

The Causes of the Decline of Spain, the Stanhope Prize Essay, 1867

George Herbert West



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The Causes of the Decline of Spain, the Stanhope Prize Essay, 1867 George Herbert West This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1867. Excerpt: ... To such a point of degradation had the House of Austria brought the once mighty empire of Spain. in.--Decline Such was the result of their traditionary policy, which, Prosperityerlof ever engaging the country in useless crusades, left Spain. no time to attend to the true interests of the people, and ended by placing on the throne the grandson of their bitterest foe. But we have seen that this policy of the monarch was but the reflection of the spirit of the people, who had learned to identify the enemies of Catholicism with the enemies of Spain. And this same spirit, the true spirit of the crusades of the Middle Ages, perpetuated also the unenlightened political economy of the Middle Ages, and was therefore the chief cause of the decline of the country's material prosperity. To this we will now turn, and for the sake of clearness we will take it under the heads of the Decline of Agriculture, of Industry, and of Commerce. There are however two great general causes of Spain's material decline which we shall do well to take into consideration first of all. They are, I. The indolence of the national character, and the hatred and contempt of the Spaniard for all industrial occupation; II. The continued depopulation of the kingdom. The Spanish character, as we have already seen, was formed in the long struggle against the Moors. Flr causeTM8.1 While Europe had her seven fitful crusades, and indolence of after all failed in her object, Spain had but one, in nalCliar" which she steadily marched forward to the attainment of her end. Hence only the soldier was of value: he who worked peacefully for his livelihood, who let others defend him instead of himself defending his country,--for no one hindered him from ennobling himself by taking arms,--was considered unwor...

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