

three thousand six hundred miles, in which it receives a prodigious number of navigable rivers, falls into the ocean between Brazil and Guiana. The Rio de la Plata, or Plate-river, rises in the heart of the country, and becomes so large by the accession of other considerable rivers, that it pours such an immense flood into the sea, that it makes it taste fresh for several leagues from the shore. Besides these there are the Orinoko, and several other very considerable rivers.

A country of such vast extent on each side the equator, must necessarily have a variety of soils as well as climates; but if we except the most northern and southern parts, which here, as every where else, are naturally cold and barren; the rest is an immense treasury of nature, producing most of the metals, minerals, plants, fruits, trees, and woods, to be met with in the other parts of the world, and many of them in greater quantities and higher perfection. The gold and silver of America has supplied Europe with such immense quantities of those valuable metals, that they are become vastly more common; so that the gold and silver of Europe now bears little proportion to the high price set upon them before the discovery of America.

This country also produces an immense quantity of diamonds, pearls, emeralds, amethysts, and other valuable stones, which are brought from thence into Europe, in such quantities, as have also greatly lowered their value. To these may be added a great number of other commodities, which, though of less price, are of much greater use. Of this sort are the constant and plentiful supplies of cochineal, indigo, annatto, logwood, brazil, sulphur, pimento, lignum-vitæ, rice, ginger, cacao, or the chocolate-nut, sugar, tobacco, banillas, cotton, red wood, the balsams of Tolu, Peru, and China, Jesuits-bark, mechoacan, sassafras, sarsaparilla, cassia, tamarinds, hides, furs, ambergris, and a great variety of woods, roots, and plants, to which, before the discovery of America, we were either entire strangers, or forced to buy at an extravagant rate from Asia and Africa.

America has also a variety of most excellent fruits, which here grow wild to great perfection; as pine-apples, pomegranates, citrons, lemons, oranges, malicagons, cherries, pears, apples, figs, grapes, vast numbers of culinary, medicinal, and other herbs, roots, and plants. Add to this the surprizing fertility with which the soil is blessed, by which many exotic productions are nourished in as great perfection as in their native ground.

With all this plenty and variety, the vast continent of America formerly laboured under the want of many necessary and useful commodities: for upon the first landing of the Europeans, they found neither corn, wine, nor oil; the inhabitants in many places knew not the use of corn, but made their bread of pulse or roots: their drink was the water of the clear spring; and, with regard to money, they were ignorant of the use of it. Our kind of sheep, goats, asses, and horses, were not to be found there, though the land abounded with pastures; and at first the sight of a man on horseback would throw a whole troop of these innocent and simple inhabitants into a dreadful panic. But all these animals have been brought hither in such plenty, and have increased so fast in those fertile pastures, that the country has no want of them, as appears from the innumerable hides, particularly of oxen, continually exported from thence. However, in the room of these domestic animals they had others no less valuable, and to which we in Europe were utter strangers; these we shall describe in the countries where they are bred.

The same may be said of the vast variety of birds to be seen there, some of which greatly surpass all that are

to be found in any other parts of the world, for their surprizing beauty, fine shape, bright and glowing colours. The seas, lakes, and rivers, are no less fraught with the greatest plenty and variety of fish.

Before the arrival of the Europeans they had arts of their own; they had some notion of painting, and also formed pictures by the beautiful arrangement of feathers of all colours, and in some parts built palaces and temples. Though the use of iron was unknown, they polished precious stones, cut down trees, and made not only small canoes, but boats of considerable extent. Their hatchets were headed with a sharp flint, and of flints they made knives. Thus, at the arrival of the Europeans, they afforded a lively picture of the primitive state of mankind in the infancy of the world. At that period the arts, the sciences, and all the learning that had long flourished in these more enlightened parts of the earth, were entirely unknown. These, which had before travelled west from Egypt to Greece, and from thence to Rome, have proceeded in the same course, and are daily gaining ground where ignorance reigned triumphant; and the time may arrive when America may become the seat of mighty empires, and be distinguished by cities extensive as Babylon, and beautiful as Athens and Palmyra.

North America is divided

I. Into the dominions of Great Britain: containing Labrador, or New Britain, with the countries about Hudson's-bay, Canada, Nova Scotia, New England, New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida.

With many rich and fertile islands, the principal of which are Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Providence, Jamaica, St. Christophers, Antego, Nevis, Dominica, Barbuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, Tobago, St. Vincent, Barbados, the Granades, and Granada. To which may be added the Bermudas, or Summer Islands.

II. The dominions of Spain: containing Louisiana, Old Mexico, New Mexico, and California, in North America. With the extensive countries of Terra Firma, Peru, and La Plata, or Paraguay, in South America.

With the valuable islands of Cuba, half of Hispaniola, or St. Domingo, Porto Rico, Trinidad, and Margareta, in North America. Chiloe, the Kings or Pearl Islands, Juan Fernandes, and the Gallipagos Islands, in the Pacific ocean.

III. The dominions of France, by the late peace confined to the farther side of the river Mississippi, are now said to be exchanged with Spain.

The French have, however, the following islands: St. Martin's, St. Bartholomew's, Descada, Guadalupe, Marigalante, Martinico, St. Croix, and part of Hispaniola.

IV. The dominions of Portugal consist of the rich and extensive country of Brazil, in South America.

V. The dominions of the Dutch consist of Surinam, on the continent of South America; with the islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba, near the coast of Terra Firma; with Eustatia and Saba, two of the Caribbee Islands.

VI. Those of the Danes consist only of one of the Caribbee Islands, named St. Thomas.

VII. The parts still possessed by the native Indians, which are the countries north-west of Mexico; the greatest part of Guiana, and all the most southern part of the continent, as Patagonia, and the island Terra del Fuego.

We shall begin with the dominions of Great Britain, which are bounded on the north by the ocean and lands near the north pole, on the east by the Atlantic ocean, on the south by the Gulph of Mexico, and on the west by unknown lands inhabited by the native Indians.

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