

MR. BRYAN ON MEXICO.

Tells the New York World What He Saw There.

PROSPERITY UNDER FREE SILVER.

Mills Multiplying, Real Estate Rising, Exports Expanding, Wages Steady and No Fall in Prices as in the United States. Mexican Markets For American Products.

[Copyright, 1898, by the Press Publishing Co., New York World. All rights reserved.] The reading which I did preparatory to my visit to Mexico revealed to me how little I had known of the history of that country, past and present. In this connection I acknowledge my indebtedness to Senor Romero, the Mexican minister at Washington, for advanced proofs of his book, just issued from the press, descriptive of Mexico at the present time. Senor Romero, besides being a student of great industry and research, is thoroughly familiar with our language, and his book will be of great value to both republics in that it gives to the people of the United States full and authentic information with regard to our neighbor on the south. The readers of The World may be interested in a brief reference to some of the facts which came under my observation during a three weeks' stay in the land of the Aztecs.

I found: First.—That Mexico is a delightful place to visit. Travel on the main lines is as safe, as comfortable and as cheap as in the United States. The City of Mexico is within four days' ride of Kansas City and can be reached by three routes. The Mexican National leaves the Rio Grande at Laredo, the International at Eagle Pass and the Mexican Central at El Paso.

The weather is dry and pleasant during the winter months, and the temperature high enough to be inviting to those who find the cold of the north too rigorous. The descent from the City of Mexico to Vera Cruz can be made between sunrise and sunset, and in the course of the day the traveler has an opportunity to compare the flora of two zones. As both the Mexican and the Inter-oceanic railroads connect the capital with this seaport the tourist is enabled to vary the scenery without loss of time. The new railroad which is building from the City of Mexico to Acapulco rises 2,500 feet almost within sight of the City of Mexico, and then drops 5,000 feet to Cuernavaca, the present terminus. The three snow-crowned peaks Popocatepetl, Iztaccihuatl and Orizaba are magnificent mountains. Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl are near the City of Mexico. The first named, the largest of the three, presents the best view from Cuernavaca. All three can be seen from a point on the Inter-oceanic road, near Puebla. Cathedrals built before the landing of the pilgrims, huge public buildings, differing entirely in architecture from our own; unique Chapultepec, a national art gallery, filled with rare and valuable paintings, and a museum containing innumerable relics of a civilization which antedates the discovery of the continent by Europeans—all these combine to interest and instruct.

Second.—That while our nation has more inhabitants, covers more territory and possesses greater wealth, we cannot surpass the Mexicans in hospitality or in the courtesy which they extend to strangers.

Mexico Friendly to the United States. Third.—That the Mexican authorities entertain a very friendly feeling toward the citizens of the United States, and heartily desire a continuation of the amicable relations now existing between the two nations.

Fourth.—That Mexico is as firm as the United States in the support of the Monroe doctrine, having realized only 30 years ago the dangers attendant upon an attempt to extend monarchical institutions upon the western hemisphere.

Fifth.—That President Diaz is entirely deserving of the encomiums bestowed upon him by his own people, by resident Americans and by visitors. He has a genius for public affairs, understands the condition and needs of his people and has their confidence to a degree seldom enjoyed by an executive, either hereditary or elective. While the advantages of a stable government are now so generally recognized that his death or resignation would not disturb the existing order of things, yet his qualifications have been so amply proved and his administration so completely successful that his people are unanimous in the hope that he may yet enjoy many years of official life.

Hidalgo, the warrior priest, who led the movement which resulted in independence, is called the Mexican Washington. Juarez, who successfully defended his country against Maximilian, was the second great Mexican leader of the nineteenth century. President Diaz, himself a brave general, by restoring order, establishing the supremacy of the civil law and perfecting the system of public education has earned for himself and will enjoy in history a place by the side of Hidalgo and Juarez.

Sixth.—That the public men of Mexico are not inferior to our own in intelligence, education and general information. Senor Mariscal, secretary of foreign affairs, adds to great ability long experience as a diplomat and is worthy of comparison with the premiers of the leading nations of the world. Senor Limantour, secretary of finance, is a most accomplished gentleman and has exhibited superior skill in the management of the fiscal affairs of the republic. The other cabinet officers, governors, members of the national and state congresses, mayors, etc., whom I met were, without exception, men of refinement and scholarly attainments.

Seventh.—That the English language is being taught more and more exten-

sively each year and is now understood and spoken by most of the public men or by members of their families. I was informed that a majority of the members of the federal congress could understand a speech delivered in our language. The leading hotels and stores have clerks who can speak English, so that travel and traffic are made easy.

