

GREAT COMMERCIAL AWAKENING FOR WEST COAST OF MEXICO



Partial view of Mazatlan, town on Mexican west coast that gives much promise.

By G. W. Burton.
Since I first learned something about the history of man on this earth and the development of its resources it has been a favorite thought of mine to trace the progress attained by the commerce done and that by the means of transportation. I am about to present to the readers of the Journal a series of letters on Mexico and propose to set the ball rolling by some reference to the Pacific coast, its commerce present and prospective. This is timely as regards both Mexico and the Pacific. The Panama canal is the greatest undertaking in material things yet set down to the credit of the human race. Its completion will mark man's greatest achievement to our time, and this will again mark the beginning of an epoch in which the Pacific ocean and the people on its shores will take the first place in the commerce and industrial development of the century we have just entered upon.

It is conceded that Europe has no civilization purely its own. The germs of literature, art, agriculture and religion came to Europe from Asia, and whatever of the original remains is overlaid deeply with the exotic. The cradle of early civilization lay on the banks of two great rivers, the Nile and the Euphrates. Under the sands of Egypt lies buried a civilization not less than 10,000 years old. No one has yet so great an age specifically for that of the Euphrates. Nor are there any data to prove that Egypt owed its art or other progress to countries farther east. The history of the early people on the Nile appears as indigenous as that of those in ancient Mesopotamia, of which I shall have something to say at a future time.

Along the fertile banks of these two great streams man at a very early period developed the arts of agriculture in a rapid march, and from this grew naturally a small commerce between the people along the stream. This was done in boats propelled by oars.

In due time the letters invented by the Copts of Egypt and other arts from the center of Asia found their way to the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and thence to Greece, then to Italy, so over all western Europe. As one peninsula after another received this impulse, commerce grew up between the different peoples. The Phoenicians traded as far as the British Isles, Europe and North Africa became the pantry of Rome whence the people of the mistress of the world at that time drew her daily rations.

Drummer and Explorer.
An Italian born in Genoa and bred to the sea, 1500 years after Rome had penetrated to the Danube and the Volga on one side and to Britain on the other had gone to Spain, and there, looking out on the great unknown ocean, dreamed of lands beyond its mysterious shores. So Columbus in three small open boats in due time landed on one of the Bahamas, and a new world was added to the old. One adventurer followed another, and one day one of these crossed the narrow neck of land where we are now cutting the great canal and gazed on the expanse of the great ocean, so still, so peaceful, that this man of Spain, Balboa, called it the Pacific.

Go back with me in spirit 10,000 years and think of the small commerce of the early Copts in Egypt, of the scarcely larger one on the banks of the Euphrates. Skip 3000 years in one leap and think of the Romans in boats propelled by oars which carried the grain of Egypt and North Africa to the banks of the Tiber. It was a great step forward when these early merchants of Rome constructed means of bringing these ships across the isthmus of Corinth, avoiding the long, dangerous passage across the inland sea. This

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was the first step toward the Panama canal.
Now skip 1500 years from the time of these Roman merchants to the days when Spain and England saw what the commerce of the Atlantic must be in time and the Armada was sent out from Cadiz to crush the small merchant marine of the rising island rival. The storms of the English channel and the North sea destroyed the navy of Spain, and England was left the mistress of the broad seas destined to become the highway of the world's great commerce.

Now we get the perspective of my thought. Lay side by side the boats that plied along the streams in Central Asia and the rough three, five and six banks of oars. Then by them place the three sail-propelled boats of Columbus, and now we are ready to present for comparison an Atlantic steamer, a freighter of 12,000 or 15,000 tons that steams 15 knots a day, or a liner of 20,000 tons that makes the transit of the Atlantic in less than a week, with Sunday for a day of rest on shore. The commerce of our two original rivers will be to that of the Mediterranean sea as the width of the Nile is to that of the sea. The commerce of Rome in Caesar's time will be to that of London now as the distance from Algiers to the mouth of the Tiber is to that from London to New York. London will do more business in an hour than Babylon or Thebes in a year, and more in a day than Rome in 255 of them.

