

World; although there was not, I believe, an article of Mexican manufacture, that might not have been procured from Europe, of a superior quality, and at an infinitely lower price.*

Here, too, monopoly exercised its pernicious influence: as soon as the native manufactures became of importance, they fell into the hands of Spanish capitalists, who concentrated them, as much as possible, in the immediate vicinity of the Capital, (at La Puebla and Quērētārō,) from which places the inhabitants of the Interior, (where all rival establishments were discouraged,) were forced to draw their supplies of all the articles of ordinary consumption.

The effects of this system upon both the foreign and domestic trade of the country, were developed, in 1811, by Mr. Rāmōs Arizpē, (then deputy to the Cortes for the State of Cōhāhūilā,) in a report upon the Eastern Internal Provinces, to which I have already had occasion to allude. (Book I., Section IV.)†

* Imitations of some of the best of the Mexican manufactures have been tried at Glasgow, and it has been found that a Serape, or party-coloured woollen wrapper, which, at Sältillō, or Quērētārō, sells for eighteen, twenty, and even twenty-four dollars, might be made here, sent across the Atlantic, and sold on the Table land, with freight, carriage, and profit included, for eight, or, at most, ten dollars.

† The Eastern Internal Provinces, under the old territorial division of the country, comprehended Cōhāhūilā and Texas, New León, New Sāntāndēr, and Tāmāulipās.

He there states, that the cotton and wool produced in these Provinces, were exported, and returned, at the end of the year, from Quērētārō and San Luis, rudely made up, indeed, but charged with all the additional costs of double carriage, and of three or four Ālcāvālās, in proportion to the number of hands, through which they had passed.

With regard to European goods, he demonstrates the disadvantage to be still greater. They were bought in Cadiz of the *second* hand, (there being but few articles imported into Mexico of *bona fide* Spanish produce;) in Veracruz, of the *third*; in Mexico, Quērētārō, or Zācātēcās, (the principal inland depôts) of the fourth; at the great fair of Saltillo, (where the retail dealers of the Eastern Provinces purchased their yearly provision,) of the fifth, and in each of these Provinces, of the sixth hand.

Before they arrived there, they paid a duty on entering Cadiz, and another on leaving it made up for the American market; a duty on entering Veracruz; Ālcāvālā, on the sale there; Ālcāvālā, on the second transfer at Mexico, or Quērētārō, where the Saltillo trader made his purchases; Alcavala, at Saltillo, and Alcavala again in each of the Provincial towns, where the goods were ultimately retailed. The original manufacturer had his profit; the Cadiz merchant his; the merchants of Veracruz, and Mexico, or Queretaro, theirs; the Saltillo trader his; the retail dealers theirs again; while the whole of these

accumulated duties, and profits, together with the charges of a land carriage from the coast, by the most circuitous route, fell upon the unfortunate inhabitants of a portion of the country, which, under a more judicious system, might have seen all its wants supplied, through the ports of San Bernardo, (in Texas;) Refugio, (at the mouth of the Rio Bravo;) and Altamira, (all of which are within sixty leagues of some of the principal towns,) at a moderate price, and without there being a single natural difficulty to be overcome.

But any change in this respect, required (as stated by the Regency, in 1810, on the repeal of the first concessions in favour of a free trade,) a previous revision of the whole code of prohibitive laws; and this was a subject of too much delicacy for the monopolists of Cadiz, and Veracruz, to allow of any interference with it, which their money, or influence could avert.

As long as these lasted, all the ports to the North of Veracruz remained closed, and the inhabitants of the Frontier provinces of Mexico were compelled to lay in their whole stock of necessaries for the year, at the great fair of Saltillo. Even there, they laboured under peculiar disadvantages. So little of the money coined in the Capital found its way back to the North, that the farmers were often obliged to make their payments in kind, which was done at such a loss, that the whole produce of an estate was

sometimes insufficient to enable the proprietor to furnish his family with the proper supplies. In this case, credit was given upon a mortgage of a part of the property; and the debt was allowed to increase, from year to year, until the whole estate was swallowed up.

