

An Earthly Paradise 1839

Emigration fields. North America, the Cape, Australia, and New Zealand ; describing these countries, and giving a comparative view of the advantages they present to British settlers

Patrick Matthew

1839

THIS work at first consisted only of the part which relates to New Zealand. When I stated to my Publisher that I had a work in the press upon the Colonization of New Zealand, he objected to the limitation of the subject, and advised me to treat also of the neighbouring country, Australia. This led me to reflect, whether I had not such a knowledge of the subject of our colonies generally, as might be of use to my countrymen who were inclined to emigrate, and whether I could not shew how very important an element emigration might be rendered in our national economy. After deliberating, I resolved to extend the work to colonization generally, and, in the following sheets, I have at least given an honest sketch of those fields which are open to British Emigration. What I regret is, that the first portion having been hurriedly written, while the second portion was in types, and while I was a good deal engaged with other occupations, it is not so full in description and reflection as it would have been under other circumstances ; but this may be counterbalanced in its being, in consequence, more condensed and generalized in its views.

It may be objected to this work, that too much attention has been bestowed on the political relations and prospects of our Emigration Fields. A little consideration will however convince the objector, that this is not the case. The progress of colonies depends almost entirely upon their political relations ; besides, whilst I wished to afford the most correct and comprehensive account for the information of Emigrants, I wished also to render the work such as the Statesman and Economist might peruse.

The proposed Pacific steam-communication *via* the Isthmus of Darien, will soon bring New Zealand, and the fine countries on the west coast of North America, within little more than a month's voyage. In regard to New Zealand in particular, there is, I would almost say, a wilful blindness to its importance as a commercial and maritime station, and invaluable raw-material field of supply. The sagacious Franklin was aware of its importance, and drew up a plan for its colonization. Gibraltar, Malta, the Bermudas, the Mauritius, Quebec, are comparatively valueless. But because these are hallowed by recollections of their importance in past times, we continue to regard them as invaluable, and disregard what, in reference to the future trade of Britain, and of the world, and as a commanding naval station, will be found in value tantamount to all these put together.

Much has been said, and with much truth, of the excessive toil and insufficient remuneration of the working-men in Britain. It is easy to expatiate and be eloquent upon a subject so palpably distressing ; but has any plan been suggested for the quiet and just extirpation of the evil equally effectual with that proposed in the ensuing pages ?

The condition of man, more especially in Britain, is upon the eve of a great change. Facility of production has become so great, that one-third the labour, nay, even less than a third, that was required half a century ago, can now supply him with the necessaries and comforts of life. The facility of communication,—of traffic with, and emigration to, the most distant parts of the world, is now equally advanced ; the whole of the unpeopled regions of the earth may now be said to be British ground, and the gate is opened to an exceedingly improved field for human labour and vast increase of British race. *The working-men of*

Britain are determined that they will no longer be restrained from reaping the fruits of these advantages, by monopolies and regulations, which cause these discoveries and improvements to administer only to the luxury of a particular class. The working-men see, that the means of moral improvement and rational human enjoyment, are now within their reach. The capabilities of man for happiness, and for moral advancement, has hitherto been suffered to run waste. The elements of a new condition of things are all procured, and there is only awaiting a proper arrangement and social organization, to afford a sufficiency of all that renders life delightful and innocent to the whole human family,—a condition of things which causes the heart to swell and beat within us.

Patrick Matthew.

GOURDIE HILL,
26th November 1838.

The New England States, and Highlands of the regions between these States and the Gulf of Florida.

This division of the United States is the only portion of North America east of the Rocky Mountains which can be accounted wholesome, and at the same time comparatively temperate and pleasant, and well suited to the British race. It may be subdivided into two portions, the north and the south. The first, the New England States, and the New York and Pennsylvanian Highlands. The second, the Highlands of the Southern States—the Alleghany and Cumberland Ranges, including the connected spurs and elevations.

The North Portion, *The New England States and Highlands of New York and Pennsylvania*, has been colonized by the British race for a period of nearly 200 years, and is comparatively an old settled country, throwing off a vast emigration yearly southwestward to the fertile Mississippi basin. The population of this northern portion of the Union, keeping away from that of the aguish districts around Lake Champlain and of the westward towards Lake Ontario, are nearly as robust and healthy looking as the home British ; only the exposed skin is a little more tanned from the higher range of the sun and the brighter skies, and the person not quite so full. From the keen bracing air of winter in this quarter of the Union, and the summer not being so oppressively hot as farther south, it is the best suited of any part of North America for the seat of manufacturing industry. The people of European descent here are at the same time more energetic,—more willing to labour, and able to perform more work than in any other portion of the United States. Although not one-tenth peopled, yet is it not so favourable an emigration field for Britain as the highlands of the south ; at least for those who, from a superior education and a little capital, look forward to some employment more productive or less irksome than common labour. The New Englanders (Yankees proper) are too acute and active a race, and too well informed, for any stranger to carry off the more valuable prizes in their own country : But, as a field for the agricultural labourer, or common artizan, it offers fair prospects, affording sufficient employment at good wages. The great emigration which takes place from the New England States while their own lands and field of industry are far from being fully occupied, is caused by the strong emulation of the *cute* native Yankee to elevate himself above the common labour class ; and this desertion of the labour field leaves it open and favourable to emigrants of this class.

