

than four-fifths of the country, these rivers are not navigable, except for boats of small burthen, to any great distance from the ocean, and consequently the internal navigation will never employ a considerable number of people. On the coast of the Pacific Ocean, Mexico has some excellent harbours, and it is possible that at some future period she may have a naval force of some importance in those seas. But along the coast in the Mexican Gulf, the port of Guasacualco is the only one suitable for naval arsenals, or that would afford security to vessels of war. We have before noticed the objections to the port of Vera Cruz; and all the others, from Alvarado to the Sabine, are difficult of entrance, and obstructed by bars. The whole coast of Yucatan is likewise without a single port capable of admitting large vessels. It is therefore obvious, from these important obstacles, that Mexico can never become a maritime rival of the United States in the Mexican Gulf; but, on the contrary, the whole of her future commerce therein must be under the protection and control of the latter; and consequently, it must always be of deep importance to Mexico, to cultivate the amity of, and to seek a political alliance with the United States. The expediency of this friendly and political

bond will be further evident, on viewing the map of the two countries. In examining the delineation of the widest part of the continent, from Monterey, on the coast of New California, to the town of St. Louis, at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri, a distance of about eighteen hundred miles in a direct line, we are struck with admiration at the peculiar manner in which nature has provided, by means of water communication in every direction, for the intercourse of the future inhabitants of those vast regions.

Our topographical knowledge of that section of America is yet imperfect; but we know sufficient to enable us to form some idea of the great advantages that must be reciprocally enjoyed by the inhabitants of Mexico and the United States, when an unrestrained intercourse shall be permitted between them, and when the productions of industry shall be interchanged, through the medium of *internal navigation*, between the two nations. The important river *Del Norte* has its sources in New Mexico, not far distant from the heads of the rivers which flow to the Pacific ocean; and empties into the Mexican Gulf, about 25° 50' north latitude. Descending through a mountainous country, it is in many places extremely rapid, and hence

it is usually called *El Rio Bravo*; but it is nevertheless navigable for boats from its mouth nearly to its source. The *Red River* and the *Arkansa*, have their heads near the source of Del Norte. In the course of these rivers to the Mississippi, they receive the tribute of innumerable smaller streams. The *Kanzas*, and the *Platte*, which empty into the Missouri, have their origin in the same mountains that give birth to Del Norte. Throughout the whole of this country, whether among its lofty mountains or extensive prairies, the traveller can scarcely proceed five leagues, without meeting a stream capable of boat navigation. The navigation of the Mexican rivers, for the reasons we have before assigned, will never employ large vessels: they will, however, greatly facilitate the intercourse between the respective interior provinces. But the great rivers that discharge themselves into the Missouri and Mississippi, some of which we have named, are destined to afford employment to many hundred thousands of persons, in vessels of all sizes.

When we reflect that the great country we have thus briefly glanced at, is throughout its whole extent susceptible of high cultivation, the greater part of it enjoying a climate equal

to any on earth, it is not within the reach of the most ardent fancy to draw a sketch of its future importance; nor can we form an estimate, with strict accuracy, of the millions of human beings which at some future day may find subsistence and comfort in those regions. The population of the United States is rapidly rolling towards the Mexican settlements. Already have the banks of the Red River, the Arkansa, and the Missouri, become the residence of American citizens. The arts, the sciences, and (if we may use the expression) the blessings of rational liberty, are spreading in that direction. Territorial limits present but feeble barriers against the diffusion of light and knowledge. Their progress cannot be impeded by edicts of the present or of any future government in Mexico. The Mexican on one bank of a river, living in wretchedness and smarting under oppression, cannot long remain blind and insensible to the advantages and happiness of the citizens of the United States on the opposite bank.

From this brief outline of the topography of Mexico and the adjoining territory of the United States, some faint idea may be formed of the vast internal commerce that must take place between the two nations, as population shall in-

crease, and restrictions upon their intercourse be removed. How many articles will be raised from the soil of the two countries, that are at present scarcely thought of! How many manufactories will be established, in regions calculated to produce all the raw materials for the mechanic and artist! Is it because the two countries may cultivate the same products, and establish the same kind of manufactories, that some writers have maintained the opinion, that the future commerce between the United States and Mexico will be unimportant? Might they not as well argue, that because wheat is raised in Kentucky, it is injurious to the culture of that article in Pennsylvania? or that because certain manufactories are established at Pittsburg, they are rivals to those of the same class at Boston? Do we not see, that in proportion as population spreads over a country, the consumption of the products of the soil is augmented? and that human industry receives a new stimulus from a thousand artificial wants, that are created in society, as they increase in numbers and opulence?

