

Such is a sketch of this branch of industry, to which the Government and people seem to have devoted themselves with a hearty will. I have dwelt at considerable length upon it, as evincing an energy and temper not usually attributed to Mexicans, and for the purpose of exhibiting a phase of character at once creditable to their resolution, and manifesting a degree of independence and thriftiness worthy of imitation.



LETTER XXXI.

THE REVENUE AND RESOURCES OF MEXICO. ARMY. NAVY. PRODUCE OF

MINES. TOTAL COINAGE. THE CHURCH, ITS WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.

The income of the Mexican Government is derived from revenues on foreign commerce, imposts on internal trade, imposts on pulqué, export duty on the precious metals, lotteries, post-office, stamped paper, taxes, tobacco, powder, salt-works, and several other sources of trifling importance.

In 1840, these revenues are stated in the Report of the Minister of the Treasury as follows:

	Nett proceeds after deducting expense of collection.
Imposts on Foreign Commerce,	\$7,115,849
“ Interior “	4,306,585
“ On property, income, &c.	466,061
Exchanges, &c.	307,427
Creditos Activos,	3,309
Balances of accounts,	355
Enteros de productos liquidos,	452,146
Extraordinary subsidy,	103
Arbitrio extraordinario,	78,177
Capitacion,	483
Donations,	13,662
	<hr/>
	\$12,744,157

In 1839, the revenues amounted to \$11,215,848. The income from the post-office department, (which is not included in the statement for 1840,) was \$178,738, in 1839. In 1840, the lotteries produced the gross sum of \$215,437—but as the expenses connected with their management, amounted to \$158,485, it left a balance of but \$56,952, for the Government. The “sealed paper,” or stamp tax, produced \$110,863, but as this impost has been nearly doubled during 1842, the revenue must at present be proportionally greater.

I have been unable to obtain any of the official documents of 1841 and 1842, (in consequence of the disturbed condition of the country,) with the exception of the Custom House returns, for the former year.

	Custom-Houses.	Tonnage Duty.	Nett proceeds after deducting costs of collection.
East Coast.	Vera Cruz,	\$31,032	\$3,374,528
	Tampico,	7,363	1,019,046
	Matamoras,	3,525	279,627
	Mazatlan,	6,245	397,213
West Coast.	Guyamas,	2,092	46,189
	Monterey,	810	85,982
	Acapulco,	573	7,193
	San Blas,	2,719	190,270
		\$55,259	\$5,399,948

It will be perceived that the Custom Houses of Tabasco, Campeché, Sisal, Isla de Carmen, and Bacalar, are not included in the preceding statement, in consequence of the separation of the first (during the period,) from her allegiance to the Republic, and on account of the rebellious condition of the rest. At the date of the statement, reports from Goatzacoalco, Alvarado, Tuxpan, Huatulco, Manzanillo, La Paz, Pueblo Viejo, Altata, Loreto, San Diego, San Francisco, Soto la Marina, and from the frontier posts of Paso del Norte, Comitan, Tonalá, Santa Fé de N. Mexico, y Presidio del Norte, had not been yet received at the Treasury Office in the Capital. The costs of the collection of this revenue amounted to \$52,886, and the salaries of officers to \$295,404.

I regret that I was unable to obtain any very accurate date of the Santa Fé Trade, which, under judicious management, might no doubt be very advantageously conducted for the interest of both countries. In the present distracted state, however, of Texas and the Northern Provinces of Mexico, little is to be hoped, until better feelings and better regulations are firmly established. Santa Fé, and Chihuahua divide the trade; the latter, since the year 1831. The subjoined rough estimate has been given me of the value of our trade at both places since that period:

Years.	Total at cost.	Taken to Chihuahua.	Men.	Wages.
1831	\$250,000	\$40,000	320	130
1832	150,000	45,000	150	80
1833	145,000	50,000	140	75
1834	160,000	60,000	160	80
1835	135,000	55,000	140	70
1836	122,000	55,000	120	60
1837	150,000	75,000	150	80
1838	90,000	50,000	100	50
1839	260,000	150,000	250	135
1840	50,000	10,000	60	30
1841	100,000	50,000	150	80
1842	200,000	60,000	200	120