The Atlantic States for several years back have presented the anomaly of a country importing grain to a large amount, with a superior and comparatively unoccupied field for grain production. This has arisen from the following combination of circumstances :—

1st, The great recent increase of population in the Atlantic sea-board cities. New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore—which, by commerce, sea-fishing, and the carrying trade, derive a revenue from every quarter of the world, and require a large and increasing supply of grain provision.

2d, The influx of a great amount of foreign capital attracted by the high interest, and lent out or invested on railways, canals, &c. affording employment to a numerous population not engaged in agriculture, and requiring a grain supply.

3d, A considerable portion of the labour of the country which used to be employed in raising grain, being turned to the formation of railways, canals, and other purposes,—mere implements for future production, leaving agriculture, for a time, in some measure neglected.

4th, The exhaustion of a considerable portion of the lands in the Atlantic States, employed in raising grain, by hard cropping and the want of a sufficient application of manure, and this portion being left to recruit under grass,—the farmers selling off and migrating across the Alleghany to the Mississippi basin.

5th, An unusual proportion of the population being diverted from agriculture by having received an education superior to what labouring agriculturists usually possess. They considering themselves, or their parents considering them, more fitted for the learned professions, or mercantile affairs, than agriculture, in a country where the land-owner must himself be the land-worker.

These causes tending to diminish the supply of grain for a time, and to increase the demand, combined with two defective crops, have operated to raise prices so high during the last three years as to produce a considerable importation from the Baltic, Lower Germany and Britain (bonded grain). In a few years, however, the facilities of commercial intercourse with the interior parts of the union, where an almost unlimited extent of very rich land is now being opened up by roads, railways, and canals, will place the United States in a condition to be an exporting, instead of an importing, country of grain, and which the present high prices will accelerate. It is, nevertheless, not very probable that any great surplus amount of grain will be raised in a country where the population are freemen, and land so cheap as to be within the reach of every industrious individual, as in the non-slave American States. A servant, or tenant population, is necessary to much surplus grain production. The raising of grain is attended with too much hard labour to be a favourite occupation with independent citizens working their own grounds, and it will be found that the industry of the United States nation will be turned to branches of industry of less arduous bodily exertion in order to procure exportable produce.

The South Portion, *The Highlands of the Southern States and Kentucky*, extending from the Potomac to Alabama, about 600 miles in length, and 200 in breadth, although beautiful and fertile, and the climate delightful, is not so well adapted for the seat of manufacturing industry, or, indeed, for labour of any kind, by the white race of men, as the northern division ; partly from the delicious climate and greater heat producing a disposition to enjoyment rather than to active labour ; and partly because of the hateful slave system, throwing a shade of degradation and meanness over the occupation of the working man, and disposing to idleness, ostentation, and profligacy. Leaving out, however, all adventitious circumstances,—taking no account of the moral blight of slavery, this division is naturally highly favourable for rural life, affording many a sweet valley, which might well lay claim to the name “ Val-Paraiso.” It is especially suited for orchards and vineyards, and plantations of the finer and more valuable fruits of the south of Europe, upon the steep slopes and rising grounds, where almost all kinds of trees grow with more luxuriance, and ripen better fruit than on flats.

It is also much more propitious for a pastoral life than the northern division, as the winter is of short duration, and the flocks and herds can find a pasturage supply almost at all seasons. These romantic internal regions, remote from water communication, and in many places of difficult access by land, have hitherto been comparatively neglected, partly from the distance from markets and the want of roads, partly from the soil not being quite so rich as the low country, and partly from the greater difficulty of clearing and cultivating the ground where the impediments of declivity and ruggedness of surface are superadded to that of forest. Railways and roads are, however, being formed, which will open up these fine highland regions to the settler ; and, in the course of less than half a century, every valley of the Alleghany and Cumberland Ranges will smile with rural villages, and water-mills, and gardens, and orchards, and corn fields ; and the hilly ridges, cleared of the greater portion of their forest incumbrance, will feed innumerable flocks and herds.

The population of the United States, greedy of wealth, and impatient of steady labour, are much too indifferent in respect to climate and healthful locality. They rush to the Texas and Mississippi alluvions, where less labour will suffice, where wealth is more easily compassed, and where sugar and cotton—articles of lighter carriage in proportion to value, and more marketable than grain or beef—can be raised, but where health and length of days are very precarious ; while, by a little more persevering industry, they might secure a much greater amount of human enjoyment in the mountain valleys they leave behind.

