

GUIDE TO MEXICO

...BY...

CHRISTOBAL HIDALGO

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MEXICO



Pyramid of the Moon and Pulque Ranch—San Juan Teotihuacan.

GUIDE TO MEXICO

BY

CHRISTOBAL HIDALGO.

Not in the interest of Railway nor Land Company nor private party.

The only "Guide" that gives correct and reliable information about all sections of Mexico, and how to go there and secure desirable homes or good situations.

Will save Americans who visit Mexico for business or pleasure much money, valuable time and petty annoyance.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR

BY

THE WHITAKER & RAY COMPANY

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MEXICO.

MEXICO is the only country in the world that can offer settlers cheap homes in rich sections, without frost, with health equal to the average health of the United States.

The coffee and fruit belt of the State of Vera Cruz is the most desirable for those who wish to till the soil, for the reason that coffee and all the fruits of the tropics grow to perfection, while most of the products of colder countries also grow side by side with what cannot be produced in any part of the United States. Parts of the States of Tabasco, Oaxaca, and Moreles, adjacent to the State of Vera Cruz, also are desirable, though, with the exception of Tabasco, more remote from water transportation than the State of Vera Cruz. The Gulf of Mexico is the great cheap-freight route for the products of Mexico to the United States.

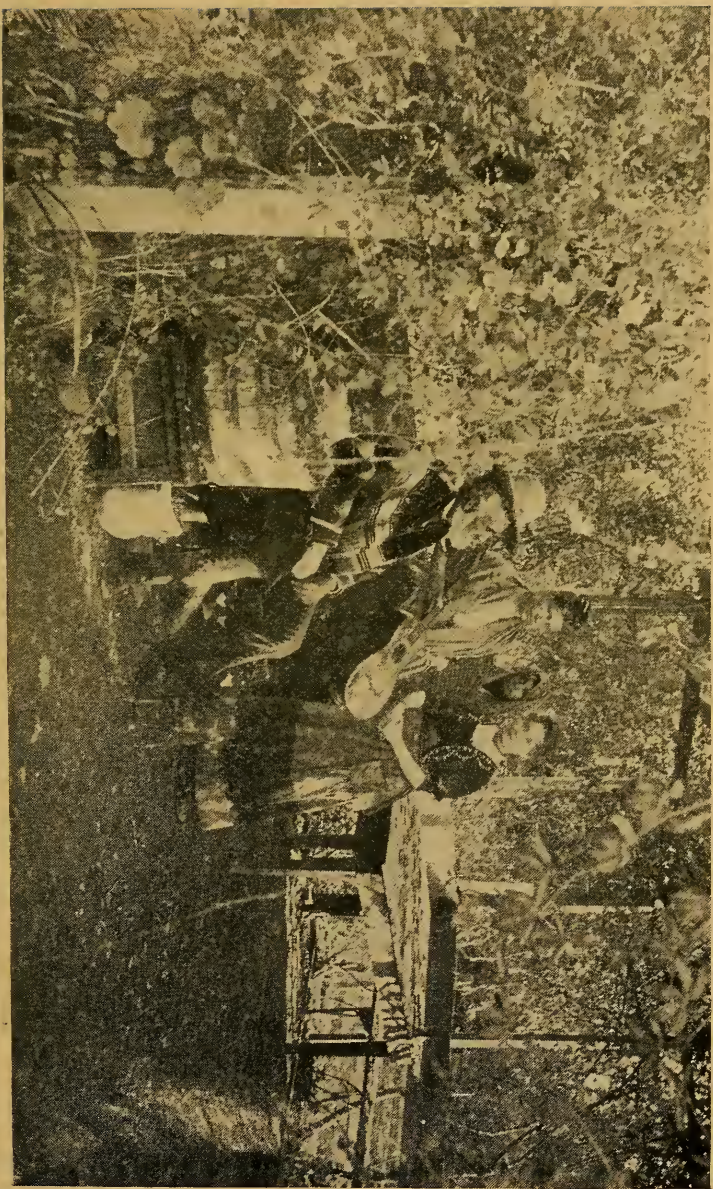
Peaches, apples, pears, grapes and wheat do not thrive with coffee, but they begin to appear in sight of where coffee stops. Tobacco, equal to that of Cuba, grows with coffee, and corn, not much surpassed in Illinois, grows anywhere in the coffee belt, or on the coast, where the country is

too low for coffee. Sugar grows wherever there is coffee, and even better in the low country. Potatoes, tomatoes, and other vegetables, common in Florida, or California, grow anywhere. Bananas grow wherever there is coffee, and yet better in the low country, while pineapples grow nicely up to the center of the coffee belt, and to perfection in the low country. No country surpasses all the coffee belt and the coast for oranges, while the possibilities of lemons are not less than other countries that are not exempt from frost, while cocoanuts abound on the coast, and mangoes, alligator pears, and other delicate fruits of the tropics are on the coast and up to the center of the coffee belt.

Lower than one thousand feet above sea level, and more than five thousand feet above sea level, is not suited to coffee growing.

A little more than one hundred miles from the port of Vera Cruz, the inhabited country rises more than eight thousand feet above the sea level, and the uninhabited to more than seventeen thousand feet, where eternal snow crowns the mountain above twelve thousand feet. Forty miles from the snow line is the cream of the coffee belt.

The City of Mexico is nearly eight thousand feet high; and corn, wheat, barley, peaches, apples, grapes, pears and strawberries grow in many sections of altitude between six thousand and eight thousand feet. The high country is not exempt from frost, though fresh strawberries are in the market of the City of Mexico every day in the year.



Ranch Life—San Nicholas, Vera Cruz.

Cattle, sheep, goats and hogs abound in nearly all the high country, though long droughts render that part of Mexico unsafe for small farmers from the United States. It is also the pulque country, where the national drink of Mexico grows in the juice of a plant, a very profitable industry, though some seven years are required to make it productive.

The State of Jalisco, of which Guadalajara, the prettiest Spanish-American city on the continent, is the capital, is a good healthy country. But there is not that diversity of crops that makes the Vera Cruz belt the garden spot of the Republic, although oranges and sugar do well, and other fruits abound low down on the Pacific side, while no part of the country boasts finer cattle. It is not a coffee country and has no transportation, except all rail, without competition.

Guadalajara has more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and is a manufacturing city of considerable promise, with room for enterprise.

The other sections of Mexico are not specially promising to people who want to grow crops or raise cattle, as their products will not bear shipment to the United States on a large scale, and farming for home consumption is not a very profitable business.

Tampico has back country that is productive, but not exempt from frost.

The mining, manufacturing and commercial cities will be noted in connection with business positions and skilled labor.

The coast country of Vera Cruz and adjacent

States is the natural field for rubber production, that is, practically unlimited, while there is no better cattle section anywhere, as pasture never fails. The poultry business has great possibilities, as Vera Cruz is a good market for fresh chickens and eggs, always at paying prices.

The city of Vera Cruz is the only important point not usually free from yellow fever, and it has not been epidemic there in two years. Yellow fever never visits the farming districts, though trade with Vera Cruz is not interrupted when there is an epidemic there, for the reason that the natives of Vera Cruz never have it, and there is no danger of it going inland, except to Cordoba, which has an epidemic about once in ten years. Vera Cruz would never have an epidemic if always clean, and the disposition to keep her clean is growing. Trains and steamers run inland every day when there is an epidemic in Vera Cruz, the same as when there is no fever there, for the reason the people in the country know they are safe from contagion.

The other maladies of Mexico are identically the same as are common everywhere in the United States, and no more serious.

The question of homes in Mexico, whether for families or single persons, is an interesting and a very important one, little understood, and not duly appreciated in the United States, for the reason that the information within the reach of the public is mostly incorrect and misleading, being from interested land and railroad companies, seeking to induce settlers and travelers their way.

There are land companies that describe their own property correctly, and railways that do not misrepresent the scenery along their own lines, but that conceal what may be more desirable to Americans elsewhere. This is natural.

For these reasons this effort to give correct and impartial facts, entirely independent of land dealers and railroad people, is made in the interest of those who may wish to visit Mexico, seeking homes, business or pleasure, so they may avoid the mistakes, delays and needless expenses to which Americans are almost always subjected on their first visits to Mexico. For this reason this information cannot be given free, as are the advertisements of interested land and railroad people. The small price charged covers actual labor and expenses.

The first step that should be taken by all who contemplate a visit to Mexico, no matter for what purpose, is to learn enough of the Spanish language to get along without an interpreter. This is an easy, and should be a pleasant, task. Get a De Torno's method of teaching Spanish to an English speaking person. There are other good books, but De Torno's is the simplest and best for a person who cannot have a teacher. If your bookstore has none the book may be ordered from D. Appleton & Co., No. 3 Bond Street, New York, the publishers. The price is two dollars for the book, with Spanish key to the English exercises. But in buying or ordering be sure to get a book to teach an American Spanish, not a Spaniard English, as this last would not teach you the pronun-

ciation of Spanish. Learn first the sound of the Spanish letters. This is easy, as a letter has but one sound. Then learn the Spanish of the first lesson, which is opposite to the English, so you know it perfectly. Then proceed from lesson to lesson, the same way, never passing a lesson unlearned. Be careful to learn and remember the tenses of the verbs, and especially the tenses of the irregular verbs that are irregular, and the genders of the nouns.

