

all rational improvement; still it cannot be said that they are discontented; if they lead the life of grovelling animals, they have at least their negative happiness. If they are cribbed like the stalled ox, they are fed like him, and they have hardly more care or fear for the future than he has.

The bliss is theirs
Of that entire dependence that prepares
Entire submission, let what may befall.....
No forecast, no anxieties have they:
The Jesuit governs and instructs and guides;
Food, raiment, shelter, safety he provides:
Their part it is to honor and obey,
Like children under wise paternal sway.*

Their labour is very light, and they have much leisure time to waste in their beloved inaction, or in the rude pastimes of their aboriginal state. These last consist chiefly of dances and certain games, and gambling of various kinds. Of two games they are especially fond, and spend much of their time, like boys as they are, in their performance. They are thus described by La Pérouse. "The first, to which they give the name of *takersia*, consists in throwing and rolling a small hoop, of three inches in diameter, in a space of ten square fathoms, cleared of grass. Each of the two players holds a stick, of the size of a common cane and five feet long; they endeavour to pass this stick into the hoop whilst it is in motion; if in this they succeed they gain two

* A Tale of Paraguay, Canto IV.—SOUTHEY.

points, and if the hoop, when it stops, simply rests upon their stick, they gain one by it: the game is in three points. This game is a violent exercise, because the hoop or the stick is always in motion.

The other game named *Toussé* is more easy. They play it with four, two on each side; each in his turn hides a piece of wood in his hands, whilst his partner makes a thousand gestures to take off the attention of the adversaries. It is curious enough to a bystander to see them squatting down opposite to each other, keeping the most profound silence, watching the features and most minute circumstances which may assist them in discovering the hand which conceals the piece of wood; they gain or lose a point, according to their guessing right or wrong, and those who gain, have a right to hide in their turn. The game is five points and the common stake is beads.*

These and other games of chance, some of them learnt from the Spaniards, as those at cards, are indulged in to a criminal excess; and frequently they lose in this way, all they can call their own, the clothes off their backs, the favours of their wives, and even their wives themselves. This picture is not softened by the addition of intoxication, a vice not unfrequent in the missions.

From the total subjection in which the Indians

* Vol. II, 224.

grow up and live, never being taught or indeed allowed to act and hardly to think for themselves, it could scarcely be expected that they should attain any real knowledge of life or independence of conduct, even if they had been originally of a better stock; as it is, they are, in regard to the capacity and power of acting as members of a civilized community, on a lower scale than even the domesticated negroes of the West Indian colonies: they are reduced to the state of mere automatons, totally subjected to the direction and guidance of others. It has accordingly been invariably found that, when any of them have been set at liberty or placed in a position to act for themselves, by leaving the missions or otherwise, they were utterly incapable of maintaining themselves; nay even so stupid as to be incapable of exercising the office of a beggar, even when their very existence seemed at stake. This seems hardly credible, yet it is a fact.

The extreme state of debasement in which they are held, not only has deprived them of their mental powers, but it has diminished their physical strength; they are not only stupid and pusillanimous but puny and feeble. It is well known that savages are prone to be filthy in their habitations; but in their natural state their living so much in the open air, their exertions in hunting and diversions, counter-

act this cause of disease; but at the missions, the Indians being still allowed to live in all their native filthiness, and their lives being now comparatively sedentary, with little corporeal and less mental exercise, they inevitably grow up debilitated in body as well as in mind. And how could it be otherwise?

All thoughts and occupations to commute,
To change their air, their water, and their food,
And those old habits suddenly uproot,
Conform'd to which the vital powers pursued
Their functions,—such mutation is too rude
For man's fine frame unshaken to sustain.*

Great numbers fall a prey to fevers, dysenteries, and other acute diseases. Langsdorff tells us that the missionaries informed him that upon the least illness they become wholly cast down and lose all courage and care for recovery, refusing to attend to the diet or any thing else recommended for them. Chronic diseases of various kinds are also prevalent and add to the mortality. Syphilis prevails to a frightful extent, being indeed almost universal not only among the Indians but the Creoles and Spaniards: it produces frightful ravages among the former, as they refuse all treatment of it even when this is accessible to them, which is not always the case. These circumstances, with the natural tendency which all the Indian race have to diminish in num-

* Southey, *ib.* c. iv.

bers in a state of civilization, much more in a state of bondage, make the loss of life very great in the missions : and now that fresh recruits can be procured with difficulty, and under recent events probably not at all, and consequently the stock maintained only by the procreation of those already domesticated, it is probable that the whole race will gradually diminish and in a few generations more will become entirely extinct.

