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BARON HUMBOLDT.

From the "Literary Magazine, and American Register."

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION.

The following abstract of the American Travels of the celebrated Baron Humboldt and his companion Bonpland, has been drawn up from notes which the former has kindly furnished, and will force ce'e the many very incorrect accounts hitherto published relative to this interesting object.

Baron Humboldt, having travelled from the year 1790, as a naturalist, through Germany, Poland, France, Switzerland, and through parts of England, Italy, Hungary, and Spain, came to Paris in 1798, when he received an invitation, from the directors of the national museum, to accompany captain Baudin in his voyage round the world.—Citizen Alexander Aime Goujon Bonpland, a native of Rochelle, and brought up in the Paris museum, was also to have accompanied them; when on the point of departing the whole plan was suspended until a more favorable opportunity, owing to the recommencement of the war with Austria, and to the consequent want of funds.

Mr. Humboldt, who, from 1792, had conceived the plan of travelling through India at his own expence, with a view of adding to the knowledge of the sciences connected with natural history, then resolved to follow the learned men, who had gone on the expedition to Egypt.—His plan was to go to Algiers in the Swedish frigate which carried the Consul Skoldebrandt, to follow the caravan which goes from Algiers to Mecca, going through Egypt to Arabia, and thence by the Persian gulph to the English East-India establishments. The war which unexpectedly broke out in October 1798, between France and the Barbary powers, and the troubles in the East, prevented Mr. Humboldt from embarking at Marseilles, where he had been fruitlessly two months waiting to proceed. Impatient at this delay, and continuing firm in his determination to go to Egypt, he went to Spain, hoping to pass more readily under the Spanish flag from Carthagena to Algiers and Tunis. He took with him the large collection of philosophical, chemical, and astronomical instruments, which he had purchased in England and France.

From a happy concurrence of circumstances, he obtained, in February, 1799, from the court of Madrid, a permission to visit the Spanish colonies of the two Americas, a permission which was granted with a liberality and frankness, which was honourable to the government and to a philosophic age. After a residence of some months at the Spanish court, during which time the king showed a strong personal interest in the plan, Mr. Humboldt, in June, 1799, left Europe, accompanied by Mr. Bonpland, who, to a profound knowledge in botany and zoology, added an indefatigable zeal. It is with this friend that Mr. Humboldt has accomplished, at his own expence, his travels in the two hemispheres, by land and sea, probably the most extensive which any individual has ever undertaken.

These two travellers left Corunna in the Spanish ship Pizarro, for the Canary Islands, where they ascended to the crater of the Peak of Teyde, and made experiments on the analysis of the air. In July they arrived at the port of Cumana, in South America. In 1799, 1800, they visited the coast of Paria, the missions of the Chaymas Indians, the provinces of New Andalusia (a country which has been rent by the most dreadful earthquakes, the hottest, and yet the most healthy in the world) of New Barcelona, of Venezuela, and of Spanish Guyana.—In January, 1800, they left Caraccas to visit the beautiful vallies of Aragua, where the great lake of Valencia recals to the mind the views of the lake of Geneva, embellished by the majesty of the vegetation of the tropics. From Porto Cabello they crossed to the south, the immense plains of Calabozo, of Apure, and of the Oronoco, also los Llanos, a desert similar to those of Africa, where in the shade (by the reverberation of heat) the thermometer of Reaumur rose to 35 and 37 (111 to 115 F.) degrees. The level of the country for 2000 square leagues does not differ 5 inches. The sand every where represents the horizon of the sea, without vegetation; and its dry bosom hides the crocodiles, and the torpid boa (a species of serpent.) The travelling here, as in all Spanish America, except Mexico, is performed on horseback.—They passed whole days without seeing a palm-tree, or the vestige of a human dwelling. At St. Fernando de Epure, in the provinces of Varinas, Messrs. Humboldt and Bonpland began that fatiguing navigation of nearly 1000 marine leagues executed in canoes, making a chart of the country by the assistance of chronometers, the satellites of Jupiter, and the lunar distances. They descended the river Apure, which empties itself into the Oronoco, in 7 degrees of latitude. They ascended the last river (passing the celebrated cataracts of Maypure and Atures) to the mouth of the Guaviare. From hence they ascended the small rivers of Tabapo, Juamini, and Temi. From the mission of Sarita they crossed by land to the sources of the famous Rio Negro, which Condamine saw, where it joins the Amazon, and which he calls a sea of fresh water. About 30 Indians carried the canoes through woods of Mami, Lecythis, and Laurus Cinamomoides, to the cano (or creek) of Pimichin. It was by this small stream that the travellers entered the Rio Negro, or Black River, which they descended to St. Carlos, which has been erroneously supposed to be placed under the equator, or just at the frontiers of Great Para, in the government of Brasil. A canal from Temi to Pimichin, which from the level nature of the ground is very practicable, would present a fine internal communication between the Para and the province of Carracas, a communication infinitely shorter than that of Calliquiare.—From the fortress of St. Carlos on the Rio Negro, Mr. H. went north up that river and the Cassiquiare to the Oronoco, and on this river to the volcano Duida, or the mission of the Esmeralda, near the sources of the Oronoco: the Indians Guaicas (a race of men almost pigmies, very white and very warlike) render fruitless any attempts to reach the sources themselves.

