

to recommend it only by the careful preservation and prudent use of the blessing."

"During all the intervening period, the policy of the European powers, and of the United States has, on the whole, been harmonious. Twice, indeed, rumors of the invasion of some parts of America in the interest of monarchy have prevailed; twice my predecessors have had occasion to announce the views of this nation in respect to such interference. On both occasions, the remonstrance of the the United States was respected, from a deep conviction on the part of European Governments, that the system of non-interference, and mutual abstinence from propagandism, was the true rule for both hemispheres."

"Since these times, we have advanced in wealth and power; but we retain the same purpose, to leave the nations of Europe to choose their own dynasties, and form their own systems of government."

"This consistent moderation may justly demand a corresponding moderation. *We should regard it a great calamity to ourselves, to the cause of good government, and to the peace of the world, should any European power challenge the American people, as it were, to the defence of Republicanism against foreign interference.* We cannot foresee, and are unwilling to consider what opportunities might present, what combinations might offer for our protection against designs inimical to our form of government."

"The United States desire to act in the future as they have ever acted heretofore. They never will be driven from that course but by the aggression of the European powers. And we rely on the wisdom and justice of those powers, to respect the system of non-interference which has so long been sanctioned by time, and which by its good results has approved itself to both Continents."

PART IX.

INTEROCEANIC TRANSITS; THEIR POLITICAL HISTORY.—EFFORTS OF SPAIN, ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

THE great Republic, on the 4th of March, 1869, will enter upon a new era in its history. It has passed through all the various stages, phases, and struggles of youth, and has survived the doubts and fears of friends at home, and all the hatred and hostility of its foes abroad. The last great crisis is over. The transition period is fast passing away. Trial has tested its virtues and strength. It has been in the red-hot crucible, and comes out "silver and gold."

Three great questions, vitally affecting the interests of modern civilization, have been settled, at least for our country and our Continent:

1. National organic independence and the sovereignty of the people.
2. Individual liberty and civil rights.
3. Religious freedom.

Bunker Hill and its sequiturs settled the first; Appomattox Court House and its antecedents the second; and the last departing squadron of the intervention left the third, in final settlement with Juarez and his compatriots in Mexico.

These three, involving the fundamental truths and principles, the great American ideas that underlie the whole political, civil, and religious institutions of the Republic, concern essentially its internal progress and wel-

fare. In symmetry and strength they constitute the root, the trunk, and the fruit of our "tree of liberty" at home.

There is another, not less important question, that now arises, and is looming up over land and sea. It touches both the inmost heart and life of the Republic, and is equally vital in respect to its influence and mission abroad among the nations of the earth. It challenges the attention of every American. It has for half a century engaged the most earnest attention of the "Great Powers" of the other hemisphere, and concerns the welfare of all mankind. The question involves the attitude the Republic should assume among the family of nations, the position it should take and the voice it should have, in respect to those great international interests and measures, which affect the commerce and the civilization of the world.

All nations are now neighbors, and have certain common interests in the great trunk lines of communication and commerce around the world. Among these, are the two great continental isthmus transits, that lie in the great highway of all maritime and commercial nations. The narrow necks of land that divide the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, and the American isthmus connecting North and South America, lie as near as may be in the circle, that describes the commercial equator of our sphere. The trunk lines of commerce that traverse the oceans, cross the Continents at these points. All nations have an interest in these transits, and they should be opened, not in the exclusive interest nor under the undue control of any one government, however strong, or any territory, that may chance to hold the position or the power to claim an ascendancy over them. They belong to all mankind.

There is a right of eminent domain that attaches to the

family of nations. That right which cuts a canal or stretches a railroad across a State or a Continent, through any man's farm or house, belongs *à fortiori* to the nations, to make a way and a highway anywhere on the earth, that the common interests of humanity demand. No principle of political economy is more plain. As well might Spain and Morocco claim the passage of Gibraltar, or England and France the straits of Dover, as any other nation claim the monopoly of a transit, on sea or land, that the great Creator designed for the whole family of man. Why should the Bosphorus, any more than Gibraltar, be shut out from the unrestricted transit to the seas? Why should Russia, Prussia, Holland, and the United States have no voice in the opening and direction of the transit to the commerce of Asia? Why should England and France hold the right of way, for canal and railroad, and have virtual control over the great gates of the East?

