

indigo plantations of Sãn Sãlvãdõr, (in Guatemala,) which produce annually 12,000 tercios, or 1,800,000 lbs. of indigo, valued at (2,000,000 of dollars,) there is reason to suppose that the plant might be cultivated there with great success; but for this, as for every thing else in Mexico, time is requisite. The resources of the country cannot be developed in a day; and whatever the future capabilities of Tabasco may be, it is now one of the poorest states of the Federation.

CACAO.

Cacava quahuatl.

It is from Mexico that both the use, and the name of chocolate, (Aztec chocolatl,) were borrowed, and introduced into Europe; but the cacao of Sõcõnõscõ, (in Central America,) from its superiority to all others, has entirely supplanted, in Mexico, the use of the cacao of Mexican growth, and but little attention is, consequently, paid to its cultivation. The plant appears to succeed better nearer the Equator, in the low hot grounds of Cãrãccãs, Guãtẽmãlã, and Guãyãqũil, where it is now grown to a great extent. From all of these Mexico draws an annual supply: but there are still some plantations of cacao near Cõlimã (on the Western coast,) in the Isthmus of Tẽhuãtẽpẽc, and in the State of Tabasco, where it appears, by the statistical report of 1826, to form an article of considerable importance. Like indigo, it is supposed

to have been originally an indigenous plant, but the principal plantations are now found on the banks of rivers, or in districts liable to be annually overflowed, (tierras anegadizas,) in which the cacao tree thrives best. The number of trees now under cultivation is not known, but the average annual produce is stated not to be less than 15,000 cargas, of 60lbs. each.

COTTON.

Cotton was found amongst the indigenous productions of Mexico, at the time of the conquest, and furnished almost the only clothing used by the natives. The cultivation has been since much neglected, and the art of imparting to it the brilliant colours so common amongst the Aztecs, entirely lost. Up to the close of the last century, however, the annual value of the cotton manufactures of the country was estimated at five millions of dollars. They are now gradually disappearing, as the supply of European manufactures becomes more abundant, and will probably cease to exist in the course of a few years; but the raw material, by which they were supplied, may become of the greatest importance, if the Cotton plantations be kept up as an article, not of home consumption, but of exportation for the foreign market. The Mexicans are not yet aware of all the advantages which they might derive from this change, or of the facility with which it might be effected.

Throughout the United States, Cotton is a plant of annual growth; the frost destroys it, and every year the labour of clearing the ground, and forming a fresh plantation, must be undertaken anew.

In the Tierra caliente of Mexico, nothing of the kind is required; the tree propagates itself, and the only attention requisite, on the part of the proprietor, is to prevent the ground from being overrun by the multiplicity of other plants, which the profuse vegetation of the Tropics is continually calling into existence.

There are still considerable Cotton plantations upon the Western coast, and in the vicinity of the River Nāzās, in Dūrāngō, from whence the Cotton spinners of Zācātēcās, Sāltillō, and San Luis, are supplied with raw material for their Tapalos (shawls) and other domestic manufactures.

The price of cotton on the Table-land has been hitherto, very high, from the expense of carriage; for, until very lately, a cotton gin (simple as the invention is) was unknown in any part of the country, and the cotton was sent from the place where it was grown, to the nearest manufacturing district, without being even separated from the seeds, much less cleaned, or pressed, or submitted to any of those processes by which the bulk is usually reduced. But this state of things cannot last; and where the remedy is so easy, and the advantages so great, it is impossible that public attention should not, speedily, be turned to an object of so much

interest, not only to Mexico, but to all the manufacturing countries of the Old World. Twenty-five thousand Arrobas of Cotton is the utmost that has yet been exported from Veracruz in the year; but the supply must increase with the demand, since no great exertion or capital are required to produce it. In Texas, Austin's colony already makes large remittances of cotton to New Orleans; and I doubt not that this branch of agriculture will soon be every where duly appreciated.