From the Esmeralda, Messrs. H. and B. went down the Oronoco, when the waters rose, towards its mouth at St. Thomas de la Guayana, or the Angostura. It was during this long navigation that they were in a continued state of suffering, from want of nourishment and shelter, from the night rains, from living in the woods, from the musquetoes, and an infinite variety of stinging insects, and from the impossibility of bathing, owing to the fierceness of the crocodile and the little carib fish, and finally the miasmata of a burning climate. They returned to Cumana by the plains of Cari and the mission of the Carib Indians, a race of men very different from any other, and probably, after the Patagonians, the tallest and most robust in the world.

After remaining some months at New Barcelona and Cumana, the travellers arrived at the Havanna, after a tedious and dangerous navigation, the vessel being in the night on the point of striking upon the Vibora rocks. Mr. H. remained three months in the island of Cuba, where he occupied himself in ascertaining the longitude of the Havanna, and in constructing stoves on the sugar plantations, which have since been pretty generally adopted. They were on the point of setting off for Vera Cruz, meaning, by the way of Mexico and Acapulco, to go to the Philippine Islands, and from thence, it it was possible, by Bombay and Aleppo, to Constantinople, when some false reports relative to Baudin's voyage alarmed them, and made them change their plan. The gazettes held out the idea that this navigator would proceed from France to Buenos Ayres, and from thence by Cape Horn, for Chili and the coast of Peru. Mr. Humboldt had promised to Mr. Baudin, and to the Museum of Paris, that wherever he might be, he would endeavor to join the expedition, as soon as he should know of its having been commenced. He flattered himself that his researches, and those of his friend Bonpland, might be more useful to science, if united to the labors of the learned men who would accompany captain Baudin.

These considerations induced Mr. Humboldt to send his manuscripts, for 1799 and 1800, direct to Europe, and to freight a small schooner at Batabano, intending to go to Carthagena, and from thence, as quickly as possible, by the Isthmus of Panama, to the South Sea. He hoped to find captain Baudin at Guayaquil, or at Lima, and with him to visit New Holland, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean, equally interesting in a moral point of view, as by the luxuriance of their vegetation.

It appeared imprudent to expose the manuscripts and collections already made to the risks of this proposed navigation. These manuscripts, the fate of which Mr. H. remained ignorant during three years, and until his arrival in Philadelphia, arrived safe; but one third part of the collection was lost by shipwreck.—Fortunately (except the insects of the Oronoco and of the Rio Negro) they were only duplicates; but unhappily friar John Gonzales, monk of the order of St. Francis, the friend to whom they were entrusted, perished with them. He was a young man full of ardor, who had penetrated into this unknown world of Spanish Goyana further than any other European.

Mr. Humboldt left Batabano in March, 1891, and passed to the south of the island of Cuba, on which he determined many geographical positions. The passage was rendered very long by calms, and the currents carried the little schooner too much to the west, to to the mouths of the Attracto. The vessel put into the river Sinu, which no botanist had ever before visited, and they had a very difficult passage up to Carthagena. The season being too far advanced for the South Sea navigation, the project of crossing the isthmus was abandoned; and animated with the desire of being acquainted with the celebrated Mutis, and admiring his immensely rich collections of objects of natural history, Mr. H. determined to pass some weeks in the woods of Turbaco, and ascend (which took 40 days) the beautiful river of Madelaine, of the course of which he sketched a chart.