Moderate application should make any one of ordinary capacity master of the book in three months, so every word and feature will become natural as breathing. Thus qualified, it will be easy to get along with Spanish-speaking people, and every day of practice with them will make one more and more proficient. It would keep a hundred good gold dollars in the pocket of any tourist and give him a thousand dollars more pleasure and satisfaction than is possible with the best interpreter, and double the gain of a settler, a man of business or a person depending on a salaried position.

Some knowledge of the language is half the battle and compensates for the want of capital to a great extent. It is folly to go there entirely ignorant of Spanish to engage in business or seek employment.

Those who wish to become bookkeepers, salesmen or stenographers should learn the Spanish with some assistance of a teacher and an English and a Spanish dictionary, in order to learn more words than the text-book contains.

Spanish may be learned without interfering with the regular duties of daily life, on the way to and from work, at night and in the early morning. Ten new or difficult words may be learned daily by writing them on a card and keeping them in sight when at work. In one day they will become familiar. Thus, in a few months, a full stock of words will be garnered in the storehouse of memory, ready for future use.

The farmer who knows a little Spanish can make twice the headway with his work and the country people as he can if he knows none.

The natives are very kind and gladly help one along in the use of the language, if one is social and disposed to make the best of his new situation.

The next step, after learning the rudiments of the language, is to decide what one intends to do and select a field in which to labor, and the most desirable route to reach it.

A man of family should go alone and prepare his home before he moves his family. This is cheaper, safer and better than having a family in a strange land without a home.

Farmers might select one among them to go and find a desirable location for a settlement, and thus save much expense.

Persons wishing to engage in commerce or manufacturing should go in person and select a field for their operations.

Clerks, bookkeepers and stenographers may secure work by advertising in Mexico and by correspondence before going, so as to have work ready

on arrival. How to do this will be explained in due time and place.

As people going to a foreign country will naturally wish to know something of its government and institutions, it may be well to dispose of these features at once.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

Mexico is a Republic of twenty-seven States, two Territories and the Federal District, which is the Capitol and the City of Mexico, the same as the District of Columbia, and Washington City are the Capitol of the United States. The Constitution of the country is modelled after that of the United States.

The President is elected for four years, and has a Cabinet very similar to that of the United States.

The Congress and Senate are elected, a Congressman for every 40,000 inhabitants and fraction between 20,000 and 40,000, for two years, and two Senators for each State and two for the Federal District, for four years, all by popular vote.

The Courts are much the same as those of the United States, the Judges of which are appointed by the Ministers of Justice and Education.

The States elect their Governors and Legislators and are equally as independent of the Federal Government as those of the United States.

AREA.

There are 770,000 square miles, with 6,000 miles of coast, 1,700 on the Gulf and 4,300 on the Pacific Ocean, while the country is 2,000 miles long and from 140 to 750 miles wide.

The Gulf ports of entry for foreign commerce are: Vera Cruz, Tampico, Frontera, Progreso, Coatzacoalcos, Campeche, Tuxpan, Carmen, Anton Lizardo and Matamoras; and those on the Pacific: Mazatlan, Manzanillo, Guaymas, San Blas, La Paz, Puerto Angel, Acapulco, Salina Cruz, Tonalá, Ensenada, and Soconusco or San Benito.

POPULATION.

There are about fourteen million people in Mexico, of which some nine and a half million are of the laboring classes, including Indians, and there are some three hundred thousand foreigners, representing nearly all nations, in the industries of mining, manufacturing, trading and agriculture.

PROPERTY.

The titles and rights to property are good as anywhere, and one is protected in same by law as much as in the United States.

The wealth of the country is increasing very rapidly, so that land and houses will be worth very much more a few years hence than they are now, in 1898.

Washing in San Juan River.



TAXATION.

The State tax on lands and houses vary from .75 to 1.50 per year on the \$1,000 of assessed value, which is always moderate.

Federal taxes are in the forms of duty on imported goods and stamp on all business documents, and amount in all to some fifty million dollars per annum.

There is little likelihood that taxes will ever be higher and a strong probability they may be lower than they are now.

INDUSTRIES.

There are some one hundred and fifty cotton and woolen factories, with capital of some twenty-five million dollars invested, supporting, in the production of material, in the field, and by labor in the mills, some sixty-five thousand families. The annual production of the factories equal the amount of capital invested.

There are some dozen paper mills, several glass factories, quite a number of breweries, some fruit preserving establishments, iron, brass and nail foundries, cotton seed, castor oil mills and soap factories, all doing well, with yet more room for skill and capital in any of them.

The government is very liberal to all who wish to establish industries to develop the resources of the country.

RAILWAYS.

There are nearly nine thousand miles of railways in the Republic, and the mileage is rapidly increasing. They have all been built in the last twenty years, by more than a hundred million dollars' aid from the Mexican Government. It has all been practically the inspiring work of one man—President Diaz—without whose cold judgment and guiding hand of destiny the country might yet be the bloody scene of revolution.

TELEGRAPHS.

The railroad companies have their own wires and do public business, while the Mexican Government has some thirty thousand miles of wire, reaching the most remote sections of the Republic and the United States and extending service by cable to all parts of the civilized world.

POSTAL SERVICE.

Is about the same and equal to that of the United States, with some sixteen hundred offices in the country, and is in the Postal Union. There are carriers and free delivery in all cities that have population to entitle them to have that system.

Letter postage is five cents per half ounce and the second class is two cents for sixteen ounces or fractional part thereof, to all parts of the Republic and foreign countries in the Postal Union.

Local postage carries a letter from the United States to any part of Mexico. Many people do not know this fact and waste stamps when writing to Mexico.

THE METRIC SYSTEM

of weights and measures has been adopted by law, which makes a uniform standard the first time in the history of the country. Before this there was much confusion from different methods in vogue.

EDUCATION.

There are some eleven thousand public primary schools in the Republic, with some seven hundred thousand average attendance. Primary education is compulsory. There are also many church and private primary schools which have a respectable patronage. Most of the national schools have classes for teaching arts and trades. There are also colleges, military, medical, musical, professional, of high grades.

There are some seventy-five public libraries in the Republic, the National one alone, in the City of Mexico, containing some two hundred and seventy thousand volumes. The government spends more than five million dollars a year in education.

There are more than three hundred and sixty periodicals published in the country, some of which are daily newspapers in English, while there are some in French and German.

There is complete religious liberty, the same as all creeds enjoy in the United States.

Any person may reside and travel at pleasure anywhere in the Republic without passport or other document, whose conduct is respectable and law-abiding.

Law and justice are equal to all classes, and life and property are more safe and secure than in New York or Chicago.

CLIMATE.

Almost enough has been said on this subject, as the climate of Mexico is difficult to define or understand.

The coast country and up to an elevation of some 3,000 feet is known as the "Hot Country," although the average temperature the year round is no more than 75° to 82° Fahrenheit, no more than Florida would have, were she equally exempt from frost. What is called the temperate zone, from three thousand to eight thousand feet elevation, often has hard frost at the top, while the temperature is 75° at the bottom and 50° at the center, but the average annual temperature is 60° to 70° over the zone. The third zone, from eight thousand feet to the eternal snow line, is scarcely worth the time and space required for discussion. There is not much industry nor production above nine thousand feet.

At eight thousand feet and higher the sun may glow with as much force as at three thousand feet, but the night is sure to be chilly, sometimes frosty.

The air is bracing and healthy in the high zone,

and warm and moist in the coast zone, though very salubrious as a rule. The near proximity of vast sheets of water and constant sea breezes modify the heat of the "Hot Country" to a degree till the heat is not near as oppressive in the shade as it is in the United States in hot summer weather, while the nights are almost uniformly cool and refreshing. *Sunstroke is unknown.*

Water is good and abundant everywhere.

RESOURCES OF AGRICULTURE.

As already stated, no other country in the world can rival Mexico as a practical and profitable field of agriculture, for the reason the crops of her frost zone are ripe when the frost comes, and the lower zones are absolutely exempt from frost. The products of the world, without one exception, have their native soil and climate in abundance and to spare in Mexico.

Land and labor are cheap, hence a hundred dollars gold invested in farming in Mexico will yield more profit than a thousand dollars in the United States, with about one twenty-fifth part of taxes required in the United States.

Land that costs anywhere from twenty-five dollars to one hundred and twenty-five dollars per acre, in productive sections of the United States, can be bought from four dollars to ten dollars gold, per acre in the coffee and fruit zones of Mexico. On this expensive soil of the United States, corn, oats, wheat, potatoes, and some other vegetables grow, never exempt from frost, often with

little or no profit, above the cost of production and marketing. If there is a little profit fuel and stock feed, and idleness in winter, eat most of it up. The same crops, wheat and oats alone excepted, grow with much less labor on the cheap Mexican land, while coffee, sugar, and many tropical fruits, grow with them, in the coffee belt, and all, except coffee, in the low belt, with many other products that do not grow with coffee.