In the United States, the production of cotton increased, (according to Humboldt,) in six years, (from 1797 to 1803,) in the ratio of three hundred and seventy-seven to one.

Were it possible to communicate a very small portion of similar activity to Mexico, the effect upon her external trade would be considerable; for, in 1824, the value of the cotton exported from the United States, amounted to 21,947,404 dollars, (*vide* Mellish's United States,) one-tenth, or even one-twentieth part of which would form no unimportant item in the exports of a country, which, at present, is forced to cover the amount of its importations, almost entirely with cochineal and bullion.

VANILLA.—(*Epidendrum Vanilloe.*)

This is one of the endless variety of parasitic plants, with which the forests of Vērācruz abound. It was long thought to be confined, almost entirely, to the district of Mīsāntlā, at the foot of the mountain of Qūilātē, (in Vērācruz,) and to the vicinity of

25,000.
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6,250,000 1/2

the village of Teūtilā, in the state of Ōāxācā; but it has recently been discovered in great abundance in Tabasco, upon the mountains near the coast, where, during the last two years, some hundreds of millares have been collected, with every probability of a farther increase. In Ōāxācā and Vērācruz, the cultivation is entirely in the hands of the Indians. It is a very simple process, for a shoot of the Vanilla, when planted at the foot of the tree destined to support it, requires no other care than to be freed, occasionally, from the hardier creepers, by which its progress is impeded. It gives fruit the third season, and continues to produce for thirty, or forty, years without interruption. The pods are sold by the Millar, or thousand, subdivided into mazos, or packets of fifty pods each. To prepare these for the market, the Vanilla is dried for some hours in the sun, and then wrapped in woollen cloths, to sweat it; after which it is again exposed to the sun, dried, and packed up.

There are several different qualities of Vanilla, designated as Grande fina, Chica fina, Zacate, Rezacate, and Basura. The best of these sold, before the revolution, at Veracruz, for about forty-four dollars a Millar, from nine to eighteen hundred of which were exported annually.

JALAP.

Convolvulus Jalapæ.

This drug takes its name from the town of Jalapa, in the vicinity of which it is found.

It is the root of a parasitic plant, with leaves like the ivy, and a red flower, which has the property of shunning the light, and opening only at night, whence the French name for it, *Belle de nuit*. The quantity exported from Veracruz seldom exceeds three thousand quintals.

COCHINEAL.

Cochineal is another of those precious productions which Nature seems to have bestowed, almost exclusively, upon Mexico; for the insect which bears the same name in the Brazils is of a very inferior kind. It is that known by the naturalists as Grana Silvestre, and the dye extracted from it is neither so brilliant, nor so durable, as that of the Grana Fina, with which Mexico supplies the European market. The Grana Fina, at its utmost growth, resembles a bug in size and colour, with the exception of a mealy, or whitish powder, through which the rings, or cross stripes on the back of the insect, are distinctly visible: The female alone produces the dye; the males are smaller, and one is found sufficient for three hundred females.

According to Humboldt, the insect is bred on a species of Cactus, (opuntia, or Indian fig,) the fruit of which is white.

The Cochineal feeds only upon the leaf. The process of rearing it is complicated, and attended with much difficulty: the leaves of the Nopal, on which the seed is deposited, must be kept free from all extrane-

ous substances, and in the Cochineal districts the Indian women are seen bending over them for hours together, and brushing them lightly with a squirrel's tail.

In a good year, one pound of Semilla, deposited upon the plant in October, will yield, in December, twelve pounds of Cochineal, leaving a sufficient quantity of seed behind to give a second crop in May.

The plantations of the Cochineal Cactus are confined to the district of La Mīstēcā, in the State of Ōāxācā. Some of these Haciendas de Nōpālēs contain from fifty, to sixty, thousand plants, arranged in lines, like the Aloes in the Maguey plantations which I have already described, and cut down to a certain height, in order to enable the Nopaleros to clean them more easily.

