

silver has established a bounty of over one hundred per cent. on the exportation of commodities, the proportion during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1896, was \$64,838,596 of precious metals, and \$40,178,306 of commodities, the precious metals amounting to sixty-one per cent. of the total exports, and the total amount exported from Mexico during the last fiscal year ended June 30, 1897, was \$111,346,494.

*Cost of Living in Mexico.*—It is time now to speak of the prices of Mexican commodities and to compare them with such as are produced here. Our Department of Public Works has been for some time collecting data concerning the prices of agricultural products in Mexico, and during the visit I made to the capital of the Republic, in 1891, I obtained a *résumé* of such data, which I give below, reducing the weights and measures used in Mexico to the same standard as those used in this country, and stating the price of each article in each country.

It has been very difficult to make this table, for the complete accuracy of which I cannot vouch, notwithstanding that I have used much care and availed myself of all the means within my reach to make it as complete as possible; but the difficulty of obtaining the average price of certain articles in both countries is very great, and also the reduction to a common standard of the weights and measures used in each. So far as commodities in the United States are concerned, I have taken as the basis for fixing their price the data contained in No. 12 of the Statistical Abstract of the United States for the year 1889, prepared by the Bureau of Statistics, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury, and sent by him to the House of Representatives on the 4th of December of the same year. In regard to such commodities as were not embraced in that document, I have used the data contained in the thirty-second annual report of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of New York for the fiscal year 1889-90, and in the report of the Produce Exchange of New York for the same period, and such other data as I have been able to obtain from reliable sources.

## PRICES OF WEARING APPAREL IN 1896.

ARTICLES.	MEXICAN CURRENCY.	UNITED STATES CURRENCY.
Flannel (54 inches wide).....per vara <sup>1</sup> ..	\$1.00	\$0.51
Gingham (26 inches wide).....do.....	\$0.20 to .25	\$0.10 to .13
Ordinary cassimere (52 inches wide).....do.....	1.75	.90
Prints and calicoes (33 inches wide).....do.....	.18 $\frac{3}{4}$	.10
Complete suit of woollen clothes, the cheapest.....	10.00	5.10
Bleaching blouses.....	1.50	.77
Pantaloons, cheap.....	1.50	.77
Woollen hats.....	1.50 to 25.00	.77 to 12.75
Straw hats.....	.50	.26

<sup>1</sup> Vara equals 33 inches.

## AVERAGE PRICES OF COMMODITIES IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES IN 1891.

ARTICLES.	PRICES IN MEXICO.	PRICES IN THE UNITED STATES.
Bacon.....	50c. per lb.	20c. per lb.
Beeves.....	8c. per lb. gross weight.	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ per lb. gross weight.
Coal.....	\$16 per ton.	\$3.18 per ton.
Coffee.....	22c. per lb.	19c. per lb.
Corn.....	2c. per lb.	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb., or 43c. per bushel of 56 lbs.
Cotton prints.....	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. per yard.	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. per yard.
Cottons.....	19c. per lb.	10c. per lb.
Flour.....	5c. per lb.	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb., or \$2.75 per bbl. of 196 lbs.
Ham.....	50c. per lb.	18c. per lb.
Hogs (alive).....	9c. per lb. gross weight.	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb. gross weight.
Iron, pig.....	\$32 per ton.	\$19 per ton.
Lard.....	18c. per lb.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb.
Meats:		
Beef.....	12c. per lb.	7c. per lb.
Mutton.....	14c. per lb.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb.
Pork.....	11c. per lb.	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. per lb.
Paper, printing.....	15c. per lb.	5c. per lb.
Prints.....	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per yard.	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per yard.
Rice.....	7c. per lb.	5c. per lb.
Salt.....	7c. per lb.	4c. per lb.
Sheep.....	9c. per lb. gross weight.	5c. per lb. gross weight.
Sugar.....	21c. per lb.	5c. per lb.
Tallow.....	15c. per lb.	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. per lb.
Tobacco.....	24c. per lb.	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. per lb.
Wheat.....	3c. per lb.	1 $\frac{1}{8}$ c. per lb., or 83c. per bushel of 60 lbs.
Whiskey.....	\$16 a cask of 20.0787 galls., or 80c. per gall.; 36c. per gall. in bond.	

