

Translation 1815

~~Answer of a South American to a Gentleman of his Island~~
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Kingston 6th September 1815

Dear Sir,

I hasten to reply to



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I have now the honor to answer to your letter of the 29th ultimo which you did me the honor to direct to me, and which I received with the greatest satisfaction.

I feel most ^{very} interested in the interest you have been good enough to take in the fate of my country, by the concern you express for the misfortunes with which ^{it} has been oppressed by ^{its} destroyers the Spaniards, from the period of ^{its} discovery, until the present day. ~~I feel not that I can~~ ^{put} the ^{substances} with which you put to me these pressing questions, relative to the most important events that can occur in the history of any nation: but I am placed in a state of embarrassment, by a struggle, between my desire to ^{meet} your good opinion of me, and an apprehension that I may fail in that desire, as much from the want of necessary documents, and books, as from the ^{limited} knowledge I possess of a country so immense, ^{diversified} and unknown as America.

It is in my opinion impossible to answer ^{all the} ^{directed to me} questions. Even Baron Humboldt himself, with his ^{universal} ^{knowledge} of ^{theoretical} as well as practical, could scarcely reply to them with exactness; for although it may be admitted that some portion of the statistical account and certain occurrences of the revolution are known, I make bold to assure you that the ^{greatest part is} ⁱⁿ ^{obscurity} ^{total} ^{and} ^{consequently} none but the most

imperfect conjectures can be formed of them, and more particularly, as to what may be the future fate and ^{prospects} ^{of} the Americans; ^{these} ^{nations}, on account of ^{its} ^{physical} ^{peculiarities}, the vicissitudes of war, and the line of ^{its} ^{own} ^{and} ^{European} ^{policy}, affords in a double degree the prospect of ^{these} ^{combinations}, which History records of nations in general.

No. 3 Considering myself bound to give every attention to your much esteemed favor, on account of the very particular and philanthropic views which it contemplates, I have been

This view represents a military scene, two thousand leagues in length, and in the broadest part, nine hundred leagues in breadth, in which seven millions of ^{Americans} human creatures are either defending their rights, or ^{standing} ~~bowing~~ under the oppression of the Spanish nation, a nation which, formerly possessed the most extensive empire in the universe, but whose government is now not only too important to rule the new world, but insufficient to maintain itself in ^{old} ~~old~~. And will it be permitted by Europe, a part of the Earth most civilized, commercial, and friendly to liberty, that ^{old} ~~old~~ ^{Spain} should lay waste and desolate the most beautiful portion of the globe? What! Is Europe ^{she calls} ~~deaf to~~ ^{the clamour of her} ~~her own~~ interest? Has she not eyes to observe justice? Has she become lost to all sense of feeling? The more I reflect on these questions, the more am I confounded; I begin almost to think, that it is her wish, to annihilate America, but that is impossible, as all Europe is ^{not} ~~not~~ belonging to Spain. What madness it is for our enemy to suppose that we are to be re-conquered without a navy, without money, ^{without} ~~without~~ soldiers? As to her army, it is ^{barely} ~~scarcely~~ sufficient to keep her own subjects in ^{a peace} ~~obedience~~, and to defend her from her neighbours. Besides, can a nation like Spain, without either manufactures, territorial productions, arts, ^{sciences,} ~~sciences,~~ or even policy, can she monopolize to herself the exclusive trade of one half the world? But, supposing she should succeed in this rash undertaking; may more, supposing she could bring about a reconciliation: Would not our posterity, although united with that of the re-conquering Europeans, in twenty years hence ^{form} ~~form~~ that grand and patriotic designs which we are now contending for?

I am decidedly of opinion that Europe would confer a great benefit on Spain, were she to dissuade her from her obstinate ~~tomorrow~~ ~~in it~~ ~~would~~ at least spare her the expensiveness of her revenue, and prevent the effusion of blood. She might, she might direct her attention to more laudable and proper ^{pursuits} ~~pursuits~~, and might ground her prosperity and power on more durable foundations than those of uncertain conquests, precarious commerce, and violent evolutions, with a people distant, unfriendly and powerful. Europe herself should on a principle of wisdom and policy, have prepared & carried into effect the grand project of American independence, not merely because the "balance" of ^{the world} ~~power~~ requires it, but because it would have been the most legal and



increased
D. 1790

* ^{establishment}

certain method of obtaining for herself ultramarine ~~for~~ for her commerce. It is Europe, from not being agitated with the contending emotions of vengeance, ambition, and greediness, which distinguishes Spain, that was ^{by} duly authorized, by every principle of equity, to explain to her, her true interests. —

As all writers who have treated of this subject agree in this Opinion, we naturally expected that all enlightened nations would have pressed forward to assist us in obtaining those advantages, which would have been mutually beneficial to both Hemispheres.