Advances in Educational Affairs. Eighth.—Mexico is making substantial progress in education. The public schools are free and attendance is compulsory. The president and those associated with him in authority are putting forth every possible effort to improve the system of instruction and to bring all the children under the influence of the schoolteacher. As an illustration, in the state of Mexico the number of schools has increased more than 100 per cent within the last ten years, and the number of pupils in attendance shows an equal increase. The girls and boys enter school upon an equal footing, and the ambition of the pupil is stimulated by the offer of rewards for merit.

It was our good fortune to be invited to witness the distribution of prizes for the schools of the federal district. Nothing impressed me more than the scene here presented. President Diaz delivered the awards to several hundred boys and girls. The Indian and the Spaniard, the rich and the poor, all mingle together in the public schools and vie with each other for the prizes. The state not only furnishes instruction in the elementary branches, but provides industrial training for both boys and girls, normal schools for teachers and professional schools for students of law and medicine. President Diaz recently quoted a remark made by Von Moltke in praise of the German school-teacher and also pointed out the necessity for educated mothers. He recognizes, as did Jefferson, that popular education is vital in a republic, and largely through his efforts Mexico sees a yearly increase in the number of those who are capable of intelligent participation in government.

Ninth.—That the free coinage of silver is entirely satisfactory to the people of Mexico. They have had a chance to test the system thoroughly and to compare it with the systems of the United States, England, France and Germany, and I found no disposition either among the officials or among the people to favor the gold standard. The federal government pays about \$6,000,000 annually on gold obligations, and while it is compelled to collect over \$12,000,000 in silver to cover this interest account, it has no difficulty in doing so, because of the prosperous condition of the nation's industries. The government is not only not encountering the disastrous fall in prices which has afflicted all the gold standard countries since 1873. While exchange has fluctuated, the fluctuation has only affected foreign trade, and that fluctuation, while of small importance when compared with the great advantage of maintaining the level of prices, will entirely disappear when the parity between gold and silver is restored.

I found quite a number of Mexicans who went so far as to express the hope that the United States would continue the gold standard because of the advantage which Mexican manufacturers find in a high rate of exchange, but the majority of the people with whom I talked desire the restoration of bimetallicism in the United States in order that stability in exchange may be added to stability in prices.

No Desire to Abandon Silver. The United States has had the gold standard for 23 years, and the system has proved so unsatisfactory that at the last election 6,500,000 voters expressed a desire for independent bimetallicism, while 7,000,000 cast their votes for candidates pledged to international bimetallicism. The gold standard has been so disastrous that even a Republican administration is asking foreign nations to help us to get rid of it. The people of Mexico could adopt the gold standard if they desired to do so, and yet no considerable number of them wish to abandon silver.

Tenth.—That Mexico is more prosperous today than ever before. Her industries are increasing in number and importance. Near Orizaba is a cotton mill of immense proportions. The company operates 18,000 looms and 70,000 spindles. The plant has earned more than 16 per cent a year on the capital stock during the last five years, has been enlarged at the rate of more than 10 per cent per annum during that time, and the company is preparing to add 500 looms and 12,000 spindles this year. At San Luis Potosi I found a cotton factory owned by an American. The proprietor told me that he had been enlarging his plant and found the business profitable. I went through a new cotton factory at Monterey and learned of a large mill now under construction at Guadalajara. There are a number of cotton mills also in the neighborhood of Puebla.

The manufacture of woolen goods, the manufacture of hats, the manufacture of boots and shoes and the brewing of beer are all growing industries. The silk industry is in its infancy, but a Frenchman has planted over 3,000,000 mulberry trees in the state of Guanajuato within the last few years and is much encouraged over the success thus far achieved. I visited a silk factory which he had recently opened in the suburbs of the City of Mexico.

The premium on gold has acted as a wall to keep out foreign competition and at the same time has given a substantial bounty upon exports. While I was in Mexico the gold premium varied from \$1.05 to \$1.15, and I shall therefore take \$1.10 as an average. In 1873 the Mexican dollar commanded a premium of about 3 cents over our gold dollar. At that time a yard of cloth worth a dollar in the United States or Europe, when imported by Mexico, would be worth about 97 cents in Mexican money plus transportation and tariff. Now, with gold at a premium

of \$1.10, a yard of cloth worth a dollar in the United States or Europe is worth \$2.10 in Mexican money plus transportation and tariff. Where the gold price has fallen one-half the Mexican price is about the same that it was in 1873.