Although much nationality exists among the United States people, yet is there perhaps some want of local attachment, or of kindred and friendly ties, and even a deficiency of enthusiasm for the natural beauties of their fine country. By having been dissevered from their local attachments in the mother country, the race seems to have lost the disposition to be fixtured—to become enamoured of surrounding objects, and fascinated by the delightful remembrances and associations of youth and home. Their disposition to rove seems, at least, the leading passion, and has the effect of driving them westward from the Atlantic States, and even from the beautiful country of Kentucky, leaving a sufficiency of space behind to accommodate the whole British emigration to the United States. The American emigrants are, from habit of race and acclimated constitution, much better suited for pioneers in the western wilderness, than the British emigrants, especially as being less liable to fever and ague. While, on the other hand, the emigrants from Britain, from being accustomed to the division of labour, and the habits of a denser society, are far better suited for the districts which have been for some time partially settled.

Seeing the extreme liability of the British emigrant to fever and ague in the whole of the flat country of the United States and Upper Canada, and the misery that must ensue when the head of an emigrant family is incapacitated, by lingering diseases, for labour, I would impress upon British emigrants to North America the wisdom of choosing one or other of these two more salubrious divisions :—perhaps the working emigrant without capital or much education, to the North division, and the capitalist and more educated to the South—especially to the hills of Virginia and Kentucky.

It is true the slave blight is spread over these delightful regions, but the ingress of British emigrants would have its effects to bring about a change sooner than otherwise might take place. The natural resources of the country are great, the evil is only adventitious, and must soon give way before the force of moral opinion and civilization. This change is the more likely to take place in Kentucky and the highlands of Virginia, as the climate is suitable to white race labour.

In judging of the fitness of a locality for emigration, the appearance of those born in the country, especially those of British race, ought to be particularly attended to ; and the British

highland Virginians and Kentuckians are as athletic, tall, and handsome a people as are to be found. The fact that in Kentucky and Tennessee the raising of black people for exportation to the sugar-producing swamps of Louisiana is a highly profitable business, and carried on to considerable extent, although no very favourable index of the standard of morals of the white population, is rather a favourable one of the salubrity. Some may think that the circumstance of salubrity of climate has met with more attention in these pages than it merits, but if they think so, it is from ignorance or inattention to facts. In a vast majority of cases, at least when slave labour is not employed, everything depends upon the personal activity and the power of muscular exertion of the emigrant and his family ; and health and strength come to be of the last importance to happiness and even to existence. In the greater part of the United States, and even of North America, the defect lies more in the climate than in the productive powers of the soil. The United States citizens are sufficiently sensible upon this point, and nothing can be said more likely to give offence than any reflection upon, or expressed doubt of the character of the district they belong to in regard to salubrity. Although it can be proven that every dwelling during the latter part of every summer is an hospital of fever and ague patients, and even that one-half of the population died the previous season, yet any allusion to the fact is quite enough to afford occasion for a little rifle practice. The rapid increase of the population of the United States is not owing to any salubrity of climate, but to the favourable field for human labour inducing early marriage ; scarcely a woman of twenty-one years of age remaining a spinster unless she is *awful* (very ugly). In certain localities of America, the prevalence of insects, musquitoes, and sand-flies, come to be an important consideration as well as climate ; in some cases, otherwise desirable settlements have been abandoned after the necessary buildings have been erected and clearances made, from the insufferable annoyance of these diminutive pests.

It is proper, however, to mention that neither of these divisions are free from endemic disease. Consumption is prevalent in the New England States, causing a premature loss of about one-fifth of the population ; and in the south division, although the inhabitants are upon the whole healthy, yet fever has its periodic visitations, generally once in eight or ten years, and will sometimes carry off one-half of the population of a village or district. It must also be kept in view, that the base of the mountain ranges next to the low country, and the low adjacent valleys and ravines, especially when of south exposure and heavy wooded and sheltered by the high grounds from the purifying ventilation, are even more unwholesome, than the low country itself.

Were the dense forests removed from the Alleghany highlands and valleys, the climate would doubtless be greatly improved, as the surface of the earth would be swept over by the frequent mountain breeze, and no quantity of malaria suffered to accumulate. Some bad effects might still continue to be felt for a few years, from the vast quantity of tree roots decaying under ground, and emitting putrid effluvia. The soil, also, so long shaded by the rank vegetable covering from the direct action of the sun's rays, would, upon being stirred and exposed to it, send forth for a time pernicious exhalations. Thus the production of malaria will, in the first place, be increased by ploughing and digging, though the source will sooner be exhausted.

In situations, however, of a peculiar nature—rich deep vegetable mould or water alluvion, such as are met with in the low country east of the Alleghany and in Louisiana,—in the hot weather, the drier the soil becomes the production of malaria is the more abundant ; fluids of the most pestilent quality rising out of the cracks which the drought occasions in the ground. This dry malaria is most abundant and of the most deleterious nature when there is no plentiful cover of vegetables upon the ground (as after the crop is reaped or gathered) to consume it as it rises ; which vegetables do as food when they are present. In some parts of the low country of the Carolinas and Virginia, eastward of the mountain division we are treating

of, where the soil is of this description, it is almost certain death for a white man to remain during the latter part of summer in the cultivated grounds ; his only chance of surviving, should he not migrate to the New England States, or the more adjacent highland district (which nearly the whole white population do during the sickly season), is to enter the low-country forest where the trees have tall clear stems with room for a ventilating breeze underneath, and reside in a hut till the winter commence. It is even said that should a few trees around the hut be cut and a small garden formed, malaria will be generated, and the occupier seized by a dangerous bilious remittent.