THE GREAT "EASTERN" QUESTION.

The struggle of the century in Europe has been for the commerce of the Orient. England, Russia, and France have ever been at cross purposes in the Levant. They have never been able to agree in adjusting their respective claims. The Eagle, the Lion, and the Bear, with mutual jealousies have guarded the passage, which neither is willing the other should enjoy. The question will yet arise, whether the Suez Canal and the Euphrates Valley Railway, or some other track shorter and more direct, from the Mediterranean to the mouth of the Euphrates, should not be opened to all the world, on a scale commensurate with the wants and the enterprises of our century, and under the protection and control of some kind of international commission, charged with the preservation of the rights of all nations.

THE GREAT "WESTERN" QUESTION.

The transit of the American isthmus from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by canal and railroad, has also engaged for centuries the attention of mankind. Where, when, and how shall these waters be joined, the gateways be opened on a scale equal to the wants of Europe, Asia, and America?

The question has received far more the attention of European governments than it has that of our own. The following brief historical sketch may give some idea of the importance attached to this subject by transatlantic powers, and of the political and commercial aspects in which it has been viewed.

Since the sixteenth century, this American isthmus section has occupied the attention of the great Powers of Europe. The most eminent statesmen have devoted themselves to the subject. Jefferson and Pitt in the last century, the successive ministers of the British government, Louis Philippe, Louis Napoleon, and their unrivalled corps of engineers, Pope Pio Nono, the *savans* of Europe (Humboldt and others), and the late administrations of our government—Everett, Marcy, Webster, and Clay—have directed to it the most marked public and official attention. Many treaties and concessions have been made by the different governments of Mexico and of Central America, with a view to secure to foreign governments, or to companies or individuals, at home or abroad, some exclusive rights or privileges over the great highway.

PROPOSED ROUTES FOR CANALS AND RAILROADS.

There have been at least nineteen different routes proposed for interoceanic communication between the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific ocean—by

CANALS.

First—The Tehuantepec route, by the Coatzacoalco river and the bay of La Ventosa.

Second—The Honduras route, between that bay and the bay of Fonseca.

Third—The eight Nicaragua routes—1. By the river San Carlos direct to the Gulf of Mexico. 2 to 5. Four routes, through the lake Nicaragua, by the several rivers connecting the lake with the Pacific Ocean—the Niño, the Sapoa, the San Juan del Sur, and the Brito. 5 to 8. The three routes by Lake Managua, viz., by the river Tamarinda, by the city of Leon and the port Realejo, and by the bay of Fonseca.

Fourth—The four Panama routes—1. By the river Chagres and Panama. 2. By the way of Trinidad and Caymito. 3. By Navy bay and the rivers Chagres, Bonito, and Bernardo. 4. By the Gulf of San Blas and the river Chepo.

Fifth—The two Darien routes—1. By the Bay of Caledonia and the Gulf of San Miguel. 2. By the rivers Argina, Paya, Tuyra, and the Gulf of San Miguel.

Sixth—The three Atrato routes—1. By the river Napipi and Cupica bay. 2. By the Truando to Kelley's inlet. 3. By the Atrato river.

There have been at least seven different projects for communication by

RAILROADS.

First—The Tehuantepec route, by the Coatzacoalco.

Second—The Honduras to the Gulf of Fonseca.

Third—The Nicaragua.

Fourth—The Chiriqui to the Dulce Gulf.

Fifth—The Panama, in operation.

Sixth—The Gorgon bay and Realejo.

Seventh—The Gorgon bay and San Juan del Sur.

These all have received more or less attention, and have had their respective projectors and advocates. The idea of a canal between the oceans has roused the imagination of many minds. A great variety of projects have

been put forward from time to time, some of the more important of which are as follows. There are men who have devoted time, labor, and money to these two great enterprises on behalf of our country, that entitle them to honor and gratitude from all true Americans.