On the other hand, those who export from Mexico have a great advantage over competitors living in gold standard countries. For instance, a coffee raiser in Mexico because of the rise in exchange has fared much better than the planter who has cultivated coffee on a gold basis and who had found his income diminishing while his debts and fixed charges refused to fall. One of the gold men of my own state has laid aside his political scruples sufficiently to invest in a large tract of land near Tampico, upon which he is planting the coffee berry. He is not the only American citizen who is seeking in Mexico the prosperity for which he voted in the United States.

Large Importations of Raw Materials.

The cotton mills of Mexico now consume more cotton than Mexico produces, but the acreage is increasing. If, as some expect, they find it possible to produce upon Mexican soil all the cotton needed by their mills, the Mexicans will become dangerous competitors of the gold standard countries. At present they are handicapped by having to import so large a proportion of their raw material. In reply to the argument that it is sometimes made—namely, that we can protect our manufacturers by still higher duties—I contend that we can only do so by increasing the disadvantage under which American farmers now labor. The lot of our farmer is hard enough when the price of what he buys falls in the same proportion as the price of his own product, because even then his taxes, debts and other fixed charges do not fall. If, however, we maintain the price of manufactured goods by a high tariff, the burdens of the farmer will be so increased as to make his ultimate bankruptcy certain.

I might mention in this connection that I found many of our protected manufacturers selling their wares in Mexico in competition with their European rivals. At one store I found lamps and lamp chimneys made in Missouri, hammers and shovels made in Philadelphia, cutlery made in Massachusetts, also Yale locks; Disston saws, and hinges made in the United States. California wines and canned fruits and Chicago canned meats find a market in Mexico. At Guanajuato is a theater, recently completed, the structural iron of which came from the United States. At several places I saw electrical apparatus of American construction. In many instances an additional discount is given by American manufacturers upon exported goods.

Eleventh.—That wages are not only higher on an average than ever before, but still rising. Progress or retrogression can be determined only by comparing the present with the past. The condition of the laboring classes in Mexico can be improved, but it is a fact that they are in better condition than they were in 1873, when the Mexican dollar was worth more than our gold dollar, and I believe that their condition is much better today than it would have been if Mexico had adopted the gold standard when the United States did. It is not fair to compare the wages in one country with the wages in another country without first making allowance for differences in efficiency, differences in climatic conditions, differences in habits, etc.

Differences That Cannot Be Ignored.

Even within the boundaries of our own country there are differences too great to be ignored. During President Harrison's administration Secretary Ruskin issued a document entitled "Wages of Farm Labor in the United States" (Report No. 4, year 1892). Page 16 of this report contains a table showing that in 1892 the average wages for farm labor (without board) was \$12.50 per month in South Carolina, \$12.30 in North Carolina, \$12.50 in Georgia and \$12.75 in Alabama, while in California the wages paid were \$37.50 and in the state of Washington \$37.50, the average for all the states for that year being \$18.60. For farm labor with board the wages varied from \$8.40 to \$25 and averaged \$12.54.

The report says that white farm labor in the United States received \$282 per annum; that the same labor received about \$150 in Great Britain and \$90 in Germany. I refer to this report because it was issued by Republican authority and shows that under the operation of the same financial system and the same tariff system farm labor received three times as much in one part of the Union as it did in another part. When it is remembered that the wages paid in each state were ascertained by averages, it will be seen that the difference between the best paid labor and the poorest paid labor is still greater. The report also shows that in the United States Caucasian farm labor receives more than three times as much as the same labor receives in Germany, although both countries have a gold standard and a protective tariff. Between 1810 and 1834 England had a gold standard and the United States had a double standard, with silver as the money in common use, and yet laboring men were better off here than in England. Turkey is one of the gold standard nations, and Japan, until recently, coined silver at a ratio almost identical with ours, and yet the progress of Japan was so great that Mr. Cleveland commented upon it in a message during his second term. The gold standard advocate who would consider it unfair to compare Japan and Turkey does not hesitate to blame silver for the low wages of the peons of Mexico.

In all the leading cities of Mexico can be found people from the United States, England, Germany and France—all drawn from gold standard countries by the advantages offered in Mexico. Few have gone from the United States to Canada, where they have the gold standard and speak the English

language, but in Mexico, where an American citizen is compelled to learn an entirely new language, there are already several American colonies, and the number is constantly increasing. Some are in business for themselves, some working for wages, and they stay there, although they are at liberty to return whenever they see an opportunity to better their condition in the United States.