The Atlantic Sea-board Flats, East of the Alleghany Range.

This low division of the United States extends in length from the Chesapeake to the Gulf of Florida, about 700 miles, and in breadth, from the sea to the mountain division last treated of, nearly 100 miles. With the exception of a few partial slight elevations, such as that at Savannah, it is almost a dead level along the sea-coast, and appears to have been the bottom of the Atlantic at some former period, when that sea has washed the Alleghany base. The soil consists chiefly of sand, such as the ocean would leave, in some places arid and unfit for cultivation, in others covered to considerable depth by the mud alluvion of rivers, which flow eastward across it from the Alleghany range, and by the debris of a rich vegetation, forming a deep vegetable mould.

Very little of this productive but unwholesome region is suited for the British emigrant ; at least it is impossible for that race to subsist by their own labour in these fever-flats. The white population consists chiefly of what are termed *planters* ; proprietors farming their own grounds by the labour of the black slaves. The exportable produce of this division is both great and valuable : it consists chiefly of tobacco, cotton, and rice, far exceeding that of all the other divisions of the United States put together ; and it was in a great measure the wealth derived from this produce, obtained by slave-labour, which put the British colonies in a condition to achieve their independence, and to become the great and powerful nation they now are. It is also true, though not a very pleasant truth, that many of the leading spirits in the war of independence, and also in the later patriotic conflicts and struggles for liberty, have been slave-holders, indebted to slave-labour for their means and leisure and proud inflexible character. That which has contributed so much to the creation of the national power will, however, in all probability, lead eventually to its destruction. The tree which has rushed up so fast, and flourished so richly, has sprung from too rank and corrupt a soil, and the cause of its early vigour and luxuriance will also, it is to be feared, prove the cause of its sudden decay.

The black slave population here is so great, and is increasing so rapidly, from superior adaptation of the race to the climate, in comparison to the whites, that the power of the latter over the former would be of very short duration, were it not for the coercive influence of the whites in the other provinces of the Union. [1] From the fact that the white race cannot maintain themselves by their own labour, in this low, hot, and unhealthy country, [2] while, should the blacks obtain their freedom, very little labour will be performed by them in raising colonial produce as hired servants, as they will preferably purchase small portions of land, on which they can raise all the necessaries of life for themselves with little trouble, we may expect that their manumission will not take place till the last necessity compels it. It is, therefore, highly probable that the manumission may be delayed till insurrection breaks out, from which the most disastrous consequences to the Union may be apprehended.

In the mean time, however, the consciousness of this enemy within his walls, has a powerful influence to repress the warlike propensities of Brother Jonathan. He is well aware what the consequences might be were a liberating army, with a few hundred thousand stand of spare arms, to form a rallying point in this division of the Union. Now that the British West

Indian black population are invested with all the rights of British freemen, the formation of a native West Indian army might be a consideration well worthy the attention of our Government. A black force, consisting of several thousand picked men, should be embodied, have their moral sense and intellect properly educated, be trained to military tactics, and thus prepared, in case of emergency, to act as disciplinarians and leaders of the people of their colour in the United States. This measure is the more expedient as having a double philanthropic tendency. It would have a considerable influence in maintaining our present friendly relations with our American white brothers (with whom, in order that liberty and human improvement may continue to progress, it is exceedingly desirable that friendly relations should exist), and might also have the effect of bringing speedily about a judicious act of Congress manumitting several millions of our American black brethren. It is pretty certain that ere long the whole of this eastern low region will be possessed by a free black population, and the sooner this takes place the better. The black population existing in the neighbouring mountain region to the west, after being manumitted, should also be encouraged to remove to this division. The affairs of the United States' Union will never be in a wholesome condition, till several black Representatives from these low regions are seated in the House of Representatives at Washington. This is a more plausible scheme,—would form a better Liberia, than the African Liberia.