From Honda, our travellers ascended through forests of oaks, of *melastoma* and of *chincona* (the tree which affords the Peruvian bark) to St. Fe de Bogota, capital of the kingdom of New Grenada, situated in a fine plain, elevated 1360 toises (of six French feet) above the level of the sea. The superb collections of Mutis, the majestic cataract of the Tequedama (falls of 98 toises height) the mines of Mariquita, St. Ana, and of Zipaquira, the natural bridge of Scononza, three stones thrown together in the manner of an arch, by an earthquake, these curious objects stopped the progress of Messrs. Humboldt and Bonpland until the month of September, 1801.

At this time, notwithstanding the rainy season had commenced, they undertook the journey to Quito, and passed the Andes of Quindiu, which are snowy mountains covered with wax palm trees, palmiers a cire, with passe flores, passion flowers, of the growth of trees, storax, and bambusa, bamboo. They were during 13 days, obliged to pass on foot through places dreadfully swampy, and without any traces of population.

(*To be continued.*)

From the Aurora.

SPANISH AGGRESSIONS!

No. I.

A short time ago (20th August) there appeared in the Register (a paper published by a dismissed placeman) an article which we here publish:

"We have stated on information which will not be contradicted, that Spain has refused to ratify the convention, heretofore agreed on, which convention, among other stipulations, allowed to the citizens of the United States an indemnity for the spoliations committed on their property by the government and subjects of Spain. The reason assigned by Cevallos, for this refusal was expressly as follows: "The accession of Louisiana has so varied the relations between Spain and the United States, that we cannot, and will not ratify the convention."

"Hence it appears that the boasted acquisition of Louisiana, which has been so much trumpeted and celebrated by our leading-string administration, and for which we have paid *Fifteen millions of dollars*, or, nearly one-fifth part of the whole amount of our national debt, may cost fifty millions more to quiet the possession. This boasted bargain turns out to be, neither no more nor less than a purchase of individual injury and national dishonor—Of *individual injury*, being the cause of an absolute refusal to ratify an act of just retribution to our citizens—*Of national dishonor*, insmuch as the refusal is made by a government, which a proper exertion of our power could have compelled to the performance of its engagements, and even shaken to the base of its authority.

"But the energies of our country are paralysed, and her resources wasted in the trembling hand to which they have been confided—The claims of our citizens are disregarded, and the character of the nation, when brought into competition with the ease and convenience of our rulers, is an object of no importance.

The frown of war might shorten their stay in office—peace must, therefore, be maintained at any sacrifice."

Perhaps personal malignity never exposed itself in so silly and contemptable a view, as in this article. It is not yet forgotten that very bitter censure was thrown out against the government in the Gazette of the United States last winter concerning a convention with Spain, and much pains were taken to induce an opinion that our government was indifferent or negligent of the public interests regarding our concerns with Spain. The information of that time was evidently given by a certain New England senator, for the business was of an executive nature, and even the members of the House of Representatives were unacquainted with the subject or the existence of such a convention. It appears, however, that the delay of the convention was wholly attributable to the obstacles thrown in its way by the factious animosity of those called federal men in the senate. The convention, however, was ratified last session; and is in substance as follows:

The title is,

A convention for the indemnification of those who have sustained injuries in consequence of the excesses of individuals of either nation during the late war.

The first article provides for the formation of a board of *five* commissioners, *two* by each party, and the fifth by common consent.

2. Their duties fixed.

3. They shall assemble within 18 months after their appointment, and receive complaints of persons of both nations.

4. What evidence shall be received.

5. No appeal from the decision of a majority—and the amount of awards to be paid in specie.

6. This article declares, that it not having been possible for the plenipotentiaries to agree upon a mode by which the commissioners should arbitrate on claims originating from the excesses of *foreign cruisers, agents, consuls or tribunals*, in their respective territories which might be imputable to their two governments. Each government shall reserve the rights they hold to bring forward those claims at some future convenient time.

7. The convention not to be in force till ratifications are exchanged.

Dated 11 Aug. 1802.

This is the sum of the convention—which we think proper to give here, that the American reader may not be imposed upon by misrepresentation.

