

larger and more interesting field for research ; older, from having been the first to coin money ; larger, from the diversity of types of its coins and more interesting from the vicissitudes of its governments of Monarchies, Empires, and Republic ; presenting a variety of coins, instructive in following up the chronological order of the rulers, and interesting in the early difficulties to contend with, and much later in the Provisional coinage during the eleven years War of Independence.

To present to the readers of this journal something approximating to the history of the earliest and subsequent coinage of Mexico is a task I would with pleasure resign to more competent hands ; but at the request of a few friends I have gathered what data I could find near at hand on the subject. Knowing full well my inability to do it justice, the difficulties to contend with from the scant or doubtful statistics on record, the little interest felt in the study by the people of the country, and the difficulty to obtain reliable information even on the modern coinage of the Republic, makes me cognizant of the arduous task I have undertaken, yet I hope that my critics will be lenient, and if too verbose at times to attribute it to my zeal or incompetency.

The scarcity of coined money necessary for the mercantile transactions in the Colonies of America was seriously considered in Spain. After much discussion by Bishop Zumarraga and other notables, the Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza, by a Royal decree of the Queen dated May 11th 1535, was authorized to establish a Mint in Mexico for the coinage of silver and copper, but not of gold.

The director of the Royal tribunal of mines in Mexico, Don Fausto Elhuyar, in a work entitled *Examinations on the coining of Money in Mexico*, says : "The first provision relative to the establishment of a Mint in America was the Royal decree of the 11th May 1535, in which the reigning Queen ordered that there should be established in the cities of Mexico, Santa Fé, of the New Kingdom of Granada, and