No one who has resided any length of time in Mexico, either connected or unconnected with commerce, can fail to have heard of the extent to which smuggling has been and still is carried on in the Republic. This infamous system, alike destructive of private morals and public integrity, has become a regular business in portions of the country, and, after having been, to a great extent, suppressed on the Eastern coast, has for several years occupied the attention of numbers on the West. Mr. McClure* calculated that the Republic possesses "a frontier of five thousand miles, including the sinuosities, windings, and turnings of bays, gulfs and rivers on the Pacific; three thousand miles on the United States of America and Texas; and above two thousand five hundred on the Gulf of Mexico; making, in all, ten thousand five hundred miles of frontier to guard against illicit trade, *without an individual on the one thousand two hundredth part of the space to give notice of any depredations that may happen.*"

Now, although the estimate of this philanthropist may appear rather fanciful, when we remember, that wherever there are smugglers to introduce it is probable that there are individuals to receive, and consequently that the Government might be protected; still it is undeniable that the territory is vast, the population sparse, and the corruption of government agents has been as shameful as it was notorious. Facts came to my knowledge, while a resident in Mexico, which proved, beyond question, this immoral tampering, and went far to implicate men of rank and capacity in the country. I forbear to detail these occurrences here, but I have the documents, in writing, under the attestation of an individual who was approached by one of the vile instruments in the deed of shame, and I feel perfectly satisfied of their unexaggerated accuracy. I do not mention this circumstance, for the purpose of reflecting on the existing Government; but simply to direct the attention of such Mexicans as may read these letters, to a frightful evil, the extirpation of which will at once increase the financial resources of the country and improve the morals of their people. It may be urged, perhaps, that it is impossible to correct this mal-administration; and, I confess, there appears to be much force in the remarks which I subjoin, from the author I have just quoted. At page 292, of his "Opinions," Mr. McClure observes:

"In the comparatively limited frontiers, and crowded population of the European monarchies, with their hundreds of thousands of soldiers and officers of the customs, it has been found impossible to prevent smuggling, with all its attendant crimes and corruptions. What hopes, then, can a small population scattered over so extensive a surface, have, that a revenue will be collected, even if it were probable in the present state of morals to find honest collectors! It would be contrary to all former experience and analogy, to expect anything else, in this country, than a gradual diminution of the revenue, in the ratio of the organization of smuggling. All additional guards or officers of the customs, would certainly

* Vide McClure's "Opinions."

increase the quantity of bribery and corruption, but would not add to the revenue a sum equal to their pay!"

NATIONAL DEBT.

The national debt of Mexico is one of very considerable importance, and may be divided into the two great classes of Foreign and Internal debt.

The INTERNAL DEBT amounts to \$18,550,000; and in 1841 the customs were mortgaged to pay this sum, in the following subdivisions:

17 per cent. of the Customs devoted to a debt of	- - -	\$2,040,000
15 " " " " " "	- - -	410,000
12 " " " " " "	- - -	2,100,000
10 " " " " " "	- - -	3,100,000
8 " " " " " "	- - -	1,200,000
10 " " " " Tobacco fund debt,		9,700,000
16½ " " " " Interest on English debt.		
10 " " " " Garrison fund.		
98½		\$18,550,000
1½ balance clear of lien, for the Government!		
100		

The FOREIGN DEBT is still larger than this; and (including the above,) I will state the entire national responsibility, as it existed at the end of last year:

Internal debt,	- - - - -	\$18,550,000
Debt to English creditors,	- - - - -	60,000,000
United States claims and interest, say	- - - - -	2,400,000
Copper to be redeemed,	- - - - -	2,000,000
Claims for Hilazo,	- - - - -	700,000
Bustamante loan,	- - - - -	500,000
		\$84,150,000