THE DECREE OF THE SPANISH CORTES—1814.

In 1814 the Spanish Cortes, with such information as they possessed, passed a decree authorizing the opening of a canal across Tehuantepec. The revolutions and contests in Spain and in Mexico, however, absorbed all the attention of both governments for many years in other things.

AN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION—1825.

In 1825 an association was formed in London for the purpose of cutting a ship canal across the isthmus of America.

R. B. Pitman published a volume of 230 pages, 12mo, giving an analysis of all the information then extant in regard to the subject. He quoted from Dampier and Wafer in 1681; Sharp and Funnel in 1703; DeUlloa in 1726; Edwards in 1799; Humboldt in 1803; Walton in 1817; Robinson in 1820; Hall in 1822; and Purdy in 1824; and cited the remark of Humboldt, that "there was no paper" at that date "to throw light on the possibility of cutting a canal across the isthmus of America." The work contains a map and a description of the five routes that had been then suggested—the Tehuantepec, the Nicaragua, the Panama, the Darien, and the Atrato.

The author says, "It is especially within the obligations and the power of Great Britain to investigate the subject impartially, and, if practicable, to accomplish an improvement which is pre-eminently benefiting herself, and

would confer inestimable advantages upon the rest of the world," and suggests "a convention, under the mediation of the British government, with all other maritimations, by which war and its hideous consequences should, by common consent, be forever excluded from that one spot on the earth's surface, which appears destined by nature to be the heart of the commerce of the world."

SPIRIT OF THE ENGLISH PRESS—1846.

The London *Spectator*, September 19, 1846, contained the following article: A railroad, or even a good common road, across the Isthmus of Panama, would be an invaluable boon to the country through which it passed, and would not be devoid of utility to commerce; but it would be immeasurably inferior in importance to a ship canal between the two oceans, and would by no means supersede the necessity for that grand highway for the navigation of the world. * * * What is wanted is a maritime channel, which shall enable merchant vessels of the largest class to avoid the expense, danger, and loss of time incident to doubling Cape Horn, and to pass from ocean to ocean without discharging their cargoes, or being delayed more than two or three days in the Isthmus. It would be fortunate if such a canal could be cut through the Isthmus of Panama (proper), which is but forty-one miles. But the impossibility of doing this has been fully proved by M. Gavella, an engineer who surveyed the isthmus by order of the French government, and the result of whose investigations was published in the *Journal des Débats* January 15, 1846.

To say nothing of the want of sufficient harbors at either end of the canal in this locality, a tunnel would be requisite capable of giving passage to ships of 1,200 tons

burden, with their lower masts standing. It would have to be cut through a solid porphyry rock. Its dimensions would be about eight times those of the box tunnel, and the cost of excavating it, estimated by M. Gavella at £2,000,000, would probably fall not far short of five times that amount.

Scarcely a doubt remains, that the most eligible locality for the proposed work is the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in the Mexican territory. It is true the land is much wider here than at points further south, but it presents, in the table land of Tarifa, the only gap as yet discovered in the granite chain that extends from Behring's Straits to Terra del Fuego.

The total breadth of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is 140 miles, but the greater part of this space is occupied on the south by lagoons, which could be easily converted into a commodious harbor. On the north is the Coatzacoalco, a river of great volume, admitting the largest vessels at all seasons of the year, to a distance of thirty-five miles from its mouth, latitude 18 deg. 8 min. north, and is capable of being made navigable twenty-five miles further. The canal to be excavated would therefore be but fifty miles long. The highest point to be surmounted is 206 metres (218 yards) above the level of the Pacific, and 160 above the Atlantic. The ascent and descent would be effected by means of 150 locks. Water for feeding the canal can be had in abundance at the summit level. The Mexican government has assigned to the projector of the canal, Don José Garay, the fee simple of nearly 5,000,000 of acres in the Isthmus, together with the privilege of establishing colonies over a breadth of fifty leagues on either side of the canal.

