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[WHOLE NO. 90.]

Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.—VIRGIL.

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Expose of the French Empire.

[Translated for the American.]

From the Bordeaux L'Indicateur of March 3.

LEGISLATIVE BODY.—Sitting of the 25th Feb.

After transacting some business of minor import, his excellency count Montallivet, minister of the interior, and the counsellors of state counts Lavallete and Mole, appeared and took their seats. His excellency having read his majesty's decree, directing those three orators to lay before the legislative Body the *Expose* of the situation of the empire during the years 1811 and 1812, communicated what follows.

EXPOSE OF THE SITUATION OF THE EMPIRE.

Gentlemen—His majesty has ordered me to make known to you the situation of the empire in the years 1811 and 1812.

You will perceive with satisfaction, that notwithstanding the great armies which a state of maritime and continental war has obliged us to keep on foot, the population has continued to increase; that our industry has made new progress; that the soil never was better cultivated, nor the manufactories in a more flourishing state; that at no epoch of our history was wealth more equally enjoyed by the various classes of society.

The humble farmer is this day sensible of those enjoyments, to which, until now, he was an entire stranger; he purchases, at the highest prices, lands most convenient to himself—his clothing is better, his table is more abundantly supplied; he rebuilds his houses, which are more commodious and substantial.

The new proceedings in agriculture, industry and useful arts, are no longer impeded. Every where experiments are made, and whatever experience renders preferable and useful is substituted in lieu of ancient customs. The meadows have increased in number; the fallow system is abandoned; newly cultivated fields tend to augment the product of our lands; cattle, &c. multiply, and the different species improve; simple farmers, have acquired the means of procuring Spanish merinos, and horses of superior kinds; studying their true interests, they do not hesitate to make those useful purchases.—Thus it is, that the necessities for our manufactories, our agriculture, and our armies, are daily easier obtained.

This degree of prosperity is owing to the liberal laws which pervade this great empire—to the suppression of feudality, of the tythe, and of monastic orders—a suppression that has enfranchised so much private property, which remains this day a free patrimony to a multitude of families, formerly deprived of the full enjoyment of their rights; it is owing to the clearness and simplicity of the laws in regard to property and to mortgages; to the promptitude with which law suits (which are decreasing daily) are decided; it is to these real causes and to the influence of vaccination, that we are to attribute the increase of population.—And why should we not say also, that the conscription itself, which every year places under our banners the most

active part of our youths, has contributed to this increase by multiplying the number of marriages?

THE POPULATION.

The population of France, in 1789, consisted of 26,000,000 of individuals; some writers even reduced their calculations to 25,000,000. The actual population of the empire is 42,700,000 souls; 28,700,000 of whom are of the departments of ancient France. This population is not the result of simple conjecture, but of exact census; which gives an increase of 2,500,000, or nearly one-tenth, since the last 24 years.

[Chapter 1st of the *Expose* relates to the agriculture—chapter 2d treats of the manufactories and industry.*]

CHAPTER III.—OF COMMERCE.

The commerce of an empire which reckons more than seventy millions of products annually, exclusive of other resources, either real or fictitious, those calculators who study political economy, duly appreciate, and must be immense.

If we had sought wealth from sources purely commercial, I do not fear to say that our calculations would have amounted to one hundred millions.

To have commerce, is to place, and always to keep, convenient to the consumer, articles suitable both to his wants and taste.

Commerce, therefore, should be carried on with more activity in countries where are found a greater number of manufactories, and a greater number of consumers.

When an empire has a good soil, and is extensive, and has a numerous population, it is in its own bosom that necessarily exist the most important means of commerce.

In 1789, one of the years when the foreign commerce of France was most considerable, the exports amounted only to 357,000,000 francs, and her imports at 400,000,000; for, in the imports, must not be counted the 236,000,000 we received from our colonies, which at that time formed an integral part of France. From the imports must be taken off the specie, which is the payment made by the foreigner for some of our exportations.

In taking off 55 millions of specie in gold and silver, the real importations into France were, in 1789, only 345 millions; the exportations were 357 millions; which is a commerce of about 360 millions, whether viewed as real or passive. It was not one-fifteenth part of our internal commerce.

Let us compare our external commerce at that period, with what it is at this day. I shall consider our colonies as forming part of France, and their commerce as internal.

In 1788, the exportations amounted to 365 millions; the importations at 345 millions, 55 millions of which being in specie, reduced them to 290 mil-

*It is to be regretted that the *exposé*, at length, has not reached us. The parts omitted, on account of their length, were not published in the *French* papers received by the editors of the *American*.—They are interesting, as shewing the real state of France. If hereafter received, they shall be inserted.—ED. RES.