It, nevertheless, but ill becomes the home British to say much about the United States' slavery, or, indeed, about any slavery. The causes which operate to promote or prevent direct slavery have never, that I am aware of, been clearly pointed out. Slaves (direct) are found only where land is cheap. When the land, from its redundancy in proportion to population, as in America, is of little or no value, the whole property consists of labour, or the produce of labour, and the covetous man not being able to satisfy his lust for riches by the produce of his own labour, has no other way of gratifying it but by obtaining possession of the persons of his fellow-men, and compelling them to labour the otherwise unprofitable ground for his emolument ; and this he finds profitable, because the produce of labour, even of slave-labour, in this favourable field for production, is more than sufficient to support his slaves as reproductive labouring stock, or to purchase new ones should they wear out. On the reverse, slaves (direct) are not found when the land has been all occupied, and has reached any considerable value or rental. Wherever this has taken place, and population has become dense, hired or piece labour becomes more profitable than slave-labour, and drives it from the field. The reason of this is obvious : man in a state of comparative liberty of action, has more of mental energy to stimulate and carry on his corporeal exertions, and to direct them to more profitable effect, than when under direct slavery, while at the same time he can be maintained at less cost as a reproductive animal when in semblance free. Besides, when the land has been all taken up, and has come into the hands of a small number of the community, these, from being the possessors of property, generally obtain the governing power, and form a land aristocracy class. They proceed to legislate and levy taxation in the most partial and unjust manner, to forward their own selfish interests, they secure the land property to themselves and their posterity, and, by taking advantage of the poverty and necessity for food of the labouring population, make out to obtain a more complete command over their labour, and more power to render them subservient to their pleasure and luxury, than if the working population were slaves direct.

In this way, by means of a food-monopoly, for the emolument of the heir or eldest male of the family, and excessive taxation upon the necessaries of the working people for the support of the younger branches, our governing land aristocracy have done every thing in their power to bring the working population to a complete state of *indirect* slavery, the only slavery which, from the nature of things in Britain, is profitable or practicable, and they have succeeded,—the destitution and hollow cheek of wife and children being a more powerful

incentive to severe toil than the whip of the hippopotamus hide. A sufficient emigration would help to reform this.

The Mississippi Basin.

This vast extent of very fertile territory, in which rivers navigable for 3000 miles upward from the ocean hold their course, extends from the Lakes of Canada on the north, to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and from the highlands of the Alleghany and Cumberland ranges on the east, to the Rocky Mountains far to the westward.

The greatest labour of Hercules, the noblest deeds recorded of man in ancient or modern history, sink to nought when compared to the doings of Brother Jonathan. It was but as yesterday when he first stood on the highest summit of the Alleghany range, and, gazing down upon the illimitable western wilderness, boldly resolved to people the whole extent ; and already cities, and towns, and villages, and innumerable clearances, are scattered over nearly a million of square miles. True to his purpose, Jonathan is progressing in a ratio of increase never before equalled, and, in the course of a century at the present increment, this great and most fertile field for the extension of the human race will contain a progeny exceeding the whole of the population of Europe.

This region, upon a closer inspection, presents traces of a former population of considerable amount, and, as some facts would seem to indicate, of considerable civilization. It is not easy to account for the extinction or displacement of a numerous population of a country so fertile, and comparatively so temperate. The ancient records of the Mexican Empire, as well as the old world history of mankind, however, speak of the migrations of whole communities, for which no sufficient reason is given, or can well be traced, and the population may have moved to the Mexican territory, only a few stragglers remaining, to degenerate into roaming savages. It is also not impossible that some destructive pestilence, such as has lately swept off entire tribes of the red race in the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains, may have passed over this immense valley, leaving only a few scattered individuals, scarcely able to contend for existence with the other numerous types of animal and vegetable life struggling for occupancy in this teeming field.

This great river-land rises almost imperceptibly from the level of the Mexican Gulf at New Orleans, to the neighbourhood of the Canadian Lakes, where it attains an elevation of nearly 600 feet above the sea. It is comparatively a level country, with only gentle undulations, and, in some places to the westward, with rounded gravel hillocks, relieving the uniformity. A great portion of it, like Upper Canada, consists of limestone strata, covered with a pretty thick layer of diluvium, constituting a fertile and manageable soil. The eastern half was fifty years ago a continued forest of magnificent hard-wood trees ; but in which numerous clearances have now been effected by the industry of the settler, and the demand for timber-fuel to the numerous steamers. To the west, beyond the confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri, a considerable portion of the country consists of prairies, extensive fields covered with tall rough grasses, and skirted by portions of forest. The absence of trees in these extensive meads has been variously accounted for, some attributing it to conflagrations (the most probable cause), some to the dryness of the climate. It is also not impossible that the gramineæ, though a comparatively smaller order of plants, may have greater power of occupancy than the trees in this locality,—the rank grass smothering the annual shoot rising from the forest-tree seed. These beautiful prairies, frequently wider than the eye can reach across, afford most excellent stations for the settlers who migrate thus far westward. They locate themselves in a circular ring around the margin of these flowery grassy plains, where the forest-belt affords plenty of timber for houses, enclosures, and fuel ; they cultivate the nearer portion of the prairie, where not a stone is to be found, and nothing interferes with the

ploughshare but the strong roots of the grassy sward ; and they drive their herds to pasture a little farther into the interior of what appears like a verdant sea. The pastoral life is far more desirable here than in British America ; the winter being only about one-half as long as in the maritime provinces of the St Lawrence, or even in Upper Canada, while the Herculean labour of removing the dense forest which covers nearly the whole of America to the eastward, is not required. Immense herds of wild cattle once fed upon these pastures, but they, like the red Indian, have retired westward, before the fire-armed European, and are only now to be found towards the base, and amidst the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains. This fine prairial country, were measures taken to destroy the wild dogs or wolves, might be rendered very productive of wool, the export of which, down to New Orleans, would be easily accomplished.