It will hardly be believed that this iniquitous scheme formed not the least lucrative part of the speculations of the Mexican and Saltillo trader, and that no inconsiderable portion of the landed property in the North, was thrown by it, latterly, into their hands.

The Western Internal Provinces, which abounded more in the precious metals, were enabled, by this means, to obtain a more regular supply of European goods; and thousands of mules were employed, before the year 1810, in the trade between Dürängö and the Capital. They came, loaded with bars of silver, hides, tallow, corn, a little wine, chile, and sometimes wheat; and returned with mining stores, (quick-silver, steel, and iron,) brandy, and manufactures, both foreign and domestic.

During this period, at Pueblă alone, 20,000 Mantas, (pieces of cotton of thirty-two yards each,) were often made in the year; and, at Quērētārō, from sixty-three, to sixty-five, thousand Arrobas of wool were worked up into Panos, Xergetillas, Bayetas, and Xergas, under which names the different woollen manufactures, in use amongst the common people,

were designated; the annual average value of which was supposed to amount to 600,000 dollars.

Soap, leather, hats, and pottery, were likewise made in very large quantities; and, at one time, the earthenware of La Puebla and Guädäläjärä, formed a considerable article of exportation on the Western coast, where it was shipped at Äcäpülcö, for Gÿyaqūil and Perū.

But the trade on the Pacific side was never of any importance in comparison with that of Veracruz. It consisted, almost exclusively, in Chinese and Indian silks and muslins, which formed the cargo of the Galleon, (or Nao de la China,) in return for which remittances in specie were made: the total amount of these varied from one and a half, to two millions of dollars; the whole of the imports and exports not having averaged more than three millions and a half of dollars, on a term of fifteen years, ending in 1810; at which time I conceive the trade of the galleons to have died a natural death.

By the preceding statement, it will appear, that the whole annual average value, in dollars, of the Trade of Mexico with Europe, before the year 1821, was:—

	Dollars.
Including the imports and exports of the Royal treasury,	30,586,273
Without them,	21,545,606

That the average value of the Trade, on the West-

ern side, (up to 1810), was three millions and a half of dollars, making, with the imports and exports of Veracruz, a total of 34,086,273 dollars.

That the whole of the Exports from Acapulco, and five-sixths of those from Veracruz, consisted of the precious metals.

That the Imports were partly Spanish produce, (as wines, brandies, oil, paper, and silks,) and partly European manufactures, imported through Spain, or the Havana, the direct importation being, in twenty-five years, less than one-tenth of the whole.

That the average exports of each year always exceeded the imports.* And

That the value of the home manufactures of wool and cotton alone, (without including those of leather, hats, saddlery, earthenware, &c. &c., the consumption of which was very great,) nearly equalled the

	Dollars.
* Commercial exports of specie (average)	8,361,088
Ditto of Royal Treasury	8,340,667 3
Total annual amount	16,731,755 3
American produce (average)	2,790,280
Total annual exports	19,522,035 3
Total imports, including those of Royal Treasury	11,864,237

value of all the imports from any other part of the world.

The above is a rough sketch of the state of the trade of Mexico up to 1810. The first material change that occurred was occasioned by the civil war, which broke out in that year, and by which the Government was compelled, as early as 1812, to open the ports of Tāmpicō and Tūspān to the East, and that of San Blas to the West, from the impossibility of introducing an adequate supply of European manufactures through Veracruz alone, the communication with that place being sometimes interrupted for months together by the Insurgents.

Foreign vessels, however, were still excluded from these ports, the total amount of the direct intercourse with Foreign countries, (as already stated,) not having exceeded four millions and a half of dollars, in the years 1817, 1818, and 1820, on the Eastern side.

With regard to the Western Coast, nothing certain is known; but, as far as the imperfect returns, which I have been able to obtain, go, it appears that, although the trade of San Blas acquired, at a very early period, considerable importance, from the large remittances of European goods sent there, by Spanish merchants, from our West India Islands, across the Isthmus of Pānāmā, and introduced, through Gūadālājārā, on to the Table-land, means

were found to confine this trade, almost entirely, to *Spanish* vessels; nor was it until 1821 that a great and decisive change in this respect took place.