## RETAIL PRICES OF FOOD PRODUCTS IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.

ARTICLES.	MEXICAN CURRENCY.	UNITED STATES CURRENCY.
Jerked beef.....per pound..	\$0.65	\$0.33
Salt fish.....do.....	.45	.23
Salt pork.....do.....	\$0.32 to .40	\$0.16 $\frac{1}{2}$ to .21
Hams, native.....do.....	.33	.17 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hams, imported.....do.....	.55	.28
Eggs.....per dozen..	.25	.13 $\frac{3}{4}$
Flour, native.....per pound..	.07	.03
Flour, American.....do.....	.15	.08
Wheat.....per bushel..	1.50 to 1.80	.76 to .91
Corn.....do.....	1.00 to 1.40	.51 to .71
Corn meal, American.....per pound..	.15	.08
Beans, American.....do.....	.09	.04 $\frac{1}{2}$
Beans, Mexican.....do.....	.07	.03 $\frac{3}{4}$
Butter, native.....do.....	.35 to .50	.18 to .26
Butter, American.....do.....	.60 to .75	.31 to .37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sugar, native (uncut).....do.....	.08 to .10	.04 $\frac{1}{4}$ to .05



## RETAIL PRICES OF FOOD PRODUCTS IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.—Continued.

ARTICLES.	MEXICAN CURRENCY.	UNITED STATES CURRENCY.
Sugar, native (cut).....per pound..	\$0.14	\$0.07½
Sugar, American (refined).....do.....	.25	.13
Molasses, native.....per gallon..	1.00	.51
Maple sirup.....do.....	4.00	2.04
Dripped sirup, imported.....do.....	8.00	4.08
Salt (table).....per pound..	.08	.04½
Coarse salt.....do.....	.03	.01½
Pepper (black).....do.....	\$0.70 to 2.50	\$0.35½ to .40½
Tea, choice.....do.....	1.25 to .80	1.27 to 1.28
Coffee, raw.....do.....	.68	.21
Coffee, roasted and ground.....do.....	.60	.31
Kerosene oil, good.....per gallon..	.40	.34½

Mr. Ransom's report on money and prices in Mexico, to which I have already alluded, contains a statement of prices in Mexico, and, although I cannot vouch for their correctness, I think it proper to give them here. Mr. Ransom's statements are the following:

## RETAIL PRICES OF FOOD PRODUCTS CONSUMED IN MEXICO AND EXPORTED IN 1896.

ARTICLES.	MEXICAN CURRENCY.	UNITED STATES CURRENCY.
Jerked beef.....per pound..	\$0.12 to \$0.20	\$0.07 to \$0.12
Fresh beef (cities).....do.....	.12 to .25	.07 to .13
Fresh beef (ranch).....do.....	.06	.03½
Fresh pork.....do.....	.15 to .25	.08 to .13
Salt pork.....do.....	.25 to .45	.13 to .23
Native hams.....do.....	.40 to .55	.20 to .28
Flour.....do.....	.06 to .10	.03½ to .04½
Corn:		
Usually.....do.....	.01½	.00¾
Now.....do.....	.04	.02½
Native beans.....do.....	.07 to .14	.03½ to .08
Native butter.....do.....	.50	.26
Native cheese.....do.....	.25 to .55	.13 to .28
Native soap (laundry).....do.....	.08 to .15	.05 to .08
Native sugar (white).....do.....	.08 to .15	.04½ to .08
Native sugar (brown).....do.....	.04 to .08	.02½ to .04
Coffee (raw).....do.....	.35 to .45	.18 to .23
Irish potatoes.....do.....	.03 to .07	.01½ to .03½
Rice.....do.....	.08 to .10	.04½ to .05
Lard.....do.....	.20 to .26	.11 to .13
Kerosene oil.....per gallon..	.60 to .75	.31 to .38
Tea (common).....per pound..	.50	.26
Tea (good and choice).....do.....	1.50 to 2.00	.76 to 1.02
Molasses (ordinary).....per gallon..	1.00	.57
Wheat:		
Per bushel.....do.....	1.50	.76
Generally.....do.....	1.80	.91

Mr. Crittenden's statement is the following:

## PRICES.

## WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES OF ARTICLES.

[Where wholesale price is not given, the retail prices can be reckoned on from 15 to 40 per cent. higher.]

