

abandoned, and though some have been of late years reclaimed, many lie untaken today. The recent border troubles with the Apaches make this especially the case in the northwestern part of the State of Chihuahua.

Large deposits of iron and loadstone are found in Chihuahua, and the Cerro del Mercado, in the State of Durango, is said to be a mountain of iron, assaying 60 per cent. of pure metal. A great variety of marbles everywhere abound. Gypsum and slate are very common, and anthracite coal of the best quality, in an inexhaustible quantity, has recently been discovered in eastern Sinaloa. After naming a number of the mineral resources of Mexico, Mr. Alfred R. Conkling says: "To these are to be added every other metal which science has enumerated."

In former times the government owned and worked all the mines, and even after the citizens were allowed to hold mines, a tax was levied on the output; but at present there is no tribute exacted or any restrictions whatever on the ownership of such property. It is, however, required that the claimant shall work his mine the year round, or provide the equivalent of two men working six months or four working three months. If this is not done, the mine may be "denounced," and the claimant ousted unless he can show good cause for his neglect. However, as mines usually pay working expenses from the "grass roots," this regulation is not considered a hardship.

The manufactures of Mexico are comparatively unimportant, none but those of tobacco, cacao, sugar and indigo being in excess of the home consumption.

A description of Mexico and its resources is no more interesting than its history. And this, not more so to many of your readers, from the fact of their anticipations for its people, than that their country was once the home of the conquerors of this. The Aztecs, or Mexicans, who, coming after the exit of the more peaceable and intelligent Toltecs, held sway here at the time of the conquest, in their immigration to the south, are said to have made the shores of the Great Salt Lake one of their stopping places. From there, so tradition has it, they migrated to the Gila river, in Arizona, about where the "Mormon" settlements in that section are located, thence to where the Casas Grandes ruins now stand, whence, it is supposed, they made their entrance and next and last halt in the valley of the City of Mexico. Here, after a time, they conquered the surrounding peoples and established the magnificent court of the Montezumas.

From the conquest of Cortez in August, 1521, to the movement for independence, in 1810, the history of Mexico presents an almost unbroken narrative of misrule. Internal dissensions, with the exception of the war of 1846, with the United States, occupy the time from that period to the invasion of the country by the French in 1863; but since the death of Emperor Maximilian in 1867, the Republic has enjoyed comparative peace, and is making prodigious strides towards stability and greatness.

Strictly speaking, there has never been a census of Mexico, but the latest

approximation places the population at 10,447,984, of whom, it is estimated, fully two-thirds are of pure Indian blood, half of these, still in a savage state, living mainly in the mountains to the north. Half-breeds, or mestizos, Indians and whites, make up about 2,000,000; while perhaps 30,000 are negroes, or hybrids having some negro blood; and the remainder, whites of various nationalities, principally Spanish. The mestizo are the most degraded of all, being the class from which the *peons*, or slaves, are drawn. For, while there exists no slavery in Mexico, and the constitution recites that slaves, from whatever nation, by the simple act of setting foot on Mexican soil becomes free men; yet a man may sell himself as absolutely as one may sell an ox, and from that time for a stated number of years or for life, according to the terms of the contract, he is the absolute property of his master. Among the natives skilled labor is very rare.

As a nation the Mexicans are patriotic to the last degree, their national hymn breathing all the ardor of the "Marseillaise" of France.

In the densely populated portions of the country, public instruction receives active support and the educational standard is fair; but in the less favored districts of the north, the proportion of the natives able to read and write is not more than one in ten.

The federal government of Mexico is based on the constitution of 1857, framed after that of the United States, with the variation, among others more slight, that the chief justice unites with his judicial functions that of Vice-President of the Republic. The proportion of representatives in Congress is one member to 80,000 inhabitants. The States are more independent of the general government than those of the United States.

There is no public land in Mexico. If there is anywhere, in all this vast domain, a piece of land that has not been "granted" to someone, it is because the land is worthless or because none of the on-hangers at the head of the government have found it out. However, a good title may be obtained to real estate at prices ranging from twenty-five cents to \$5 per acre. Tracts of land in every part of the republic are held for sale all the time by real estate agents at Deming, New Mexico. Along with his purchase of the railroad concession recently made by Hon. John W. Young, there was placed at his disposal a tract of land, in the northwestern corner of the State of Chihuahua, of an area of 2,500,000 acres, over three times as large as the State of Rhode Island, and nearly twice as large as Delaware. These lands, than which none richer can be found anywhere, will probably be open to purchase by the Latter-day Saints in a short time, through Mr. Young's agent, Bishop William Derby Johnson, Jr., at Deming, New Mexico. Mr. J. Fawson Smith, of your city, chief engineer of construction, informs your correspondent that tracklaying will probably commence about the 25th of the present month, on Mr. Young's railway; which, when completed, will place the settlers on these lands in direct communication with the best of every variety of resource Mexico affords.

Neither is there here any regularity in the division of lands. With no national system of survey, with its large and small tracts and *terrenos* divided, angling and interlarded, a Mexican plat of land presents the appearance of the craziest kind of a "crazy quilt."

Though, as good authority says, "in the northern States the priesthood are becoming less influential day by day," the prominent religion of Mexico is Roman Catholic; but all religions are tolerated, and, from being threatened with expulsion on their first arrival, in 1885, the Latter-day Saints are now invited and encouraged to become residents of the republic.

L. A. WILSON.

LAS PALOMAS, Mexico, via Deming, N. M., June 10, 1890.

### IN SAMOA.

On April 2nd, 1891, the following party—President W. O. Lee, A. Beesley, B. Smoot, H. L. Bassett, and two native teachers, Ioane and Iopo—left Apia, Upolu, bound for Saleaula, Savaii, the largest island of the group, to hold conference with the Saints on that Island. We took passage on a small schooner of six tons, owned and manned by Capt. Kinison. We had but a slight wind and did not reach the nearest point of Savaii till about 12 o'clock p. m. We concluded to run in the harbor and wait till daylight before continuing on the journey. We had gone about forty miles and had to go about twenty-five more before reaching our destination. Early in the morning of April 3rd we hauled in the anchor and again set sail. We made several unsuccessful "tacks" before we were able to get outside the opening in the reef that surrounds the harbor. A short time after leaving harbor the wind died out and left us tossing about helplessly under the rays of a tropical sun. The heat was very oppressive. Quite frequently the oars were brought into requisition to keep us from being drifted on to the dreaded reef. The day waned away and when darkness came upon us we had only traveled about three miles nearer to our destination. A night breeze sprang up, and when we arose on the morning of April 4th, we were not far from Saleaula, our destination, at which place we arrived at about 8 o'clock a. m.

Saleaula is a district comprising several villages. The village at which we stopped is called "Salaupulo." We were here welcomed by Bros. E. J. Wood, J. H. Carpenter, Geo. McCune and C. W. Poole. The Saints were also pleased to meet us. Under the management of Bros. Wood and Carpenter the house had been very tastefully decorated with flowers, leaves, etc.

In response to an invitation, we assembled together in the large "village house." This place, too, was nicely decorated. We were here presented with numerous gifts, consisting of ten pigs (cooked whole), 483 taro, two kegs of salt beef, two cans of salmon, fifty yams, twenty-three packages of fish, two large fishes, eight devil fish, five pigeons, fourteen bunches of bananas, eight pieces of sugar cane, twenty-one palusami, two falai, one lobster, ten shell fish and ten coconuts. These