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SPANISH AMERICA.—M. DE PRADT.

The latest intelligence which we have received from South America acquaints us with the fact, that General Bolivar, with the independent forces under his command, had made himself master of the town of Angostura, on the banks of the river Orinoco. It is also added, that the patriot admiral Brion had been obliged to depart from the Island of Margarita, and that his intention was to steer for a place of rendezvous in the vicinity of Bolivar's new position.

If this account be true—and we have no reason at present to doubt it—it tends to prove, in the absence of more particular information, that the independent party have been compelled to evacuate the provinces of Santa Martha, Venezuela, and Cumana, and to take refuge in Spanish Guiana. This would seem to augur ill for the cause of South American independence upon the Atlantic coast: but the scene of revolution is so extensive, that insurrection may be suppressed in one quarter and still prevail in another.

A writer has recently appeared, who has thrown considerable light upon the question now depending between the Spaniards of America and those of Europe: He is a Frenchman, of the name of De Pradt, and he discusses the subject with unusual boldness and candor; which every one will allow who has read his arguments, and are informed that he belongs to the order of Priests and is a Bourbon Royalist. This author reasons thus:

Spanish America must, sooner or later, be independent: it is in the order of nature that she should be so. The principles of separation are too deeply implanted in the minds of the Americans ever to be eradicated. They may be defeated in their object now; but they will, from time to time, renew the attempt, and finally they must succeed. The Spaniards of Europe are slow and awkward in fitting out maritime expeditions; besides, they want pecuniary means: these means they can chiefly derive only from America, and, in consequence of the state of revolution there, they are mainly withheld. The population of Spanish America is superior to that of Old Spain. It is as fifteen are to eleven. It has the advantage of being habituated to the climate, which is destructive of the European Spaniards. The soldiers of Old Spain, who are sent to combat the revolutionists, will either speedily find their graves, or they will be won over to the cause of independence by largesses and the many advantages with

which the independents have it in their power to allure them. The inhabitants of Spanish America are no longer mere Indians: they are, in a great measure, of the genuine Iberian blood. It is not, with that part of the globe, at this day, as it was in the times of Cortes and Pizarro. In America they inherit the spirit, and are, in a certain degree, acquainted with the arts and the sciences of Europe. The flame of insurrection is universal: subdue it in one province, it will still exist in another, and in places where it is extinct it will be rekindled from the fires which continue to blaze in other parts. Could Spain reconquer her colonies, she could not retain them in subjection without guarding them by military force in every quarter: and how can she furnish troops sufficiently numerous for such a purpose? Should she try the experiment, she will depopulate herself once more, as she did at the period of her first settlements in the western hemisphere.* It is for the interest of the United States and of Brasil that the whole continent of America should be independent of Europe: the prosperity of those two sections of America will perpetually excite the Spanish colonies to new efforts to liberate themselves from the yoke of their mother country. The desire for independence is strengthened by motives of self-interest; for, under the dominion of Spain, America is excluded from trading with the rest of the world; whereas, in a state of independence, she would have a free commercial intercourse with all nations. If Spain continues the war against the Patriots, both royalty and the Catholic religion will be put in jeopardy. The priests are generally the friends of arbitrary power; they favor the cause of Old Spain to the detriment of the colonists, and the Americans will be glad to get rid of them and to establish a more liberal system of Christian worship. The Spanish Americans will, from the oppressions which they have experienced under a monarchy, be naturally inclined to republicanism; and if they should prosper under that form of government, whilst the subjects of European sovereigns are oppressed and rendered miserable under the forms of royalty,

* It is a remarkable fact in statistical history, that, whilst France and England count 150 souls to the square mile, Spain reckons only 75. Writers who have investigated the subject have been puzzled to account for this difference: some have attributed it to the expulsion of the Moors; some to the bigotry and tyranny of the Spanish government; others to the terror inspired by the Inquisition; and De Pradt ascribes it to the great numbers of Spaniards drawn off to colonize America. It may, perhaps, have been a combination of all these causes that produced a deficiency in the population of Spain.

on their part, in every thing that could intoxicate their senses, or gratify their vanity. Succeeding demagogues followed the example set by Pericles—an inundation of luxury was poured in upon the country, and the capability of maintaining its freedom and independence vanished. A VICIOUS PEOPLE NEVER CAN BE FREE—THEIR PASSIONS FORCE THEIR FETTERS.