The great distinguishing features of the Mississippi Basin, are the vast abundance of fine level land, capable of supporting a very dense population, and the immense system of rivers ramifying through it, a number of the tributaries of the Mississippi flowing a distance of 1000 miles before they join the grand stream, and being conveniently navigable for nearly their whole course by steam vessels.

The ease of communication, however, and of transit by the system of rivers, has the effect to scatter the settlers in all directions, so much so, as to present a great impediment to the advantageous division of labour, and use of combined labour, and thus to retard the progress of improvement, although this condition of man, no doubt, has a very favourable effect to increase his acuteness and general capacity. Had the system of river-communication been awaiting, it is probable, that the new settlements in this comparatively level fertile territory, would now be conducted by carrying forward railways, and settling within a practicable distance of the lines, in a more systematic, and, perhaps, on the whole, more advantageous manner for the speedy production of wealth, than by the rivers. As it is, the rivers are the highways,—the lines of traffic,—the landmarks,—the connecting medium with the world of civilization,—the system of nerves by which the electric currents of opinion and social sympathy, are transmitted from the more vital parts to the extremities. In North America, a strong and constant tide of emigration is setting westward. There is a fascination in the wilderness. The bold young American of the North-Eastern States, chooses a helpmate, collects some clothing, takes up his rifle and hatchet, and, trusting entirely to his own prowess, marches off in the direction of the setting sun. He crosses the Blue Mountains, commits himself and mate to the rivers, and penetrates more than a thousand miles into the heart of the western wilderness. There is something highly exciting and grateful to youthful daring and independence, in travelling onward in search of a future home, and having found some sweet encouraging spot in the bosom of the wilderness, in rearing every thing by one's own handiwork.

The superior means of communication in this region, and the absence of natural and artificial barriers, as it is being occupied, with the exception of the slave population southward, by one race speaking one language, dispose it for becoming the seat of one very great empire, perhaps exceeding the Chinese in population ; while, from the superior energy of the race, and higher civilization, it will be incomparably superior to the Chinese in national influence, and in power over the future destinies of man.

All this low flat country is defective in salubrity, the whole of the Mississippi Basin being tainted with miasm atmosphere. Fever and ague, and in the fall, dangerous remittents, are more or less common over all the region, increasing in malignity as we get lower down in the system of the rivers, till at New Orleans, “ the wet grave,” we reach the *ne plus ultra* of insalubrity. This is exceedingly unfortunate, as New Orleans is fitted by position for being the emporium of North America. It is said, that six hundred Irish labourers migrate down the

Ohio and Mississippi every season, attracted downward by the wages rising, and the rum falling in price as they descend, till they reach New Orleans, where the arrivals of last season are almost to a man cut off every fall by the yellow fever. The Banks of the beautiful Ohio, by the French called, *par excellence*, “ La Belle Rivière,” are perhaps the most salubrious of all this region, especially higher up eastward, towards Pittsburgh. It is not easy to determine what effect the nearly entire removal of the forest might have upon the climate. It would, in all probability, render it drier, [3] and in some degree more salubrious ; but as the great cause of the insalubrity is the annual flooding of the alluvial grounds, along the river-sides, and as the rivers and river inundations are on so vast a scale, and the river-beds gradually changing, hither and thither, through the alluvial grounds, liable to be flooded, so that the labour of man cannot, by forming embankments, have much effect in circumscribing the overflowings of the rivers, a complete removal of the malaria cannot be expected.

This country affords a field, at least sufficiently extensive, for British emigrants ; but from the fever, and ague character of the territory, particularly to the south and west,—the whole of the regions of the Mississippi Proper, of the Wabash, Missouri, and Arkansas, the British emigrant, more especially the agriculturist, ought to prefer the Alleghany highlands. In some of the towns on the Ohio, artisans, who are not so much exposed to the exhalations from the soil as agriculturists, may find a favourable field.

Mexico.