In the course of that year, the declaration of the Army in favour of Independence occurred, and one of the first effects of political emancipation was, to free the country from that system of absolute prohibition, under which it had so long suffered. Foreign vessels were invited to visit the harbours of Mexico, on a footing of perfect equality with those of Spain; and most of the Spanish capitalists, disgusted by the prospect of such an encroachment upon their former monopoly, and discouraged, too, by the aspect of affairs, withdrew, with their families, to the Peninsula or the Island of Cuba.

They were replaced by Foreigners, principally British, or Americans, with some Germans and French, who, being all commission-merchants, found it more advantageous to supply the retailers of the Interior directly, without the intervention of any intermediate agent. They, consequently, established themselves in the city of Mexico, having merely correspondents at the ports for the purpose of forwarding the goods consigned to them from Europe.

Thus, Veracruz and Alvarado, (which port was opened to Foreign trade in 1823,) became, in their turn, mere places of transit, with the exception of their own actual consumption, which, in the mari-

time provinces to the East, is by no means considerable, that of Jālāpā (the capital of the State of Veracruz,) not being supposed to exceed 600,000 dollars annually.

As the commercial interests of Great Britain in Mexico, are the principal object of this Section, I shall beg leave, before I proceed to trace the other effects produced by the Revolution, to express my opinion with regard to the line taken by the British merchants on their first arrival, in concentrating themselves, as they did, in the Capital.

I cannot but think, that, in attempting to supply, from any one point, (however central,) a country of such vast extent as Mexico, they have, in fact, repeated the error committed by the Spaniards, with merely a great reduction in the value of the goods brought into the market, in consequence of a great competition.

Thus, in the Capital, European manufactures have often been sold under prime cost, while the same articles, if landed upon other points of the coast, and properly spread through the country, without the addition of unnecessary land-carriage, (which is an expense always incurred when goods are transmitted through the Capital to the Interior,) might have been disposed of at a moderate rate of profit.

This was, perhaps, an unavoidable mistake at first, when the nature of the country was so little known; but now that the effects of the system

pursued have been felt, it has often been a matter of surprise to me, that, with some few exceptions,* there should not be an English house of respectability established any where but in the Capital, or, as agents, at the ports.

The consequence is, that a very large proportion of the British manufactures at present consumed in Mexico, passes entirely through the hands of North Americans; and, after being landed by American ships at Tāmpicō, Sōtō lā Mārīna, and Rēfūgīō, is disposed of, by American merchants, at San Luis, Pōtōsī, and Sāltillō, where they have formed establishments, and are in almost exclusive possession of the trade of the country.

The importance of this branch must not be estimated by its value in former times, for commerce, freed from artificial trammels, has, as usual, opened to itself a thousand new inlets; and one of the first-fruits of this salutary change has been to free the Northern Provinces from those evils, which Mr. Ramos Arizpe so forcibly described in 1811.

They are now rising daily in prosperity, and have every prospect, from their vicinity to New Orleans, and from the facility of their communication with

* The house of Ritchie, and Co. at Guādālājārā, and that of Mr. Short, at Cūlīcān, have, I believe, had every reason to be satisfied with the results of their departure from the general rule; and I have little doubt that a similar experiment in each of the great towns of the Interior, would be eminently successful.

the coast, of being as well provided with all necessary supplies as the Capital itself.

Similar advantages have been dealt out to the whole Mexican territory, by the Congress, with no sparing hand. The whole line of coast, from the extremity of the Peninsula of Yucatán, to the boundary of the United States, is already frequented by foreign vessels; and, in due succession, from South to North, the ports of Sisāl, Cămpēchē, Isla del Cărměn, Guăsăcōālcō, Ālvărădō, Vărăcrūz, Tūspān, Puēblō, Viejō de Tămpicō, Tămpicō de las Tămăulipās, Sōtō lă Mărīnă (or Săntăndēr), Rēfūgiō, Săn Běrnărdō, and Galveston, have been thrown open to the Trade with Europe, and already serve as a medium of communication with the Table-land.