ARTICLES.	MEXICAN CURRENCY.	UNITED STATES CURRENCY.
Corned beef.....	Not used.	
Jerked beef.....per pound..	\$0.65	\$0.34
Salted fish.....do.....	.45	.235
Salted pork.....do.....	\$0.32- .40	\$0.166- .208
Ham:		
American.....do.....	.55	.286
American, wholesale.....do.....	.42	.218
Mexican.....do.....	.35	.192
Mexican, wholesale.....do.....	.27	.14
Eggs.....per dozen..	.25	.13
Flour:		
American.....per pound..	.15	.078
Mexican.....do.....	.07	.036
Wheat.....per bushel..	1.50- 1.80	.78 - .936
Corn (high on account of short crop).....do.....	1.50- 1.80	.78 - .936
Corn meal, American.....per pound..	.15	.078
Beans:		
American.....per pound..	.09	.047
Mexican (frijoles).....do.....	.07	.036
Butter:		
American creamery.....do.....	.50- .75	.26 - .39
Mexican, unsalted.....do.....	.35- .50	.192- .26
Sugar:		
Foreign.....do.....	.25	.13
Mexican, uncut.....do.....	.08- .10	.042- .051
Mexican, cut.....do.....	.14	.073
Molasses, ordinary.....per gallon..	1.00	.52
Sirup, maple.....do.....	4.00	2.08
Sirup, imported.....do.....	8.00	4.16
Salt:		
Table.....per pound..	.10	.052
Coarse.....do.....	.03	.016
Pepper.....do.....	.70- .80	.364- .418
Tea.....do.....	1.25- 2.50	.65 - 1.306
Coffee, green, retail.....do.....	.40	.20
Coffee, ground, retail.....do.....	.50	.26
Coffee, wholesale.....do.....	.19- .31	.099- .161
Kerosene.....per gallon..	.56- .66	.291- .343
Gasoline.....do.....	.37	.192

## PRICES OF MEXICAN MANUFACTURES.

ARTICLES.	WHOLESALE.		RETAIL.	
	Mexican Currency.	United States Currency.	Mexican Currency.	United States Currency.
Flannel, 54 inches wide.....per vara¹..	\$0.75	\$0.39	\$1.00	\$0.52
Ginghams, 25 inches wide.....do.....	\$0.18- .20	\$0.09 - .104	\$0.20- .25	\$0.104- .13
Cassimeres, 52 inches wide.....do.....	1.25- 1.50	.65 - .78	1.75	.91
Prints, 33 inches wide.....do.....	.15- .16	.078- .083	.19	.094
Prints, 27 inches wide.....do.....	.11- .11½	.057- .058	.13	.067
Sheetings, 66 inches wide.....do.....	.28- .30	.145- .156	.32	.166
Shirting, 26 inches wide.....do.....	.07- .11	.036- .057	.08- .13	.042- .067

¹ The vara is 33 inches.



WHOLESALE PRICES, CITY OF MEXICO, 1886 AND 1896, MEXICAN CURRENCY.<sup>1</sup>

ARTICLES.	QUANTITY.	1886.	1896.
	<i>Pounds.</i>		
Olive oil.....	25	\$5.00 to \$5.50	\$6.00
Beneseed oil.....	25	3.25	3.50
Linseed oil.....	25	2.75	5.00
Cotton.....	1	.18 to .19	.18
Rice.....	100	6.50 to 7.00	\$8.00 to 10.00
Sugar (uncut).....	25	2.17 to 2.25	1.68 to 1.81
Coffee.....	100	11.00	29.00
Barley.....	300	3.50	4.50
Beans.....	300	13.00	14.00 to 15.00
Peas.....	300	14.00 to 15.00	11.00 to 17.00
Flour.....	25	1.31	1.00 to 1.09
Ham.....	25	5.00 to 5.50	5.00 to 6.00
Corn.....	300	5.50	7.50
Piloncillo.....	300	7.50 to 8.00	8.25 to 8.50
Cheese.....	25	5.25	6.00 to 6.50
Salt.....	25	.62 to .66	.56 to .88
Tallow.....	25	4.25	3.50
Tobacco.....	25	3.50 to 4.25	6.50 to 7.50
Wheat.....	300	11.25 to 11.50	11.00 to 12.50

On account of its natural conditions, the cost of living in Mexico is considerably cheaper than in the United States<sup>2</sup>; and, taking into consideration that the Mexican dollar has not lost any of its purchasing

<sup>1</sup> Expressed in United States currency will be about one-half in 1896, but in 1886 the Mexican dollar was valued by the United States Mint at 81.7 cents.

