

the whole world might see and believe. I shall not hesitate, therefore, to avail myself of the best thoughts of the best thinkers of this period of our advancement, being convinced that such arguments, emanating from men of the highest order of intellectual culture, attested by incontrovertible facts, will be received with the respect which they merit and will carry with them their just measure of conviction. Hence it is that such a subject as this can lay claim to but little originality, since it bears the impress of former discovery. Indeed, he who now advances a theory of weight, hitherto unknown, the influence of which shall be felt in the literature of the time to come, is the genius of his age—one of those bright illuminations in the wide field of science which occasionally flash through the world, the wonder of all men.

The physical laws by which the civilization of Brazil has been retarded are, the influence of the trade winds and the exceeding fecundity of nature. These winds, blowing constantly from the north-east or south-east across the Atlantic Ocean, become in their passage surcharged with vapors, which, at certain intervals, are condensed into rain. The whole mass of water is poured down upon the eastern shores of South America, being turned backward from its passage westward by the chain of the Andes. This supply, together with the vast river system peculiar to Brazil, accompanied by a sufficient amount of heat, has enriched the soil to an extent unequalled by that of any other section of the globe. It possesses a vegetation of unsurpassed beauty and profusion. Nature revels, without a check from the advance of man. Vast forests and mighty trees bound immense tracts of meadow, teeming with the richest food for all descriptions of cattle. Birds of exquisite plumage, flowers of the most delicate coloring and texture, insects of every variety, make up the wondrous picture. But while this flow and abundance swell the magnificence of nature beyond expression, it dwindles man into insignificance; for in comparison with the surrounding majesty, he is as nought. While a nation is in its infancy, its inhabitants are always adverse to enterprise, and possessing no knowledge of the arts by

which physical impediments are removed, they never attempt to grapple with them. The objects that oppose them seem so formidable that they never rally from the accumulated pressure. In the case of Brazil, this indolence is not confined to the natives, for even the resources of European civilization have not been sufficient to conquer the difficulties. So active are the physical laws, and conducted on a scale of such magnificence, that it has been impossible to escape their effects. Dense and well nigh impenetrable forests prevent extended husbandry, while numerous insects never allow the gleanings of a harvest. The spirit of man, hampered by nature, has not the power to rise, but is ever maintaining an unequal struggle. Such is the reproductive power of its indigenous plants that the natives subsist without the necessity of manual labor. Without taking into consideration the relaxing effect of this species of food, such a lack of physical exuberance and activity will breed a torpidity of intellect from which a nation seldom if ever arises.

Another cause, in connection with this, may be cited in further proof,—the lack of accumulated wealth. This, in the early days of a nation's advance, is a death-blow to the expansion of the human intellect; for since men cannot have leisure until they have wealth, and cannot think advantageously until they have leisure, it follows that the want of that by which alone leisure can be obtained, will affect the whole mental progression of a people. The returns made to labor are governed by the fertility of the soil, and the energy with which such labor is conducted is dependent upon the climate. But although the soil of Brazil has all the natural advantages of chemical composition, irrigation and heat, the physical impediments are so vast as to render agriculture almost impossible; and, even were it otherwise, the heat is so intense as to enervate the powers of man, and we could not expect to find that untiring industry and zeal which are the characteristics of those in more northern climates. Thus it is that, in this Empire, there have never been discovered the relics of an anterior civilization in any way superior to the present.