This, again, has led to the establishment of depôts, unconnected with the Capital, in the more Central and Northern Provinces, which receive their supplies direct from the nearest port.

Thus, San Luis Pōtōsī has become the depôt for Tămpico and Sōtō lă Mărīnă, from which it is about as far distant as Mexico is from Veracruz, (one hundred leagues), whereas goods received *through* Veracruz and the Capital, would have to pay a land-carriage of two hundred and twenty leagues before reaching San Luis.

Cătōrcē is supplied in like manner, from Sōtō lă Mărīnă: Sătillō, Mōntērēy, and Mōnclovă, from Rēfūgiō; and Texas, from the Bay of Galveston, and the Port of San Běrnărdō, between which places

and New Orleans a communication by steam-boats is already organised.

On the Western coast, Gūadălăjără serves as a depôt to Săn Blās; Cūliăcăn, Ālămōs, Cōsălă, and the other mining towns of Cīnălōă, with Dūrāngō, (on the Table-land,) to Măzătlan; and the Villa del Fuertē, Arispe, (in Sonora,) Jēsūs Măriă, and Chīhūahuă, to Gūāymăs, a magnificent harbour in Lat. 28, about the centre of the Gulph of California.

Ācăpūlcō is likewise beginning to be again frequented, as the nearest harbour on the Western coast to the Capital, from which it is only distant ninety leagues.

This sudden extension of the channels of communication has, of course, increased the difficulty of giving any general view of the present amount of the Trade of Mexico, or of analyzing the principal articles of which it consists.

It is, however, generally admitted, that the first effect of the Revolution of 1821, was to cause an immediate and extraordinary decrease in the Imports and Exports, the total amount of which, at Veracruz, fell, in 1821, to

1821,	17,244,569
1822,	14,030,478
1823,	6,259,209

The change becomes still more sensible if applied to the Imports alone.

In 1821, they varied from their average value of 10,364,238 dollars, to 7,245,052 dollars, or about two-thirds.

In 1822, they declined to 3,723,019 dollars, or about one-third of their former amount.

In 1823, they rose slightly, being in all 3,913,019 dollars, that is, exceeding by 190,000 dollars the Imports of the preceding year, but still falling short of the former average by nearly two-thirds.

During the two first of the years mentioned above, the Imports and Exports of Veracruz may be taken as a fair estimate of those of the country in general, no other ports being, at that time, frequented: but in 1823, this was no longer the case. Twenty-three American vessels are known to have entered the port of Tâmpicō in that year; and, at Veracruz, hostilities having commenced, in September, with the Castle of St. John, (which was then in the hands of the Spaniards,) the Custom-house was transferred to Alvarado, which became, for the time, the principal port of entry.

It would, therefore, be necessary to have an exact return of the Trade both of Tampico, and of Alvarado, during the four last months of 1823, in order to ascertain the real amount of the commerce of Mexico during that year; and this I have found it impossible to procure.

In 1826, an account was published of the Trade of Alvarado in 1824, by which it appears that the total amount of the Imports and Exports was, dollars . . . 15,158,941

The imports were . . . 11,058,291

viz. :—

Coasting Trade	284,087
American Produce	878,737
European Produce in American bottoms, principally through Cuba, and Yū- cātān,	3,481,831
European Imports direct	6,413,636

Total Imports 11,058,291

The Exports of 1824 were, in all, 4,098,650 dollars.

The direct importation from Europe, at Veracruz, during the same period, was dollars . . . 1,023,739

The Exports 593,907

Total Trade of Veracruz in 1824, . . . 1,617,646

2,423,019 dollars of the 4,098,650 dollars to which the Exports from Alvarado amounted, were in Silver, coined or wrought; as were 431,130 of the 593,907 dollars, exported through Veracruz.

The total amount of the Exports and Imports in the year, of the two ports, was 16,774,587 dollars.

viz. :—

Total amount of Imports at Alvarado and Veracruz	12,082,030
Total Exports	4,692,557
	<hr/>
	16,774,587

But, as I have already stated with regard to 1823,