

—leaving as heretofore the soldiers in rags and the employés without pay : the result of the whole is, that all parties have to recur to the missions and the friars for their daily maintenance to prevent them from starvation. The debt owing by the government to the missions for such supplies, amounted in 1831 to four hundred and fifty thousand dollars.\*

\* No alterations have been made in this chapter since it was first written : it must, consequently, be understood to refer to the state of things previously to the late revolution.—ED.

## CHAP. VIII.

### UPPER CALIFORNIA CONSIDERED AS A FIELD FOR FOREIGN COLONIZATION.

IT would not be supposed *a priori*, that men would select for their abode either the extreme northern regions, where the fruits of the earth are scarce, and the labour required to produce them great, and where all manner of privations are excessive ; or the burning climes of the tropics, where dangers and discomforts of a very different kind, but equally great, abound : and, yet, however inexplicable it may be, we find human beings who seem to prefer for their habitations the frozen regions of the higher latitudes, and the scorching plains of the torrid zone. We find people clinging to a soil which does not yield them sufficient subsistence, and to a climate which threatens to freeze them to death : we find human beings in Patagonia, who have to support life by eating raw fish taken from the sea, or the flesh of wild animals, whose skins serve to preserve them from perishing of cold. We



also find near the opposite pole beings equally wretched, and refusing to remove from their native snows. We find on the other hand, men inhabiting the most pestiferous situations, under the very line, in the midst of forests and marshes, whose exhalations communicate to the air they breathe pestilence and death, and whose whole lives are passed in defending themselves from noxious animals and poisonous reptiles. Is it not astonishing that the frozen and uninhabitable shores of Patagonia, Hudson's Bay, the pestiferous marshes of the tropical coast of America, and the burning sands of Africa, should be filled with people, whilst such delightful countries as California are so devoid of inhabitants? Again, we find in Europe a superabundant and daily increasing population, the utmost exertions of a great part of whom, cannot procure them bread. In Great Britain and Ireland, there are millions of human beings of superior intellects, and varied acquirements, who find it utterly impossible to get employment or food; and yet countries exist, in which the choicest fruits of nature are left to waste for want of hands to gather them, and where labour is hardly necessary to enable every one to live in plenty. While in Europe lands can only be acquired by the rich and the powerful, in some of the finest countries of the earth luxuriant soils are lying waste without proprietors, and without cultivators.

Taking every circumstance into account, perhaps no country whatever can excel or hardly vie with California in natural advantages. Its geographical situation is such as one would point out if he was desired to select the most favoured situation in the world. Its topographical relations are also most favourable: it stretches along the shores of the Pacific ocean, without extending much inland, and thereby enjoys all the manifold advantages of a maritime country.\* By its great extension from north to south settlers have also the option of selecting a climate suited to their health or views. Other countries there are, of course, which have the same relative situation on the globe; but I think it may safely be asserted, that there is no other of the same extent, which possesses so many natural and local advantages. Some countries although they are placed in the same geographical relation, are sandy deserts or inundated marshes; others are uninhabitable mountains, or impervious forests; some are destitute of ports, and rivers; while others are surrounded or possessed by savages, or bordered by shoals and unapproachable shores. California, on the contrary, enjoys natural and local advantages equal to its geographical situation. Its soil is of the most fertile description, capable of producing the

\* I speak of that part inhabited by the Spaniards, for, taken in its whole extent, California reaches far inland.



choicest fruits and grains in the greatest perfection and abundance; its coasts are bold, and free of danger, washed by the placid Pacific ocean, and possessed of ports of the first order. It is also watered by abundant rivers; and there is nothing in the configuration of the surface of the country to forbid the eternal spring which its situation promises. There is found a temperature equally removed from extreme heat or cold: and the range of hills which bound the maritime portion of California to the north-east shelter it from the only winds which might be apprehended seriously to injure the fruits of its soil, or to incommode its inhabitants.