The present low price of coffee has wiped out most of the fancy profits of recent years in that industry. But vanilla still produces more than thirty dollars per acre, while chocolate reaches two hundred dollars. Rubber will produce more than three hundred dollars per acre, but six years are required to grow the tree, which is good for a lifetime after it once becomes productive. Price of crude rubber has more than doubled in ten years. Many other crops will produce as much value on an acre as a small farm of corn or wheat in the United States. Food products can be grown for home consumption while cultivating the money crops, without extra cost.

Good native labor costs an average of fifty cents Mexican money a day, but sixty-two and one-half cents per day gets nearly fifty per cent more labor and secures the best hands. The same labor would cost one dollar a day in the United States. The labor in Mexico in gold, at the last price named there, would cost seventy cents a day less than in the United States.

The one hundred dollars gold, to be invested in Mexico against one thousand dollars in the United

States, is worth two hundred and ten dollars in the silver currency of the country, which buys more labor or native food than the same amount in gold will buy in the United States.

The money crops, for export, are sold for gold value, which produces a big sum when converted into silver. Gold has no other use in Mexico, and is never seen in circulation.

Two crops of corn, beans, and many vegetables can be grown in a year in the coast country, and two years' work can be done in one year, as there is no winter nor other weather to stop farm labor a dozen days in the year; and stock require no food in winter more than they need in the United States in summer.

CORN.

Corn is a native of Mexico, or was cultivated by the Indians there a thousand years before the discovery of the new world by Columbus. It is the greatest crop in the country, as it grows everywhere, and is the bread of the poor. It yields as much as seventy-five bushels per acre under imperfect Mexican culture, on irrigated land, and as much as forty bushels from natural moisture. It is planted on the coast in May and November, for the two annual crops.

WHEAT.

Mexican wheat took the first prize against the world at the Centennial Exposition in Philadel-



Vineyard—Parí, Nuevo León.

phia, in 1876. It yields as much as eighty bushels per acre, under crude system of Mexican cultivation, on irrigated land, and as much as twenty-five bushels with natural moisture. One bushel is worth more than twice as much in Mexico as in the United States. The crop is by no means certain without irrigation. The production could be greatly increased by more extensive irrigation, but when in excess of native consumption the price for export would not justify the cost.

For these reasons it would be folly to go to Mexico to grow wheat on a small scale, as irrigated lands are not for sale cheap in small lots, and wheat lands without irrigation would not be profitable.

BARLEY.

The production of barley is increasing since breweries started to work, though it grows under the same conditions as wheat, and is not a crop to tempt small American farmers. The straw is sold for hay at double the price of wheat straw.

OATS.

Oats grow in the same districts as wheat and barley, and under similar conditions, with favorable results.

RICE.

The Aztecs used rice for a food before the Spaniards disturbed the languid tranquility of the country. It has received less attention than al-

most any other article, though it yields abundantly in the low coast country, and would pay a net profit of some two hundred per cent. Every body eats rice in Mexico.

VEGETABLES.

Nearly all the garden vegetables of the United States and Europe grow well all over Mexico, except the Irish potato, which does not do well in the very low, moist country, though water melons do as well in some parts of the coast of Vera Cruz as in Georgia, and musk melons better than anywhere in the United States.

TOBACCO.

The Aztecs smoked through amber tubes long before the Spaniards ever saw Mexico. Tobacco is a native of the country.

The State of Vera Cruz grows a very fine, mild leaf, equal to the best produced in Cuba, while a belt of some bordering States claims the same superior stock.

The States of Chiapas, Campeche, Yucatan, Guerrero, Michoacan, Jalisco, Colima, Sinaloa, Hidalgo, and the southern part of Tamaulipas, also grow tobacco, somewhat heavier and stronger than that of the Vera Cruz belt, but desirable working stock, that makes very popular goods for smokers.

Thus it will be seen that half the States are tobacco growers, and the land suitable for this in-

dustry is unlimited, as it will remain for many generations. The best tobacco lands in Cuba and Manila are nearly exhausted, so that Mexico is rapidly becoming the fine tobacco field of the world.

The crop is surer in the coast and coffee belts of the Vera Cruz country than elsewhere, for the reason that there are almost always seasonable rains, when it is dry in other districts.

The price of tobacco advanced as heavily as coffee declined during 1897. The cultivation was very profitable at prices of 1896, more than two hundred per cent, when the price was twenty-five cents to forty-five cents per pound. Prices are twice to three times as much now, though too high to remain, when the production approaches what consumers require, yet the profit will always be large.

The yield is two thousand five hundred to four thousand pounds per acre. At a clear profit of fifty cents a pound, which the crop of 1897 is giving, the average result is fifteen hundred dollars clear gain per acre. The profit will not likely run under five hundred dollars per acre in this age, and there is not much probability that the present high prices will decline much in the next few years.

Hence, a few acres in tobacco will yield a sure fortune, at less cost and risk than gold seeking in Alaska.

SUGAR.

The coast country and coffee belt is the best sugar territory in the world, producing from

fifty per cent to one hundred per cent more to the acre than Cuba or Brazil, running as high as six thousand pounds of dry sugar to the acre. The molasses and other waste go into rum, which pays the expenses of the plantation.

Cane will grow on ten times more land than will ever be planted. There are some plantations that make two or three million pounds sugar annually.

One planting is sufficient for six to fifteen years, according to the land and locality.

Little more than enough for home consumption is now produced, but some experiments of exporting in 1897 were very satisfactory. The sugar is very sweet, nearly double the strength of beet sugar.

Small farmers may make common brown sugar, for home use, by a process about as simple and cheap as that of making sorghum molasses in the United States.

COTTON.

Mexico is the home of cotton. The Spaniards found it and its products there. There is one species that grows and produces for many years, becoming a tree from one planting, while the other is the same as that grown in the United States, and planted every year. The latter has the best fibre.

Cotton grows and produces well in the coast country, and is cultivated to some extent in the States of Nuevo Leon, Durango, Chihuahua, Oaxaca and Coahuila, where there is plenty of land suitable for this industry.

There is nowhere near enough produced for home consumption, though the profit is three times as much as in the United States; and there is a market for millions of pounds of cotton seed oil, annually imported from the United States.

FRUITS.

A greater variety and quantity of fruits of a high commercial value might be grown in Mexico than in any other country in the world.

Central and northern Mexico might outrival California in the production of apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, olives, grapes, and all the berries, as there are some grown of exceptional fine quality under crude methods of native cultivation.

ORANGES.

Mexico could produce more oranges than California and Florida combined, and of better quality, with the same high grade of cultivation bestowed on this fruit in those States, much cheaper, as no fertilizers are needed in Mexico, where no damage from frost ever occurs.

Florida is practically ruined by cold waves. California has lost a heavy per cent of three crops in five from the same cause; and it is merely a question of some years when her trees will meet the same fate those of Florida suffered. Then Mexico will be the orange belt of the continent.

Mexican oranges have never been cultivated. The trees are all seedlings, mostly volunteers,

growing where they came up, without pruning or attention; yet the fruit is sweet and juicy, equal to the best Florida and better than California.

Some hundreds of carloads of Mexican oranges have been shipped to the markets of the United States from each crop of the past three or four years, and found much favor with dealers and consumers, the drawbacks stated above, and imperfect or bad methods of transportation notwithstanding.

When the orange in Mexico is once budded with the best varieties and cultivated, the same as it is treated in Florida and California, and the transportation becomes as good as it is in the United States, the industry will be established to stay, not only in Mexico but in the markets of the United States. There are Floridians and Californians in Mexico, putting out big groves, so that it is a question of but few years when all the trees now in Mexico will be budded and cultivated, and millions of new ones planted. Then Mexico will be the orange country of the world. High duty will not keep her fine, sweet fruit out of the United States.

The coast zone and coffee belt of the Vera Cruz district has ten times more good orange land than the entire State of Florida ever had, with bearing trees in every community sufficient to produce five hundred carloads; though not much more than a hundred cars have ever been shipped to the United States in one season. The possibility of cheap, quick water transportation from the Mexican Gulf ports to New Orleans and Mobile,

and thence by fast fruit express trains, now in vogue for banana service, to Western and Canadian markets, renders the Vera Cruz belt the most promising orange section of Mexico.

The States of Jalisco and Sonora are now far in the lead of all other sections of Mexico in the production and shipment of oranges; but their geographical positions preclude them from the possibility of cheap water freight, that is a certainty from the Gulf ports of Vera Cruz and Tabasco, when there is business to support fast steamers. As Americans are going by hundreds into that district there will soon be business to justify the steamers to run direct and under high speed. There are now two lines of coasting steamers between Mexican Gulf ports and New Orleans and Mobile, ready to put on fast, direct service as soon as needed.