The Mexican empire, extending from 15° to $41\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north latitude, has the greater portion of its territory within the temperate zone. It consists chiefly of a central highland country, or table-land (which may be considered a prolongation of the Andes). A great portion of this table-land is elevated from five to ten thousand feet above the sea level, intersected in some places with river-ravines of great depth, and having a number of mountain ranges and peaks rising from it to considerably greater elevation, some of them covered with perpetual snow, and the highest exceeding 17,000 feet of altitude. This high table-land, declining very gradually from the Vale of Mexico, latitude 19° , to Santa-Fé, latitude 37° , is skirted on the east by a rich flat sea-bord, like the Atlantic sea-bord of the Southern United States, apparently the sea bed at some former period ; while, on the western side, the highlands begin to rise immediately from the Pacific. The whole sea-coast, east and west, especially the portion within the tropics, is unhealthy, and this continues, till, by travelling inward, you leave the common tropical vegetation, and, gaining an elevation of about 3000 feet, reach the region of Oak. Along the Mexican Gulf, and from Vera-Cruz to the Texas, the cholera morbus is the most fatal distemper, while on the Western, or Pacific side, the yellow fever is nearly equally destructive ; and it is only in the winter and spring, when these destroyers seem to hibernate, that Europeans ought to attempt to make their exit from, or entrance into, the comparatively healthy interior. The Eastern sea-bord is very defective in regard to harbours, the rivers having dangerous bars, and the sea being shallow for some distance from land, as it generally is on all low coasts. This deficiency of good harbours is the more to be regretted, as, from the insalubrity of the climate, it will be very difficult to remedy the defect by the formation of artificial harbours. The most of the low country is, however, fertile, and suited for raising sugar, and other tropical produce, so as to attract agricultural settlers, or rather colonists ; and the advantages of a situation which, notwithstanding the deficiency of good harbours, commands the trade of the whole of Mexico, through which the vast wealth derived from the very rich mines of the interior must pass outward, and all the European manufactures in return pass inward, is also a strong inducement to commercial settlers.

Leaving out the insalubrity of the climate of the sea-bord, Mexico presents a combination of advantages unique in character. The position, a long neck of land joining two great continents, and dividing the two great oceans, thus holding in the right hand the commerce of

the East of Asia, and in the left, the commerce of Europe ; the possession of incomparably the richest and most workable mines of the precious metals (especially silver) that are known in the world ; and the being capable of raising, within itself, all kinds of tropical produce in the low hot regions, and all the valuable grain, and vine and orchard produce of temperate climates in the delightful more elevated country, where, in some places, they enjoy a perpetual spring, combine to render it an extremely tempting Emigration Field. It is only, however, at moderate elevations that the cereal plants and fruits appear in great luxuriance and perfection. At very high elevations, though the temperature be sufficient, the rarity of the atmosphere comes to affect their growth, they are comparatively weak and stunted, and, as well as the animals, seem to languish from the insufficient density of the element in which the functions of life are carried on.

Mexico, notwithstanding its great natural advantages, is not at present very prosperous. The population are of a mixed description, the descendants of Spaniards, and Indians and Negroes, with all the intermediates ; and since the establishment of independence, things have not settled down properly. There is a deficiency of knowledge and political judgment, and combinable power. The population are not sufficiently enlightened for self-government, and would require a superior class to act as leaders,—something resembling our feudal system. The priesthood serve in some degree to supply the defect, and to bind society together ; but they are so bent upon their own mischievous dogmas and institutions,—upon keeping up their idle saint-day observances, their charity bequeathments and monastic religious establishments, that they greatly repress the industry of the country, inducing the people to lose their time in superstitious mummeries, and to squander their means in feeding profligate mendicants. Public opinion, and the rules of society, being thus founded upon false or mistaken principles, are also very deficient as a moral regulating power. The government is, in consequence, defective in organization and strength, and not very stable, and property and life comparatively insecure. The northern parts enjoy a temperate climate, but they are almost a wilderness, subject to the inroads of the wild roving Indians, and in some places under Indian sovereignty. In the western parts, towards the Gulf of California, affairs are very unsettled ; this is the more to be regretted, as these regions, particularly the province of Senora, are extremely rich in silver, and the climate, especially to the northward, favourable to Europeans.

The portion of Mexico, which at present most concerns the British emigrant, and indeed the British nation, is the province immediately adjacent to Louisiana, and extending south-west, towards the Rio Bravo, named the Texas. A part of this province has recently been overwhelmed by an inundation of the United States' people (merely a private affair, however, and not a government invasion, for which the authorities of that country can in any way be considered accountable), and all the power which the Mexican empire has been able to exert, has been baffled, in attempting to drive back the invading legions of settlers.

Raising colonial produce (better designated tropical produce), from the great demand in the European and North American markets, has hitherto been a far more profitable occupation than raising the agricultural produce of temperate countries. And the cause of this friendly visit, or love-intrusion of Brother Jonathan, is the adaptation of the Texas territory for raising tropical produce, with the superiority of the climate to that of Louisiana, the lower portion of which is the only part of the United States well suited for raising of this kind of produce, but which, from New Orleans upward, for at least five hundred miles, is a pestiferous (well named) “ Dismal swamp.”

Another cause of the spirited progress of Jonathan is, that by the Mexican law no slavery can exist within the empire, while in the Texas territory it is by slave-labour only that tropical produce is to be raised in any considerable quantity, and wealth amassed. The United States'

people, with a considerable command of slaves, have, therefore, a stronger motive for possessing this soil, productive under slave-labour, and for expelling the Mexican government ; and even the old Mexican proprietors, where the ground has been appropriated, finding they can make most of their property under Jonathan liberty,—preferring the liberty to have slaves, to the slaves having liberty, make no strenuous effort in support of their own government.