In concluding this sketch of the present state of the domesticated Indians of California, which unquestionably betrays a lamentable want of judgment and sound philosophy on the part of the men who have been the original founders and are still the strenuous supporters of the system under which these melancholy results have arisen, it would be extreme injustice not to place in the strongest contrast with their want of judgment, the excellent motives and most benevolent and christian-like intentions by which they have been always influenced. Considering the perfectly absolute and totally irresponsible power possessed by the missionaries over the Indians, their conduct must be allowed to have been invariably marked by a degree of benevolence and humanity and moderation, probably unexampled in any other situation. To each missionary is allotted the entire and exclusive management of his mission. He is the absolute lord and master of all

his Indians, and of the soil ; he directs without the least interference from others, all the operations and economy of the establishment, agricultural, mechanical, manufacturing, and commercial ; and disposes, according to his will and pleasure, of the produce thereof. He allots his lands, orders his seed time and harvest, distributes his cattle ; encourages, chastises, and commands all the human beings under his charge ; and all this without being accountable to any power on earth ; for by a convenient fiction, this property belongs to the Indians, and the Indians are his slaves. There are, I fear, few examples to be found, where men enjoying such unlimited confidence and power, have not abused them. And yet I have never heard that the missionaries of California have not acted with the most perfect fidelity, or that they ever betrayed their trust, or exercised inhumanity ; and the testimony of all travellers who have visited this country is uniformly to the same effect. On the contrary, there are recorded instances of the most extraordinary zeal, industry, and philanthropy in the conduct of those men. Since the country has been more opened, strangers have found at their missions, the most generous and disinterested hospitality, protection, and kindness ; and this without one solitary instance to the contrary that I have ever heard of.

I cannot avoid this opportunity of gratifying my

feelings, by noticing in a more especial manner one of those worthy men as affording a recent example of what I have said of their order.

FATHER ANTONIO PEYRI, whose portrait appears in the front of this volume, took possession of the mission of San Luis Rey, in the year 1798. He first built a small thatched cottage, and asked for a few cattle and Indians from the mission. After a constant residence of thirty-four years at this place, he left it stocked with nearly sixty thousand head of domesticated animals of all sorts, and yielding an annual produce of about thirteen thousand bushels of grain, while the population amounted to nearly three thousand Indians! He left also a complete set of buildings; including a church, with inclosures, &c. Yet after these thirty-four years of incessant labor, in which he expended the most valuable part of his life, the worthy Peyri left his mission with only what he judged to be sufficient means to enable him to join his convent in the city of Mexico, where he threw himself upon the charity of his order. The toil of managing such an establishment would be sufficient motive for a man of Father Peyri's age to retire; but the new order of things which has introduced new men and new measures,—when the political power has been entrusted to heads not over-wise, and to hands not over-pure, when the theoretical doctrines of liberty and equa-

lity have been preached while oppression and rapine have been practised,—has doubtless accelerated his resignation. Whatever his motives may have been, his voluntary retirement in poverty, to spend his remaining days in pious exercises, must be applauded by the religious; and his noble disinterestedness by all. At his mission, strangers of all countries and modes of faith, as well as his fellow subjects, found always a hearty welcome, and the utmost hospitality. Many of my countrymen and personal friends have related to me, with enthusiasm, the kindness and protection which they have received at his hands, boons which are doubly valuable where places of entertainment do not exist, and where security is not very firmly established.

I had the pleasure of seeing the Father Peyri on his way to Mexico; and although I had heard much of him before, yet his prepossessing appearance, his activity and knowledge of the world, far above what could have been expected under the circumstances, gave me even a higher opinion of his worth than I before entertained. The excellent climate from which he had come, and his constant employment in the open air, made him look like a robust man of fifty years of age, although he was then sixty-seven; and although his general character and manners were, necessarily, very different from what could be expected from a mere cloistered monk, yet

in his grey Franciscan habit, which he always wore, with his jolly figure, bald head, and white locks, he looked the very *beau ideal* of a friar of the olden time. This worthy man having now entered the cloisters of a convent, may be considered as dead to the world; but he will live long in the memory of the inhabitants of California; and of those numerous strangers who have been entertained at his hospitable board at San Luis Rey.

The best and most unequivocal proof of the good conduct of these Fathers, is to be found in the unbounded affection and devotion invariably shown towards them by their Indian subjects. They venerate them not merely as friends and fathers but with a degree of devotedness approaching to adoration. On the occasion of the removals that have taken place of late years, from political causes, the distress of the Indians in parting with their pastors, has been extreme. They have entreated to be allowed to follow them in their exile, with tears and lamentations, and with all the demonstrations of true sorrow and unbounded affection. Indeed, if ever there existed an instance of the perfect justice and propriety of the comparison of the priest and his disciples, to a shepherd and his flock, it is in the case of which we are treating. These poor people may indeed be classed with the "silly sheep" more than with any other animal; and I believe they

would, in the words of the poet, even "lick the hand" thought it were "raised to shed their blood"—if this were the hand of the friar.

