

the Trade of Alvarado and Veracruz in 1824, was not by any means the Trade of Mexico; for, although the British vessels chartered for the Gulph, still cleared exclusively at these two ports, no less than five thousand tons of American shipping are known to have been employed, in 1824, in the trade between Tampico and the United States.

It becomes, therefore, doubly necessary to ascertain the amount of this Trade, (which consisted principally in the importation of European goods,) before any estimate can be formed of that of the country in general; but this is unfortunately impossible; no authentic information upon the subject, either public or private, having yet been obtained.

Allowing, however, four millions of dollars for the value of the Imports and Exports in the 5000 tons of shipping admitted to have been employed, and adding these four millions to the gross amount of the trade of Alvarado and Veracruz, (16,776,587 dollars) there will be found to be but little difference between the Trade of Mexico in 1824, and its annual average value before the declaration of Independence, viz.: 21,545,606 dollars, omitting, of course, the Imports and Exports on the account of the Royal Treasury, and taking only those comprehended in the Balanza General.

It was in the mode of introduction, and in the quality of the articles introduced, rather than in their aggregate amount, that the greatest change took place.

In 1821, the whole of the Imports, with the exception of 37,995 dollars, were introduced in Spanish bottoms, from Spain, or her immediate dependencies, without any intervention, or participation in the trade by any foreign power.

In 1822, the Imports from Spain and her dependencies amounted only to 2,553,255 dollars; while the direct Imports from foreign countries rose to 1,169,764 dollars, or upwards of thirty times their amount in 1821.

In 1823, the Spanish Imports, at Alvarado and Veracruz, fell to about one-fourth of their amount during the preceding year, being only 480,007 dollars; while the direct Imports from foreign ports rose to 2,090,732; without making any allowance for the twenty-three vessels from the United States which discharged at Tampico.

In 1824, the Imports from Europe direct at Alvarado and Veracruz, were 7,437,375 dollars, and those of European productions from Cuba, 3,481,831 dollars; (these last belonging strictly to the Imports from foreign ports, passing merely through the Havana from its being a free port,) while no direct importation whatever from Spain took place. At Tampico, the trade was entirely in the hands of the United States; while at Alvarado, out of 18,730 tons of shipping registered in the year, 8,320 tons were from Europe direct.

These facts sufficiently show how entirely the channels of communication varied between 1821 and

1824. In the first of these years, not one foreign, in the last, not one Spanish vessel cleared at a Mexican port.

A change something similar occurred in the nature of the importations themselves.

Spanish silks, which, in 1821, were imported to the amount of 1,205,219 dollars, fell, in 1822, to 224,288 dollars. In 1823, they only reached 212,778 dollars, and in 1824, not a trace of them is to be found in the importation lists of Alvarado and Veracruz. Cottons rose in amount, as the silk importations decreased. In 1821, they only amounted to 888,726 dollars.

In 1823, they rose to 1,156,787 dollars, and, although the amount of the importations in 1824 has not been ascertained in any authentic shape, I should conceive, from the tonnage employed in the European trade, (of which cottons formed a most essential part,) that their value must have been, at least, two millions and a half of dollars.

Spanish wines and brandies, which, in 1821, were alone known in Mexico, have been entirely supplanted by French, which, in 1824, appear to have been imported, through Alvarado and Veracruz alone, to the amount of 927,366 dollars, out of a total importation of 1,062,970 dollars.\*

\* In making this calculation, I have taken as French, (or at least, not Spanish,) all the wine imported direct from Europe, with the brandy entered as Aguardiente Frances. The imports through Cuba I consider as Spanish produce.

The native manufactures, of which I have spoken in the beginning of this Section, have shared the fate of those of Spain: they have fallen gradually into disuse, as the Mexicans have discovered that much better things may be obtained at a much lower price, and will soon disappear altogether. Qüerētārō, indeed, is still supported by a Government contract for clothing the army; but the cotton-spinners at La Pueblā, and in other towns of the Interior, have been compelled to turn their industry into some other channel.