In the year 1758, a government registry office was established at Ōāxācā, in consequence of the complaints of some English merchants, who had received cargoes of adulterated Cochineal, in which all the Cochineal produced in the province was ordered to be examined and registered. By the official returns which I possess, it appears that the value of the Cochineal entered upon the books of this office up to 1815, was 91,308,907 dollars, which, upon fifty-seven years, gives an average of 1,601,910 dollars per annum, without making any allowance for contraband, which has always been carried on to the amount of nearly half a million more. The number

of pounds collected during the same time was 37,835,104lbs.; so that the price current upon the spot, averaged two dollars, three and a half reals, a pound; it has varied, however, from six, to thirty-four reals, and has even risen from six, to twenty-four, in the same year.

The annual registered exportation of Cochineal from Veracruz, has amounted, according to the Consulado reports, during a term of twenty-five years, (from 1796 to 1820 inclusive,) to 34,316,961 dollars, being the value of 352,843 Arrobas of Cochineal; which gives an average of 1,372,678 dollars, and 14,113 Arrobas upon each year. The total registered produce of Ōāxācā being, as we have seen, 37,835,104lbs. (1,513,404 Arrobas,) on a term of fifty-seven years, which gives 26,550 Arrobas, as the average of each year, it becomes evident, that an illicit trade, to an enormous extent, must have been carried on; as the difference between the produce and the exportation, would give 12,437 Arrobas as the annual home consumption of Mexico, where, certainly, not half that number of pounds are employed. If, therefore, it be supposed that one-Fourth more is produced in Oaxaca than is registered, an allowance of at least one-Third must be made for contraband upon the coast. This would give 1,830,237 dollars as the value of the exportations, (taking 1,372,678 dollars as the average of the registers;) while the produce, adding one-fourth, as before stated, to the average registered value on fifty-seven years, (1,601,910

dollars,) would be 2,002,387 dollars, which bears a fair proportion to the exportation, and at which I am consequently inclined to think that the cochineal annually raised in Mexico may fairly be estimated.

Many are disposed to rate it much higher, (two millions and a half of dollars,) but as I am not in possession of any data that warrant this supposition, I shall confine myself to the calculation given above, in which I am borne out by positive facts. The crop is divided into three classes,—Grana, Granilla, and Polvos de Grana, to which may be added, Zacatilla, the name given to the December crop in the Misteca, the quality of which is thought to be superior to that of the others.

WAX.

The great consumption of wax in the church ceremonies renders this an article of much importance. Some attention is paid to it in the Peninsula of Yūcātān, where there are Colmenares, containing six and seven hundred hives.

But Mexico imports annually a large quantity, (from two to three thousand Arrobas,) which, now that the direct trade with the Havanna is closed, are introduced principally through New Orleans.

Mexico possesses, in addition to the productions which I have passed in review, Tabascan pepper, (*Pimienta malagueta, o'llainada,*) which grows wild throughout that State, and is collected in the months of July and August; Campeche log-wood, Mahog-

any, equal to that of St. Domingo or Cuba, and a thousand other varieties of timber, of the most beautiful and variegated kinds. All these have been, hitherto, neglected, nor is there yet a single saw-mill in the *Tierra calientes*, in which they are principally found; but the States are endeavouring to bring this branch of national industry into activity, by fitting up with native woods the halls of Congress, and other public offices, which have been established under the New System.

Pearls are found in abundance on the western coast, and particularly in the Gulph of California, where, although the diving-bell has failed, the native divers are by no means unsuccessful.

Few countries are richer than Mexico in domestic animals, the horned cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, and horses, introduced by the Spaniards, have flourished in every part of her territory, and multiplied to such a degree that their numbers are now incalculable.

In Texas, California, and the Indian country, vast herds run wild in the forests, and even in the interior the number both of horses and cattle kept on many of the large Haciendas is hardly known. Buffon's theory of the degeneration of European animals in America is totally unfounded. As Humboldt beautifully expresses it, "since the facts alleged have been carefully examined, naturalists have discovered proofs of harmony, where the eloquent writer announced only contrasts."