Until 1841, the whole of the revenue, except 11½ per cent. was appropriated to the payment of \$18,550,000, while the remaining claims were entirely unprotected by securities. Shortly after the accession of Santa Anna to power, he *suspended* (by a decree of the 16th of February) the payment of the first five funds charged upon the customs, as stated in a preceding table, but reserved the *active appropriation* for the Tobacco and *English interest debts*. This, as may be well imagined, created great dissatisfaction among the mercantile classes, and among numbers of persons who had invested their capital in Government loans, with a reliance upon the *revenues* as a solemn pledge for their redemption. Santa Anna, however, withstood the torrent manfully. He was assailed by legations, newspapers, and individuals, but nothing could induce him to yield the

pressing wants of the Government to their importunities. He was, in fact, forced to the measure. The national credit was irretrievably impaired, and he found it impossible to obtain loans. The consequence was, the seizure of the customs by the *suspension* of their prior appropriation until he was enabled to relieve his Treasury.

Independently of the English and the American debt, the claims upon the Mexican Government have usually been created by means of loans of the most usurious character. In order to illustrate this system, and to show the enormous rates at which lenders endeavored to assure themselves against loss by depreciation, I will recount some transactions which were partly effected in 1841.

On the 20th of September, fifteen days before the treaty of Estansuela, the administration of President Bustamante offered the following terms for a loan of \$1,200,000. It proposed to receive the sum of \$200,000 in *cash*, and \$1,000,000 represented in the *paper or credits* of the Government. These credits or paper were worth, in the market, nine per cent. About one-half of the loan was taken, and the parties obtained orders on the several maritime Custom Houses, receivable in payment of duties.

The revenues of the Custom House of Matamoras, have been always hitherto appropriated to pay the army, on the northern frontier of the Republic. During the administration of General Bustamante, the commandant of Matamoras issued bonds or drafts against that Custom House for \$150,000, receivable for all kinds of duties as cash. He disposed of these bonds to the merchants of that port for \$100,000—and, in addition to the *bonus* of \$50,000, allowed them interest on the \$100,000, at the rate of three per cent. per month, until they had duties to pay which they could extinguish by the drafts.

Another transaction, of a singular nature, develops the character of the Government's negotiations, and can only be accounted for by the receipt of some advantages which the act itself does not disclose to the public.

The mint at Guanajuato, or the right to coin at that place, was contracted for, in 1842, by a most respectable foreign house in Mexico, for \$71,000 *cash*, for the term of *fourteen years*, at the same time that another offer was before the Government, stipulating for the payment of \$400,000 for the same period, payable in annual instalments of \$25,000 each. The \$71,000 in hand, were, however, deemed of more value than the prospective four hundred thousand! This mint leaves a nett annual income of \$60,000!

With such a spendthrift abandonment of the resources of the country, continued, for a series of years, in the midst of the pressure of foreign claims and domestic warfare, it is, indeed, wonderful that Mexico has so long survived the ruin which must inevitably overtake her with a debt of \$84,000,000, and an annual expenditure (as will be seen from the suc-

ceeding statement,) of \$13,000,000, independent of payment of interest, balances, and loans. Yet with all these incumbrances, created under the most usurious exactions, it is greatly to her honor that she has not repudiated the claims of her creditors;—a moral and political firmness in which she may well be emulated by some of those very States that have been loudest in their thoughtless abuse of a sister Republic.

A late Mexican paper states, that the Minister of the Treasury of Mexico has published a decree, by which the President directs twenty-five per cent. of all the receipts of the Custom Houses of the Republic to be set apart as a "sinking fund," to pay the public debt. This fund is to be inviolable. The decree provides for the consolidation and funding of the debt at the rate of a six per cent. stock, for which it will be exchanged by such as choose. Those who do not embrace this arrangement with the Government are to have their claims liquidated, only, when out of the sinking fund now created, those who accede to the exchange of stock, shall have been first of all paid!

