

AN EXPOSÉ
ON THE
Dissentions of Spanish America,

CONTAINING,

An account of the origin and progress of those fatal differences, which have bathed that country, in blood and anarchy. An explanation, of the social footing of the Spanish Americans. The degradation of the colonial system of Spain. The redress sought, and denied by the Cortes. Defects of the Spanish Constitution. Horrors of the Spanish soldiery in Spanish America. Dreadful consequences to the Bri-

tish islands, from arming the negroes in Caracas. Mutual murder of prisoners there. A death war declared. Conciliation, the only means of putting an end to these horrors. How England ought to establish her claims of a free trade, with Spanish America. This even advantageous to Spain. Great resources of that country. Only way of establishing a permanent government there, &c. &c. &c.

INTENDED AS A MEANS TO INDUCE THE

Mediatory Interference of Great Britain,

IN ORDER TO PUT AN END TO A DESTRUCTIVE CIVIL WAR

AND TO

ESTABLISH PERMANENT QUIET AND PROSPERITY,

On a basis consistent with the Dignity of Spain, and the Interests of the World.

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
REGENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM,

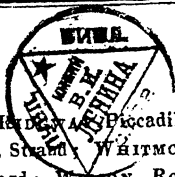
&c. &c. &c.

By WILLIAM WALTON.

London;

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P R E F A C E.

THE pages, I have now the honour to lay before the public, were, originally, written for the exclusive object of inducing the British government to ponder on the melancholy situation of Spanish America; and under a hope of explaining the nature of those unfortunate dissensions between European and American Spain, which had generated into an unnatural and destructive civil war. More than a year ago, they were placed, in a more condensed shape, in a channel, from which some relief was expected; yet, still, the same apathy seemed to reign with regard to this most interesting subject; and the murders of unoffending thousands were heard, without the corresponding sympathy

so usual to Britons. In the midst of so much languor, and surrounded by misrepresentations, we seemed perfectly insensible to the nature of that war, which had already inundated the Western hemisphere with blood ; nay so much had our policy changed, that we now behold those struggles with contempt, which, lately, we had encouraged and promoted ; and though a road was open to bring relief, consistently with honour, and even with the new engagements England had contracted with Spain, as well as of adding essential resources to that momentous cause, in which we were embarked, we still kept aloof, and feared to interfere in a matter, we seemed not to understand.

A resolve was made to print them, when the indiscriminate massacres in New Spain, had risen to such a height, that they could not be read without the keenest emotion ; when a *death-war* had been declared in Caracas, and when every thing there announced the mutual butchery of prisoners, which afterwards took place. They were sent to press, when, in Venezuela, the slaves had been armed for the murder and pillage of their masters, when the horrors of St. Domingo were there renewed ; and, when the danger pressed heavy on all holders of British property, in the West Indies. They were sent to press, when the chief sections of Spanish

Columbia, had been wrapped in a wide and universal state of civil war and desolation, when a million and a half of its inhabitants had been immolated on the altars of vengeance ; when odium was accumulating on the British name ; and when, by our coldness, there was every reason to believe, — we were about to lose, for ever, our hold on a rich and extensive country, that, otherwise, opened to us the most brilliant prospects. They were printed, in short, when the mass of injustice and the enormities, committed against an unoffending people, were such, as the feeling mind, could, no longer, behold with calmness and self-controul ; and when it became the first duty of humanity, as well as of society, to explain them to a public, both interested and implicated in their fatal consequences, and who never before had an opportunity of judging for itself, or even of fully comprehending the nature of a dispute, which had, already, filled the New World with scenes of horror that outrivalled its conquest.

During their publication, two great political events have occurred, viz. the fall of Buonaparte ; and the return of king Ferdinand, to his throne, after the dispersion of the new Cortes. The first event has, certainly, occasioned some material change in the tenour of my arguments. The rising influence the French were fast gaining in Spanish

America, and the manner in which they were supplanting us in the affections of the people, ceased to be a subject of alarm. Yet, things had been so organised, that the sailing of three frigates to three isolated points, which it was out of our power to watch, with twenty thousand stand of arms each, would not only have broken, for ever, the Spanish sceptre, in the Western hemisphere, and destroyed our own influence, but would have given the French that same ascendancy they acquired, by aiding the revolutionary struggle of the United States.

The second event, as far as it relates to the duration of the constitution, was perfectly foreseen; as will be evinced by the strictures on that singular speculation of law, which were both written and printed, long before the late revolution in Madrid, took place. Not that it could be anticipated, that Ferdinand, or rather his counsellors, would wreak their vengeance on the New Cortes, which, if at all founded, ought to have fallen on the old ones. Had their conduct to Spanish America, been one of the motives alleged for this harsh treatment, the world would not have been so much astonished, or those who wish well to Spain, so much scandalized. And, yet, even the old Cortes, though they have rendered Spanish America, the seat of anarchy, bloodshed, and destruction, had, nevertheless, sav-

ed one half of the monarchy to its rightful possessor, and had acted as a shield against the most pressing dangers. This event has, more than ever, confirmed me in the opinion, that nothing but the mediatory interference of Great Britain, under such a general clash of interests, such a prevalence of irritated feelings, and under such systems as those likely again to prevail in Spain, can ever restore peace to the ultramarine provinces, in a manner consistent with reason and justice; or establish permanent harmony, on the basis of general good. If so, and since every month's delay, is the murder of thousands, ought one moment to be lost, in relieving universal affliction and distress?