Is it possible, that, in the nineteenth century, we have heard the ambassador of a civilized nation stating, in a formal diplomatic communication to the government of the United States,

that they ought to oppose the extension of the blessings of freedom and commerce to Mexico, because wheat, and other staples of the United States, could be raised with greater facility in that country, and because its superior climate would invite the emigration of our citizens, and thereby diminish our strength? These were the sentiments, openly and officially avowed, of the Chevalier Onis. He did not scruple to recommend these abominable and anti-social principles to the serious consideration of our cabinet; and, what is still more extraordinary and disgraceful, the same doctrine has found abettors in some American writers, who have endeavoured to prove that *the independence of Mexico would be injurious to the commercial interests of the United States.*

We humbly conceive that the sketch we have given of the advantages which our country will derive from Mexico being under a liberal government, is a mode of refutation to the principles advanced by the Chevalier Onis and his partisans, as unanswerable as it must be grateful to every American citizen, who feels, as we do, the absurdity and iniquity of sacrificing the happiness of millions of the human race at the shrine of political ambition and mercantile calculation. We conceive, that the indepen-

dence of Mexico will be an event next in importance, to the whole civilized world, to that of the declaration of the independence of the United States, on the 4th of July, 1776; and to promote such an event, by every fair and honourable means, is in unison with the wishes and interests of all classes of our fellow-citizens.

It is possible that Spain may, for a few years longer, endeavour to preserve her tottering sovereignty over Mexico; but even admitting that her sway should continue longer than we anticipate, it will be of little or no use to her, because her moral as well as physical supremacy is no longer felt, nor can ever again be exercised over her former subjects in that kingdom. She can no more expect to find obedience and respect among the Mexican Creoles and Indians, than she can compel the waves of the ocean to subside, when agitated by the winds; but even admitting that it is still possible for Spain to re-subjugate the Mexicans, may we not ask, how is she to preserve her empire there, in the event of a war with Great Britain, the United States, or any other maritime nation? Have we not proved, that on the fidelity of her American subjects she can no longer place any reliance, even for a moment? Where are her

fleets to protect her commerce with Mexico, or to prevent its being invaded by an enemy in every direction, as well on the Atlantic as on the Pacific coast? If, then, during peace with all nations, Spain finds it difficult to preserve Mexico, and to repress the revolutionary spirit of the people—if, during war, she is exposed to have Mexico torn from her by conquest, where is the policy of exhausting the blood and treasure of the inhabitants of Spain, to maintain a sovereignty over an empire liable every instant to break from her grasp? If these observations are applicable to the relative situation of Spain with Mexico, and indeed with all her possessions on the American continent, do they not apply with still greater force to the islands of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines? Will the most prejudiced Spaniard undertake to say, that those great islands can be held by a nation without a maritime force? Of what use are their vast fortifications and garrisons, against a rigorous blockade? Let us examine the present state of the important island of Cuba, in order to demonstrate the precarious tenure of Spanish sovereignty in that island.

The port of Havana has been very justly called the principal maritime key of the West Indies, inasmuch as its position gives it a con-

trol, not only over the immense commerce at present existing, but of all the indefinite future trade of the vast countries lying between the Isthmus of Panamá and Florida; for, by the laws of nature, the whole of such trade must pass from those regions by the route between the Cuba and Florida shores. Fast-sailing vessels, it is true, may occasionally beat up from Jamaica, and from the Isthmus of Panamá, so as to pass between Cuba and St. Domingo; but rapid currents, and the trade winds, will compel the great body of commerce to be carried on by the passage through the Gulf; it is, therefore, undeniable, that Havana is a key of the highest maritime consequence in the Western World—a key that can lock and unlock at pleasure the commerce alluded to, and more especially that of Mexico. Indeed it is not saying too much, to assert that the political and commercial destinies of the Mexican empire, must be very materially influenced by the conduct of that power which holds the port of Havana. How long the island of Cuba will continue under Spanish banners, whether it will be seized by Great Britain by force, or be obtained by her through negotiation, or whether the people of Cuba will declare their independence, are all-important questions to

the civilized world, and, to the United States, most deeply interesting.

Within a few years past, the British Journals have teemed with essays, tending to prove, not merely the great commercial benefits that will arise to Great Britain from possessing Cuba, but also that its possession is absolutely necessary, as well for the security of the British West India commerce, as to repress the growing power of the United States. However extravagant many of the opinions contained in those essays may be, and however marked with illiberal and hostile features towards the United States, yet they are so flattering to the domineering spirit of the British nation, that we should not be surprised to see them realized by the British cabinet, on the first favourable occasion.

Should Great Britain gain possession of the island of Cuba, it would, no doubt, be in her power to retain it for a long time; and, by the establishment of extensive arsenals at the port of Havana, she would, likewise, be able to keep there an immense fleet; so that, in the event of a war with the United States, the vast commerce of the river Mississippi, and that of all the Mexican Gulf, would be seriously annoyed, and, perhaps, entirely suspended. All

this we admit; but, nevertheless, we do not hesitate to predict, that in less than half a century hence, when the United States shall have a population exceeding *forty millions*, and a naval force, such as the extent of their maritime resources will then enable them to maintain, the island of Cuba, as well as all the Antilles, and the commerce of the Mexican Gulf, will be under the control of the republic. This idea does not spring from any ill-will towards other nations, but is merely a hint to the governments of the Old World, that their establishments in the New are limited to a short duration; and that every new attempt, whether on the part of Great Britain or any other nation, to oppose the natural and inevitable progress of the United States, by planting *rival posts*, either on the continent or islands adjacent, will only tend to an earlier developement of our resources; and, consequently, accelerate the epoch, when the power of our republic will be felt and acknowledged over the western hemisphere.