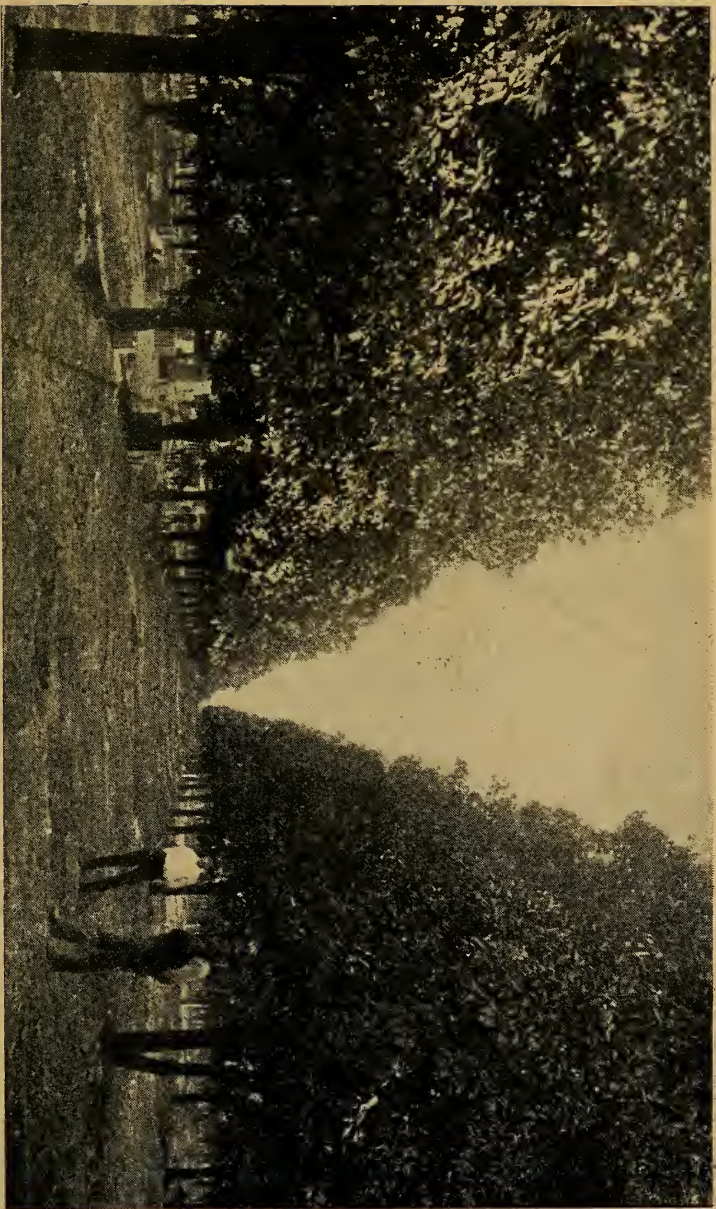
Oranges can be produced in Mexico at half the cost in Florida and California, with no crops lost as the result of frost.

LEMONS AND LIMES.

Lemons and limes grow wild in all the orange belt of Mexico and have never been cultivated, but as fine fruit can be grown there as any in the world, and very cheaply.

BANANAS.

Bananas grow wherever there is coffee, and anywhere below the coffee zone. The low coast coun-



Orange Grove—Guadalajara, Jalisco.

try alone would produce fruit that would be profitable to export. From the sea level to seven hundred feet above immense banana plantations may be established at a cost of about five cents a plant. At the end of a year the plants bear each a bunch of fruit, worth from fifty cents to one dollar, gold, in the United States. The second year, and many years after, the yield doubles without replanting, as suckers come from the original plant. After the first year there is little expense beyond gathering the fruit; and the first crop makes a profit above all the expenses of planting and caring for the young plants.

There are three fields more desirable than others equally productive in the same section, because they are on the banks of rivers near the Gulf. The port and central point of the first is the city of Tlacotalpam, in the State of Vera Cruz, on the river San Juan, at a point where three rivers unite. The city has some fifteen thousand inhabitants, and some factories. Vera Cruz is the port proper, but New York steamers go there regularly for cargoes.

The banks of each of the three rivers that unite there are as fine fields for bananas as any in Central America, and the quality of the fruit that grows there now, without attention, is good as the best elsewhere. The Havana market has been supplied with plantain or bread fruit from there since the war in Cuba has been raging. There is land enough for thousands of planters.

The central of the three rivers leads up into as fine a water melon section as any in the United States.

Another river empties into the Gulf at the port of Coatzacoalcos, that, has fine banks for banana plantations, and yet another at the port of Frontera, where the cultivation has been started systematically but on a small scale, as yet, by one man.

Land of no better quality would cost ten times as much in Central America as in Mexico, hence the capital to start could be much less and the net profit correspondingly larger than in Central America, \$100 gold invested in plants, land necessary to set them and labor to bring them to bearing, should produce \$500 gold the first year, and from \$700 to \$1,000 each subsequent year, for nine or ten years. The cost per year, after the first year, would not exceed \$25.

The finest quality of large yellow bananas should be planted, such as grow in Central America, and can be found at Frontera. Most of the bananas now grown in Mexico are not of quality suitable to export.

Cultivation of bananas for export would quickly assure steamer service suitable to carry oranges, which also grow finely and ripen early in the banana sections.

PINEAPPLES.

The finest pineapples in the world grow in the same districts or sections last mentioned as adapted to bananas, and there is practically no limit to the possibilities of production. Suckers are planted and produce fruit in a year; and it comes again from the root, year after year, with-

out replanting, the same as the banana. Three thousand five hundred to four thousand may be planted to the acre. After the land is cleared and planted very little cultivation is required. At five cents each the profit would be very large.

The safest business and biggest possible profit would be in canning that fine pineapple in a ripe state, which would drive all the green, trashy canned pineapples out of the markets of the world. In this way none would be lost in transit. The first half of the crop could be marketed in a fresh state more profitably than canned, but not the last half, after the rainy season sets in.

COCOANUTS.

There is nothing to do but gather, hull, and sack cocoanuts, which grow wild everywhere, in the banana sections, even in sea marshes.

OTHER FRUITS.

The finest mangoes and alligator pears also grow in banana sections, as well as many other small fruits, entirely unknown in the United States, though unimportant beyond home use, as not suitable to export.

COFFEE.

All books and guides show the profit of coffee growing to be from 100 per cent to 300 per cent, on capital invested; but the decline of 1897 wiped

all that golden harvest from the industry, and brought coffee production down to the lowest hard pan of any business in Mexico.

There is yet a modest profit to be gleaned from existing coffee plantations, at present low prices, but no sort of tempting inducements to start new ones. There seems to be little prospect of high prices again soon, though Mexican coffee is worth more than that of other countries.

Mexico took the highest award from all the world with her coffee at the Centennial Exposition, at Philadelphia, in 1876, and yet deserves to hold it.

Under existing circumstances it seems superfluous to dwell on the culture of coffee, as an inducement to emigrate to Mexico.

Since the above was written coffee has advanced, and is now profitable; and the government has abolished the export duty.

VANILLA.

The Spaniards found the Aztecs flavoring their chocolate with the vanilla bean, which is a native of Mexico. It grows from the coast up to an altitude of 2,500 feet. Three years are required to get the first crop, worth \$50 to the acre, after a cost of \$30, leaving \$20 profit. After the first crop the yield is \$60 per acre and the expenses \$10, leaving \$50 clear.

CHOCOLATE.

The chocolate bean grows on a tree that requires five years to produce fruit, and needs some shade, in moist soil, while young. It is a native of Mexico, and bears fruit some thirty years. It does not pay in an altitude above 2,000 feet, as it requires a hot climate. The district of Vera Cruz suits it better than any other, though it does well in some others. It produces about \$200 per acre.

The quality of Mexican chocolate is equal to that of any other country.

RUBBER.

Rubber trees grow wild along the coast of Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco and Campeche, and as far as seventy-five miles inland, in some places. Such trees are beginning to die out from the effect of frequent tapping, which is leading many persons to start plantations. The rubber tree makes a good shade for coffee or chocolate trees, while these are young and delicate, though it is not of much service to coffee, as it does not thrive at an altitude above 400 feet. It grows 50 feet in height and 10 inches in diameter, and must have a warm, moist climate. It is propagated from its own nuts and grows with little care. From 250 to 500 trees are planted to the acre, as to the fertility of the soil. Six or seven years are necessary to get the first crop, but is then productive sometimes for fifty years, or an average of thirty-five years.

Rubber is a very profitable crop, and there seems no limit to the demand, as the price is ever advancing. Brazil exports more than a hundred million dollars' worth in gold, annually. There is some fifty million dollars invested in bicycle tires in the United States alone. There are one hundred and fifty thousand miles of submarine cables insulated with rubber. It has some hundred other uses, ever increasing the consumption.

A milky substance exudes from the tapping of the tree, which is coagulated into crude rubber, by simple and inexpensive processes. A tree yields two to three pounds of crude rubber, now worth more than seventy cents per pound in gold. The land, clearing, planting and cultivating to the first crop will cost about twenty-five dollars per acre. Two hundred and fifty trees, with one pound of crude rubber each, at seventy cents, would make one hundred and seventy-five dollars gold per acre, leaving one hundred and fifty dollars profit. Ten acres would leave fifteen hundred dollars, a respectable showing for a poor man, who should be making a living and some money from other crops, while his rubber trees are growing.