The situation of California for intercourse with other countries and its capacity for commerce—should it ever be possessed by a numerous and industrious population—is most favourable. Its western shores on the Pacific, as has been already shown, possess capacious ports. The port of San Francisco for size and safety is hardly surpassed by any in the world; it is so situated as to be made the centre of the commercial relations which may take place between Asia and the western coasts of America. The route by which the voyage from India, China, Manilla, and other Asiatic countries is performed to the American coast, particularly to that of Mexico, Guatemala, &c., obliges vessels to pass very near the coast of California; because

in order to avoid the easterly trade winds, it is necessary to stand to the northward to get into the variable and prevailing westerly winds, just as vessels must do when bound from the West Indies to Europe. The vessels of the Spanish Philippine company on their passage from Manilla to San Blas and Acapulco generally called at Monterey for refreshments and orders. Thus it appears as if California was designed by nature to be the medium of connecting, commercially, Asia with America, and as the depôt of the trade between those two vast continents, which possess the elements of unbounded commercial interchange; the one overflowing with all the rich and luxurious commodities, always characteristic of the east, the other possessing a superabundance of the precious metals and other valuable productions to give in exchange.

California is also admirably calculated for carrying on a trade with all the new republics bordering on the Pacific; and as its productions are of a different description from those of the countries chiefly situated within the tropics, it is capable of furnishing them with articles of indispensable necessity, which hitherto they have been obliged to procure from Europe, at an enormous expence, and often, from the length of the voyage, rendered useless by the damaged state in which they arrived. California could furnish abundantly all those countries with



flour, potatoes, salted provisions, hides, tallow, butter, cheese, wine, brandy, oil, olives, raisins, apples, and other fruits; as also with hemp or cordage, flax, wood, pitch, tar, &c. all of which would arrive by a short voyage, and in perfect condition, and be furnished at reasonable prices.

Another commercial field offers to be gradually opened in the numerous islands scattered over the Pacific ocean, with some of which, particularly with the Sandwich Islands, considerable dealings are already carried on by foreign vessels and also by those under the Sandwich Island flag. These carry live stock to those islands, which have benefitted amazingly by the introduction of black cattle and horses, of which they now possess large numbers.

The foregoing is a brief view of what commercial consequence California might soon arrive at, if peopled by an active and enterprising race of men; but under the present system, and while the population retain their present character of indolence and total want of enterprize, it must stand still. If, on the contrary, this country was under an enlightened and liberal government, which knew how to promote its colonization, and to encourage the resort of industrious settlers from whatever quarter they might come, it could not fail to become known and selected as a refuge by the innumerable starving population of the old world; and would soon be one

of the most interesting and prosperous spots on the earth. It is true that its distance from Europe is great, but it is not much greater than that to New Holland or Van Dieman's Land, which so many emigrants now reach at a moderate expence.

The great number of vessels proceeding to fish for whales in the Pacific might, also, perhaps, be made the means of conveying emigrants to California, so as to be advantageous both to the owners of the vessels and the passengers. This fishery has, of late years, been most successful on the coast of Japan; and to vessels passing to that coast round Cape Horn, California would not be much out of the way. They would there be able to refresh their crews, and lay in a fresh stock of provisions and water for their ultimate destination. These vessels carry out empty casks for the purpose of holding their oil: these would serve for carrying water for the passengers, so that except in the article of provisions, scarcely any additional expense would be incurred.

Should the projects now much talked of, of forming a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, and of establishing a line of steamers along the western coast of South America, be ever carried into effect, the means of transport of individuals to California, would be extremely easy, and in less than half the time required for a voyage to Austra-



lia. The probability of the commercial advantages of such projects forms quite a separate subject of inquiry.

The opening of a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across the Isthmus of Panama, or at some more favourable point in that neighbourhood by means of a canal, has long occupied the attention of the nautical and scientific world; and if this enterprize should ever be carried into effect, a voyage from Europe to California would be comparatively short, and emigrants could be carried there with little more expence than to Canada. If ever this route shall be opened, California will then be one of the most interesting commercial situations in the world; it would in that case be the point of rendezvous for all vessels engaged in the trade between Europe and Asia by that route: it is nearly midvoyage between those two countries, and would furnish provisions and all naval supplies in the most ample abundance; and most probably would become a mart for the interchange of the commodities of the three continents. No other station in the course of this route would be in any way equal to California. The parts of America through which the supposed canal must pass, must be low and in a tropical climate, consequently unhealthy; they are also unproductive of provisions and naval stores; whereas California presents a healthy climate, good harbours, provisions, and naval stores of all descriptions.