If I have any thing to add to the explanation of my views in publishing this exposé, it is, to implore the benevolent exertions of my fellow-citizens, to urge relief for suffering humanity; and, in order, that the brightest prospects that ever opened on our mercantile enterprize, may not be marred. The memorials sending up from the manufacturing towns, respecting a retention of trade to Spanish America, sufficiently, indicate the public interest felt upon this occasion; yet, what can be our prospects of trade, in a country desolated by civil war? Let us not appear selfish, humanity is the spring on which we are to act. Let all, with a

firm and decided voice, express the necessity under which England stands, of giving peace to Spanish America ; and after aiding to extend the olive branch over the old world, to pronounce it as her sacred duty, to see that its benign effects are equally diffused to the new one. Peace must be the precursor of all definitive arrangements, let its basis only be liberal, and it will not only be advantageous to all parties ; but will, eventually, confer the most lasting benefits on the world at large.

London, June 8, 1814.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,
THE
PRINCE REGENT
Of the United Kingdoms,

&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

WHEN a private individual presumes to address one, of the exalted rank of your Royal Highness in these United Kingdoms, the subject-matter, he proposes to discuss, ought not only to be of a transcendent and national interest, but the language of his appeal, ought to be, besides, respectful, and divested of every spirit of party and fallacious reasoning. If he anticipates a favourable result from what he has got to disclose, correct details ought to form the basis of his exposé, and impartial truth, ought to be preeminently conspicuous in his display of facts.

These essential requisites, will, I hope, be found in the pages I have now the honour to submit to your Royal Highness; nor will it, perhaps, be deemed presumptive, if I call your attention to a subject, not of temporary, but of lasting and genuine importance to us, as a maritime and commercial people; and of vital interest to us, during our present expensive war-system, and the great continental combination formed against our resources. At a

period, then, when our increased sacrifices press heavy on the revenue of the country, and whilst a fearful and an eventful tragedy is acting on the grand theatre of Europe, may I be allowed to lay before your Royal Highness, the following considerations, dictated by the most pure and unbiased interest for our national welfare; and which have for object, to stop the ravages of war, and to quench the flames of civil feuds in the great continent of Spanish America; to turn its lost resources against the common enemy; to open new sources of intercourse and vent for our stagnant trade; to promote the influx of precious metals, and the entry of manufacturing raw materials; to connect us by indissoluble ties, by the double ones of gratitude and interest, with a population larger than our own; in short, to add greatly to our wealth and prosperity, and by thus contributing largely to our own strength and resources, to establish a lasting and powerful check on the views of our enemies.

Great and comprehensive as are the subjects to be discussed in the following sheets, I will, nevertheless, endeavour to unfold them, in as brief and plain a manner as their complexity will admit; I will do it with a correctness and solemnity suited to the importance of the matter in view, and the present momentous crisis of human events; well aware, that in appealing to your Royal Highness's judgment and feelings, I not only present a fair, an interesting opportunity, of following the dictates of humanity, of exercising those manly and benign principles and virtues, which have ever formed the characteristics of your Royal Highness's illustrious house; but I, also, afford the means of promoting the national welfare of that empire, over

which you so worthily preside; besides extending the blessings of peace, prosperity, and regeneration, to an extensive and valuable range of country, that will, at no distant period, remunerate us for all our exertions in its favour.

To one, who like yourself, holds in his hands the reins of a government, so much concerned in the political welfare of every nation of the globe, but particularly so, when interest, sympathy, and political engagements add to the bond; of a government, in short, that has sacrificed so much for the freedom and independence of the States of Europe, and has ever been foremost in the cause of reason, justice, and humanity, it cannot be an unseasonable theme, to dwell on those national interests we have now at stake—to advert to that fund of odium accumulating on our name, and those dangers we, at the same time, incur, by an entire dereliction from our plighted faith, and reiterated and solemn promises: neither can it be irrelevant here to portray the oppression, calamities, and destruction of one entire quarter of the globe, with whose natives we have so long sympathized, and to whose interests we are so closely connected; when, at the same time, a safe and consistent remedy is within our reach; a remedy not only in perfect unison with our national honour, and founded on sound and lasting policy, but, moreover, by no means opposed to those very engagements, under which we stand bound to the third party concerned.

