

MEXICO AS IT IS.

A Land for Which Nature Has Done Very Much and Man Very Little.

A late volume of reports from United States Consuls is mostly devoted to Mexico. It includes a general description of the state of the various industries of the country; its agricultural, mining and manufacturing possibilities; tenure and value of land; prices of food, livestock, etc., and prospects for American enterprise. These reports vary in accordance with local conditions, but they are all of the same general purport. With an area of 760,000 square miles, and a population of nearly 10,000,000, the total real estate valuation of Mexico is only \$382,000,000, and the value of its agricultural products is less than \$200,000,000 annually. The other industries of the country, aside from mining, are insignificant. This is due to no lack of natural resources. The soil is rich and the climate favorable for farming operations, but there is no development of the advantages of the country, and ignorance, indolence and poverty form the burden of the reports regarding the people. The most fertile soils remain unproductive for want of artesian wells and irrigating ditches. There is a variety of products which require little or no cultivation, but there are no roads for their transportation, no machinery for handling them, and no banking system to facilitate exchanges. Land is literally "dirt cheap," yet it is difficult of purchase because owners are too conservative and inert to either sell or work their holdings, and there is no established trade in real estate. The peasantry, mostly of Indian blood, are virtually held in bondage by the system of perpetual indebtedness and the transferring of accounts from one employer to another, and they are so lazy and shiftless that they scarcely earn the twenty-five cents a day which is their average wage. What they get for their labor after satisfying their primitive living necessities, is spent in cheap finery and merry-making.

The whole teaching of these reports is that Mexico is a grand field for American enterprise, in all natural advantages, but that a new race, or a radical transformation of the present inhabitants, is necessary to make the field profitable. For instance, the use of American agricultural machinery would be a great boon to the country, but there is little or no sale for it for several reasons. Except in the immediate vicinity of the railroads the cost and difficulty of transportation virtually prohibits its use. Few of the farm laborers or their employers are competent to use it, if procured. The native mechanics are not smart enough to make repairs, and any breakage means disuse for months. To make a market for such goods, dealers must establish depots at centers of population, with provision for making repairs at heavy expense and considerable risk. So in other departments of industry. Altogether these consular reports tell the same story of Mexico which has been told by private observers. It is a land for which nature has done much and man little. There are some signs of progress along main lines of communication, but it will be necessarily slow.—*San Francisco Bulletin.*

A Short-Tailed Cat.  
[Exchange.]

Japanese cats have the shortest kind of tails, or else none at all. Being deprived of this usual plaything they are very solemn pussies. An American once took one of these tailless cats to San Francisco as a curiosity, and it utterly refused companionship with the long-tailed feline specimens there; but, finding a cat whose tail had been cut off by accident, the two became friendly at once.

Ancient "Concealed Weapons."  
[London Letter.]

In the tower of London are twenty-one specimens of shields, with a pistol attachment in the centre, the weapon being a breech-loader, and slightly projecting, so that it would hardly be noticed by an enemy until it was discharged. All these shields were carried in former times as "concealed weapons."

COMPLETE SURPRISE.

How a Detroit Female Righter Was Rather Disagreeably Disappointed.

On the last day of registration a woman armed with a bone-handled umbrella walked into the fourth precinct of the Second ward and asked:

"Is this where the men register?"

"Yes'm, and the women, too," was the courteous reply.

"Then I can register without any fuss?"

"Yes'm."

"I didn't know as they allowed it," she explained, "but I was determined on it. When I left home I had my mind made up that I'd either register or—"

"Put your name right down on this sheet of paper," interrupted the clerk. "You needn't even give your age."

"I needn't! Well, sunthin' wonderful must have happened all at once. I guess you men have found out that us women are of some account after all."

"Oh, certainly. That's all, ma'am."

"And no fuss about it?"

"Not a bit."

"I expected I'd have to jaw and tear around, and perhaps use a weapon, and I'm a leetle disappointed."

"Yes. We won't keep you longer waiting, ma'am."

"Well, I'll go, but my old man won't believe it, and I'll hardly dare say it myself. I expected you'd refuse, and I'd have to jaw and—"

"Good day, madam."

She went out grudgingly and she stood in front of the building for three or four minutes like one knocked out, and when she finally moved off she was saying to herself:

"Well, mebber the fuss will come in when I try to vote. Mebber they'll git a prize-fighter to challenge me."—*Detroit Free Press.*

What Johnnie Had Heard.

Vinegary mother—Now, Johnnie, you must stop being so silly. Just think of a big boy like you playing horse!

Eight-year-old Johnnie (whimpering)—Well, I guess I'm no worse than pa.

Vinegary mother—Stop your noise; your pa doesn't play horse.

Johnnie—No; but I heard him tell Brown that he sat up all last night playing bank.

Vinegary mother—The wretch! He won't get a thing to eat to-day.

Johnnie—I guess he won't be hungry, ma.

Vinegary mother (growing inquisitive)—What makes you think so, my son?

Johnnie—'Cause I heard him tell Brown that he wouldn't come home until he got a stake.—*Chicago Herald.*

Had Cause to Grumble.

Old Bob Brayson, just after putting on a pair of new brogan shoes, went out to chop wood. While standing on a log, chopping, his axe glanced and cut his left foot nearly off. His son came up and asked:

"Pap, what's the matter?"

"I've dun ruint my new shoe," the old fellow replied. "It beats any thing I ever seed. Ben choppin' wood for a month in my old shoes an' never tetchted 'em, but now that I've larned down two dollars fur er new pa'r I have to cut an' slash 'em all to pieces."—*Arkansas Traveler.*

"Minute and a Half" Headway.  
[New York Letter.]

There is no more curious sight than the Brooklyn terminus of the great bridge at 6 o'clock in the afternoon. The cars are then run at about a minute and a half headway, as they call it, by which they mean that two cars are emptied on the Brooklyn side about that hour in every minute and a half. The passengers then descend a stairway to the street, but, notwithstanding the interval of time named, the procession of people is unbroken during the rush of business. A constant stream of men and women, seven and eight abreast, is to be seen descending these stairs.

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