If we exclude the American debt, now in the course of payment, (an exclusion nevertheless improper, as the Government has but changed her responsibility from a foreign creditor to a domestic one,) the debt of Mexico may still be fairly estimated at \$82,000,000, which, at six per cent., bears an annual interest of \$4,920,000. The actual income from customs and all resources may be set down at \$13,000,000—25 per cent. on which will produce a fund of \$3,250,000, or \$1,670,000 less than the interest on the whole debt! It may well be asked whence is to proceed the "sinking fund," so long as such a deficiency exists?

TABLE OF THE EXPENSES OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN 1840.

	Dollars.	Total.
SUPREME POWERS.		
Poder Conservador, - - - - -	30,000	
Legislature, - - - - -	319,550	
Executive, Ministers, Council, Secretary, Archives, &c. - - - - -	230,930	
Supreme Court, - - - - -	79,300	
		\$659,780
DIPLOMACY.		
Legations, Consuls, Commissioners, &c. - - - - -		140,000
TREASURY.		
National Treasury, Almacanes generalis, Direccion de Rentas, Heads of the Treasury, and Departmental Treasuries, - - - - -	251,758 6	
Pensions to retired officers, - - - - -	174,942	
Pensions of the <i>Mont de Piete</i> , - - - - -	160,554	
		587,254 6
		\$1,387,034 6

	Dollars.	Total.
B't for'd, \$1,387,034 6		
JUDICIARY.		
Salaries of Departmental Magistrates, Judges and Subalterns, - - - - -		1,207,376
POLITICAL.		
Governors, Secretaries, Departmental Juntas, Prefects, their Secretaries and sub-Prefects, - - - - -		847,467
ECCLESIASTICAL.		
Bishoprics of Sonora and Yucatan, - - - - -	15,200	
Missions, - - - - -	31,930	
		47,130
INSTRUCTION, BENEVOLENCE, AND PUNISHMENT.		
Academy of San Carlos, - - - - -	13,000	
Museum, - - - - -	5,600	
Conservatory of Chapultepec, and Professor of Botany, - - - - -	2,200	
Colleges of St. Juan Lateran, Idefonso, Esperito Santo at Puebla, - - - - -	20,000	
Professors in University at Mexico, - - - - -	7,613	
School of Surgery, - - - - -	1,500	
Professors of Medical School or College, - - - - -	10,800	
Director of Institution of Medical Sciences, &c. &c. - - - - -	2,160	
Hospitals, Prisons, Fortresses, - - - - -	180,000	
		260,409
SALARIES OF VARIOUS OFFICERS OF PALACE.		
Concierge, - - - - -	420	
Architect, - - - - -	200	
Chaplain, - - - - -	600	
Two Porters, - - - - -	1,200	
Gardener, - - - - -	1,000	
		3,420
RENTS, PENSIONS, ETC.		
Collegiate of N. S. of Guadalupe, - - - - -	26,391 4 9	
Civil Pensions, - - - - -	70,178	
		96,596 4 9
Sundries, Printing, &c. &c. - - - - -		87,596 5 3
WAR OFFICE.		
Salaries of officers—(active,) - - - - -	357,397 3 6	
" " " (on leave,) - - - - -	28,759 7 0	
" " " (retired,) - - - - -	718,399 2 0	
Military <i>Mont de Piete</i> , - - - - -	291,079 3 9	
Army, privates, and all other military expenses, - - - - -	6,604,379 7 9	
		8,000,000
DIVIDENDS ON FOREIGN DEBT,		
		1,155,922 2 5
		\$13,155,922 2 5
Exclusive of the payment of loans and balances.		
Mexico, 28th July, 1841.		

The deficiencies to which I have alluded, on the page preceding the last tabular statement, must be still more apparent and lamentable after

an examination of a document which exhibits an expenditure of \$8,000,000 (in a time of peace with all the rest of the world,) for a War Department, the *active* officers of which receive \$357,397 a year, while the *retired* are paid *more than double* that amount; at the same time that the whole Civil Administration of the country costs but about four millions! This statement would appear to indicate a degree of necessary coercion and corruption, which are but slender promises of the growth of peace, glory, and prosperity. The feeble support given to public instruction by direct contributions of the Government I have already alluded to, and the reader may, at a glance, see how much is expended for punishment, and how little for instruction and benevolence. The army is constantly the fondling of the rulers of the day. By it they are elevated to power; by it they are sustained or defeated, and, relying on its bayonets rather than the hearts and *intellects* of the great masses of their countrymen, they are obliged to pay both well and promptly the masters they pretend to rule.

