

that whenever applied by the inhabitant of any one place to the temperature of any other, it implied an increase, and not a diminution, of heat. Thus, Jālāpā would certainly be called *Tierra templada*, by a native of Mexico, although Mexico might not perhaps be so termed by a native of Jalapa; while both would be designated in the same way by an inhabitant of *Tierra fria*, to whose district nature has assigned a degree of warmth much inferior to that of either of the other two.

Notwithstanding the arbitrary manner in which these terms are used, I shall frequently employ them in the course of this work; for, until a barometrical survey of the whole country has been executed, and the relative height of the principal points fixed, it would require a tedious explanation to give the ideas which the words *Tierra caliente*, and *Tierra templada*, are sure to convey. In order to illustrate still farther the peculiar character of the country, of which I fear that no words can furnish an adequate idea, I subjoin a sketch of Mexico, which, supposing it a bird's-eye-view, without any pretensions to geographical accuracy, may serve to show the relative position of the *Tierra caliente* and the Table-land, and to explain the variety of climate in the intermediate space.

The former division of New Spain into what was denominated the "Kingdom of Mexico," and the Eastern and Western Internal provinces, was never very distinct, and is now of little importance;

as the Republic is distributed, under the present system, into States, of which the Federal government is composed. These states are nineteen in number, and commence to the South, with the Peninsula of Yūcātān or Mēridā to the East; and Tābāscō, Las Chīāpās, and Ōāxācā to the South and West; which are followed in regular succession towards the North by Vērācrūz, Tāmāulipās, San Luis Pōtōsī, New Lēōn, Cōhāhūilā, and Tēxās, which comprise the whole territory to the frontiers of the United States, on the Gulph side: La Pūēblā, Mēxicō, Vāllādōlid, Gūadālājārā, Sōnōrā, and Cīnāloā, the Western extremities of which border on the Pacific; and Qūerētārō, Gūanājūatō, Zācātēcās, Dūrāngō, Chīhūahuā, and New Mexico, which occupy the centre of the country, and extend, between the two oceans, towards the Northern frontier. Beyond these again, are Old and New California, (which in some maps is called New Albion,) and the Indian territory, the extent and inhabitants of which are almost equally unknown. The two Californias and New Mexico are not yet admitted to the rank of independent States, their population not entitling them to be represented in the Congress. Each of the others returns a quota of deputies, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants.

As it is the general character of the country, and not that of particular States, that forms the subject under consideration in the present chapter, I shall reserve for another part of my work the statistical

details which I collected during my visit to the Interior, and proceed to point out here a few of the circumstances, by which the fate of Mexico, as a country, is most likely to be influenced.

Nature has bestowed upon her a soil teeming with fertility, and a climate, under which almost every production of the Old, and the New World finds the exact degree of heat necessary in order to bring it to perfection. But the peculiarity of structure, in which this variety of climate originates, neutralizes, in some measure, the advantages which the country might otherwise derive from it, by rendering the communication between the Table-land and the coast extremely difficult, and confining, within very narrow limits, the intercourse of the States in the interior with each other. On the Table-land there are no canals, (with the exception of that from Chalco to Mexico, about seven leagues in extent,) and no navigable rivers; nor does the nature of the roads allow of a general use of wheel-carriages; every thing is therefore conveyed on mules, from one point to another, and this mode of carriage, when applied to the more bulky agricultural produce of the country, increases, enormously, the price of the articles of most general consumption, before they can reach the principal markets. Thus, in the Capital, which draws its supplies from a circle of perhaps sixty leagues, comprising the valley of Mexico, and the fertile plains of Tōlucā, as well as the great corn lands of the Bāxiō and La Pueblā, wheat,

barley, straw, maize, and wood, are not only dear, but the supply is uncertain\*; while in the districts immediately beyond this circle, but which, from their distance, are excluded from the market, the same articles are a mere drug, and may be purchased at a fraction of the price.

The same effect is produced in the vicinity of each of the great towns of the interior, and more particularly of the mining districts, where, from the number of animals employed, the demand is very great. But for the mass of the produce of the country there is no home-market, and therefore no encouragement for industry, beyond the production of the mere necessaries of life.