The Commerce Has Arrived.
And the Pacific? It is not a matter of speculation. The commerce of the great ocean has not to be waited for. It has arrived. It is an infant, but it is of the type of the infant Hercules in his cradle strangling his constructors, with his little fingers. It is not easy to come by recent statistics of the world. Some years ago Honorable Lorin A. Thurston, in an article calling attention to the importance of the Hawaiian islands, gave the statistics of commerce done at nearly a score of the principal cities.

The in-and-out tonnage at London about 30 years ago was 7,470,000 tons. New York 5,400,000. Hamburg 4,100,000. Antwerp 3,350,000. Hongkong 3,200,000. Sydney 2,380,000. Melbourne 2,154,000. San Francisco 1,050,000. Chile 2,000,000. Japan 1,350,000. In this time New York has increased her business by 50 per cent, and has passed London in the combined in-and-out movement. The increase in San Francisco has been even larger, and there is no comparison in that of Japan. Taking 1905, in value, the commerce done at Liverpool was \$1,371,521,000. Hamburg \$1,200,794,252. Antwerp \$875,557,362. New York \$1,386,548,435. San Francisco \$81,867,481. Puget Sound \$52,743,368 (20 years before this was so small as to escape notice). Chile \$31,600,000. Shanghai \$135,844,929. Japan \$200,000,000. Sydney and Melbourne \$205,000,000.

There is thus far only an adumbration of the commerce of the Pacific. The ocean is twice as large as the Atlantic in area. The steamers that are now engaged in its commerce are already taking their measure by its waters and are generally about twice the size of those on its little but powerful rival. The rivalry is powerful now, but will not prevail long. The years are few when the business done at Pacific ports will outmeasure that of the Atlantic by two to one. Why? Because commerce is roughly measured by population, and there are more human beings on the shores of the Pacific than on those of the Atlantic. Business and population are measured by the area of fertile soil in the back country to the sea ports. Here again the Pacific ports outmeasure those of the Atlantic by two to one. The American continent stretches from the frozen oceans near the North Pole almost to that around the South Pole. The continent of Asia on its east border reaches from the same frozen ocean on the north down into the tropics beyond the equator.

The growth of population along the west coast of America will be more rapid in the century we have just entered upon than in any other part of the world. It will be a population living upon a higher plane than any other, and will spend dollars where the others do dimes. On the shores of Asia that face the Pacific are now 800,000,000 human beings, or more than in all the back country of all the seaports on the Atlantic. The uplift and development of these Asiatic peoples have been begun and will go on at a pace never seen before among men. See for proof what has taken place in Japan.

We have not touched at all on Australia—not an island, but a continent almost as large as all Europe, half as large as North or South America, and with the lowest ratio of population to area of any fertile region of the earth. Europe has a population of 318,000,000. Australia of 5,000,000. The new continent has a capacity to support as many as the old, and when the population has arrived the business of this part of the Pacific will match that of all Europe, on and off of the Atlantic. So we shall have an epoch when the business of the Pacific will be to that of the Atlantic not as two to one, but as four or five to one.

The signs of this day are in sight, and are manifold. One has been mentioned, the size of the steamers that carry the trade now existing. A second sign has been glanced at, though some readers may not have seen it. Two years ago London just led New York in in-and-out commerce. In the year that past we believe the figures were slightly in favor of the American metropolis. At any rate, the outgoing commerce of New York outran that of London. Imports mean expense, exports revenue. Does not the significance of the encroachment of New York on London appear? It means that financial dominance in the industrial and commercial world which in long gone ages passed from Babylon to Corinth, thence to Rome, from thence to Paris and Madrid, and finally settled down on the banks of the Thames, is about to make another move and make its home in the world unknown until the Genoese sailor made his way to the great continent that

fronts both the great oceans of the world.

The United States is first among the nations in the value of its annual crop production, \$3,000,000,000, and second in gold production, first in copper, in coal and in iron. Where the annual increment of wealth is largest the stock of money and the circulation cannot lag behind. With New York leading London in its commerce, the financial pulse must beat stronger at no distant day. But the total population of the United States west of the Rocky mountains is not above 5,000,000 if it is as much as that. That of the eastern coast is six times greater. How long will this last? Not many years as we count time in such matters. With the trade of the Pacific outmeasuring that of the Atlantic there must come a shifting of the financial center to keep pace with the business progress of the world. Early in the present century there will come a new adjustment as there have been many such in the past. The movement has been all the time westward. It will continue to follow the sun until it can go no farther. On the shores of western America there will be a city that will in all respects outrank all on the globe in its time and all that have gone before it. These things are as sure as the fate that has led the star of empire westward from the Nile and the Euphrates to where its conquering eagles perch today. Where will the city be? Between Puget sound and San Diego bay. Let each harbor on this long stretch treasure the hope that fate has fixed upon that as the future financial and commercial center of the world and let each do all in its power to make that aspiration a fact.

