

of the Spanish ministry, the most advantageous conclusions have been drawn; to this may be added the possession of lead-mines, the ore being, in many places, close to the surface of the ground; the facility of manufacturing potash and salt-petre; and the iron, copper, and silver mines, so abundant in the interior.

The chief advantages of a colony, in respect of commerce, exists in the colony itself; and the more it is flourishing and populous, the greater will be the advantages derived by the mother country. But when, besides the interior consumption, it offers a market and supplies of the greatest importance to the mother-country, how much ought such a colony to be valued! Such is the case in which Louisiana is in relation to France. The inhabitants of the Western Settlements of the United States, entirely employed in agricultural labours, neither manufacture clothing nor furniture. Their intercourse with the maritime cities from which they obtain these necessary articles, presents innumerable difficulties; the land-carriage being both expensive and dangerous. How great would be the advantages gained by a *dépôt*, from which all their supplies might come by water, and where they could pay for them by the overplus of their territorial productions! New Orleans is this *dépôt*. Coffee, sugar, spices, East and West India merchandize, would always sell there to advantage. The government cannot be ignorant, how much the good understanding of the two countries depends on their commercial relations, and how advantageous it would be for France to preserve this good understanding with the Western States of America; which, from their character, opinions, and situation, will probably soon become independent of the Northern States. Another branch of commerce, not less important, is that of furs and skins. I have endeavoured in a former chapter to prove, with what facility Louisiana might wrest this trade from Canada, on the whole of the right bank of the Mississippi: it will be less difficult to convince the reader, that we possess, even over our rivals on the most northern lakes, an advantage of cent. per cent.

Between the Missouri and the chain of mountains which are on the southern bank of the great Red River, whose waters flow into the lake Owinipike, is a part of the nation of Chistinous, to the number of five hundred warriors. The body of this nation, to the number of 2500 warriors, is dispersed between the 50 and 55° north lat. and 120° west long. Between the Missouri and the Red River, but more to the west, is the river of the Osseniboinos, which seems to derive its waters from the lake Placotte; it flows into the river Catepoie, which has its mouth in the Red River, at a little distance from the lake Owinipike. The people that inhabit its banks, known by the