On the Table-land, there is no doubt that this disadvantage may, to a certain extent, be removed, and distant points be brought more into contact, by the establishment of lines of road, traversing the country from North to South, or even of canals, as soon as the civilization and population of the Republic are sufficiently advanced for the attempt. The nature of the ground would rather favour than oppose the project; but to the East, and West, the obstacles to be overcome are very serious. On the Eastern side, particularly, the descent from the Table-land is so precipitous, that it appears to me very questionable whether it be

\* Wheat sells for fourteen and sixteen dollars the carga (300 lbs.); barley for four or five dollars, according to the season; charcoal for one dollar, and, in the rainy season, for one and a-half dollar per arroba (of 25 lbs.)

possible to construct a road sufficiently good to open a communication with the coast to the land-owners of the Table-land; I mean, *such* a communication as would enable them to bring their produce into the West Indian, or even the European market, at the same price as the flour from the United States. It is true, that from the extraordinary ratio of increase, and the lowness of wages in Mexico, a greater expense in conveyance might be borne; but as the Americans are already in possession of the market, that expense must be so far reduced, as to lower the price of Mexican wheat, in the first instance, to something *below* that, at which it can be offered by the farmers of Kentucky, and the Anglo-American Western States.

To ascertain, and accomplish this, (if practicable,) should be the great object of the Mexican government; as nothing could have so immediate an effect upon the general interests of the country. The vessels by which Mexico is now supplied with European manufactures, return in ballast, or obtain, with difficulty, a cargo of Campeche wood, or coffee; in default of which, remittances are made in specie alone. Roads, if constructed with success, as Baron Humboldt, and many other scientific men, are of opinion that they may be, would give quite a different character to trade, by furnishing a mass of raw produce for exportation, which would, at once, increase the consumption of the country, (by giving a value to property, which has now, comparatively,

none,) and the advantages of the foreign merchant, by enabling him to invest his profits immediately in a second venture. Towards this, as yet, nothing has been done. The proposals made by foreign houses of respectability, in 1825, for the establishment of a line of roads between Vera Cruz and the Capital, were not taken advantage of, because the government conceived that the mania for foreign investments in England would last for ever; and when, in 1826, it perceived its error, no foreign capitalist would advance a shilling towards the attempt. With the exception, therefore, of some temporary improvements, made by the Real del Monte Company for the conveyance of its steam-engines, the principal communication with the coast is now in the same state as in 1815, when the great stone-causeway, built by the merchants of Vera Cruz in 1803, was destroyed by the insurgents, in order to cut off the intercourse between the Peninsula, and the Spanish Authorities, and merchants, in the Capital. When this is thoroughly repaired, and continued across the Table-land into the vicinity of the corn lands of La Puebla, it may be expected to produce a great change in the agricultural prosperity of the country, if the opinions of those, who think it possible to bring Mexican flour into the Havanna market, at a lower price than that of the United States, prove to be correct. I am myself inclined to question the probability of Mexico ever finding a source of wealth in the exportation of her *Cerealia*, or, as it would be termed

in the United States, her *bread stuffs*; and this, not from any deficiency in the power of producing, to almost any extent, but from the want of a market for the produce when raised. The consumption of the West Indian Islands is extremely limited, and most European nations have been endeavouring, for some years, to render themselves independent of external supplies, by growing a sufficiency of corn for home consumption. The effects which have been produced already by this system upon the United States, prove how little reliance Mexico can place upon the foreign market. The exports of *bread stuffs* from the United States, amounted, in 1817, to 20,388,000 dollars; in 1821, to 5,296,000, (*vide* Mellish's United States;) and the consequence of this sudden falling off would have been inevitable ruin to the grain-growing states, had they not, instantly, turned to manufactures the capital, and the population, which agriculture had before employed. But the necessity for doing this, in a country where internal navigation afforded to the landowner every facility for disposing of his produce, holds out but little encouragement to the proprietors of a country, where no such facilities exist, to attempt to bring into the market produce of a similar description, however well adapted the nature of the soil may be for its growth.

I do not, therefore, conceive that the exportations of Mexico in corn will ever be very considerable; but in those articles, which we term Colonial pro-

duce, for which there is a constant demand in Europe, and which a large portion of her territory is so admirably qualified to produce, she has a source of wealth as inexhaustible as her mines themselves. The whole Eastern coast of Mexico, extending, in length, from the River Guásacūalco to the Northern frontier, and, in breadth, from the ocean, to that point upon the slope of the Cordillera, at which Tropical fruits cease to thrive, is susceptible of the very highest cultivation; nor can any part of the now exhausted islands sustain a competition with the fertility of its virgin soil.

The state of Vera Cruz alone is capable of supplying all Europe with sugar. Humboldt estimates the produce of its richest mould at 2800 *kilogrammes* per *hectare*, while that of Cuba does not exceed 1400 *kilogrammes*; so that the balance is as two to one in favour of Vera Cruz.