What a spectacle! A democracy distinguished for genius, for valor, for power, for the growth of science, for the cultivation of eloquence and poetry, for munificent encouragement of the fine arts, and above all for the ardent love of liberty; the nurse of soldiers and statesmen—the prolific mother of heroes—the heroes of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Mycale—the cradle of philosophy and philosophers—of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon—in one comprehensive word, ATHENS, reduced merely by the blighting hand of luxury, to the lowest debasement of which man or nations are susceptible—its citizens at last sunk to the degradation of being fed at the public expense, like the modern Lazaroni of Naples; nay worse, if worse can be imagined—so utterly depraved and emasculated, as to accept amusement as an alms, and to become objects of a fund established by the influence of their demagogues, for affording them gratuitous admission to the theatres!!

What was the consequence? out of this universal laxity and a daily increasing appetite for gross debauchery, a more universal profligacy, and a more undisguised practice of corruption arose. To all sensual men, but more particularly to vulgarity thoroughly sensualized, the love of country is nothing when opposed by present gratification.—Every hand in Athens was open for a bribe, and nothing was wanting to the complete extinction of the republic, but an ambitious, bold, and cunning foreign enemy; and him they soon found in Philip of Macedon. Each succeeding day they became more devotedly the brutalized tools of their favorite demagogues, while those demagogues were, all the time, the subservient agents of Philip. In vain Demosthenes raised his mighty eloquence to resist the corruption that prevailed, to rouse the Athenians to a sense of their danger, and to expose the pernicious machinations of the Macedonian tyrant—his eloquence, even *his*, was no match for the sensuality of that fallen people. Vitiated by the practice of luxury, beyond the possibility of cure; a dinner was more important in their eyes, than Athens—a theatrical spectacle or a song, more precious than liberty; and, so far from being able to save his country, Demosthenes could only by swallowing poison, save himself from the ignominy of being betrayed by his ungrateful countrymen to perpetual imprisonment or death—in short, from the disgrace of fall-

ing into the hands of Philip, who by the battle of Charonea, decisively extinguished the liberties of Athens, and the independence of all Greece.

This is a most afflicting picture, but it is a correct one. To Americans it presents an awful lesson, and ought to be kept continually in their view. Could the whole be compressed into one short, comprehensive sentence; that sentence ought to be inscribed in large letters at the entrance of every city, town, and village in the United States. Unhappy, ill-fated Greece, which at this moment, after a lapse of two thousand years, remains a monument of the vengeance of Heaven upon national luxury. For I do believe that if the whole globe were measured over, step by step, there could not be found upon it one spot where civilization had ever prevailed, inhabited by so miserable, forlorn, and abject a race as that once most favored portion of the earth.

My next will contain a no less impressive picture of the fatal effects of luxury upon that stupendous power, the Roman republic.

LUCILIUS.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

FROM THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL.

Philadelphia, June 16, 1817.

Messrs. M'Corkle & Son :

GENTLEMEN.—Several applications having been recently made to me to state the errors which I had observed, and often mentioned, in the publications of the names of the members of the Continental Congress, who declared in favour of the Independence of the United States, on the 4th of July, 1776—I have not, at present, sufficient health and leisure to reply severally to each application. There can be but one correct statement of facts: one public statement, therefore, through the press will serve the purpose of the gentlemen who have made the request, and may also give satisfaction to the minds of others, who have turned their thoughts upon the subject. If I am correct in my statement, it may be of use to future historians: if not, my errors can be readily corrected. I wish, therefore, by means of your paper, to make the following statement of the facts, within my knowledge, relative to the subject of enquiry :

On Monday, the 1st day of July, 1776, the arguments in Congress, for and against the Declaration of Independence, having been exhausted, and the measure fully considered, the Congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole; the question was put by the chairman, and all the States voted in the affirmative, except Pennsylvania, which was in the negative, and Delaware, which was equally divided. Pennsylvania, at that time, had seven members, viz. John Morton, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson, John Dickinson, Robert Morris, Thomas Willing, and Charles Humphreys. All were present on the 1st of July, and the three first named voted for the Declaration of Independence, the remaining four against it. The state of Delaware had three members, Caesar Rodney, George Read and myself. George Read and I were present. I voted for it, George Read against it. When the president resigned

his chair, the chairman of the committee of the whole made his report, which was not acted upon until Thursday, the 4th of July. In the mean time I had written to press the attendance of Caesar Rodney, the third delegate from Delaware, who appeared early on that day at the state-house, in his place. When the Congress assembled, the question was put on the report of the committee of the whole, and approved by every State. Of the members from Pennsylvania, the three first, as before, voted in the affirmative and the two last in the negative. John Dickinson and Robert Morris were not present, and did not take their seats on that day. Caesar Rodney, for the state of Delaware, voted with me in the affirmative, and George Read in the negative.

