

*THE INFLUENCE OF A COUNTRY'S PHYSICAL FEATURES
UPON ITS INHABITANTS.*



THE fashion now-a-days amongst Northern people is to affect a contemptuous pity for their brethren in the South, whom they fondly imagine to be entirely wanting in energy and progress. This smacks sufficiently of egotism to arouse a suspicion of its truth, and enquiry shows the suspicion to be well grounded. One has but to glance over the daily papers to find glowing accounts of the prosperity of Brazil, to which recent events have called attention. Nor is this an isolated instance. The desire of foreign nations to enter into commercial relations with the different South American republics is sufficiently evidenced by the appointment of ministers to these states. Whilst, then, the alleged superiority of Northern over Southern races seems more fanciful than real, no one will deny that their respective characters exhibit traits differing widely from each other. That this is in part due to the physical features of the countries they inhabit must suggest itself to every thoughtful mind, and the more the question is studied the more clearly does one see that such is the case. And if there be one of these influences that contributes more than another to the formation of a people's character it is that of the climate. Now, as everyone knows, whilst the greater portion of inhabitable territory in the Northern hemisphere lies in the temperate zone, the torrid zone claims for itself most of the land in the Southern hemisphere. This may tend to explain the statement, so often made, that the Southern people are indolent, inconstant and quick tempered. They are, indeed, less inclined to manual labour than the people of the North, but is this surprising? The exuberance of nature in the South takes away the chief, I might almost say, the only incentive to such labour,—the necessity of procuring food, fuel and clothing. There the earth yields two, and sometimes three crops a year, and that with but little cultivation whilst,

the warmth of the climate precludes all need of fuel, and greatly lessens the amount of clothing required in more frigid climes. How different is it in the North. Here the snow wraps Nature in a winding sheet for a period of from three to six months, during which she is literally dead as far as production is concerned. Then, when the time of cultivation does come, it is only after a great amount of labour that a single crop can be gathered. Add to this the necessity of providing the requisite fuel and clothing, and it is easily seen that in Northern countries a man must work, and work hard, whether he will or not. From this difference also springs the backwardness of Southerners in introducing modern improvements into their countries; they have no need of them, consequently they do not trouble themselves about them. Much less surprising, therefore, that the Northern nations should lead in the invention of labor-saving machinery. Circumstances, as I have shown, compel them to direct their energies, physical and mental, towards the provision of food, fuel and clothing more earnestly than their more favored Southern brethren.

Conceding, then, the greater progress of Northerners in this respect, can we admit the statement of many that "man here attains his highest intellectual, moral and religious development?" I should prefer also to divide prosperity into material, intellectual and moral. All that I have conceded would come under the the first head, material—it goes without saying that this is the lowest form of progress. Now, I not only deny that Northern nations surpass Southern nations in intellectual and moral progress, but I will even say that the conditions of these countries are, if not incompatible with, at least less favourable to high intellectual development. To make it clearer, let us go farther north where these conditions are intensified, and we find the Esquimaux, dwarfed and undeveloped, wholly occupied in providing for his lowest physical wants. Now no one will deny that men in temperate regions share, in a greater degree than