

## "UNITED STATES OF MEXICO."

[Correspondence of the DESERET NEWS.]

Though but recently counted among the great powers as a nation—if indeed it is generally so rated today—the Estados Unidos de Mejiro (United States of Mexico) has an undoubted standing, in point of natural resources, among the most favored countries of the earth. As its welfare has always been a matter of solicitude to the Latter-day Saints, on account of its native races, and is fast becoming more so by reason of their numbers removing here, a somewhat studied account of the country, its resources and people, may be of interest to a few of your readers.

Lying as it does across the Tropic of Cancer, between the 15th and 32nd degrees north latitude, the domain of Mexico is about equally divided between the tropic and temperate zones. Its greatest length is about 1900 miles; its width varying from 750 miles near the 26th degree, to 140 miles across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The northern frontier of Mexico is 1900 miles long, and its southern, 345 miles; while its entire seaboard reaches the extent of 6086 miles in all, 1677 miles on the side of the Atlantic, and 4409 miles bordering the Pacific. The western coast is very irregular and the water deep, affording splendid harbors at Acapulco, Manzanillo, San Blas, Mazatlan, La Paz and Guaymas; while on the eastern coast, though the same irregularity exists, the water is so shallow, except on the Caribbean sea, where the trade is unimportant, as to make it impossible for ships of large draught to make land. All the eastern coast, with a slight exception near the mouth of the Tabasco river, is low, flat and sandy, rising at no place for from thirty to forty miles inland more than a thousand feet above sea level; while the low coast on the Pacific, though of the same general character, is relieved here and there by spurs of the Sierra Madre mountains running down to the sea.

A profile of the railway running from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico would probably give one a very good idea of the general formation of the coast region of the entire country. In making sixty miles inland this road gains an elevation of 8000 feet above the level of the sea, rising 133 1-3 feet to the mile. Once attained this elevation is so regular as almost to form a continuous level plain from the capital north to Santa Fe, in New Mexico, a distance of 1200 miles. To the south, however, the plain, though still holding its way through the middle country, varies in elevation, being from 6000 to 3,000 feet above sea level. In the latitude of the City of Mexico, this plateau is about three hundred and fifty miles wide, decreasing in width to the south, and, to the north, widening with the country. From this elevated table land, stretching from the isthmus of Tehuantepec to the boundary on the north, the country in general recedes in terraces to the sea.

Great numbers of volcanoes occur throughout the Andes to the south, and there are ten in Mexico, but at about the latitude of the national capital, as if to block the way, drawn up in line east and west almost from ocean to ocean, there are seven burn-

ing mountains, bearing the well nigh unpronounceable names of Tuxtla, Orizaba, Popocatepetl, Iztaccihuatl, Toluca, Jorullo and Colima. As if at this line it had been said, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further," no volcanoes are to be found to the north until we reach far beyond the northern boundary of the republic.

There are not many rivers in Mexico, and on account of a bar at the mouth of each, due to the peculiar formation of the country, few of these are navigable, so that the cheap transportation of the country must be done by railroad.

Varying with the altitude, the climate not found in Mexico is not known on the globe. In this respect the country is divided into *tierras calientes*, hot lands, all the low lands not more than 3,000 feet above sea level; *tierras templadas*, temperate lands, on the mountain slopes, between 3,000 and 6,000 feet altitude; and *tierras frias*, cold lands, on the elevated plateaus. The main annual temperature on the hot lands is 104 deg. Fahr., varying from seventy-five deg. to eighty-five deg. in the temperate regions; and on the cold from fifty-five deg. to sixty deg. in the dry season, and averaging eighty deg. in the wet. On the cold lands the nights are cool the year round. "On the railway from Vera Cruz to the capital," says one authority, "every variety of climate is experienced within the space of a few hours, and the natural productions of each are successively passed in review, from the sugar cane, indigo plant and plantain of the tropics to the pines, firs and lichens of the north." As a rule a clear sky prevails throughout the year, except for a few hours of the day, usually in the rainy season.

There are two seasons, the wet, from the middle of July to the last of October, and the dry, comprising the rest of the year, during which time, however, there are occasional rainstorms. While the hot lands are, in many parts, humid and the climate unhealthy, that of the plateau is in the main salubrious and invigorating.

Throughout Mexico animal life abounds. Bees are easily kept and are very remunerative, and the silkworm thrives extraordinarily. Wild animals fairly swarm the forests of the south, but the animals of the north are confined chiefly to the species used for food. In the hilly country of every section wild fowl are numerous. Over the all but fruitless plains, usually covered throughout the year with wild clover or one of the five interchanging varieties of grass indigenous here, cattle and horses run at large the year round, many of them as wild as the original animals of the forest. In the larger rivers and lakes fish are numerous, but in the smaller streams only two kinds exist; one a species of sucker, and the other much like a cross between the chub and the black bass. Turtle, however, may be found in any of the streams. Ducks, geese and swans frequent the rivers and lakes of the north in great numbers, especially in the colder season.

All the plain lands of Mexico that are not extremely fertile, are those which do not receive irrigation. Growing spontaneously may be found here every kind of edi-

ble fruit known in Europe and America; while the forests carry fifty-six varieties of building-woods and twenty-one of cabinet-woods. One authority places the number of varieties of cabinet-woods and building timber at one hundred and fourteen. At the capital, so it is said, all of the different varieties of fruit may be obtained any month in the year.

Among the natives, especially of the less favored portions of the country, agriculture is carried on almost exclusively with the appliances of their ancestors. "They often plow with a crooked stick, and the hoe is their scythe, sickle and reaper. Even their hay is cut with a hoe." In the north where but two crops are usually raised, irrigation is necessary for the first, which is usually planted in December or January. However, as the natives of this section do not as a rule farm at that season of the year, there is an abundance of water. Agricultural implements are admitted free of duty.

Probably the most largely cultivated of the cereals is corn, of which in the hot lands, three and even four crops may be obtained in a year. Even in the north, stalks of corn grow to the height of eighteen feet. Corn, chill and beans make up the almost exclusive diet of the Indians. Chili, or red pepper, is an ingredient of every dish relished by the Mexican, and that in such quantities as to make the "innocent" think he is eating fire.

What is said of corn, as to thrift, is equally true of all the cereals, as well as of all the common vegetables. Cotton is largely grown as far north as Sinaloa, and experiment has proven the northern part of Chihuahua to be well adapted to its growth. According to Senor Buston *Estadística de la Republica Mexicana*, an acre of land will yield about 2000 pounds of cotton as an average. Grapes, too, give heavy returns. The cacao of Oajaca, where three crops are grown annually, has obtained a world-wide reputation; and Mocha coffee is not more celebrated than that of Mexico, most of the supply of the United States having of late years been drawn from this country.

But the richest resource of Mexico lies in its mineral wealth. Without exception the mineral products of Mexico are richer than those of any other country known; and from the developments being made every year, it may well be said that the richest mines are yet undiscovered. The silver bearing district, as set down on the maps, occupies the southern and middle portions of the country, while the northern States are classed as being rich in gold. The silver mines of Chihuahua and Senora are among the best known, a recent discovery in Chihuahua assaying 16,000 ounces of silver to the ton. Authorities hold that the State of Sinaloa will be the great source of supply of the silver of the world for the next century, that State being, it is said, literally covered with silver mines." Lead is almost everywhere found with the silver, running as high as 50 per cent. In some recent discoveries near Casas Grandes,

Owing to the numerous wars in which the country has been involved during the last three-quarters of a century, many mines have been