The opening of this passage may perhaps be considered as a remote contingency: but when we reflect on what has been achieved within the last fifty years; what has been the progress of the world in that time; and look at what is in progress; is it too much to indulge in a hope that this enterprize so manifestly useful, and on all hands allowed to be practicable, may at no very distant period be accomplished? If California and the country through which the proposed canal has to pass, had appertained to England for three hundred years, as they have done to Spain, would not at this day such a canal have been the thoroughfare for the trade to Asia? Nay, would not the people of England have opened this communication for the sole purpose of settling such a country as California, if no other object had been taken into account?

I shall here presume to give my opinion, that all attempts to make a passage between the two oceans will be abortive, unless the territory through which the canal passes shall be ceded in sovereignty to some powerful European state, or put under the guaranty of a convention of European states; because the new republics into which the late Spanish colonies have been divided, have not the stability, nor have they adopted that liberal policy, which is necessary to ensure a free transit, indispensable for the good success of such an undertaking. The



security of those who had to expend such large sums of money, and the protection of the extensive commerce which would have to pass through such territory, are alike indispensable. Another consideration in my opinion is also indispensable to the success and utility of this undertaking, viz. that the canal should be made of a capacity sufficient to admit merchant vessels to pass through without discharging their cargoes. To make a canal for boats, or on any other scale than to permit vessels to pass on to the ulterior destination of the goods, would be entirely nugatory; the expence and delay of transporting the cargoes by boats in such a country as that through which the canal passes, would be very great, and the loss by periodical rains, robbery by an ill-regulated population, and a thousand causes, would counterbalance all other advantages; but the principal difficulty and expence would be to procure vessels in the Pacific, to prosecute the remaining part of the voyage. On this ocean, at present, the freights paid for vessels are most exorbitant, and from the nature of the coasts in the neighbourhood of the canal, which are all unhealthy, and unfit for the creation or maintenance of a marine, no improvement of consequence is to be expected. It would result in the case supposed of a mere boat canal, that after a cargo had been forwarded to the eastern entrance of the canal, and

transmitted to the Pacific by boats, the time that might elapse before a vessel could be procured to proceed with this cargo to China or other destination, would be more and the expence greater, than if the original vessel had proceeded directly round the Cape of Good Hope. It has been lately much recommended to make a railroad from Portobello to Panama, or somewhere in that vicinity; but the foregoing objections exist to this in all their force, as to a canal for boats, and I should consider such an undertaking utterly useless, in a commercial point of view. If, on the contrary, the canal was made capable of admitting vessels to pass through with their cargoes, the delay would be very small, and the expence trifling; Asia would be thereby brought by one-half nearer to Europe, and the passage to all the west coast of America and the Pacific islands shortened in a still greater degree. This revolution in the commerce with Asia and the Pacific ocean, if it were to happen, would aggrandize the country of which we have been treating in an extraordinary manner: and however distant this era may be, it is not to be supposed that in the present state of the world, when such rapid progress is making in every thing that is useful, this gigantic improvement will be indefinitely delayed; and particularly when it would appear, that the means are but trifling in comparison to the end



proposed. When we look at what has already been done in North America, England, Holland, France and other countries, the undertaking alluded to does not appear to be formidable. Perhaps the Caledonian canal which passes through Scotland, and unites the North Sea with the Atlantic, is not a much inferior undertaking to the one proposed; and the plan on which it has been constructed, ought to be adopted. This canal is capable of admitting the largest loaded merchant vessels to pass through it without discharging; and one of the same capacity between the Atlantic and Pacific, would effect all the vast advantages which I have mentioned—and indeed many more.

In the present unsettled and uncertain state of Upper California, in its internal and external political relations, and more particularly in the state of anarchy which has resulted from the changes that have taken place since the preceding chapters of the present work were written, it would be absurd to recommend it as a field for emigration at this moment. As, however, this state of things cannot be expected to be permanent; and as it is to be hoped that whether the country re-unites itself with Mexico or achieves permanent independence, more liberal and enlightened principles of government and state polity will prevail; there appears much probability that the views that have heretofore been