Major Jackson lately an officer in the customs of the United States, will no doubt think that a vindication of Spain and reprobation of the American executive, is justified by his dismission from a lucrative office. To our humbler conceptions, he furnishes testimony that he ought never to have been entrusted with any office under this government; and this evidence we apprehend is to be found in the attempt which he suffers himself to make to support *Spanish injustice!*

The principles of this convention are simple, and under all the circumstances of the times, which it was agreed upon at Madrid, was as liberal on the part of the United States as Spain could have expected from the most sincere disposition to promote a durable concord and friendship.

The period of the conclusion of this convention will be found not to be remote from that of the aggression of the Spanish intendant at New-Orleans (Dec. 16, 1802) The liberality of our government, as well as its sound policy was conspicuous in the postponement of the consideration of those cases which related solely to the French aggressions, because on the one hand, Spain was so circumstanced with regard to France, that her own will could not properly be said to stand unrestrained on any subject connected with France; and on the other, our government was eagerly pressing the acquisition of the Floridas, with a view to save our southern frontier from annoyance by the renewal of war between Great Britain and either of those powers.

The aggression at New-Orleans, however, placed the two governments upon different grounds. The injury done us was incompatible with good faith, and even with friendship; and our government found it necessary to adopt a course the most decided—to obtain not simply reparation for the act of the Spanish intendant, but security against the recurrence of similar or greater wrongs.

The dependent condition of Spain was not a secret to the world—and while remonstrances were carried to that court on the conduct of its officer—the negociation was concluded with the actual owners of Louisiana: by which the sovereignty of that country and the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, were secured for ever. We obtained a country, the value of which Mr. Gouverneur Morris thus describes in his speech in the Senate of the United States, on the 14th February, 1803—"With this country in our possession, we have means of defence more ample, more important, and more easy, than any other nation on earth. In a short time all the West India islands fed from our granaries, must depend on our will. It is a defence superior to fleets and armies.

Yet major Jackson assures us that Don Pedro Cevallos has refused to ratify the convention, because—"The *accession* of Louisiana has varied the relations between Spain and the United States."

That a Spanish minister should be so absurd is barely possible—but that a man pretending to be an American, who has lived upon the revenue of the public for several years past, should undertake to justify such a pretence bears something more than a common execration.

What! the Spanish ministers have plundered our ships on the high seas, and instead of making reprisals as we might justly do; we resort to the pacific course of negociation, and a convention is formed and signed by this minister, openly recognizing the justice of our complaint and providing means for redress.

An American Editor undertakes to say that because America has obtained through the energy and decision of her executive a territory belonging to France—that Spain is justifiable in not making remuneration for the wrong she has done us on the high seas.

This is the sum of the argument—or it is nothing—for the acquisition by us of Louisiana and the sum which we paid for it—have nothing to do whatever with the convention, or the depredations which it was proposed to redress.

It would be insulting the understanding of the public to compare the understanding of major Jackson with that of Governeur Morris: the advantages of Louisiana are already felt—those who wish to be more sensible of them will refer to the debate from which the above extract is made.

But it is alledged, that we are subject to individual injury and national dishonor, by this acquisition—and this conduct of Don Pedro Cevallos in rejecting the convention, is produced as the evidence of this dishonor and injury.

But does the assigning of a cause so absurd prove its justice? Because we have obtained from France, what France had before obtained from Spain—is that a sound ground of objection to do us justice for other wrongs.

I should scorn the insignificant sophistry, that prates about, "paralysed energies," and "wasted resources," and "trembling hands," the bitterness of mind that dictates the mean asperity, merits no other animadversion! The characteristic bombast that concludes this article, is of that description which may excite public derision, but it cannot ever obtain even the approbation of a man of common judgment of any party.

But there is a point of view in which the arguments of this imbecile editor may be placed that supercedes every other comment.

The convention with Spain has been declared to be on our part a bad one.

The acquisition of Louisiana has been declared to be on our part of no advantage.

Yet Spain is alledged not only to be at enmity with us because we have obtained Louisiana; but she is represented as rejecting a convention said to be advantageous to her, and disadvantageous to us—and her conduct in rejecting these alledged advantages which we have allowed her, made a matter of reproach to our government!

(*To be continued.*)

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