The wool of the Mexican sheep is supposed to be

of an inferior quality, but I am inclined to attribute its defects more to neglect, and to the too great abundance of the Cactus, and other thorny shrubs, in the plains where the great flocks of the Interior are fed, than to any peculiarity in the climate.

Wherever due attention is paid to the subject, and care taken to preserve the fleece from injury, the quality seems to improve, and the price rises from ten, or fourteen reals, to twenty-four, and twenty-eight reals, per Arroba. This is the case at Quērētārō, with what is termed the *Lana de chinchorro*, of which I shall have occasion to speak in the account of my journey into the Interior.

The total agricultural produce of Mexico, calculated by Humboldt upon the Tithes, (on a term of ten years,) with an allowance of three millions of dollars for the Cochineal, the Vanilla, Jalap, Sarsaparilla, and Tabascan pepper, which paid no tithes, and two millions more for the Sugar and Indigo, upon which the clergy only received a duty of four per cent., was found to amount to twenty-nine millions of dollars, and thus to exceed, by four millions, the annual average produce of the mines, from which the wealth of the country was supposed to be principally derived.

Of the present amount it is impossible to form any correct estimate, from the state of disorganization into which both church, and state, have been thrown by the civil war.

But the produce, under less favourable circum-

stances, cannot be objected to as a criterion of what may again be; and, should the country continue in a state of tranquillity, I am inclined to think, that before the year 1835, the agricultural wealth of New Spain will be at least equal to that of 1803.

Without wishing to found any unreasonable hypothesis upon the contents of the preceding pages, it appears to me that they warrant the following conclusions.

That Mexico possesses the means of maintaining, in abundance, a population infinitely superior to the present number of its inhabitants.

That although, from the peculiar structure of the country, the agricultural wealth of the Table-land is not likely to be brought into the European market, it ensures the general prosperity of the interior; while the cotton, coffee, sugar, and indigo, cacao, and other productions of the Coasts, will form, in the course of a few years, a very considerable mass of exportable commodities.

That these, in conjunction with the cochineal, and the precious metals, must render the external trade of New Spain highly interesting to Europe; while the amount of the population, and the absence of manufactures, give to the internal consumption of the country an importance, which none of the other New States of America possess.

Mexico contains nearly one half of the seventeen millions of inhabitants, that are said to compose the population of the former colonies of Spain, and this

half possesses, perhaps, the largest share of the mineral and vegetable riches of the New World.

It is not, therefore, a mere theory to suppose that the progress of such a country must exercise a considerable influence upon the manufacturing industry of the Old World.

Of its future consumption, (as I stated in the first section,) no estimate can be formed by that of former times, when its resources were prevented from developing themselves by the jealous policy of the Mother country, which will form the subject of the following section.

Its probable importance may be more easily deduced from the facts which I shall endeavour to embody in the present work, in order to enable my readers to form their own conclusions upon data, the authenticity of which I need not add that I have taken all possible pains to ascertain.

SECTION IV.

SPANISH COLONIAL SYSTEM.

UNDER this head, it is my intention to give some account of the mode in which the Internal government of the former Spanish Colonies was carried on, before the year 1810, and to add a short sketch of those prohibitory laws with regard to foreign trade, which formed so marked a feature in the policy of the Mother country. It is true, that these laws have ceased to exist, but an acquaintance with them, as well as a knowledge of the political institutions by which they were supported, are essential to a right understanding of the events that have since taken place; for it is in the complication of abuses, to which the Old System gave rise, that we must seek the causes of that Revolution, which has changed the face of the New World.

With the exception of Brazil, Dutch and French Guiana, and our present colonies of Demerara and Esequibo, the Spanish possessions occupied the whole of South America, the Isthmus of Pánamā, and a portion of the Northern continent, which extended to the confines of the United States.