

same year also admits the commercial supremacy of the Mississippi.¹

For ten years this condition remained unchanged. Commerce increased steadily. The receipts of lead at New Orleans rose from 295,000 pigs in 1836 to 785,000 in 1846.² At St. Louis they were at about the same maximum in 1847.³ But from this time forward there was a steady decline. At New Orleans the receipts of lead sank to 256,000 pigs in 1852,⁴ in 1854 to 74,000,⁵ and in 1857 to 18,000⁶ (round numbers), and thereafter they were never more than a tenth of the receipts of 1847; so that by 1857, in ten years, the lead trade was practically extinct in that city. For St. Louis the loss was not proportionately so large, but it was none the less decided; in 1855 the shipments were less than a half of those in 1847.⁷

The explanations offered for this great falling off in trade were many and diverse. The discovery of gold in California, which attracted the miners from the lead region; the working out of the surface or shallow diggings, necessitating a considerable outlay of capital to make the mines again profitable; and the lack of scientific knowledge of the geology of the mining regions, these were all urged as the chief causes of the phenomenon.⁸ Without doubt these, especially the two last, were factors of considerable importance. Lead mining had at this time progressed beyond the experimental stage, and scientific knowledge and large expenditures of capital were necessary in order to overcome the increased difficulties in getting at and raising the mineral. The tariff of 1846 also played a part in reducing its value and thus lessening its production. The new act served to depress the Eastern

¹ Williams, *New York Annual Register* (N. Y., 1836), p. 174.

² *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, xvi., pp. 96, 97.

³ *Id.*, xxvi., p. 325.

⁴ *Id.*, xxix., p. 572.

⁵ *Id.*, xxxi., p. 476.

⁶ *Id.*, xxxvii., p. 604.

⁷ *Id.*, xxxiv., p. 361.

⁸ *Id.*, xxvii., pp. 431-432; xxviii., p. 426.