Before concluding this sketch of missionary and of still Indian life, it may not be inappropriate or useless to consider, in a few words, the actual benefits conferred by the missionary systems of converting savage nations; what is the relative value of those systems; and whether they are the best that could be adopted.

In the first place, what have the natives of California gained by the labours of the Missionaries? What service have those Friars rendered to the Spanish nation, or to the world in general? They have transformed the aborigines of a beautiful country from free savages, into pusillanimous, superstitious slaves, they have taken from them the enjoyment of the natural productions of a delicious country, and ministered to them the bare necessities of life, and that on the condition of being bondsmen for ever. Is there any one who can suppose, that those men who formerly wandered in their native wilds, "free as the wind on their mountains," were not happier than the wretched herds of human animals which are now penned in the missionary folds? It must be owned,

that the arts of agriculture, and the use of the domestic animals are infinitely preferable to the scanty endowments of the hunter or barbarian state: but what share of the blessings resulting from these, do the Indians enjoy? They are made to assist in the toil which those improvements bring along with them, but for this toil they have no reward: for them there are no hopes! Can any one of a well constituted mind approve of this transformation, or reflect on it without sorrow?

Admitting, which I most readily do, that the natives in this part of America were and are very low in the scale of even savage happiness, surely we must allow that their actual condition as domesticated animals—I will not say as civilized men—is a degree even below this, when we look to *the mind*, the only source, seat, and criterion of enjoyment, that deserves the name of human. True it is, as the poet whom we have already several times quoted says of them—

Their inoffensive lives in pupillage,
Perpetually but peacefully they lead,
From all temptation saved and sure of daily bread;

still, I think, no one with the feelings of a man capable and conscious of independence, will for a moment prefer this happiness of the stalled ox to the enjoyments of the free and robust Californian savages (chequered and embittered as these enjoy-

ments were with many hardships and privations) when left to subsist on the spontaneous productions of their woods and fields, tracking the wild deer on their plains, bringing up fish from their waters; traversing, without control, their forests and their mountains, or basking, in dreamy inactivity, on the banks of their rivers, or on the shores of the ocean. Does it benefit the world more that twenty thousand Indians should live in aggregated huts on one side of the mountains, than in scattered tribes on the other? Does it promote the cause of true religion, that this number of beings should be repeating the offices of Saint Francisco and singing hymns before the image of the virgin Mary in a church, more than that an equal number should offer their orisons under the canopy of heaven to the supreme being whom they suppose to be represented by the rising sun? I think not: but it certainly interests humanity to know, that one of the finest countries on earth has been doomed to be the abode of men reclaimed from one state of misery and barbarism only to be plunged in another sort of barbarism and an aggravated state of misery; whereas, under other management, it might now have been the abode of millions of the human race, enjoying all the advantages and comforts of civilization and opulence, which some other states of America not so favourably situated, are so fully possessed of. The mind of man

can hardly conceive a contrast more complete than that between the present state of California, and the united states of America. On the one hand, we see an immense population formed into a community governed by wise laws, and outvieing the old countries of Europe, not only in the arts of life and the various improvements of modern times, but even in numbers; sending out fleets over all the earth, and in constant and intimate connection with the whole world. On the other hand, we see a few helpless slaves engaged in superstitious exercises, immersed in the most complete ignorance, utterly unknowing and unknown to all beyond the precincts of their wretched huts! If north America had been first peopled under the influence of Spanish Friars; if the red men of the north had been enclosed in folds, and taught to sing hallelujahs to the virgin, and repeat the offices of San Francisco; if they had been made nominal owners of the soil to the exclusion of white men, and governed according to the Franciscan system, what would have been the rank of that country at this day among the nations of the earth? Nay had even Mexico, Peru, and the other Spanish colonies been subjected to this system, what figure would they have now made in the new world of republics?

All that we can allow is, that the missionaries are honest men; that they pursue with assiduity

what they believe to be their duty; that they labour in their vocation with zeal: but we entirely condemn their system, and lament its results. In their view of the subject, the conversion of those infidels to the Roman Catholic faith is the sole object of their labours: attention to their temporal comforts or intellectual cultivation cannot be expected of teachers, whose tenets are, that to abstain from all worldly comforts, and to despise all human learning, is their paramount duty: consequently no instruction has ever been given to their neophytes beyond learning to repeat in Spanish or Latin the offices of the church. Those offices, they of course, repeat by rote without at all knowing their meaning: but as it is sufficient in the Romish church, that its members perform the ceremonies, and repeat the offices in any language, whether understood or not, the jargon muttered by the Indians is perfectly orthodox, and intitles them to all the future happiness which this infallible church has to bestow.

What would those respectable and philanthropic persons think, who are so numerous in England, and so much interested in the propagation of civilization and religion, if all their labours and immense pecuniary sacrifices ended only in changing the condition of the wild but free inhabitants of a fine country into one of slavery and superstition? Would they consider the religious, moral, or tem-