This, in a country where the population is so scanty, is not only not to be regretted, but may be regarded as highly advantageous: a few of the towns, indeed, may suffer by the change at first, but the general interests of the country will be promoted, as well as those of the foreign manufacturer, who may not only hope for a return in valuable raw produce for his manufactures, from the labour of these additional hands, but must see the demand for European productions increase, exactly in proportion to the decrease in the value of the home-made cotton and woollen manufactures, which averaged, before the Revolution, ten millions of dollars annually.

This sum is now added to the wants of the country, or, in other terms, to the amount of European manufactures annually consumed by New Spain.

Such are the principal changes which the Revolution has produced in the intercourse between Mexico and Europe. It would be superfluous to trace

them through all the minor branches of the actual Trade of the country, nor have I the means of doing so in an authentic shape, the returns from the different ports having been very irregular during the last three years, which have barely allowed time for the adoption of the measures necessary in order to afford some prospect of regularity in future.

To the West, the want of returns has been still greater, some of the ports now most frequented, (as Māzātlān and Guāymās,) having had no Custom-house establishment at all before the end of 1825; while that of San Blas\* was noted for the extreme laxity of its administration.

It will, therefore, be necessary to confine my investigations to the following points, upon which I shall hazard some general observations:

First, the amount of the trade of Mexico in 1827, estimated roughly by the produce of the Customs, and the number of ships employed.

Secondly. The probability of an increase, or decrease, in this amount, in the course of the next five years. And

Thirdly. The system at present pursued with regard to Foreign Trade, and the ameliorations of which it is susceptible.

The first of these points admits of something like

\* The uninhabitable state of this Port during five or six months of the year, (the rainy months,) may account in some measure for this laxity. At this season it is abandoned, the principal merchants betaking themselves to Tēpic.

evidence being adduced in support of any opinion that I may be inclined to form; but the second leads, unavoidably, to much vague speculation, to which my readers will, of course, only attach importance in as far as they conceive the data, upon which it is founded, to be worthy of attention. The third, consists merely of a statement of facts, which it will not be necessary to enter into in great detail, as a new Tariff, which has long been in contemplation, will probably appear before my present work is concluded.

With regard to the first point under consideration, viz., "The amount of the Trade of Mexico in 1827," I have stated, that the first effect of the Revolution of 1821 was to occasion a sudden decrease in the commercial intercourse of Mexico with Europe; which was reduced, in three successive years, from Twenty-one millions and a half of dollars, (the annual average value up to 1821,) to Seventeen, Fourteen, and Six millions of dollars, to which it fell, at Veracruz, in 1823.

Allowing three millions more for the exports and imports of Alvarado and Tampico, we shall find the *bonâ fide* trade of Mexico, in 1823, not to have exceeded Nine millions of dollars.

This sudden, and apparently unnatural diminution in the consumption of the country, at the very moment when it was first allowed to taste the advantages of a Free Trade with Europe, is explained, in part, by the simultaneous removal of all those, by whom the com-

mercial wants of Mexico had been previously supplied, and by the time which foreign adventurers required, in order to make the necessary arrangements for entering upon a field, which was entirely new to them.

The whole of the year 1822, and a great part of 1823, were consumed in these arrangements, which were rendered very complicated by the necessity of opening some new line of communication with the Interior; Veracruz having become nearly useless as a port, in consequence of its vicinity to the castle of Ulloa.

The Old Spaniards too, who naturally relinquished with reluctance their hold upon the country, were still engaged in winding up their affairs; and, while this state of transition lasted, there was little to animate foreign speculators: nor was it until the commencement of 1824, that they acquired sufficient confidence in the stability of the new institutions of the country, and a sufficient knowledge of the most obvious channels of communication, to enter upon a commercial intercourse with Mexico, with any sort of activity.

The effects of it in that year, have been already shown. The Trade of Alvarado and Veracruz, rose from Six to Sixteen millions and a half of dollars, (16,774,587,) while that with Tampico, which employed alone 5000 tons of American shipping, must have raised the total amount of the Imports and Ex-

ports of the year, to something very near the former average of 21,545,606 dollars.