Seeing that the contest in the Texas resolves itself into the question of slavery and no slavery, and considering the vast importance, politically, of the possession of that province, which is calculated to command the Eastern trade of Mexico, and, in all probability, to determine the possession of Mexico itself, it is surely a high object of British policy to prevent a slave-driving banditti from plundering our natural ally of Mexico, of her most valuable province.

It is even a duty incumbent on the British Government towards our West Indian planters, now that these are no longer slave-drivers themselves, to see that a slave-state does not spring up in the vicinity, which, by the unfair advantage of compulsory labour, would ruin the success of our free labour system. Should some steps not be immediately taken, the probability is, that a considerable portion of the twenty millions given by the nation to redeem our slaves, will go to the Texas, and the neighbouring low country southward to Vera Cruz, to found new slave-States, and perpetuate slavery, and, at the same time, to an immense extent to strengthen a rival's power.

Ireland is now teeming with a very numerous, and, as things are regulated, a greatly over-abundant population, so situated, that a deficient crop is followed with a pestilent typhus, which carries off vast numbers, a consequence of the extreme reduction of bodily vigour, caused by starvation. And from the rapid increase of population now going on, and the comparative abundant crops of late years, the effects of a scanty crop are the more to be dreaded. The Texas province, especially in the interior valleys, a few days' journey up the beautiful rivers, where a country, as healthy as Upper Canada, abounding in pasture, and superior in productiveness, in beauty, and in every way more advantageous for a settler, is lying almost desolate, would be a most desirable emigration-field for our poor and destitute fellow-subjects. The emigration of a million of Irish population, accompanied and directed by their priesthood, who, from the circumstances under which they have been placed, are generally an indefatigably humane body of men, and in some respects necessary to the direction and government of their trusting flocks, would be a very great relief to the Irish remaining at home ; and the emigrants, under proper direction, would, after a few years of exertion, find themselves comparatively in an earthly paradise. [4] There is no doubt that the government of Mexico would be ready to give every possible encouragement to an auxiliary British importation of subjects.

From the Irish being generally of the Roman Catholic persuasion, the same as the Mexicans, the amalgamation would take place readily, and the Mexican government, supported by British influence and connection, would obtain strength and stability to enforce obedience to the laws in her own territories, and to command a respectful and just forbearance on the part of foreign powers. Considered in relation to British interests, the stability of affairs, and consequent prosperity of Mexico, would be of the greatest advantage to British industry, as Mexico, on account of her vast internal riches, is one of the very best customers for British manufactures; and our protective connection would necessarily place the trade on the most favourable footing. A sufficiently strong government would also be of incalculable advantage to the British capitalists, who have invested so much money in the Mexican mines. Besides, an alliance offensive and defensive with Mexico, would have the certain effect to render the British influence permanent in the West Indies.

The whole affair resolves itself into this, are the United States to be allowed to seize upon Mexico, and to deprive Britain of her West Indian empire ? This is even more likely to take place, than the dreaded conquest of the East Indies by Russia. The United States and Russia are clearly aiming at these two objects ; and it for us to prevent them, by taking precautionary measures in time.

- [1] It is one of the evils of confederated and dependent Governments, that they sometimes keep up an extent of tyranny and misery which could never exist but by powerful extraneous influence. We have had illustrations of this in our West Indian colonies, where a system of slavery,—extreme tyranny and misery,—has been supported by means of a strong British military force ; a system which the population of Britain never would have endured themselves, nor would the colonial inhabitants have endured it, but for the coercive British power. We find another illustration of the mischievous effects of extraneous power in Ireland, where a condition of things the most galling to the great body of the population, and the most unfavourable to improvement and civilization, has been kept up—a state of things so adverse to human enjoyment, that nothing approaching to it would have been tolerated an hour, or could ever have come to exist, but for the coercive influence of a neighbouring more powerful nation.
- [2] Agricultural labour, the most healthy occupation in healthy countries, is perhaps the most unhealthy of all occupations in these unwholesome regions. Brought to high perspiration from his exertions under a very hot sun, and in this state, or in the still more susceptible state, after the ensuing chill, exposed to the exhalations from the soil, the field labourer of the white race is almost certain to fall a victim. If the white race can with difficulty maintain existence as masters or superintendents, subsisting by the labour of others, it is not to be expected that they could maintain existence if obliged to labour for their own subsistence.
- [3] In Prussia, from the increase of population, and great improvements of the country of late years, much of the country has been stripped of its forest cover ; the consequence is, that the fall of rain has been considerably diminished, and the evaporation increased ; and the rivers, which used to continue streams of considerable depth all the year round, are now nearly dried up during the summer months. This has interfered to a considerable extent with the internal navigation, and in districts of dry sandy soil is regarded with considerable apprehension. The Elbe has, it is said, fallen several feet.
- [4] The removal of a great number of the Irish population is absolutely necessary. If something extensive in this way be not done, a convulsion may be expected.

Emigration fields. North America, the Cape, Australia, and New Zealand ; describing these countries, and giving a comparative view of the advantages they present to British settlers (1839)

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