<sup>2</sup> In the report that Mr. Thomas T. Crittenden, while he was U. S. Consul-General to the City of Mexico, sent to the *New York Journal*, dated at the City of Mexico, on September 4, 1896, he stated on this subject the following, published by that paper in its issue of September 17, 1896:

*Cost of Living in Mexico.*—As to the cost of living in Mexico, I find it in many respects much cheaper than in the United States. The manner of life made possible, and even necessary, by the climatic conditions simplifies the problem. Fuel, for instance, so considerable an item of expense in the North, is an unimportant feature here. I doubt if many families expend so much as \$15 per year each for their charcoal. The average expense for fuel for the better classes is about \$1.25 per week. The use of fires for heating alone is almost unknown. Meats and fatty foods of whatever kind, heavy woollen clothing and other items, absolutely indispensable to life and comfort in Northern climates, are not needed here; on the contrary, they are even detrimental to health. In general, I find living in the City of Mexico about as reasonable as at my home in Kansas City. There are many articles that enter into home consumption that are much higher, especially those not grown or produced in Mexico, but when those are considered the costs average quite well. Servants are much cheaper, and when good ones are obtained they are as serviceable and more contented, seldom leaving the premises and never complaining of the work. Hotel and boarding-house rates are about the same in Mexican money as they are in the United States in American coin. I have heard tourists say they could get meals here as good and cheaper than in cities in the United States."

power for domestic commodities, Mexican wages go considerably farther than the same amount would go in the United States.

The cost of living, that is, of food, clothing, house-rent, and everything else that enters into the daily life of a workingman, differs so greatly in the two countries that the only comparison possible to make intelligently is one between the present conditions in Mexico and those existing ten or fifteen years ago, in the matter of the income and the expenses representing the cost of living, and the opportunity of earning such living. The cost of livelihood in Mexico for the working classes has not materially increased during that time, while the wages have increased considerably.

During the discussion which preceded the last Presidential election Mexico was on the tapis, and the opinions expressed on the subject of prices of commodities were of a very contradictory nature. Sometimes the price of Mexican commodities was represented as exceedingly high, and therefore beyond the reach of the poorer classes, and when compared with similar commodities in the United States it showed the great advantage that this country had in producing cheaply the necessities of life. That reason was alleged when it was intended to show that the silver standard in Mexico raised the price of commodities and made the country wretchedly poor. At the same time, when commodities were cheaper in Mexico than in the United States, that fact was presented to show that labor was very badly remunerated in that country, a result which was also attributed to the silver standard prevailing there.

Therefore, whatever might be the result of a comparison of prices between the two countries, it always was unfavorable to Mexico. If commodities were cheaper there than in the United States it showed that labor was very badly remunerated, and it was presented as the cause of the so-called pauper or peon labor prevailing there. If, on the contrary, commodities were there higher than in the United States, that was supposed to be the result of the silver standard, which made everything higher and reduced considerably the purchasing power of the low wages of Mexican laborers. This very fact shows the fallacy of such doctrines. Such comparisons are not fair, because some commodities which are comparatively cheap here and could not be easily obtained in Mexico had to be imported from the United States, paying for them in gold, besides heavy import duties, and that made them, of course, exceedingly high there; while other commodities which were easily raised in Mexico were considerably lower than they could be obtained in this country, and that reasoning did not prove, therefore, what it was intended to show.

Several comparisons have been recently made in this regard between Mexico and the United States that are very disparaging to the former,



but, as I have just stated, domestic commodities in Mexico have not increased in price since the depreciation of silver, excepting those that, like coffee, have their price regulated in foreign markets, but which are not very much used by the poorer classes. So far as foreign commodities are concerned, of course they have almost duplicated their value, because they have to be paid in gold.

*Report of Labor Assembly.*—The labor question in Mexico was so earnestly agitated during the last Presidential election in the United States that the Chicago Trade and Labor Assembly, desiring reliable information on the subject, sent to Mexico a special committee of two, Mr. Paul J. Maas, who organized the American Confederation of Labor, and Mr. Patrick Enright, of the Executive Board of the Moulders' Union, for the purpose of examining the question on the spot, and that committee presented a report on October 10, 1896,<sup>1</sup> which was widely circulated in this country, and taken as a conclusive proof of the bad results of the silver standard in Mexico, so far as the laboring classes were concerned. That report, however, failed to present the question in a proper light, for the reason that the gentlemen who made it did not know enough of Mexico to fully comprehend what they saw, and they did not remain long enough there for that purpose.