The cost of this branch of the service must have greatly increased in 1842 and 1843, in consequence of the meditated attack upon Texas and the actual conflict with Yucatan. I regret that I have no data upon these subjects; but it may fairly be calculated, that if the expenses were \$8,000,000 in 1840, in a period of comparative tranquillity, (with the exception of a short revolution in the Capital,) they must have been swelled in 1842 and the present year, by the purchase of steamers and munitions of war, to near 10 or \$12,000,000.

ARMY AND NAVY.

In regard to the numbers of the ARMY, I am equally without information since 1840; but I may state that the forces have been considerably augmented, and in all probability amount to 40,000 men. In 1840, the Mexican army was composed of

14 Generals of Division,	\$500	per month.
26 " of Brigade,	375	" "

ARTILLERY.

3 Brigades, (on foot)	
1 " (mounted),	
5 Separate Companies.	

ENGINEER CORPS.

1 Director General,																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			</
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SAPPERS.

1 Battalion.	
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PLANA MAYOR DEL EJERCITO.

This was composed of the General-in-Chief and a number of Colonels, Lieutenant-Colonels, Captains, &c. &c.

PERMANENT INFANTRY.

8 Regiments of 2 battalions each, each battalion of 8 companies, each company of 112 men, officers included—or in all 14,336 persons: each *soldier* is paid, \$11 93½ per month.

ACTIVE INFANTRY.

9 Regiments. This body differs from the preceding, or *Permanent* Infantry, in being liable to service only when required by Government; or, in other words, it is a sort of national militia, well drilled—Total number, 16,128.

PERMANENT CAVALRY.

8 Regiments, each regiment composed of 2 squadrons, each squadron of 2 companies. Each regiment composed, in all, of 676 men,—or the 8 of 4,056, at 12 50 " " 35 Separate Companies in various places throughout the Republic.

ACTIVE CAVALRY.

6 Regiments of 4 squadrons, each squadron of 2 companies.

NAVY.

THE NAVY OF MEXICO consists at present of 3 Steam Frigates, 2 Brigs, 3 Schooners, 2 Gunboats.*

MINES AND COINAGE.

In treating of the resources of men and money of Mexico, it will not be uninteresting (after knowing that the production of the mines amounts in value annually to about twenty-two millions, of which twelve find their way to the mints,) to present a statement of the total coinage of the country, derived from the records of the earliest periods to which access could be had.

*The regular force of the United States, as now authorized by law, consists of 717 commissioned officers, 17 storekeepers, (of whom 15 are attached to the Ordnance and 2 to the Purchasing department,) 250 enlisted men for the ordnance service, and 7,500 non-commissioned officers, musicians, artificers, and privates, 20 chaplains and schoolmasters, and as many ordnance sergeants as there are military posts. Clerks, forage-masters, and wagon-masters, are also employed in the Quartermaster's department from time to time, according to the exigencies of the service. The act of August 23, 1842, reduced the rank and file of the army 3,920 men. The reduction is gradually proceeding in the manner contemplated by the act, and the excess, according to the last returns, is 1,970 men. It is supposed the prescribed minimum will be reached by the beginning of the year 1844.

The whole number of troops now in service is 9,847, consisting of 781 commissioned officers, 9,600 non-commissioned officers, musicians, artificers, and privates, and 247 enlisted men of ordnance.

It is confidently believed that the present military establishment, including all the expenses of the military academy of a permanent or contingent character, may be estimated at \$3,100,000, exclusive of the ordnance, ordnance stores, small arms, and equipments, which are distributed among the States, or accumulated for future use.

TABLE OF THE COINAGE OF MEXICO FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS
TO THE PRESENT DAY.