The object of my present address, is to call the attention of your Royal Highness to the long neglected and melancholy situation of the great continent of Spanish America, where a destructive civil war has been waging for more than four years: a deadly war, that like a

spreading cancer threatens to overrun, and soon to destroy that fair portion of the habitable globe, if the necessary remedies are not speedily applied. It is, at the same time, to point out the immense resources there uselessly wasting, and the oceans of blood spilling in every section; and, in a full manner, to explain the origin, nature, and progress of that complicated and aggravated dispute, which has so long desolated Spanish Columbia, rent asunder the ties of blood and nature, and filled it with unheard of scenes of horror and devastation. In short, the pages I have now the honour to inscribe to your Royal Highness, are intended to throw light on a subject that has been but partially understood in this country; whence have originated delusive theories, and erroneous conceptions of the actual state of the great question here alluded to; and I am the more solicitous to undertake this essential task, from the general ignorance in which the public has been kept, of all the transactions carried on in that unfortunate country, owing to its distance, and the confined use of the language, in which they have been detailed; as well as from the misconceptions and prejudices diffused amongst us, in consequence of the partial and incorrect statements, copied into our public prints, from those of Cadiz.

This is, perhaps, the only great political question that has not hitherto met with the attention of the British public, or called forth the discussions of our statesmen or writers of the day; yet, to us, as the allies of the Spanish monarchy, anxious to give every efficiency to that alliance, and acting on the broad principle of justice and equity, it cannot be deemed of trifling importance; much less so, when we view it connected with our present and future prospects of trade, and

linked with our most interesting maritime relations. Commerce, has ever been considered as the main sinew of our political existence, and we have now in view, the great and gigantic efforts of the enemy, if not to paralyze, at least to corrode this pillar of the British empire, and to diminish its energy and extent. Some of our greatest and most enlightened statesmen of the age, have, moreover, established as a political axiom, that considering our insular situation, the nature of our defence, and the circumstances of the enemy, it behooved us, in a particular manner, to extend our influence, our connections, and our consumption of merchandise, in those regions which are beyond his reach, and consequently not subject to his control, his systems, or to the fortunes of war; he may threaten to wage against them. This safe and fundamental principle, founded on our naval preponderance, and so intimately connected with our political economy (that real basis of our strength and grandeur) has been verified by the experience of the last twenty years, by successive events, and by the failure of our past energies on the continent, as well as by the depressed state to which we now stand reduced.

In conformity to this principle, and considering also the present condition of Europe, not only in consequence of the influence of France, but also owing to a continental policy existing even amongst our oldest allies, to trade as little with us as they possibly can; Great Britain is particularly called upon, at this moment, to enquire, if in any other quarter of the world, a barrier can be found to resist the general combination formed against her mercantile interests, and to open new channels, in lieu of those closed against her. In this

important enquiry, the political economist naturally casts his eyes towards the great continent of Spanish America, a country far surpassing the whole of Europe in extent, in fertility, and in rich productions, though hitherto debarred from the intercourse of foreign nations. A position, therefore, unparalleled on the face of the globe, for the union of commercial advantages; an extended range of country, varied in soil and productions; rich in every thing necessary to minister to the wants and luxuries of man; one that in its late degraded state, annually coined forty-two millions of dollars, in gold and silver; consumed fifty-nine and a half ditto in European imports, circulated thirty-eight and a half ditto in choicest exports,* besides being inhabited by a large and increasing population, certainly presents a scene worthy of the contemplation of the first magistrate of so enterprizing a nation as ours; yet fair as is this prospect, considerable as is this produce and consumption of Spanish America, the timely adoption of better systems, and a newly diffused regeneration (as will hereafter be fully proved) would long since have doubled both. And, yet, in addition to this scope for commercial enterprize, in addition to this flattering but correct picture of the resources of Spanish America, and these considerations of national expediency, political motives of a still more sacred nature, have long called upon us to look with anxious concern to the fate of the Western continent, and to prevent its entire destruction.

The increase and protection of trade, undoubtedly, becomes the paramount duty of the heads of government;

* Vide Humboldt's Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain, vol. 4, book 5, chap. 12.

and any elucidations on so interesting a subject, cannot, therefore, by your Royal Highness, be deemed ill-placed or offensive. Every thing relating to Spanish America, that we have undertaken for many years past, proves how little we were acquainted with the dispositions, sentiments, and resources of those distant regions, notwithstanding the expences government has incurred to obtain information; and how much we have been puzzled to fix on an enlightened and accordant policy, in our new alliance with Spain, results from many facts that will hereafter be adduced. I am, for this reason, the more encouraged in my present attempt, as well as from a conviction that my sources of information are not only extensive, but also correct, and in most cases, official. And whilst I deplore that want of influence we have never obtained over the councils of Spain, whilst I regret our complete failure to infuse liberal principles in her members of government, and to awaken an enlightened policy in the nation at large, respecting its vital interests with Spanish America, (the grand cause of most of the evils with which we have now to contend, in our relations with the Spanish monarchy of both hemispheres) though late, I still hope something useful may be deduced; and at all events, it may be of service to delineate those results which would have been produced by a different line of conduct on our part, and to point out where we erred, in our new and delicate connection with European and American Spain.

Important, however, as might have been the consequences of keeping the two halves of the Spanish monarchy strong and united; offensive both to justice and humanity as has been that cruel, desultory, and unnatural war which has so long been waging between them; im-