the colonists received any impulse from foreign commerce. The Home Government was compelled to subsidize the islands with an annual payment of 250,000 dollars, for their maintenance in periods of tranquillity, instead of receiving any revenue from them; and twice the idea of their formal abandonment was seriously entertained, in consequence of the excessive cost of their retention. The efforts made, first by the Sociedad Economica, and subsequently by the Royal Company of the Philippines, were found to be a mere profitless sinking of money. They were of no avail whatever, because they could neither find consumers nor establish an active competition. If there be any value in the prohibitory system, its beauties were surely manifested here, where the principle was enforced in its uttermost rigour. What prevented Spaniards, who had no foreign competitors, from extracting all attainable advantages out of their East Indian ports? They were open to them, and closed to all the rest of the world. The dog-in-a-manger feeling was paramount and rampant. Yet, so far from prospering, these possessions were found to be a drug. The colonial ports were eventually opened, through the impulse of sheer necessity; but obstacles were still thrown in the way of foreign commerce. While the ports of Europe were for the most part open to Spanish shipping, a jealous and unusual preference was given to Spanish vessels frequenting this colony, as if the object was to extract all they could from foreign nations, and give nothing in return.

11 307

The Spanish flag enjoyed the benefit of differential duties, both in the ports of the Peninsula and at its entrance into all the islands. While England opposes no difficulty whatever to the establishment of strangers in her colonies, Spain, until lately, has made it next to impossible—a policy self-evidently pernicious, since the accession of capital and of industrious citizens must increase the sum of the wealth and prosperity of a state. On this subject the greatest ignorance has long prevailed in Spain. The broad and staring fact of our liberality in this respect has been pertinaciously denied to exist; and a royal order was not long since issued by a Spanish Minister of Finance, based upon this absurdly erroneous supposition. There is a party in Spain, whose rigorous *exclusivismo* is mortally offended by the slightest condescension to foreigners, and the smallest abatement of miscalled protective laws they invariably denounce as treason. Events have singularly falsified the predictions of the strict-prohibition party. Few possessions have had their face and their fortunes so changed in a few years as the Philippines, since the force of the principles of modern political economy compelled the Government to relax their protective regulations, and admit foreign competition to their ports. The following official returns of the exportation from the port of Manilla, at different periods, to the mother country and to foreign ports, demonstrate as well the remarkable increase of the last fifteen years, as the striking fact that *to foreign commerce* is Spain exclusively indebted for this improvement.

Declared value of goods exported from the port of Manilla in the years from 1805 to 1810 inclusively, during which period foreigners were admitted, but not tolerated :—

	Dollars.
In national and foreign vessels . . . . .	1,485,289
From 1827 to 1830, during which period foreigners were tolerated :—	
In national ships . . . . .	1,732,329
In foreign ships . . . . .	3,575,554
	<hr/> 5,307,983
From 1836 to 1840, in which period there has been some further relaxation :—	
In national ships . . . . .	4,169,783
In foreign ships . . . . .	8,588,614
	<hr/> 12,758,397

For eight years after the establishment of the Royal Company of the Philippines, from 1785 to 1793, all the wealth of Spain, before she was embarrassed by the French Revolution, or lost her South American possessions, was applied to propping up the prohibitive system, and it failed. In the same year in which the head of Louis XVI. rolled on the block, foreigners were for the first time admitted to the Philippines, although not yet tolerated. Yet still these islands were a burthen to the mother country, until 1827, when Spain had her eyes partially opened by the recent loss of her other colonies, and foreigners at last were tolerated. The Philippines now yield a million of dollars of annual revenue to Spain, and that revenue may be easily doubled by the establishment of commercial freedom.

All parties admit the lamentable state of confusion to which the Philippines have been reduced by misgovernment. Placed in the antipodes, having very

unfrequent and irregular communication with the mother country, and exposed to all the enervating effects of tropical lassitude and corruption, it is evident that nothing but the greatest vigour and energy in the central Government could impart a shadow of these qualities to the management of such distant possessions. The wonder is, not that they should be in a low state of vitality, but that the feeble grasp by which they are held should have been able to retain them at all. Malversation at such a distance is considered a safe job, and the conduct of the members of the Council gives the cue to the lowest official. The insular exchequer is dilapidated in every shape which can be devised by ingenuity or fraud; and this essential business of money-making, when the collection and alienation of revenue is deemed too slow, is accelerated by processes which, if not so flagrantly dishonest, are to the full as undignified and objectionable. Governors have been seen to stand in the public square auctioning goods which they have imported as a venture, applying the screw of their official station to compel purchases at their own price, and ready to knock down any man with their hammer who would dispute the excellence of his purchase, or the equality of sack and sample. The evasion of customs' duties by these persons, and the violation of every law in their own favour, is but an obvious corollary of the system. Calm observers predict that, unless this mode of government be changed, the national hatred of injustice and the contempt of feeble oppression, which actuate all mankind, will lead to these inevitable results, and the loss

of this colony to Spain may be no very remote contingency. Here, then, is another ground for imploring a moderation of the factious strife, which is precipitating the final ruin of Spain—if, indeed, the ruin of a nation be possible. The Houses of Vituperation, which are called a *Córtes*, have neither time nor inclination to attend to these colonies.