The progress made since that time it is impossible exactly to define, for, although it would appear by the produce of the Custom-houses to be very considerable, (the receipts of the ten first months of the year 1826, having exceeded those of the *whole* of 1824, by three millions of dollars,) this may be said to demonstrate an improvement in the system of collecting the duties payable on foreign goods, rather than an increase in the amount of the goods themselves. When combined, however, with the number of vessels employed in the Mexican Trade, it affords a fair standard for regulating our opinions, and, as such, I shall state here the result of my enquiries.\*

Dollars.

In 1824, the Customs produced, during the whole year,	4,351,218
In eight months of 1825,	4,842,354
In ten months of 1826,	7,043,237

In 1823, the number of vessels which cleared, within the province of Veracruz, was, as follows:

\* According to the official monthly statements, published by the Receiver General of the Custom-house, (Aduana) in the Veracruz paper, the Custom-house dues for June, July and August, (three of the worst months of the year for trade, on account of the climate, rain, &c.) amounted to 1,200,000 dollars.

	Veracruz.	Alvarado.	Tampico.	Total.
British . . . . .	12	3	0	15
American . . . . .	34	15	23	72
Spanish . . . . .	30	0	9	39
Mexican . . . . .	18	0	0	18
French . . . . .	1	0	0	1
Danish . . . . .	1	1	0	2
Swedish . . . . .	1	0	0	1
	97	19	32	148

The tonnage at Veracruz, where alone it was registered, amounted to 8524 tons.

The returns in my possession for 1824, give no similar classification of vessels, and do not extend to Tampico. They merely state that One hundred and seventy-six vessels entered the ports of Alvarado and Veracruz, in the course of that year, the tonnage of which amounted to 18,730 tons. Thirty-nine of these vessels (tons 2836) were Mexican, (engaged in the coasting trade,) the remainder were all American or European; but the Balanza published by the Government, does not state whether the term *American* includes the island of Cuba, and whether there were any vessels from Spain amongst the Sixty-one European vessels, which are stated to have entered the port.

It would, perhaps, be superfluous to give an analysis of the year 1825, during which a slow, but steady progress was made. I shall, therefore, proceed at once to 1826, in the course of which the

following vessels appear to have entered the Mexican ports.

From England . . . . .	55
The British West Indies . . . . .	25
Gibraltar . . . . .	15
— . . . . .	95
France . . . . .	49
Holland . . . . .	15
Italy . . . . .	6
Denmark . . . . .	1
Hamburgh and Bremen . . . . .	2
Sweden . . . . .	1
Prussia . . . . .	1
Spain . . . . .	1
The United States . . . . .	399
Lima, Guyaquil, and other ports in the Pacific . . . . .	46
Columbia . . . . .	6
China . . . . .	5
Asia . . . . .	2
Whalers on the Coast of California for refreshment . . . . .	10
— . . . . .	—
Total . . . . .	639
Prizes from Sea . . . . .	8
Entries of National Vessels . . . . .	626
— . . . . .	—
Total . . . . .	1273
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It must be admitted that this extraordinary in-

crease of activity in the intercourse between the New and the Old World, taken in conjunction with the rise in the Customs from Four to Eight millions of dollars, (allowing something less than One million for the two months not included in the receipts of 1826,) augurs well in favour of the growing importance of Mexican Trade. It may not indeed, as yet realize the golden visions of those, who, in 1825, regarded the New World as a source of instantaneous wealth; but it certainly holds out to a well-regulated spirit of commercial enterprise, a prospect of great ulterior advantages. I have not the means of determining exactly the present extent of those advantages; for it is impossible, from the arbitrary nature of the valuations, upon which the Import duties are paid, to take the amount of these duties as any criterion of the value of the Imports themselves: I should conceive, however, that a Trade in which Six hundred and twenty-nine merchant vessels from Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Southern coasts of the Pacific, have found employment, must be more valuable, in the ratio of nearly three to one, than a Trade in which two hundred and ten vessels only were engaged.