But alas, how deceived have we been in our expectations! For not only the Europeans, but even our north American brethren, have looked on, indifferent spectators of this great conflict; a conflict, which from the purity of its motives, and the grand result which it contemplates, is the most important that has been contended for, either in ancient or modern times, for how far can the transcendence of liberty be calculated in ^{western} the Hemisphere of ~~Spain~~ ~~Spain~~. The torpidity with which, as you say, Bonaparte entrapped Charles 4th, and Ferdinand 7th, Kings of that nation, which three ages ago treacherously imprisoned the American monarchy, is a conclusive ^{instance} ~~proof~~ of the Divine "retribution", and at the same time a proof, that as Heaven sustains "the just Cause of the Colonists, God will grant us our independence."

From this it would appear, that you allude to Motecuhuma, King of Mexico, who was taken prisoner by Cortes, and killed according to America, by him; but Solis, says, he was killed by the people; and also to Atahualpa, Inca of Peru, who was destroyed by Francisco Pizarro, and Diego Almagro. There is so great a difference between the fate of the Spanish Kings, and those, of America, that they cannot be compared. The former are treated with dignity, preserved, and at length restored to their liberty and throne: whilst the latter suffer unheard of torments, and undergo the most disgraceful and contemptuous treatment. If Quatimoctzin, successor to Montezuma, was honored with princely ^{usage} ~~usage~~ and the ^{crowns} ~~crowns~~ copilli or ~~crowns~~ placed on his head, it was as a mark of derision, not of respect, that he should be reminded of his fall, before he suffered the torture.

The fate of the King of Michoacan, Catzontzin, a Tlaca de Hogta, and all the ^{Toguis} ~~princes~~, ^{Knags} ~~princes~~, ^{Tlacas} ~~princes~~, ^{Ulmenes} ~~princes~~, ^{Caciques} ~~princes~~, who ^{yielded} ~~yielded~~ the power of Spain, has been similar to that of this monarch. The success of Ferdinand 7th, is more like that which occurred in Chili in 1535, when the Ulmen de Copiapo was then governing that territory.

Almagro a Spaniard pretends as Bonaparte did, to defend the cause of the legitimate Sovereign, and in consequence he calls him usurper, as Ferdinand was in Spain. He pretends to assist to the lawful monarch his Statute, and ends by chaining & burning the unhappy Women, without even ~~(according to History)~~ ⁹ hearing his defence.

This is the example of Ferdinand the sixth with his usurper. The European Kings ^{merely} ~~generally~~ suffer banishment, whilst, according to ~~the~~ ⁹ ~~account~~, the fate of those of Chili has a cruel termination.



You say I have for some months past made many reflections as to the situation of the Americans, and their future hopes. I take a great interest in their success, but have not much information as to their actual condition, or that to which they aspire. I am infinitely desirous of knowing the population of your Province, as well as its politics. Whether they wish republics or monarchies - or whether one great republic, or one great monarchy. All information of this nature which you can afford me, or point out the sources from which I may derive ^{it}, I shall esteem as a most particular favor.

Generous minds are always interested in the fate of a people struggling for the rights, which God and Nature have given them; and he who is insensible of this noble feeling, must be very much misled by passions and prejudices. You have thought of my country, and are anxious for her. This sympathy entitles you to my warmest gratitude: ~~except for a tribute of your sincere esteem.~~

I have already stated the population, as well as it can be ascertained from the data with which we are furnished, but which for a thousand reasons can not be exact. Most of the inhabitants have rural residences and very often Errantes, as they are all labourers, the ^{hunters} ~~peasants~~ scattered ^{scattered} ~~about~~ in the midst of spacious and immense solitary ^{close} ~~solitary~~ woods and plains, ^{isolated} ~~surrounded~~ by beautiful ~~and~~ extensive lakes and rivers. Who therefore can form a complete statement of their numbers in such territories?

Besides the contributions which the Natives pay, the sufferings of the Slaves, the taxes, tithes and duties which press on the labourers, and other casualties, drive the poor Americans from their homes. This is without adverting to the war of extermination which has already ~~depopulated~~ ^{depopulated} ~~one~~ ^{lost} ~~eight~~ ^{one} eighth part of the population, and dispersed ^{at} the greater part, for when ^{this}

7 shown before not with the word. I rather think it must mean "movable" habitations - as they do mean has not the word.