But the second year of production his ten acres would yield him three thousand dollars, and not less per annum thereafter, in his lifetime, but some twenty-five per cent and a little upward more after the trees are ten years old.

Since the above was written the price of rubber has materially advanced, so average production might now reach or exceed \$700 per acre.

WOODS.

There are more than sixty varieties of woods suitable for ordinary building purposes, and more than fifty for fine furniture and finishings in the forests of Mexico. There are grand openings in wood industries. The finest furniture and dye woods are in the coast belt of the Vera Cruz district; and the State of Vera Cruz contains all the ordinary building woods.

More than three million dollars' (gold) worth of dye woods alone are exported from Mexico annually.

The finest ebony, rosewood and violet wood are in Mexico, and not appreciated properly, because not extensively used.

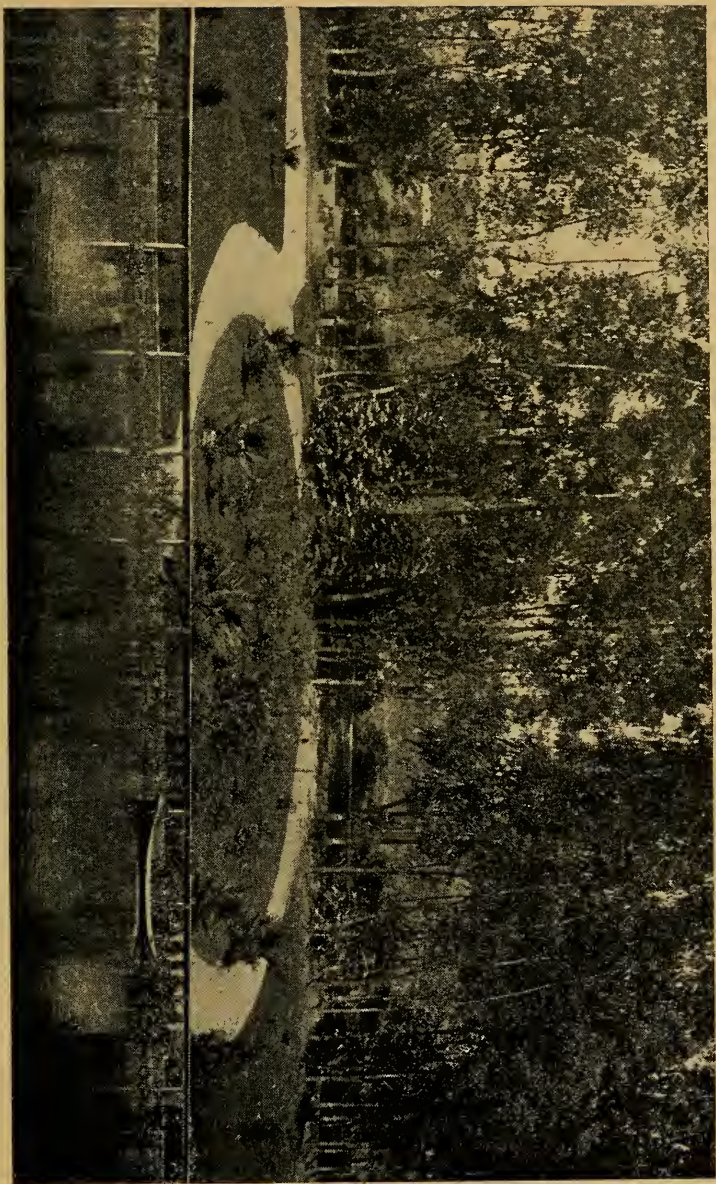
The lands one would clear, in some parts of the coast country, would contain valuable woods.

FIBRES.

Fibre plants, such as sisal hemp, called henequen, jute, ramie, flax, and others unknown by name, in the United States, grow everywhere in Mexico in great profusion. Millions of dollars' worth are annually exported, though there is little systematic cultivation.

CATTLE INDUSTRY.

With improved breeds and more care, there are unlimited chances to make fortunes in the cattle business of Mexico, and a certainty of prosperity for any one able to start on a modest scale. In the



Rubber Ranch—Acayucan, Vera Cruz.

right sections, where pasture is good and water is abundant all the year, it is nearly all profit, after the start. The coast and coffee belts of Vera Cruz district, and the State of Jalisco, are probably the best fields for men of moderate means.

A new era is dawning for the cattle industry of Mexico, as the Government is arranging a franchise to a big American company, whose business will be to facilitate the improvement and breeding of cattle, and the canning and preparation of carcasses for export to Europe—that is, dressed beef fresh in whole carcasses, as well as canned. The consumption is constantly increasing in Mexico, while the export trade goes on to the United States, in the face of high duty, and to Cuba, as it must continue a long time, even after the war is over, as the stock of cattle in Cuba will be exhausted.

All these things will stimulate the cattle business of Mexico, and render it more profitable. It will cost about the same to raise an ox that weighs fifteen hundred as one that weighs no more than six hundred pounds, when breeds are once improved. There is no probability that there will ever be a surplus sufficient to lower prices.

HOG BREEDING.

There is more promise in the pork business than almost any other in Mexico, as the supply never equals the demand, and prices are always high. As a special business, on a large scale, or by the small farmer, in connection with other crops,

there is money in the hog. Lard pays more than meat, and native brings much more money than imported. The parts of the hog that cannot be turned into lard is used as fresh pork. Very little bacon is made in Mexico, and not much used by the natives. Hams are used more than other smoked parts of the hog.

Bananas could be utilized for raising and fattening hogs, as no other food is better, and none can be produced as cheaply as that in the coffee belt, where bananas are grown to shade coffee, and have no value, as they are not suitable to export.

THE DAIRY.

There are great inducements in the dairy industry, as nearly all the cheese and butter used are imported. What little produced is the business of foreigners, chiefly from imported cows. Consumers pay forty cents to seventy-five cents per pound for cheese, and fifty cents to one dollar for fresh butter, with no supply to equal the demand. As a matter of course, this industry would have to be in reach of a city.

Dairy and hog industries would work well together.

POULTRY AND EGGS.

The poultry and egg industry will pay twice as much anywhere in Mexico as it pays in the United States. The crude methods of the natives, on small scales, is the way the business is done.

FISH.

The Gulf coast and the rivers that empty into the Gulf swarm with fine salt water fish, but few of which have any market value, for want of nearby consumers and suitable transportation to carry them to the inland cities. Families have all they want, with very little trouble of catching them. There are some small oysters along the coast that have a very fine flavor. The Pacific Coast has its fish and oysters, but is not accessible and practical for American settlers.

COAST ADVANTAGES.

Excepting wheat, barley, oats and cold country fruits the settler has all the multifarious crops and resources of Mexico concentrated in the coast and coffee belts of the Vera Cruz district, with cheap water freight for his export products, and the machinery or other goods he may wish to import.

These are advantages that cannot be estimated, and that do not exist in any other country.

From one hundred dollars to two hundred and fifty dollars, Mexican silver, will build a house that will do for a home at the start in that warm country. Clothing costs very little, as light, cheap material is sufficient nearly all the year round.

The same energy and labor expended on the crops of the United States would produce ten times more results in Mexico, where such a diversity of profitable crops may be grown on the same small farm or large plantation.

FARM STOCK.

Horses are worth ten dollars to fifty dollars; work mules twenty-five dollars to seventy-five dollars; work oxen forty dollars to seventy-five dollars per yoke of two; burros, the great pack animals of Mexico, from five dollars to fifteen dollars, and milch cows from ten dollars to twenty-five each, in silver. There is no standard price for stock hogs nor stock fowls, but they may be bought at reasonable prices, compared with their market value when ready to market.

Farming tools and machinery are mostly superfluous, as there is very little cultivation of crops, more than cutting down the grass and weeds.

It would be a good plan, when families are going by steamers, to take a couple pair of pigs of good breed, as most of the hogs in Mexico are of the old razorback breed.

CLEARING LAND.

The cost of clearing land, ready for crops, will range from five dollars to ten dollars per acre, silver, according to locality and timber. The natives do such work by the job for less money than the usual cost of day labor, as they thus have a show to earn more than current wages in a day, by rushing and long hours.

FURNITURE.

Families going by steamer would do well to carry the more necessary articles of household

furniture, where the distance by rail to the steamer is not too great and the freight near half the value of the goods. All rail it would not pay to carry anything that could not be packed in trunks, unless shipped as freight, which would be very long on the road. This would be better than buying in Mexico.

Most of the furniture sold in Mexico is imported and sold at very high prices. Furniture taken to Mexico by families emigrating there to make homes, and carried for their own use, is admitted free of duty by the government. The freight, when not carried as baggage, in excess of the weight allowed by transportation companies, would not be one quarter of the cost of new furniture in Mexico.

Books will also be admitted free of duty, when a part of family effects, as well as pianos or other musical instruments.