Some months after this, I saw printed publications of the names of those gentlemen who had, as it was said, voted for the Declaration of Independence, and observed that my own name was omitted. I was not a little surprised at, nor could I account for the omission; because I knew that on the 24th of June preceding, the deputies from the committees of Pennsylvania, assembled in provincial conference, held at the Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, which had met on the 18th, & chosen me their president, had unanimously declared their willingness to concur in a vote of the Congress, declaring the United Colonies free and independent states, and had ordered their declaration to be signed, and their president to deliver it into Congress, which accordingly I did the day following: I knew also, that a regiment of associates, of which I was colonel, had, at the end of May before, unanimously made the same declaration. These circumstances were mentioned at the time to gentlemen of my acquaintance. The error remained uncorrected till the year 1781, when I was appointed to publish the laws of Pennsylvania, to which I prefixed the Declaration of Independence, and inserted my own name, with the names of my colleagues. Afterwards, in 1797, when the late A. J. Dallas, Esq. then Secretary of the Commonwealth was appointed to publish an edition of the laws, on comparing the names published as subscribed to the Declaration of Independence, he observed a variance, and the omission, in some publications, of the name of Thomas McKean; having procured a certificate from the Secretary of State, that the name of Thomas McKean was affixed in his own handwriting to the original Declaration of Independence, though omitted in the journals of Congress, Mr. Dallas then requested an explanation of this circumstance from me, and from my answer to this application, the following extracts were taken and published by Mr. Dallas in the appendix to the first volume of his edition of the laws:

"For several years past I have been taught to think less unfavorably of scepticism than formerly. So many things have been misrepresented, misstated, and erroneously printed (with seeming authenticity) under my own eyes, as in my opinion to render those who doubt of every thing, not altogether inexcusable. The publication of the declaration of independence on the fourth day of July, 1776, as printed in the journals of Congress, vol. 2, p. 242, &c. and also in the acts of most public bodies, since, so far as respects the names of the delegates or deputies who made that declaration, has led to the above reflection. By the printed publications referred to, it would appear as if the fifty-five gentlemen whose names are

there printed, and none other, were on that day personally present in Congress, and assenting to the declaration; whereas the truth is otherwise. The following gentlemen were not members on the fourth of July 1776, namely, Mathew Thornton, Benjamin Rush, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, and George Ross, Esquires. The five last named were not chosen delegates until the twentieth of that month; the first, not until the twelfth day of September following, nor did he take his seat in Congress until the fourth of November, which was four months after. The journals of Congress, vol. 2d, pages 277, 442, as well as those of the assembly of the state of Pennsylvania, page 53, and of the general assembly of New-Hampshire, establish these facts. Although the six gentlemen named had been very active in the American cause, and some of them, to my own knowledge warmly in favor of its independence, previous to the day on which it was declared, yet I personally know that none of them were in Congress on that day.

"Modesty should not rob any man of his just honor, when, by that honor, his modesty cannot be offended. My name is not in the printed journals of Congress, as a party to the declaration of independence, and this, like an error in the first concoction, has vitiated most of the subsequent publications, and yet the fact is, that I was then a member of Congress, from the state of Delaware, was personally present in Congress, and voted in favor of independence on the fourth day of July, 1776, and signed the declaration after it had been engrossed on parchment, where my name, in my own hand writing, still appears. Henry Wisner, of the state of New York, was also in Congress, and voted for independence.

"I do not know how the misstatement in the printed journals has happened." The manuscript *public* journal, has no names annexed to the declaration of independence, nor has the *secret* journal; but it appears by the latter, that on the nineteenth day of July, 1776, the Congress, directed that it should be engrossed on parchment, and signed by *every member*, and that it was so produced on the second of August and signed. This is interlined in the secret journal, in the hand writing of Charles Thompson, Esq. the secretary. The present secretary of state of the United States, and myself, have lately inspected the journals, and seen this. The journal was first printed by Mr. John Dunlap, in 1778, and, probably, copies with the names then signed to it were printed in August, 1776, and that Mr. Dunlap printed the names from one of them."

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. M'KEAN.

SOUTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

We have been politely furnished by a gentleman who arrived in the Bay in the Buenos Ayrean brig *Patriota*, (says the Baltimore American) with the following interesting information relative to the affairs in South America:

"On 1st of June inst. a Spanish squadron passed the Island of Margareta, consisting of 20 sail and 2500 men, under the Bourbon Flag, and anchored in Cumana, after plundering several fishing boats and pressing a number of fishermen and committing numerous other depredations against the citizens; by the last account they had not disembarked, as they were in an unhealthy state, and