entertained respecting the colonization of the country by foreigners, will be greatly modified, and that encouragement will be given to the only proceeding calculated to effect the permanent prosperity of the country. Should such be the case, I know of no place, as I have already stated, better calculated for receiving and cherishing the superfluous population of Great Britain. Hitherto nothing could have been less encouraging to the settlement of strangers than the proceedings of the successive governments of republican Mexico. For although the different parties who have ruled the country have, in many public acts, held forth their great desire to encourage emigration to all parts of the country, all their laws, devised with this object, have been dictated too much in the old Spanish spirit to be really practically useful. By the multiplication of regulations and restrictions they contrived to envelope their meaning and provisions in such uncertainty that they could scarcely be understood, while most of them embraced some antiquated prohibitive principle which rendered the whole nugatory. In all of the acts relating to emigration, for instance, there have been such absurd clauses as that the emigrant must profess the catholic religion, that he shall have a certain capital, a trade or profession, that he shall appear before the authority, shall have a regular passport, &c.

As yet few strangers have established themselves



in Upper California. Such as have done so, have proceeded thither, as it were casually, in vessels trading to the coast, and are, consequently, chiefly seafaring men; but several mechanics and others have also established themselves, and all have been received with the utmost kindness by the natives, and the greater part of them have intermarried with them. The native inhabitants are indeed remarkable for their peaceable inoffensive character; and on their part no opposition is to be apprehended. It might be presumed that the chief opposition to the admission of strangers was to be expected from the missionaries: it would be supposed that from their education, and from the fear of losing the influence they possess, none could view the entrance of strangers with so much jealousy as they; but it is a curious fact, that from the first establishment of these missions to the present day, as well in the time of the Spanish government as under the republican system, the reception of strangers has always been much more cordial by the missionaries than by the government officers! The different navigators who have touched on the coast of California since its first settlement, have unanimously borne testimony to this fact; and since the country has been opened to strangers indiscriminately, the hospitably and kindness of the missionaries have been the praise of every one who has been there. Foreign mechanics

have been employed at almost all the missions, and the most cordial reception experienced by all of them. As, however, the greatest part of the lands to the southward of Monterey, and along the coast, are in the hands of the Missions, it is not to be expected that they could view with satisfaction any large number of emigrants landing in their territories, and which might require the cession of land, or interfere to disturb their peculiar system.

But, indeed, whenever circumstances permit foreign emigrants to establish themselves in Upper California, they ought to settle to the northward and eastward of the bay of San Francisco, and on the lands around that bay, and on the banks of the river Sacramento, and other streams which fall into it. These are the best lands, and in the best climate for settlers from the north of Europe. They are peculiarly favourable for the raising of wheat and other grain, and for the rearing of cattle. The immense tracts of fertile land not incumbered by forests, the facility of water intercourse by the country being intersected by the creeks on the Bay of San Francisco, and the various branches of the rivers which fall into it, render this situation highly advantageous; and its northerly situation, and the general distribution of the rains throughout the year, make it fitter for agricultural pursuits than the more southerly districts. It has also the ad-



vantage of being but little inhabited, and is unconnected with the possessions of the missionaries.

It ought also to be a fundamental principle in any plan of emigration to this country, that a sufficient number should go together, in order that they might form at first a society by themselves. Their lands should be selected as distinct from those of the missions and the present free towns as possible, so that no dispute as to territory or on any other account could ensue: for this reason, the lands on the bay of San Francisco, as before recommended, are the most proper. In the course of time the emigrants and the native settlers would become acquainted and approximate; their union would be the consequence, and this would tend to promote their mutual happiness and prosperity. But all this pre-supposes great reform to be made in the character of the Mexican government and its agents; for it must be admitted that, at present, British emigrants would not find themselves much at ease under the controul of the local authorities in any district of the republic. Nothing can be more different from the non-interference with private enterprise, and private conduct, which characterises the British policy, than the meddling and vexatious interference of the military and civil authorities, which mixes in all the business of life in the present Spanish American countries, and which is thought

necessary to enforce the infinity of laws and regulations enacted for the guidance of the citizens in their most minute affairs. This is a never failing source of annoyance and disgust, and gives perpetual opportunities for injustice and oppression. The prisons in all parts of the republic are more full than they ever were in the time of the Spaniards, and the most slight pretext is quite sufficient to justify an alcalde or a military officer in sending any one to prison, and keeping him there during his will and pleasure.