The Mint of the City of Mexico was established in 1535, but there are no returns for the first 155 years, until 1690. If we take the average of the coinage of these years to have been \$1,000,000, we shall have

From 1690 to 1803, inclusive,	1,353,452,020
" 1803 to 1821, inclusive,	261,354,022
" 1822 - - - - -	5,543,254
" 1823 - - - - -	3,567,821
" 1824 - - - - -	3,503,880
" 1825 - - - - -	6,036,878
" 1825 to 1831 (on an average three millions per annum),	15,000,000
" 1831 - - - - -	13,000,000
" 1832 - - - - -	12,500,000
" 1833 - - - - -	12,500,000
" 1834 - - - - -	12,040,000
" 1835 - - - - -	12,000,000
" 1836 - - - - -	12,050,000
" 1837 - - - - -	11,610,000
" 1838 to 1843 (averaging twelve millions),	60,000,000

To this must be added the coinage of State mints not included in the above:

Guanajuato, from 1812 to 1826	3,024,194
Zacatecas " 1810 to 1826	32,108,185
Guadalajara, " 1812 to 1826	5,659,159
Durango, " 1811 to 1826	7,483,626
Chihuahua, " 1811 to 1814	3,603,660
Sombrerete, " 1810 to 1811	1,561,249

All of these for the five years (after 1826) since which they have been calculated in the general coinage,

Total	\$2,068,597,948
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This amount, you will see, is less than it has been made by several other writers.

THE CHURCH OF MEXICO—ITS WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.

The CHURCH OF MEXICO is the next and last topic to which I shall direct your attention, and I am compelled again to regret the want of an accurate account of the convents, properties, members, and wealth of the Religious Orders in 1842. I diligently sought information from individuals who should have been *au fait* on these subjects, yet I could gain from

them but little knowledge of an authentic character. I am satisfied, that this arose neither from a narrow distrust of foreigners, nor a Chinese dislike of divulging the secrets of their country. The want of a general work of reference on statistics is denounced, as "shameful and lamentable," by Señor Otero in his treatise on the social and political condition of Mexico.

"In 1842," says this writer, "we possess no publication upon Mexican statistics except the work of Baron Humboldt, written in 1804. That work, precious as it is, has become useless as a guide, in consequence of the immense changes during the intervention of a long and revolutionary period. A complete statistical treatise might be easily compiled without expense to the National Treasury, by merely obliging the functionaries of the Government to make regular and minute returns, which should be digested and edited by competent persons in the Capital. Without such a work it will be impossible to understand the complicated interests of this vast country, or to keep the machinery of its Government in successful operation."

It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how the administrations carried on the affairs of the nation as long as they have done, without a system of statistical book-keeping, which is as necessary for them as a ledger is for the prudent merchant.

The Ministers of State have occasionally presented reports to the National Congresses upon the condition of their several Departments; but these productions have been brief, unsatisfactory, without detail, and rather involving the matters of which they treat in doubt and uncertainty, by their vague generalization, than clearly illustrating the interests, wants, and resources of the Republic.

Of all branches of the national administration, none has suffered more obscuration by this diplomatic rhetoric than the question of the Church, which properly belonged to the portfolio of the Minister of Public Justice and Instruction. It was a subject that men seemed fearful to approach. They admitted that there were abuses in the body;—that many of its members were corrupt, idle, ignorant, and vicious;—and that it enjoyed large revenues, flowing in a narrow stream, which, if suffered to diverge into smaller rivulets, would nourish the parched land and improve the condition of suffering multitudes. But wealth and property were banned and sanctified. The *establishment* was the *religion*; and he who ventured to assail the one must necessarily attack the other. Thus, even patriots who were not ordinarily affected by nervous dread, stood appalled at the first frown of priestly indignation, and trembled for their fate in a conflict between the temporal power and that tremendous spiritual influence which slept like an electric fire in the hearts of the people, ready, on the slightest impulse, to be kindled into a destructive flame.

It would be unjust, however, to leave you under the impression that the ministers of this church have been solely engaged in enriching them-

* Vide Otero, Cuestion Social y Politica, p. 30-31.