

right of dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth. Thus, in virtue of his power, as the vicar and representative of Jesus Christ, did Alexander VI, in 1493, grant to the crown of Spain, in full right, all the countries inhabited by infidels, which they had or should discover.

Enormous as the power was, which the Popes then exercised, it was recognized and submitted to by the monarchs of that day, and considered as having vested in Spain a title which they deemed completely valid, and authorized her to extend her discoveries and establish her dominion over a great portion of the new world. The Spanish crown, as well as individuals, the subjects of that power, continued to fit out ships for voyages of discovery, and, in the space of a few years, had visited various parts of the coast of America, from the Gulf of Mexico to many degrees south of the equinoctial line, taking possession, according to the custom of that day, in the name of the Spanish King. Nor was their zeal for discovery confined to the Atlantic shore alone, parties, under daring and enterprising leaders, penetrated far into the interior of the continent, and even to the shores of the Pacific ocean, wresting by violence the rich empires of Peru and Mexico from the peaceful and legitimate sovereigns who reigned over them, and annexed them to the crown of Spain, by the triple title of conquest, discovery, and the grant of the Pope.

So well satisfied do the rest of Europe seem to have been of the rights of Spain, derived from such high authority, that they permitted her to progress unmolested in her career of discovery and conquest for many years, until she had acquired the undisputed possession of most of the Atlantic coast of South America, and the whole shore of the Pacific, as high as the northern extremity of California, and, as they affirmed, after they came in possession of Louisiana, to a point far to the northward of that.

Though discoveries were frequently made of countries among the most beautiful and fertile, where nature seemed to invite the industry of man to the enjoyment of luxuriant abundance, yet none seemed to arrest the attention of either government or people, but those which contained the precious metals; this morbid thirst for gold may be the cause why no settlements were made north of California, as no metal of that description is believed to be found in that region.

About this time, it became the interest of the British crown to think differently on the subject of religion from the See of Rome, and, separating entirely from it, assumed the right of annexing to their crown all the territories discovered by their subjects, and of bestowing them by charter upon individuals. To this end, grants were issued by Elizabeth in the year 1578 and 1584, the one to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the other to Sir Walter Raleigh, which were limited to a certain number of leagues; but those issued in 1606, and 1609, and 1611, by James I. in the charters for Virginia, were declared to embrace the whole extent of country from thirty-four to forty-five degrees of north latitude, extending from sea to sea, always excepting the territories of any christian prince or people.

It is believed, that when these charters were granted by the mon-