The foreign colonies are to enjoy all requisite immu-

nities, and even the right of working the virgin mines which are known to exist on its surface. The Isthmus is known to possess a fine, salubrious climate, and in many places a most fruitful soil. Timber for shipbuilding, dye-wood, mahogany and other fine-grained trees are to be had in profusion in the forests of Coatzacoalco. The supply of animal food is inexhaustible, and nature has neglected nothing, that could mark out this region as one of the most eligible for colonization on the face of the globe. Hence arises one of the most striking advantages, which this scheme we have been considering, possesses over all its rivals. It would not be necessary to encounter at once the cost and risk of excavating the canal. All that is requisite, in the first instance, is to transport to the spot an industrious and well-disciplined population, who, after completing a temporary communication between the ocean, would develop the immense resources of the country, and draw from them, the means of completing the grand design. There are political circumstances to which, for the present, we can do no more than allude, but which call for the establishment in Tehuantepec of a well-organized colony under the protection of England and France, as a matter of vital importance to Mexico, and of proportionate interest to the allies.

See account of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, &c., based on the reports of Don José Garay, London, 1846.

The *Spectator* adds: "The feasibility of cutting through this neck of land that unites the two continents of America has been so long talked of, and only talked of, that men begin to doubt it. * * * But the thing will be done, and done probably at no distant day. * * * Our age is remarkable for the boldness with which it wages war against all obstacles of time and space."

Thus early appears the proposed alliance of European monarchies for a foothold in Mexico, for purposes of "vital importance," political, colonial, and commercial.

ACTION OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT—1845.

In 1845, Napoleon Gavella, chief of the royal corps of mining engineers, published in Paris a *résumé* of his report to the French government on the project of the Panama canal. The volume contains 230 pages, 12mo, with an accurate topographical map, and a condensed statement of the results of his examination of the isthmus, the details of which, in the estimates of construction, revenue, &c., being deposited in the archives of State. The report of M. Gavella appeared in the *Journal des Débats* January 15, 1846.

In 1846, M. Garay published a volume in London of 130 pages, 12mo, with maps, tables, and estimates, based upon the surveys and reports of the scientific commission, authorized under his grant. He claimed the superior advantages of the Tehuantepec route over every other, in shortening the commercial lines, and in other respects, while it did not differ in any extraordinary degree, in any of its dimensions of length, breadth, depth, lockage, or summit level to be crossed, from similar works already executed in Great Britain, France, Holland, or the United States.

VIEWS AND AIMS OF LOUIS NAPOLEON IN 1846.

The canalization of the isthmus was the earliest to receive a thorough scientific investigation. The honor of the first, most complete examination of the whole subject, in all its bearings, must be accorded to Louis Napoleon. While a prisoner at Ham he prepared an elaborate expo-

sition of the importance, the practicability, and advantages of such a work. His paper occupies eighty pages of the 8vo edition of his works. The following brief analysis of its contents will convey some idea of the systematic, practical, and comprehensive manner in which he treated it. An introduction of twelve pages gives an account of the origin and progress of his interest in the subject. Chapter 1, sets forth the importance of the geographical position of Nicaragua, deemed then to offer the most practicable route. Chapter 2, a description of the places in the track of the canal and the length of the route. Chapter 3, the dimensions, &c., of the canal. Chapter 4, estimates of the expense of construction. Chapter 5, revenues of the canal. The work is full and exhaustive in its details, descriptions, and statistics, as then accessible, necessary to a complete understanding of the project.

As early as 1842, it appears in his historical sketch, eminent persons in Central America invited the prisoner of Ham to America, to identify himself with some public works worthy of his name. He engaged an officer of the French marine, to investigate the possibility of cutting a canal between the two oceans, by the lakes of Nicaragua and Leon. About the same time, the government of Louis Philippe sent an engineer to survey, make plans and estimates for the same object across Panama.

In 1844 the States of Guatemala, San Salvador, and Honduras sent a Minister Plenipotentiary, M. Castillon, to the Court of Louis Philippe to seek the protection and aid of the French government, offering in return great commercial advantages. The overture being declined, M. Castillon obtained permission to visit the prisoner of Ham, and solicited him to go to Central America and place himself at the head of the enterprise.