East and West Florida must be incorporated in our federative states, either by *treaty* or *conquest*. We have already experienced the fatal consequences of permitting that section of the continent to be held by nations hostile to our interests, and jealous of our prosperity.

Our citizens on the frontiers of Georgia and Louisiana, must no longer be exposed to invasion and massacre, in consequence of the impotence and dispositions of a neutral power in the Floridas. The security of the vast commerce of the Mississippi, and the prosperity of our great western states, must not be jeopardized by allowing any foreign nation to possess the important maritime keys of East and West Florida.

If Great Britain should hoist her royal banners at Havana, and make it the depôt of her navy, and the Gibraltar of the West Indies, we must then make *Pensacola* and *Espiritu Santo* our two great *southern arsenals*; and if we are to become rivals for supremacy on the western shores of the Atlantic, then be it so.

Before we close our remarks on this important subject, we deem it necessary to say a few words on the probability that Cuba will not remain long under any foreign flag, but will become an independent power, under the protection of the United States. We know that this is the *wish*, and we are likewise certain it is the *interest* of the people of that island. It has not escaped the penetration of all the enlightened inhabitants of Cuba, that Spain cannot protect them during war; and, consequently, they know that every war in which

she may in future be engaged, exposes them, not only to have their commerce destroyed, but to invasion and conquest. Under these circumstances, independent of all political enmity to the government of Spain, the inhabitants of Cuba have no common interests with her. The products of the island are valuable, in proportion as they can, without restriction, be sent to every part of the world; and the articles necessary for the subsistence and comfort of the inhabitants cannot be supplied from Spain, and therefore must be furnished by other nations.

The city of Havana and its environs, at this day, consume more flour and provisions, of the growth of the United States, than Jamaica, or any other island in the West Indies. *One hundred and twenty thousand barrels of flour, besides an immense quantity of other provisions,* are now annually carried to Havana from the United States.

The enormous influx of negroes into the island of Cuba, within the last few years, and the inattention of the planters to the culture of provisions, have rendered the island completely dependent on foreign supplies, for the subsistence of the inhabitants. Suspend all commerce with Havana, by a strict blockade of its port, for only four or five months, and the city, with all its famous fortifications, would be compelled to surrender, without firing a gun.

The United States at present have a greater tonnage employed in the trade to the island of Cuba, than to all the rest of the West India islands. From our proximity, as well as the enterprise of our citizens, and more especially from our being the great source from whence must be derived flour and other provisions, we must always enjoy a considerable portion of its commerce. If it become independent, we shall be perfectly satisfied with such portion of the trade, as will fall to our lot, from the circumstances just suggested; and we shall feel pleasure in beholding the island in the enjoyment of an intercourse with all nations, giving to none any exclusive privileges.

We do not hesitate to declare our wishes for the independence of Cuba; because, as we know that Spain cannot possibly long retain it, without a navy, we certainly would rather see the island under a self-constituted government, than behold it under the domination of an European power, jealous of our prosperity, and capable of seriously annoying the commerce of our coasts.

But it is to Mexico that we turn, and turn again, with fond delight. We implore the reader to ponder what we have written of her present situation, of her capacity for future greatness, and of the career she has yet to com-

mence and run. For ourselves, we disguise not our admiration of her; we conceal not our affection for her. We have visited her, and we have found her sons our friends, our admirers, our disciples. We look towards her, and we see the day-spring of a glorious national existence arising within her bounds; and vain will be the effort to obscure its light. It *will* lead her in the path of success. If cast down, Antæus like, she will rise again—if overpowered, her throes and struggles will convulse her territory. Mexico will—she must be free: for the seeds of independence have already been scattered there upon the mountain and in the vale; they are now germinating; they *will* strike deep roots into the earth, for they are watered with the tears of oppressed millions;—they *will* flourish, till their strength shall laugh to scorn the fiercest blast of opposition; and then, beneath the serene and cloudless sky of liberty, they will grow a beauteous grove, whose shade shall refresh no heads but those of FREEMEN.

APPENDIX.

STATEMENT

OF THE

CLAIMS OF W. D. ROBINSON

UPON

THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.

IN the year 1799, I visited the city of Caracas as a merchant, and presented letters of introduction to *Don Manuel Guevara de Vazconcelos*, captain-general of Venezuela, and to *Don Estevan Fernandez de Leon*, intendant thereof. They received me in the most friendly manner, and each offered me his assistance and protection so long as it suited my convenience to remain in the country.

At that period, the province of Venezuela was in a most deplorable condition. War existed between Great Britain and Spain; British cruizers blockaded all the ports; and intercourse with the mother country was almost wholly suspended. The inhabitants were deficient in clothing, and in many of the necessaries of life; the products of agriculture were rotting in the