When household goods are shipped by freight, and do not accompany the owners, a certificate of the head of the family, made before a notary public, that he or she, head of a family, is emigrating with family to make a home in Mexico, and that goods shipped is family property, necessary for housekeeping of said family and not for sale. This certificate, with a letter from the railroad agent shipping the goods, stating that the certificate represents the facts, should be mailed to the Mexican collector of customs at the point where the goods would cross the border, if all rail: viz., Ciudad Juarez, if by El Paso route; Ciudad Diaz, if by Eagle Pass route; and Laredo Nuevo, if by

Laredo route; or to Vera Cruz, Tampico, or whatever port of entry, if by steamer.

The fact that the goods are family effects, of emigrants seeking homes in Mexico, should be noted on the bill of lading and the way bill, issued and made by the agent shipping the property.

A perfect invoice should be made by the owner, and the boxes numbered, should there be boxes, and number of each box placed at the head of the items of its contents in the invoice; and the second-hand value of each item in the invoice should be entered opposite it. This invoice should be absolutely correct, and so certified by the owner, before the notary public, and be sent with other documents named, in one enclosure, to the Mexican collector of customs, as already explained, while a copy of said invoice should be attached to the way bill, with a request from the shipping agent, to the American agent at the border, to ask the Mexican agent and the collector to forward the goods to destination without delay.

A false invoice subjects the shipment to seizure and confiscation, or makes it liable to a heavy duty, according to circumstances.

No passport is needed to land in Mexico, and none to travel after landing in the country.

Americans cannot be supposed to know such little, yet very important, requisites, that might cause them much annoyance and great inconvenience, if learned after setting out or omitted altogether.

Furniture, or any class of goods, is allowed as baggage, to a liberal weight, to every ticket-

holder on the railways leading out from Vera Cruz. In this way the poor Mexicans take their fruit, eggs and other small articles to market, freight-free, paying only second-class fare for themselves.

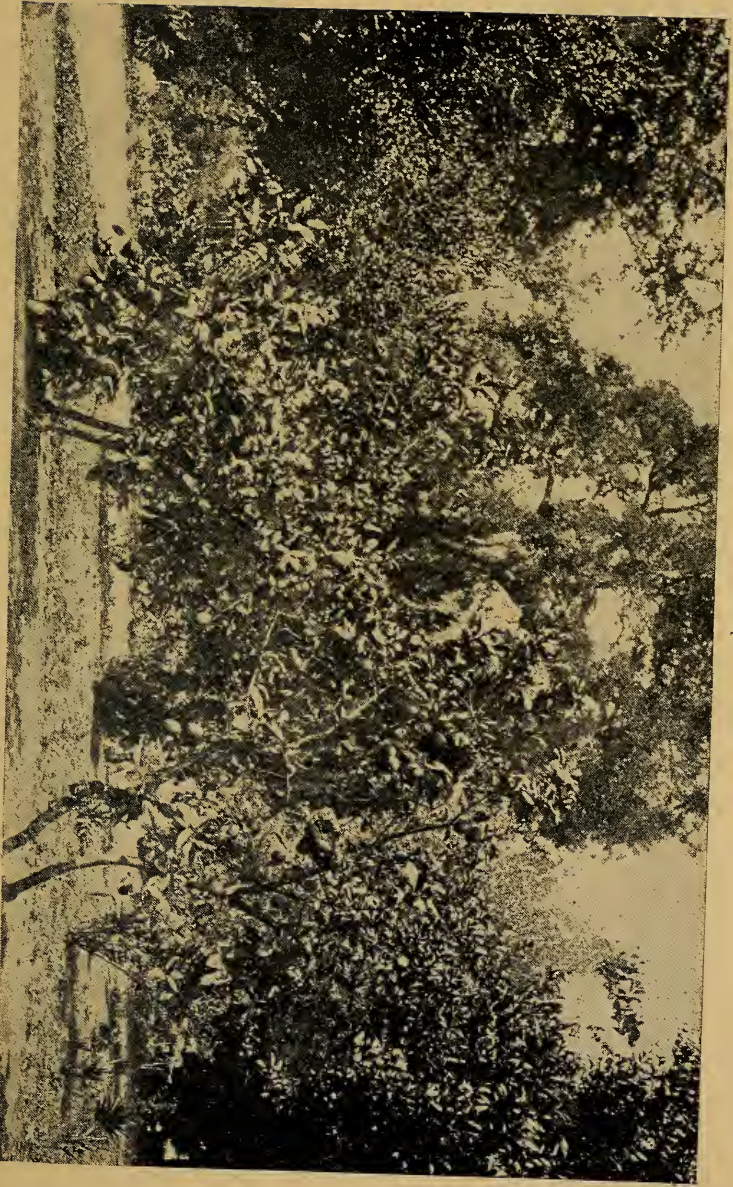
COMMON LABOR.

Farm and railroad hands had better not go to Mexico to work for wages. There are plenty of peons for all classes of cheap labor; and Americans could not get half the current price of common labor in the United States. If an American cannot start a little home, and work for his own account, as a common laborer, he had better not leave his own country.

The day may come when the supply of native labor will be less than the demand, but that day does not seem to be very near just now.

STENOGRAPHY.

There is a grand opening for stenographers in Mexico, able to take dictations and write in Spanish. But there are plenty there who know nothing but English. American railway officials and American and English companies, who have large correspondence and shipping trade with the United States and England, use stenographers who know no Spanish. There are very few stenographers and typewriters who know Spanish. Mexican girls are not taught, and would not be allowed by their parents and social usage to take positions if they could write shorthand and use



Lemon Grove—Coatepec, Vera Cruz.

the typewriter. Americans who go to Mexico with no knowledge of Spanish never learn there, though they often have the best possible opportunities. One in a hundred may learn. They herd with Americans or Mexicans who speak English. If a Mexican knows just a little English he will not talk to an American in Spanish.

Mexicans know the value of English, and learn it much oftener than Americans learn Spanish, though the task is ten times as hard for them as that for an American to learn Spanish.

One must be fairly master or mistress of Spanish to become a stenographer and typewriter in that language. Considerable study and practice are necessary to attain such mastery of the language. But the reward would compensate the labor. Without such qualification it would be needless to seek employment as a stenographer in Mexico. Certainly there are many now filling positions, as stated, without knowledge of Spanish; but there are more applicants of this class than places for them.

BOOKKEEPERS.

There is room for good bookkeepers who know Spanish. Less proficiency in the language would be required at the start of a bookkeeper than of a stenographer, though he must have commercial words and terms at his fingers' ends. Mexican law requires that all books of account shall be kept in Spanish. There are plenty of Mexican bookkeepers, though few of them know English.

Germans all learn the Spanish quickly, and hence take the best positions in the competitive race with Americans, who do not even try to learn. Germans then become partners or proprietors, or go into business for themselves, elsewhere, very soon. No German remains poor in Mexico.

Americans without capital are as smart as poor Germans, but too proud, independent, indolent in their poverty. The German could never be anything more than a peon if he remained ignorant of the language of the country. But he learns Spanish, and makes it his capital, just as any poor American of education and fair average business capacity might do. Germans are all educated, or, at least, those in Mexico.

MINOR POSITIONS.

Clerks, salesmen and salesladies, and general utility men, somewhat familiar with Spanish, might find employment with the railroads, mines, factories and stores of the country. An army of persons are thus employed in all sections of the Republic, many of whom speak no Spanish, though, in many cases, persons who speak both Spanish and English are far more desirable, and would be paid more salary than those who know but one language. The demand for such help is constantly increasing with the development of new enterprises and the enlargement of old ones. The volume of all classes of business and industries is steadily growing, as population and prosperity augment their inspiring influence.

It is not reasonable that more people will become qualified for such employment in the United States faster than there will be places ready for them to fill in Mexico.

The knowledge of Spanish being the key to success in any business or position in Mexico, it is, or would be, just as reasonable for one who is ignorant of shorthand to seek a position as a stenographer as for one without a knowledge of Spanish to apply for skilled employment in Mexico.

This is why there are always so many disappointed and disgusted Americans in Mexico City, virtually living on their wits, or such of their newly arrived countrymen as they can manipulate. Adventurers fare no better, after they are once known, in Mexico than on the frontier in the United States. They have done the honest, industrious American, whose lot was cast in Mexico without money, much detriment in the past. But now Mexicans understand them, and are able to discriminate between them and those of sterling worth to the country. Workers in the vineyard, not drones, have a warm welcome awaiting them at all times and in all parts of Mexico.

HOW TO GET POSITIONS.

The cheapest method of securing positions in Mexico would be to advertise in the want columns of "The Mexican Herald," an English paper, and "El Universal," a Spanish paper, published in Mexico City, daily. Nearly all business and manufacturing people in the Republic read one or the

other. The rates are very moderate, in silver—one dollar in gold would get several insertions of an ordinary want advertisement. Other preliminaries and details could be arranged by mail. Be sure you are qualified for the place you seek, and you will be almost certain to get answers that will lead to an engagement. There are plenty of both English speaking and Spanish speaking people who want first-class help that can use both languages. They will soon become interested when they see persons in the United States are offering their services in Mexico.