Twelfth.—Real estate is rising in Mexico. Public and private improvements are in progress. Guadalajara, one of the largest cities of the republic and surpassed by none in beauty, has recently decided to put in a complete system of sewerage and waterworks. The work of constructing the sewers was let to a New Jersey contractor last month. Monterey has recently laid considerable brick pavement, and the capital has nearly completed a sewerage tunnel through a mountain range. Electricity is taking the place of the old time street lantern, the shoe is gradually supplanting the sandal, and the coat is winning against the serape.

It would be unfair to give to Mexico's financial policy credit for all the progress which the country has made in the last 25 years. Her government and her government officials have contributed much to her development by giving security to life, protection to property and stimulus to education. If the advocates of the gold standard insist that her financial system has been a hindrance and that she has gone forward not because of it, but in spite of it, I reply that my observation as well as my reason leads me to believe that the use of silver has been of material advantage to Mexico, and I am more than ever convinced that the best interests of our own people demand the immediate restoration of the free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1 without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation.

Mexico is not strong enough to maintain the parity between the metals, but the people of the United States are. Mexico has by the use of silver avoided the fall in prices, but has suffered to a certain extent from the fluctuations in exchange. By opening our mints to the free coinage of silver we, too, shall escape from falling prices, and by maintaining the parity we shall in addition avoid fluctuation in exchange.

W. J. BRYAN.

That Monument Was Spared.

Judge Thomas J. Mackey, formerly of South Carolina, gives an incident of Sherman's march to the sea which is not recorded in the war histories.

"South Carolina was the first state in the Union to send a regiment to the front to participate in the war with Mexico," said the judge. "The people of a grateful state caused to be erected in front of the capitol in Columbia a monument to the memory of the brave boys of the First South Carolina regiment who lost their lives in that conflict.

"This monument is made of pounded brass and represents a palmetto tree. When Sherman's army entered Columbia and his soldiers were destroying everything that came in their way, several companies made a dash for the shaft. With the butts of their muskets they began the work of demolition. They had not proceeded far when a man on horseback rushed up to them and commanded them to desist.

"Not another stroke!" he cried.

"Several of the soldiers paid no attention.

"The next man who dares assault that shaft I will kill!" he thundered.

"The men saw tears in the eyes of the one who thus addressed them. They also saw that he had weighed his words carefully and meant every one of them.

"Soldiers," said he, "the boys who sleep beneath that palmetto loved their country as much as you or I. They fought as valiantly."

"And the palmetto still stands in the old town of Columbia. The man who caused it to be preserved was Colonel Paine of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Ohio regiment, and the people of South Carolina owe him a debt of gratitude they can never pay."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Dante and Purgatory.

Dante's conception of the nature and purpose of the pains of purgatory stands in very marked contrast to the popular ideas of the middle ages. In a word, there is no trace in Dante of any arbitrary or vindictive punishment in purgatory. No one can fall to feel the difference—even when they resemble in some of the details inflicted—between the punishments in hell and those in what Milton has beautifully described as "the milder shades of purgatory."

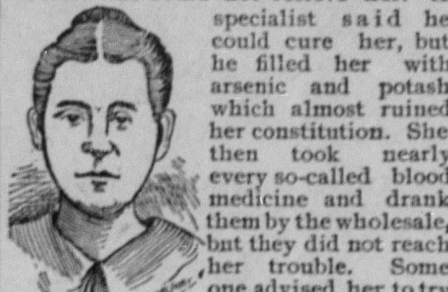
As Mr. Ruskin has expressed it: In purgatory it is no longer a question as to "what the sinner has done, but only what evil feeling is still in his heart, or what good, when purified, his nature is noble enough to receive." The whole purpose of the punishment is to enable the sufferer to eradicate and conquer what St. Paul calls "the motions of sin," to acquire that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord," and to subjugate completely the rebel will.

Not only are the punishments in purgatory appropriate in kind for this object—there is never anything degrading, grotesque or insulting about them, as is often the case in the "Inferno"—but besides the punishment there are provided on each cornice subjects for constant meditation by day and by night, both of the virtue to be acquired and the vice to be eradicated. The instant this purpose is accomplished the soul is set free, and there is joy over the whole realm of purgatory at its liberation. The time required in each case, until "infectum elidit scelus," may be long or short, but that is its absolute limit, neither more nor less. Thus Dante imagines Statius to have expiated the sin of accidia, or spiritual sloth, for four centuries, and that of avarice for five centuries more.—Fortnightly Review.

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