But while there will be one city of supreme importance there will be many of great importance. Between the Bay of Fundy and the mouth of the Rio Grande how many great cities are there? What will be the final achievement of each of these centers of population, wealth and activity? Why shall there not be on the western coast of America as many great centers? If there are not so many, then those that will exist will be in all respects greater than those on the east shore.

South of the boundary between the United States and Mexico are many important cities today. They are grow-

ing daily in importance. The construction of the Panama canal will accelerate their growth. The government of Mexico is alive to these facts. At Tampico, \$2,000,000 has been spent in constructing a harbor. Old Vera Cruz is a great commercial emporium today. It is growing fast, and much money has been spent in providing facilities for the commerce centering there. More is being spent.

On Mexican West Coast.

Is there any reason why the west coast of Mexico should stand still? If there is, no visitor has discovered this reason. The railroad across the isthmus of Tehuantepec anticipated the Panama canal and will be a formidable rival of the cut. At Puerto de Mexico a good harbor has been made and on the Pacific end of the railway a better harbor is being made at Salina Cruz. The money being spent there runs to many millions and the results are astonishing all who behold them.

Between the mouth of the Colorado river and Salina Cruz the development may be in a backward state. But the raw material is there out of which to create great things. There are many ports there in embryo or actuality. They will all be facts and great factors in the coming greatness of the Pacific. Port Lobos, Guaymas, Topolobampo, Mazatlan, Manzanillo and Acapulco will all be called upon for service in the future business of the Pacific. To show that the material exists out of which to construct an empire and achieve success of industrial greatness is the purpose of this series of letters.

I have seen what is here waiting for the magic touch of capital directed by brains and made effective through labor. There is not the same long stretch of coast on the west coast of Mexico as in the United States, but there is a long stretch and there is no bit of the crust of the earth of the same extent which can at all claim superiority over this within the confines of our sister republic. It is all in the raw. There are few great actualities here, but there is a world of great possibilities. My effort will be to show them as they are, not point out the difficulties and drawbacks as well as the advantages and certainties. I am not the only person who sees these matters as they present themselves to my eyes. No

more attention than this west coast of Mexico, although it is only a few years since it became much known to the outside world. At the present time one hears English spoken all the way from Port Lobos to Salina Cruz and often in the Pailmans it is the only language heard at all. From British Columbia to Texas capable men, practical men, with means enough at hand to carry out anything, they undertake, are met all along western Mexico. This coast is getting ready for the completion of the canal, and its pulses are throbbing with the thought of the part it is to play in the century in the great development to take place in trans-Pacific trade. Western Mexico will be ready when the time comes, and the part it will play in the great things of the future will not be insignificant.

But enough of generalities. As these letters develop they will show why I have so much faith in the sister republic. Remember there is the east coast of Mexico as well as the west, and a center as rich in resources as the coast. The country in all bound together in population, government and aspiration as well by more than 8000 miles of railroad, and all pulsing with their agricultural and mineral wealth will contribute to the development of the coast in which they have the most interest. The one great deposit of iron in Mexico so far as yet known is in Durango, and not far from the Pacific shore.

Kalamita Chases Vice.

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)
Kalamita, Wash., Dec. 10.—An ordinance passed by the city council last night defining vagrancy and providing a penalty therefor prohibits fortune tellers, houses where lost or stolen goods may be found, common prostitutes, the use of dice, cards or any other gambling device in saloons, all persons begging alms, houses for the resort of prostitutes. Any person having no visible means of support or acting contrary to this ordinance will be considered a vagrant and be subjected to 30 days in the city jail or pay \$100 fine. As a result of the ban on gambling numerous dice boxes and decks of cards have been laid aside. The ordinance went into effect today.

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