Persons well qualified could safely go to any large city at this time certain to find employment, if not at once, surely in a little season. But a better price might be secured from home, in the United States, at much less expense, and without annoyance or delay after reaching Mexico. It would be ever so much nicer to start direct to a good position than to go blindly to seek one.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

With some capital, and practical methods, there is room for a good business man almost anywhere in Mexico, and in almost any line of trade knowledge of the language would make success certain.

There are good points for a small business, where a large one would not be practical. At many points, as in the Vera Cruz district, one could engage in the sale of merchandise and the exportation of the products of the country, at the same time, which would work beautifully together and

help the merchandise feature wonderfully. Other places have articles of various classes that might be exported or sold in markets of the Republic, where merchandising would be feasible.

Before engaging in any mercantile enterprise one should go and study the situation carefully, first deciding what district would be most desirable. It might be well to visit several places, to find the most promising one.

There are grand openings for several classes of commission business in Mexico City, but time and patience would be required to make them profitable. Present methods of business would have to be revolutionized, which would go slower than changes are made in the United States. There are no large distributing depots for native and foreign produce. The primitive methods of ages are still in vogue. Small, filthy, badly-ventilated little dives contain all the fruit and other native and foreign produce, which Indian peddlers carry around the streets on their heads all day, in sun or rain, and sell at prices much higher than American methods of business would require. Such peddlers gain little if any more than peon wages, and the dealers do not get rich, for the reason that their stock goes fearfully to waste, the bulk of which should be condemned by the board of health, and would be but for the fact that there is nothing better, before it is sent out to sell. Nearly all the fruit and produce of the Republic arrives at Mexico City in bad shape, owing to barbarous gathering and handling.

Three quarters of the Republic grows no tropi-

cal fruit. Mexico City is the natural distributing point for all such territory, where an immense trade could be built up, by having practical connections at each interior point, that may be reached by rail, many of which would become sub-distributing points for back country towns and settlements.

Nearly all the State of Texas may be made tributary to Mexico City by direct and quick rail connections; and much business is now done with Texas under the present suicidal methods.

The consumption would be enormous in Mexico City were the perishable goods handled the same as they are in the United States.

The fruit can be brought from the coast to Mexico City in perfect shape, and then delivered to any point in the Republic or Texas in better condition than most of the tropical fruits reach interior markets of the United States.

The high, dry, cool air of Mexico City and the interior tableland country is almost equal to refrigeration in hot weather in the United States for the preservation of fruit and vegetables.

There is an equal opportunity to monopolize the fish and oyster business, which might be done by the same combination necessary to make the fruit and vegetable trade profitable in a high degree. The coast of Vera Cruz and Tampico now supply all the fresh fish and some of the oysters used in Mexico City and the interior tableland country. The methods are antiquated and the prices the same. There are fine large oysters in great abundance near Tampico.

There would be a quick fortune in the business at half present prices.

A big trade could be built up in California fruits, after the season for Mexican fruits of the same classes is over, by bringing them in carloads, by freight, to Mexico City, and there distributing them all over the country, even to Vera Cruz and the coast. Many such fruits are now brought all the way by express at an enormous freight, and all sold at famine prices.

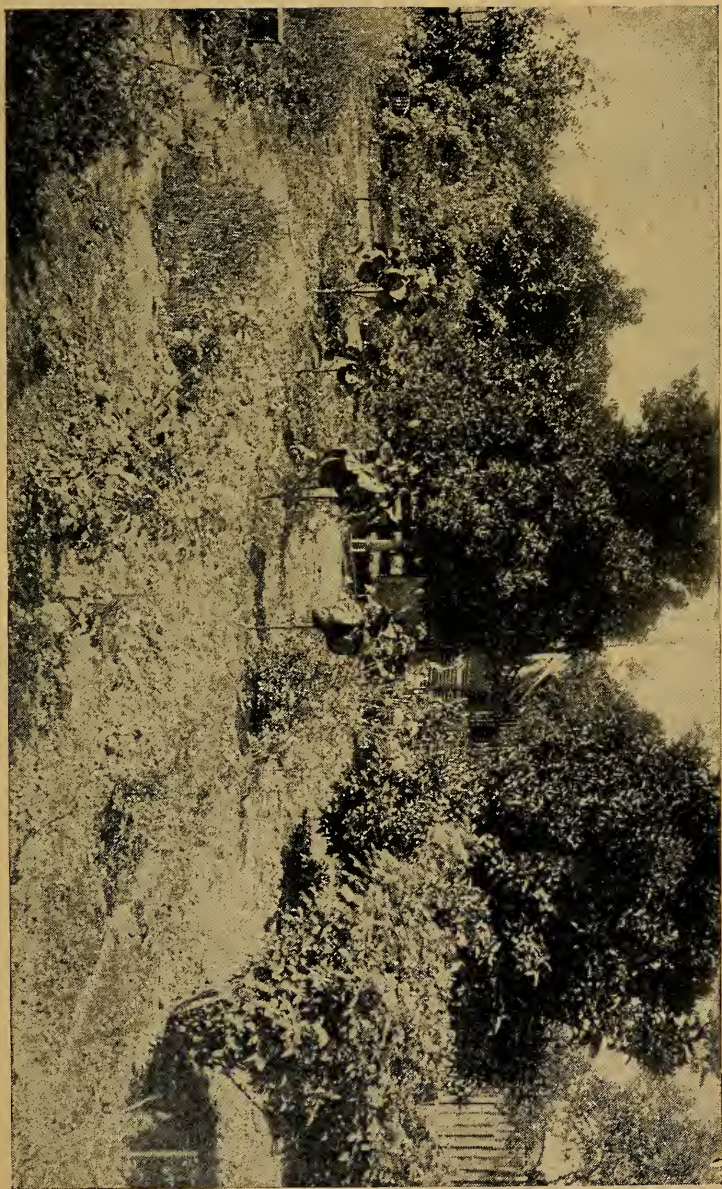
There is some little trade in American apples and potatoes, which might be largely increased.

The business might be made reciprocal and grand. Country connections could sell all classes of goods and buy local produce, suited to ship to the market of Mexico City or to the United States, according to circumstances. Mexico City is now the principal distributing point for general merchandise, mostly in the hands of German, French and Spanish merchants, in whose business fields Americans might cut broad swaths.

Vera Cruz is the natural distributing point for much of the coffee belt and coast country; and there are large, rich houses there now, but doing business under much the same methods as Mexico City, with the same show for American vim and enterprise. The Mexican government is spending twenty-five million dollars making a deep, secure harbor at Vera Cruz, which will enhance her commercial importance beyond the power of words to estimate. It will probably be finished this year.

The same company that is building the harbor of Vera Cruz has just completed the great canal

Quinine, Chocolate, Vanilla Trees—Tuxpan, Vera Cruz.



for the drainage of the valley of Mexico, at a cost of more than twenty million dollars to the Mexican government.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

There is no practical limit to the possibilities of factory industry, large or small, in almost any branch and nearly everywhere.

There are more cotton and woolen mills than any other class of factories; and twice the number of looms and spindles could run all the year round profitably.

All the hides and pelts of the Republic might be tanned and made up into goods at a profit.

There is room for foundries, large and small, as demonstrated by the enormous works at Monterey.

There is room for every industry in wood. Monterey has a furniture factory that is coining money.

Vera Cruz is probably the best place for iron-works, because of the cheap freight on pig iron and coal, and water routes to distribute much of the products of such industries to the coast country and the interior points, reached by river. Even Mexico City could be reached cheaper than from Monterey or other border point.

Tampico might be a better point than Vera Cruz for a very large part of the Republic for iron-working industries, as freight would be cheaper and quicker than from Vera Cruz.

There would certainly be much more economy

in working up material on the coast and shipping the product to the interior than paying freight on material and coal to the interior, and then distribute the product at about the same rate of freight as would have to be paid from the coast.

Orizaba, in the State of Vera Cruz, or along the river between there and the low country, would be a magnificent field for woodworking factories, not only owing to the close proximity of fine woods, but also on account of splendid water power, sufficient to run a hundred factories, as the falls are frequent and stupendous.

The cost of transportation of lumber from the coast to Orizaba would be nothing compared to the advantages of water power.

There are grand openings for sugar refineries on a large scale, wherever cane grows in paying quantities.

Fruit canning and preserving have great possibilities, and wine making could be made very profitable, as there is much material, including oranges that might be utilized for wine.

Canned fruit and preserves could be exported to Germany and other foreign countries in large quantities, while home consumption would require a large supply.

Papermills that could produce tissue paper, suitable for fruit packers, and good writing paper, would do well.

There are other industries, including fine grades of glass, that could be made profitable. Common grades of glass and glassware are cheap, there being several factories in the country.

IMPORTANT CITIES.

The limits of this guide will not admit an elaborate sketch of all the interesting little places in Mexico. The leading central points will suffice for all practical purposes.

