

DOMESTIC OR INTERIOR TRADE.

His excellency Don Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, in his work entitled "Cuadro Sinoptico," of the Mexican Republic in 1856, reviews the domestic trade of Mexico as follows: "Although it is somewhat difficult, in the absence of complete data, to give a correct statement of the interior commerce of the Republic, or of the value of its domestic exchanges, it is nevertheless easy, by calculation, to arrive at an approximate result, taking as a basis the produce of its agriculture, of its industry, of the mines and cattle, as well as the conveyances of real estate, and, finally, the amount of foreign merchandise computed according to its value in the interior markets; all of which cannot be estimated at less than \$450,000,000 per annum, and, admitting that one-half of the national products are not articles of mercantile speculation, on account of their passing from production to immediate consumption, and that the other half only pass through two hands ere disappearing from circulation, it is, beyond doubt, apparent that the interior commerce of the Republic proceeding as above stated, amounts, at the present date, annually, to more than \$400,000,000. As a proof of there being no exaggeration in the above estimate, it will suffice to say, that, according to the mercantile statistics published by the Board of Trade in Mexico, Puebla, Queretaro, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi and Guadalajara, from the years 1842 to 1846, inclusive, the value of domestic and foreign goods, including specie *legally introduced* in those six departments above, based upon the custom-house valuation, which is generally less than real value, amounted, annually, to more than \$40,000,000.

The medium of exchanges by drafts, although not generally understood or adopted throughout the Republic, being in operation only between the capital and such points as are open to foreign commerce and the principal cities, amounts, according to reliable data, to thirty or forty million dollars per annum.

The banking and discount business for loaning money at interest on mortgage, or other good securities, as well as for discounting bills and notes at short dates, is also of some importance; as, over and above the large amount of funds belonging to the clergy and other religious bodies, (which have, in reality, for many years past, formed a great national bank, their real estate, representing as it does, from eighty to one hundred million dollars, gaining interest.) this class of business, which more than any other affords to those who exercise it the advantage of appropriating to themselves the produce of industry and the labor of others by the agency of their capital, has become quite general in all the departments enjoying any kind of industry and commercial activity. The total value of operations effected in the city of Mexico alone, amounts annually to between eight and ten million dollars, and that done in the other parts and cities of the Republic to an equal sum."

MEANS OF INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION.

The conveyance of all kinds of merchandise throughout the Republic of Mexico is effected by pack-mules, and wagons drawn by mules and oxen. With this system, and the bad state of the roads generally, it will be

easily understood that transportation is not only slow but costly, and one of the chief obstacles in the way of the development of the great resources of the country. The average distance performed by mules and wagons is from fifteen to eighteen miles per day, with the exception, however, of an enterprise recently established, which runs a line of wagons from Vera Cruz to Queretaro, and *vice versa*, passing through the city of Mexico, averaging during the dry season from 36 to 45 miles per day, thus performing the journey, (390 miles,) in 11 days.

The cost of transporting merchandise varies much from one place to another, according to the price of wages and pasture, always rising, however, during the rainy season. As a general thing, freights on the most frequented roads do not exceed two cents per arroba of 25 lbs. per Mexican league.

Personal traveling is generally performed on horse or mule back, which is not only the most economical, but in many cases the only possible way, owing to the narrow and precipitous roads between many towns. On the high roads, traveling and transportation are performed by conveyances of various kinds drawn by horses and mules. In some parts of the tropics, as, for instance, between Jalapa and Vera Cruz, litters supported by mules or men are used. For the general conveyance of passengers, besides private carriages, there exists a line of diligences which perform round trips from Mexico to Vera Cruz, to San Blas on the Pacific, and to other points of the interior, in the following order: to Puebla every day; to Orizava and Vera Cruz, Pachuca and Toluca, during six days of the week; to San Blas,

Morelia, Cuernavaca, Cautla, Tulancingo, three times a week; and from Guanajuato to Leon three times a week. Besides the above principal line of diligences, there are others performing service between the following places: from Puebla to Vera Cruz, by Perote and Jalapa; from Mexico to Ameca and Ixmiquilpan; from Guadalajara to Zapotlan; from Lagos to Zacatecas, by Aguascalientes; from Puebla to Matamoras Izucara; and from Sisal to Merida, three times a week. The fare by the diligences is not the same on all roads, but as a general rule, the rate varies from twenty to forty cents per Mexican league.

The total number of trips performed by the general line of diligences, from 1851 to 1853, inclusive, and of passengers conveyed, was:

Years.	Trips.	No. of Passengers.
1851	17,316	46,452
1852	16,667	43,813
1853	17,331	42,430
Total	51,314	132,695

The diligences afford great advantages to travelers, not only on account of their repeated journeys and quickness, averaging, as they do, from nine to twelve miles per hour, according to the state of the road, but for their regularity of time. By means of this "general line of diligences," a traveler can traverse the Republic from one sea to the other—a distance of 912 miles, from the port of Vera Cruz to that of San Blas on the Pacific, passing through the principal cities, including the capital, in the short space of eleven days. Part of the time

is spent in resting at the different towns on the road, so that in reality the time spent in traveling, changing horses and feeding, is only 144 hours.

Arrangements are in contemplation for a good carriage road from the city of Mexico to Acapulco. This will enable passengers landing at Vera Cruz to reach Acapulco, on the Pacific coast, and *vice versa*, with safety and dispatch; thus affording them a tour through one of the most beautiful and picturesque countries in the world, and accomplishing the route to California in as short a time as by any other route, viz.:

From New Orleans or Mobile to Vera Cruz	4 days.
“ Vera Cruz to Mexico	2 “
“ Mexico to Acapulco	3 “
“ Acapulco to San Francisco	7 “
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Total	16 days.

When the several railroads, now in course of construction, leading to New Orleans and Mobile are completed, the journey from New York, via the city of Mexico, to San Francisco can easily be accomplished in twenty-one or twenty-two days.

AGRICULTURE.

This branch of industry is reviewed by Senor Lerdo de Tejada, as follows:

“The agricultural productions of Mexico are still limited to the absolute necessities for the consumption of its inhabitants, and the extent of ground under tillage is not equal to more than one-eighth of the whole size of the Republic.

The principal productions are maize, beans, and chile, (which three articles in general constitute the only food used by the poorer class,) wheat, barley, rice, potatoes, peas, lentils, American aloe, nopal, sugar-cane, cocoa, coffee, cotton, tobacco, pepper, anis, vanilla, sarsaparilla, olives, and all kinds of fruits and horticultural productions, to which can be added indigo, cochineal, wax, and silk, of which two last articles large quantities are already produced in the States of Michoacan, Jalisco, and Guanajuato.

As regards the annual value of the agricultural produce of Mexico, the statistics are so limited and unsatisfactory that it is quite impossible to arrive at any thing like a correct estimate. The most reliable information which we possess is contained in an account presented in the year 1817, by Don Jose Maria Quiroz, at that time secretary to the consulado in Vera Cruz, and according to whom, the total value of agricultural produce in New Spain amounted then to \$138,850,121 annually, including \$4,997,496, as the amount of produce exported; which sum, when compared with the then existing population of 5,810,005, gives an average of \$24 per head. This estimate, however, cannot serve as a basis to arrive at its present value, considering the progress, even though slow, which has been made since, in this and all other branches of industry.

For want of better data, we will take the amount of population, and calculating the quantity of agricultural produce necessary for the support of each person at \$25 per annum, or about 6¼ cents per day, the result is a yearly produce equal in value to \$197,000,000; and if to

this be added the produce consumed by cattle, the production of cotton, which amounts annually to 70,000 quintals, and that of cochineal to 625,000 lbs., as well as of silk and wax, and many other products, it will be seen that the territorial value of produce in this Republic, cannot be estimated totally at less than \$220,000,000; and if to this be added \$40,000,000, as the value of reproduction in all kinds of horses, cattle, and poultry, and of their natural produce, such as milk, eggs, tallow, &c., &c., all of which is considered under the head of agriculture, the annual value of this branch throughout the whole country may be safely estimated at \$260,000,000."

In order to give a more clear idea regarding the various agricultural productions of the country, they are presented under their special heads, as follows:

Sugar-Cane. The cultivation of sugar-cane, as much from its enormous yield as from its good quality, is of the greatest importance in the Republic, and ought to be one of the principal articles produced for exportation. In Mexico, Puebla, Vera Cruz, Michoacan, Tabasco, Oajaca, Chiapas, Yucatan, Sonora, and Lower California, exist large plantations. In the first six States mentioned above, are manufactured yearly 40,000,000 pounds of sugar in the following proportions:

Mexico,	. . . . .	25,000,000 lbs.
Puebla,	4 000,000
Vera Cruz,	2,500,000
Michoacan,	5,000 000
Tabasco,	2,000,000
Oajaca,	1,500,000
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		40,000,000
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Coffee has been produced of very good quality in the districts of Autlan and Tepic, in the State of Jalisco; but the best is found in Cuernavaca, Colima, and some parts of the State of Vera Cruz; which is, as before stated, equal in quality to the best produced in any part of the world.

Tobacco is cultivated with success in many parts of the Republic, and is destined to become an article of extensive exportation, particularly that produced in Tabasco, called "Tabaco de Corral," and, in fact, that of many other districts can be favorably compared with the best grown in Cuba.

Indigo is found wild in great quantities in many parts of Oajaca, Tabasco, Yucatan, Chiapas, Michoacan, and Colima. That produced in the last-mentioned place is considered to be of a superior quality.

Rice is cultivated to a considerable extent in Tierra Caliente, in damp and marshy situations, and yields from 40 to 60 per cent. It is destined to become one of the principal objects of agricultural industry, as the soil and climate of many localities are peculiarly adapted to its growth.

Cocoa of excellent quality is found in Tabasco and Soconusco, in the State of Chiapas, and other places in the States on that side of the Gulf, and perhaps yields the best in the world. (See Tabasco.)

Flax and Hemp are successfully cultivated: the latter particularly, in the southern districts of Michoacan, where it grows even spontaneously. The product is very large, and the fabrics made from it highly approved.

Cotton. Throughout the cotton-growing districts of

the United States the cotton plant is of annual growth ; frost destroys it, and the planter is obliged to renew the seed for every crop. But in the Tierra Caliente of Mexico this is not requisite, as the tree propagates itself, and the laborers are only required to keep the fields clear of useless vegetation. The production, however, is very limited, not at all meeting the wants of the factories in the Republic, and probably does not exceed in the aggregate over 25,000 bales of 400 lbs. each per annum.

Cochineal. The cultivation of this article has always been of the greatest importance in the State of Oajaca. The crop and value of it in the years 1854 and 1855 were in that State alone as follows :

	Cochineal Zacatillo.	Grana blanca.	Granilla.	Value.
1854	150,525 lbs.	632,625 lbs.	2 450 lbs.	\$523,433
1855	145,050 "	500 525 "	1,550 "	459,709
Total,	295,575	1,133,150	4,000	\$983,142

Vanilla. The vanilla bean is cultivated on a few plantations in Oajaca, and also grows there, as in many other parts of the coast, spontaneously, in large quantities. In the State of Vera Cruz it is extensively cultivated, and has become one of the principal articles of exportation, with a gradual increase of shipments annually.

The Grape. Although the cultivation of the vine would be a most important branch of industry, still it is at present limited principally to the town of Parras, in the State of Coahuila, where excellent wine has been produced. In Chihuahua and Sonora, however, wine and brandy are produced from the grape, and in Durango, Zacatecas and Jalisco, a liquor called "Mescal" is manufactured to a large extent.

Maize. This plant, which is indigenous to America, is cultivated as well in the hot regions as in the temperate and cold. It has a very large consumption in this country, both for human food and for fattening animals. In the hot regions it produces from 250 to 300 grains for each one planted, and in a district near the capital as many as 600. In many parts of the country two crops are gathered annually, and, in fact, there are frequent instances on the Gulf coast of three harvests on the same ground in one year.

Frijol, or Black Bean. In the fields of wheat and maize is sown the frijol, or black bean, which is most extensively consumed in Mexico, and is as much of a national dish with the Mexicans as the potato is with the Irish.

Wheat is cultivated on all the central table lands. The best is found in Atlisco, in the State of Puebla, and in the fertile valleys between Queretaro and Guanajuato, called the Bajio, where it yields 60 bushels to one sown. In some parts of the State of Sonora, and other sections of the Republic, the yield has been computed by reliable authorities at nearly double that amount.

Barley. This grain is also extensively cultivated on all the central table lands with equally abundant harvests. There is a very great consumption of it throughout the country, as it is one of the principal articles of forage used by the muleteers and wagoners for the animals of the immense transportation trains.

Trees. Besides almost every variety of fruit-trees to be found in other parts of the world, Mexico possesses an inexhaustible source of wealth in the natural products of her forests, which furnish abundantly a supply

of the several woods employed in ship-building and other mechanical arts, either for works of use or fancy.

In fine, it may be said that every branch of agricultural industry is susceptible of augmentation and improvement, and if a proper spirit of enterprise could once be awakened in its inhabitants, Mexico would soon become one of the most prosperous and flourishing commercial countries on the American continent, affording to her sister Republic a more favorable opportunity than that hitherto enjoyed, for the mutual exchange of the numerous articles of American manufacture for the rich products of Mexican soil. The chief evil that now exists, is the constant drain of specie, and the diversion of enormous amounts from the natural arteries of national enterprise into European channels, in payment of imported goods. Let the Mexican people learn that such luxuries and necessaries as they desire, can be purchased with other equivalents besides hard silver dollars; and that in commercial exchange with the United States they can have what they desire without submitting to the impoverishment they yearly undergo by dealing outside the continent. Let them learn this, or let them have facilities to improve the knowledge of it, and their rich gold and silver mines will be converted into a circulating medium among the inhabitants instead of finding its way into the vaults of European speculators; and the people of Mexico would then be induced to turn their attention to important national enterprises that would result in the future prosperity and aggrandizement of the whole country.

MINES AND COINAGE OF MEXICO.