Coffee is produced in a ratio almost equally extraordinary. Indigo and tobacco succeed as well, while, a little to the North, the state of Texas, which enjoys nearly the same climate as Louisiana, or South Carolina, is equally well adapted to the growth of cotton, the great staple of the United States. Mexico can never want a market for these more precious articles, to which the attention of the landowners is now much turned. Immense coffee plantations have been made, during the last four years, in the vicinity of Córdova and Ōřizāva; cotton has been planted, to a considerable extent, by the American

colonists in Texas ; and the reestablishment of crushing-mills for the cane, which now grows almost spontaneously throughout Vera Cruz, will be one of the first effects of the recovery of the country from that state of absolute stagnation, into which every thing has been thrown, during the last fifteen years, by the civil war.

The prospect of so abundant a supply of many of those articles, which have, hitherto, been regarded as the *luxuries* of life, is interesting to Europe, and to Great Britain in particular. There can be no doubt, that the opening of the American continent will have the effect of rendering almost universal the use of many things, which have long been confined to the privileged few ; while the more general consumption of these very articles in the Old World, will lead to a more general use of European manufactures in the New, among people, who have, hitherto, been excluded from the benefits of civilization.

No better proof of this can be given, than the change which I have myself witnessed, in the course of three years, in the habits and appearance of the lower classes in Mexico. Before the Revolution, the streets of the capital were infested with a race of naked lazzaroni, whose numbers were supposed to amount to nearly twenty thousand, and who were, at once, the disgrace, and the bane, of all public places. This class has now almost totally disappeared ; clothing has become so common, that none

appear without it. In the mining districts, a similar change has occurred ; and as the resources of the country develop themselves, there is little doubt that it will gradually spread into the most remote provinces.

Mexico cannot, during the present century, be a manufacturing country, and, probably, will not attempt it. Her mines, and her agriculture, will enable her, with only common industry, to enjoy all the advantages of Transatlantic arts, and to bring to her own door the luxuries of the highest civilization. With the necessaries of life she is abundantly provided within herself, as will be seen by the following sections, which will contain a general account of her population, and productions.

A great maritime power she likewise cannot be, for her ports, on the Atlantic side, are barely sufficient for the purposes of commerce, and were, certainly, never intended by nature for naval depôts. Most of them are insecure, and some, mere roadsteads. The entrance to her principal rivers is obstructed by sand bars ; and though art may, in some measure, correct these deficiencies, yet it cannot give what nature has denied, a harbour of sufficient magnitude to become a fit station for any considerable maritime force. Fortunately, this is not in any way essential to the prosperity of the country, as the vicinity of the United States, and the multitude of European vessels which seek the

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ports of Mexico with the manufactures of their respective countries, will afford sufficient facilities for the exportation of her raw produce, to whatever extent it may be carried.

On the western coast, the case is different. From Ācāpūlcō to Guāymās, (in the Gulph of California,) there is a series of magnificent ports, many of which no vessel has ever yet entered. Ācāpūlcō itself (the finest harbour, perhaps, in the world,) is but little frequented; its importance ceased with the trade of the galleons, nor is it likely ever to recover its former fame. The China and India trade has taken a different line, most of the ships engaged in it discharging their cargoes at the ports of Sām Blās, Māzātlān, and Guāymās; the demand for China goods being found to be greater on the Northern, and Western part of the Table-land, which is not yet sufficiently supplied with European manufactures, than in the Capital, where the market is absolutely glutted. Many years, however, must elapse before the commerce of the Western coast of Mexico can acquire any thing like the importance of that carried on upon the Eastern side; for, as there is but little difference between the agricultural produce of the countries with which she can hold intercourse through the medium of the Pacific, (Guāyāquil, Pērū and Chile, China and Calcutta,) and her own, all remittances must be made in specie; with the exception of the hides, tallow, and

wheat of California, in which an extensive trade is already carried on.

I have now traced most of the leading features which characterize Mexico as a country, with the exception of her mineral wealth. Silver may be called one of the staple commodities of New Spain; but I shall have occasion to enter into this subject, so fully, in the fourth book of this sketch, which is devoted to an account of the mines, that it would be superfluous to state any thing here but the fact, that the average annual amount of the silver raised before the revolution was twenty-four millions of dollars; a sum sufficient, alone, (without making any allowance for agricultural produce,) to render the country capable of producing it, a valuable market for European manufactures.

When added to those sources of wealth, which I have already pointed out, and to which I shall allude more fully in the third section, it places Mexico almost in the first rank of *consuming* nations, and ought to render her progress towards that station, which she is destined to occupy amongst the great communities of the world, an object of the deepest interest to all. Should my present undertaking have the effect of directing to the subject the attention of some one better qualified to do justice to it than myself, all that I venture to hope from this sketch, will be fully accomplished.