The report of these gentlemen shows their good faith and their

<sup>1</sup> I quote the following extract from that report, which shows how much the gentlemen who made it misunderstood Mexico:

"Wages in Mexico, except to skilled and steady mechanics—always foreigners—are very low. On railroads engineers (Americans) on passenger trains receive \$210 per month, while the firemen (Mexicans) receive \$1.85 per day; freight engineers (Americans), \$250 per month; firemen (Mexicans), \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day; passenger conductors (Americans), \$160 per month; brakemen (Mexicans), \$1.50 per day; freight conductors (Americans), \$200 per month; brakemen (Mexicans), \$57 to \$63 per month; Pullman conductors, \$80 per month (American money), and the porters, \$38 per month (American money), with \$5 per month extra for being able to talk Spanish. The national soldiers (or regular army) of Mexico, called rurales, and who are all ex-bandits, receive \$1 per day. In a broom factory near the depot at Jimenez the men are paid 50 cents, and women and children 25 to 37½ cents per day. In the cotton mills, cotton-seed oil mills, and soap factory at Torreon men are paid 37½ to 50 cents, and women and children 25 cents per day. A cargador (public carrier) has a rate of 12½ cents per hour, but you can hire him for from 25 to 37½ cents per day.

"At Leon, where nearly all the leather goods in Mexico are manufactured, the peon gets his leather cut for shoes, harness, or other goods to be made by him, and takes the material to his hut, where the whole family assists him, the same as in the sweatshops of Chicago. For making shoes he receives \$1 and upward per dozen pairs; on the other leather goods he receives 37½ to 50 cents per day for his labors, working as long as daylight lasts, averaging twelve to fourteen hours per day. Common laborers can be hired for 18 to 50 cents per day. House servants, male or female, receive \$3 to \$5 per month and board themselves. In or near cities peons live in adobe houses and pay a rental of \$3 a year for the ground that the house stands on. When leaving this for another location all 'improvements' the peon has made go to the landlord, or owner of the land, who pays no taxes whatever on the land."

earnest purpose to present fairly the condition of the Mexican workmen, but they seem to have gone to Mexico with a very exalted idea of the condition of the Mexican wage-earner, imagining that it might rival the situation of his fellow-workman in the United States. This was a complete delusion, as there cannot be any comparison between the two; and when they found the true condition of the Mexican workman, they concluded that the American workingman was a prince in comparison with his Mexican brother—a conclusion which I do not consider very far wrong. Their principal mistake, however, was to attribute to the silver standard in Mexico the poor condition of the Mexican workman. If they had been in Mexico when silver was on a par with gold, at the ratio of 16 to 1, that is, when the Mexican dollar had one hundred cents of gold value in silver bullion, they would have found that the Mexican workman was then a great deal worse than he is now, when the Mexican dollar has less than fifty cents of the gold value of silver in it, and they would have come to more just conclusions.

While they understood some matters in Mexico tolerably well, as when they said, for instance, that there was greater security to life and property in that country than in the City of Chicago, they made serious mistakes in others, as when they stated that all transactions were made in cash, when, as a matter of fact, all mercantile operations of any consequence are made on credit; and long credit, too, as credit is the basis of both the foreign and internal trade in Mexico; and as when they said that it is but five years since a law was passed in the City of Mexico compelling men to wear trousers; with many other almost laughable mistakes to point out, which would take too long and would divert me from my principal object in this paper.

I will consider in the two following chapters of this paper, two of the main objections that the committee made to the Mexican laborer.

*Mexican Labor is not Organized.*—It has been observed that Mexican labor is not organized, and this assertion is entirely correct. I have no doubt that in the course of time Mexican labor will be properly organized, and that then it will enjoy all the benefits of organization; and while I recognize that organization is a very great advantage to the laboring man as long as he does not become the instrument of unscrupulous persons who occasionally are at the head of such organizations, they so far have met with serious objections in this country, and it is yet the problem how this matter will turn out, there being great probability that the present conditions of labor and capital may suffer material changes.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly possible for the present that organized labor will be

<sup>1</sup> The danger that the working people will take active steps to change the present conditions of labor appears very plain from the following extract from one of Mr. Henry George's books, a man remarkable for his rare character of simplicity and devotion to duty: