

mountains, and the table-lands of the interior. These local circumstances are too often overlooked in considerations on the future fate of the Spanish colonies; they communicate a peculiar character to some of those countries, the physical and moral analogies of which are less striking than is commonly supposed. Considered with reference to the distribution of the population, the two provinces of New Grenada and Venezuela, which have been united in one political body, exhibit the most complete contrast. Their capitals (and the position of capitals always denotes where population is most concentrated) are at such unequal distances from the trading coasts of the Caribbean Sea, that the town of Caracas, to be placed on the same parallel with Santa-Fé de Bogota, must be transplanted southward to the junction of the Orinoco with the Guaviare, where the mission of San Fernando de Atabapo is situated.

The republic of Columbia is, with Mexico and Guatemala, the only state of Spanish America which occupies at once the coasts opposite to Europe, and to Asia. From Cape Paria to the western extremity of Veragua is a distance of 400 sea leagues: and from Cape Burica to the mouth of Rio Tumbez the distance is 260. The shore possessed by the republic of Columbia consequently equals in length the line of coasts extending from Cadiz to Dantzic, or from Ceuta to Jaffa. This immense resource for national industry is combined with a degree of cultivation of which the importance has not hitherto been sufficiently acknowledged. The isthmus of Panama forms part of the territory of Columbia, and that neck of land, if traversed by good roads, and stocked with camels, may one day serve as a portage for the commerce of the world, even though the plains of Cupica, the bay of Mandinga, or the Rio Chagre, should not afford the possibility of a canal for the passage of vessels proceeding from Europe to China,* or from the United States to the north-west coast of America.

When considering the influence which the configuration of countries (that is, the elevation and the form of coasts), exercises in every district on the progress of civilization and the destiny of nations, I have pointed out the disad-

* The old vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres extended also along a small portion of the South Sea coast.