Yet such is the amount of the Shipping returns for 1824, if we add to the One hundred and seventy-six vessels registered at Alvarado and Veracruz, Thirty-four more for the five thousand tons of American shipping registered at Tampico during the same year. If, therefore, the Trade of 1824 nearly

equalled the annual average amount before the Revolution, (Twenty-one millions and a half of dollars) that of 1826 must have very considerably exceeded it.

It is in the Imports that the change principally consists; for the exportable Agricultural Produce of the country has varied but little since 1824. It is composed almost entirely of the Precious Metals, Cochineal, a little Indigo, Vanilla, Logwood, Jalap and Zarzaparilla, Tabascan Cacao, and Pepper, with Cotton, Hides, and Flour, which are beginning to become of some importance in the North.

Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the average value of these different articles to be ascertained. Indeed, it must, for many years, be subject to continual variations; as, while the impulse recently given to the country continues, the produce will increase with the facility of exchanging it for European productions, and, consequently, no calculation upon the subject can be hazarded.

At present, however, the whole of the Silver raised does not more than cover the difference between the value of the Imports and that of the exportable Agricultural Produce, the Coinage of all the Mints in 1826 having only amounted to 8,451,000 dollars, while the registered exportation of Specie during the same period exceeded Seven millions and a half.

It may, perhaps, be interesting, in the absence of more authentic data, to trace the progress of some of the different Custom-houses established at the ports, which have been opened to Foreign Trade since

1824, as their receipts, under all the disadvantages of a system new in all its parts, and confided, in its first application, to agents unfitted, in many instances, by long habits of corruption, for any very strenuous exertions, afford, certainly, the very best evidence of increasing commercial activity. I shall, therefore, give a Comparative Table of their amount:—

	Produce in dollars.	
	1824.	1826, 10 months.
Campeche	115,033	157,464
Isla del Carmen		19,280
Tabasco	7,446	36,682
Tāmpicō (Pueblo Viejo)	367,680	480,195
Tāmpicō de Tāmāulipās		326,640
Refugio and Soto la Marina		
In { 1823 . . . . .	14,538	378,734
{ 1824 . . . . .	113,119	
Acapulco { 1821 . . . . .	20,362	422,343
{ 1824 . . . . .	100,308	
Māzātlān	30,392	125,298
Guāymās in 1821	26,736	44,676

I must again state that the sums given in the preceding Table are not meant to convey any idea of the *value* of the Imports introduced through the different ports, but merely to show what has been done towards the organization of a system, by which the amount of these Imports may, hereafter, be ascertained.

Smuggling prevails at present, to a most disgraceful extent, both upon the Eastern,\* and the Western Coast. A very large proportion of the European manufactures transmitted through the United States, pays no duties at all; and there is little doubt that it is the hope of introducing their cargoes upon similar terms, (in conjunction with some local grievances, to which I shall have occasion to allude presently,) that has induced the masters of so many merchant ships, on the Pacific side, to desert the port of San Blas, and to clear at Māzātlān and Guāymās, where, until 1825, there was no Custom-house establishment at all.

All these circumstances render it impossible to hazard a calculation with regard to the actual consumption of Mexico; as neither the amount of the Imports, nor that of the Exports, nor any fair estimate of the illicit trade, can be obtained.

That it must exceed that of 1824 is evident; and it is equally clear that the quantity of European manufactures consumed must be infinitely greater (perhaps in the ratio of eight or ten to one,) than at any period before the Revolution, when a profit of a hundred and fifty per cent. was obtained upon

\* Principally by small American schooners with the northern ports of Tampico, Soto de la Marina, &c. &c. Smuggling in Veracruz, in consequence of an improved system in their Custom-house, &c. is rendered very difficult; indeed, it is now confined almost to the richer and less bulky sort of goods—silks, silk stockings, &c. &c.