The great wealth of Mexico, according to developments up to the present day, consists in her mines. It is true that the capital and labor, both foreign and domestic, used in that country, have been devoted to the production of the precious metals, and though under a new order of things, agriculture and manufactures will doubtless receive greater attention, still, the abundance of minerals throughout the length and breadth of the land is so great that its mines must always constitute the leading interest.

The minerals of Mexico are of silver, gold, copper, iron, zinc, lead, *magistral*, antimony, arsenic, sulphur, cobalt, &c., &c. The mines of gold and silver have only been worked extensively, and silver forms the principal currency of the country and the great article of export.

In treating upon Mexico, there is no subject so unsatisfactory and bewildering as that which relates to the production of her mines. Humboldt, who wrote in 1803, gives some valuable statistics of mining operations in Mexico previous to that period. He gives the total amount of silver raised from the Mexican mines, from the conquest in 1521 to 1803, as \$1,767,952,000, according to the official returns, and adding one-seventh for unregistered silver, he makes the grand total \$2,027,952,000. Ward gives the total coinage from 1733 to 1826, as represented by government returns, \$1,433,658,611.

The ancient Mexicans, properly speaking, had no coin. The conquerors introduced it into the colony, and coining dates from the building of a mint in the city of Mexico, in 1535. For many years after the invasion, pieces of gold and silver were stamped by officials of the Crown, which constituted them a circulating medium. The coinage of money in Mexico presents two great epochs; first, from the establishment of a mint in the city of Mexico, up to the Independence; and second, from the Independence down to the present date. The first period affords three subdivisions, viz.: "Moneda Macuquina," or Irregular coins; "Moneda Columnaria," or Colonade coin; and "Moneda de Busto," or Bust coin. The first was so called, owing to its irregular form and weight, and was stamped by means of a hammer, with a cross, two Lions and two Columns on one side; and on the reverse, with the name of the reigning King. The second received the name of "Colonade," from presenting on one side the Arms of Spain, supported by the Columns of Hercules. This was the first coin struck in the mint according to the rules of art. The third or "Bust coin," is that with which we are acquainted, bearing the effigy of the last King who ruled Mexico.

The following statement of the coinage of Mexico from the conquest down to and including the year 1856, is from official data furnished by the Ministerio de Fomento.

Amount coined in each of the different mints of Mexico, from the conquest to 1856 inclusive.

Mints.	Silver.	Gold.	Copper.	Total.
Mexico	\$2,129,093,206	\$76,447,439	\$5,493,765	\$2,211,034,404
Chihuahua	10,593,397	956,992	50,428	11,600,818
Culiacan	7,037,530	2,604,410	.....	9,641,940
Durango	29,841,957	2,831,916	.....	32,673,873
Guadalajara	25,056,753	651,317	62,069	25,770,140
Guadalupe y Calvo	2,063,958	2,311,104	.....	4,375,062
Guanajuato	122,635,825	10,885,820	.....	133,521,645
San Luis Potosi	37,302,201	.....	23,517	37,325,718
Sombrerete	1,551,249	.....	.....	1,551,249
Tlalpan	959,116	203,544	.....	1,162,660
Zacatecas	167,980,493	.....	107,949	168,088,442
Total	\$2,534,115,679	\$96,892,542	\$5,737,728	\$2,636,745,951

The yearly coinage of the mints of Mexico, increased in steady progression from the time of the establishment of the first mint in the city of Mexico in 1535 up to the year 1805, when the highest amount was reached, being for that year \$27,000,000.

The total Coinage of the Mints of Mexico since the War of Independence is as follows:

1822 . . .	\$9,816,525	1840 . . .	\$13,162,567
1823 . . .	9,785,024	1841 . . .	13,475,632
1824 . . .	9,560,472	1842 . . .	13,800,266
1825 . . .	8,927,658	1843 . . .	12,075,698
1826 . . .	8,177,471	1844 . . .	13,671,230
1827 . . .	10,395,291	1845 . . .	15,236,717
1828 . . .	10,237,448	1846 . . .	15,414,453
1829 . . .	12,164,483	1847 . . .	17,636,115
1830 . . .	11,608,871	1848 . . .	19,203,688
1831 . . .	10,258,299	1849 . . .	19,386,570
1832 . . .	12,216,460	1850 . . .	19,389,336
1833 . . .	12,642,876	1851 . . .	17,481,934
1834 . . .	12,972,148	1852 . . .	18,190,514
1835 . . .	11,815,687	1853 . . .	17,028,921
1836 . . .	11,530,622	1854 . . .	17,249,946
1837 . . .	11,470,509	1855 . . .	17,593,475
1838 . . .	13,084,267	1856 . . .	19,205,656
1839 . . .	12,525,085		

Total since the Independence of Mexico, . \$478,392,014