It will probably be more satisfactory to any one wishing to visit the country, either for business or pleasure, to have such places presented systematically, according to the line of transportation by which they must be reached.

Assuming that this hypothesis is correct, the Mexican Central line will be the first introduced.

The Mexican Central Railway passes through long stretches of dreary waste and awful, desolate grandeur—valleys of pulverized alkali and barren mountains of cinders and ashes, as if the remains of a world destroyed by fire.

The main line, from El Paso, Texas, to Mexico City, is twelve hundred and fifty miles long, and this line and its several branches reach the most important centers of the Republic.

CHIHUAHUA.

This is the capitol city of the State of the same name, and the first place of commercial and manufacturing importance. Ciudad Juarez, just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, is the starting point of the Mexican Central Railway, and the site of the Mexican Custom House, but otherwise of no great importance to Americans as yet.

Chihuahua is styled "The American City," because quite a number of people from the United States are doing a prosperous business there. It is a great stockraising and mineral center. It is the tragic scene, the stage, where Hidalgo, the father of Mexican Independence, was executed by the Spaniards, July 30, 1811. The cathedral, the swimming baths, the chapel of Guadalupe, two causeways, and an aqueduct, the latter built more than two hundred years ago, are places of interest to the stranger.

Chihuahua boasts two smelters, a big iron foundry, a cottonseed oil mill, a soap factory, and a brewery, and room for other enterprises.

SANTA ROSALIA.

Here are the hot springs, said to excel any in the United States, and sure to cure inflammatory rheumatism, and all blood and skin diseases. Otherwise the place is unimportant.

JIMENEZ.

This is the shipping point for the rich silver mines of the Parral and Guanacevi districts, with which Jimenez is connected by daily stage lines. Jimenez has some ten thousand inhabitants.

ESCALON.

This is a small place, but the junction of the Mexican Northern Railway, running seventy-eight.

miles east to the great mining district of Sierra Mojada, said to be the largest carbonate camps in the world.

LERDO.

This beautiful little city of some twelve thousand inhabitants nestles in a district similar to the valley of the Nile. Rain rarely ever falls. The country is irrigated by large canals, watered from the river Nazas, which overflows twice a year. The section is called the "Laguna" country, and produces the finest cotton in the Republic, planted once in seven years. Grapes and other fruits, equal in flavor and quality to the same productions of California, grow in this magic vale. Naturally these irrigated lands are not cheap, and those beyond the margin of the valley will not produce one blade of grass.

ZACATECAS.

This is a city of more than ninety thousand inhabitants, and the capitol of the State of the same name. It is the celebrated silver center of Mexico, discovered in September, 1546. In 1818 the output of silver had been nearly six hundred and seventy million dollars. The mines have since produced, and are still yielding, immense quantities of ore, and late discoveries promise to make Zacatecas famous as a gold producing point.

The mint is a wonder and a show. There are other beautiful public buildings and parks, called alamedas and plazas in Spanish.

Tram cars run out to the splendid cathedral of Guadalupe, which contains some paintings and frescoes of surprising beauty, said to be emblems of supernatural production. But Guadalupe and her wondrous influence in Mexico will be presented more fittingly in a special feature as a peculiar institution of Mexican character.

The road passes directly over some of the mines, and the train affords a magnificent view of the city, just as it winds around the mountain side to plunge down into the cultivated valley below.

AGUAS CALIENTES.

This is a city of probably fifty thousand inhabitants, famous for its hot springs, attractive bath houses, and healthy climate. The feast of San Marcos, one of the most celebrated and largely attended fairs in the Republic, is annually held at Aguas Calientes in the month of April, when thousands of people from all over Mexico throng the streets and parks of this old and beautiful city. Here the beautiful needle drawnwork is made and brought to the trains for sale at very low prices. One of the largest silver-copper smelting plants in the world is nearing completion here. This is also the greatest chicken and egg center in the Republic.

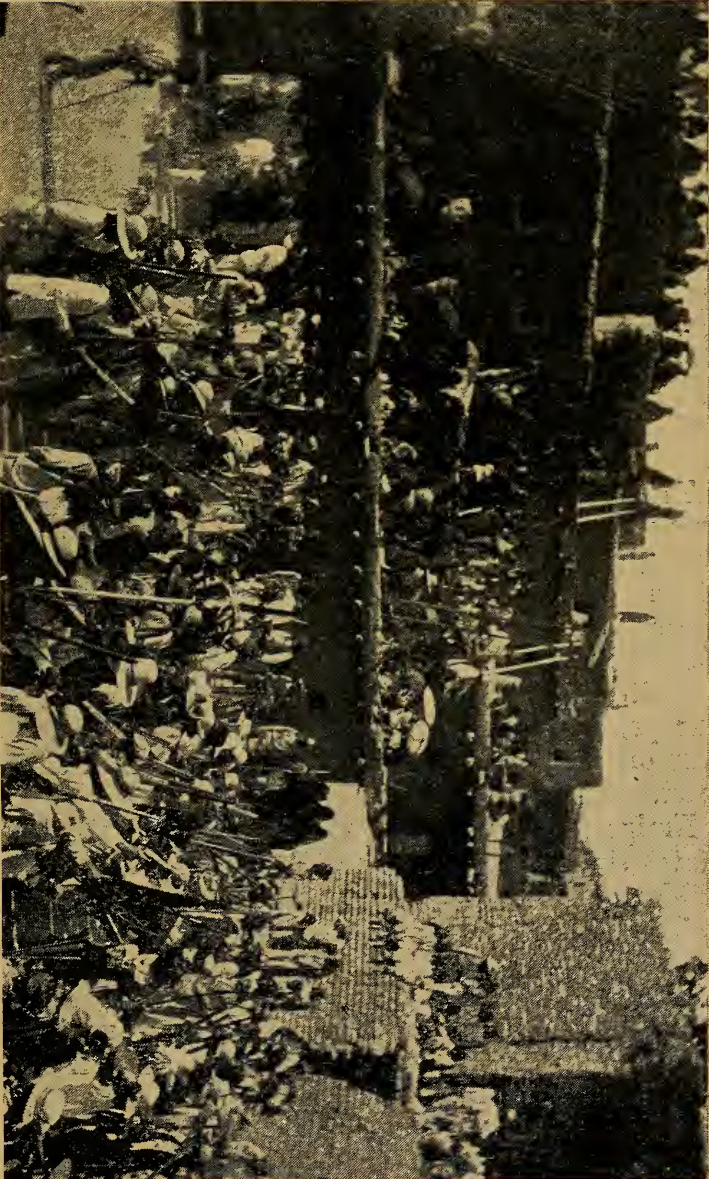
Aguas Calientes is also the junction of the Tampico branch of the Mexican Central Railway, which may be sketched now as well as later. This branch passes through Salinas, important only on account of its famous salt works.

SAN LUIS POTOSI.

This is a city of eighty thousand or ninety thousand inhabitants, on the Tampico branch, and the capitol of the State of the same name. It is one of the most important business centers in Mexico, the principal distributing point for much of the northern part of the Republic. It is situated in a fertile valley surrounded by mountains teeming with mineral wealth. This city possesses the most extensive silver-lead reduction works on the American continent, and has inviting room for many diversified industries and business enterprises.

The views between San Luis Potosi and Tampico almost rival those of Switzerland. San Luis Potosi is six thousand one hundred and eighteen feet above sea level. The plain gradually slopes, by series of terraces cut through ever and anon by cañons, for passage of watercourses descending from the tableland to the Mexican Gulf. The train rapidly glides down through one of these openings into the wild Ysidro Valley, beneath the sombre shadows of dark green mountains, whose sides are draped with the lugubrious foliage of dense forests. Farther on the train descends abruptly into the charming valley of Canoas, and thence plunges into the grand cañon of Tamasopo. Through a succession of curves and tunnel the train winds its serpentine course along shelves hewn in, the sides of almost perpendicular cliffs, and finally reaches the mouth of the cañon, where a magnificent view unfolds. Far beneath spreads

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War Dance of the Native Indians.

a smiling valley in an emerald circle of towering mountains. Down below twelve hundred feet appears, in seeming ripples of undulating waves, like a sheet of old ocean lashed into foaming green, a luxuriant tropical forest, studded here and there with cane fields and groves of tropical fruit. At many points along the route water plunges over headlong precipices three hundred feet, and the train crosses water two hundred feet below.

TAMPICO.

This is a very old town, and now has possibly twenty thousand inhabitants. It is on the Panuco river, seven miles from the mouth, and is a port of entry of growing importance. Large ocean steamers come up to the dock and discharge cargoes and passengers, without lighterage or transfer. Regular lines run to Mobile, New York and Europe, as well as Havana. It is the only inland port on the gulf of Mexico along the Mexican coast.

Emigrants from the eastern and southern States should take steamer to Tampico, if going to Monterey, or any point on the Mexican Central Railway or its branches, not farther north than Zacatecas, if economy is a question worthy of consideration.

There are fine vegetable and fruit lands up the river from Tampico, but not always exempt from frost. It is expected that Tampico will ship one hundred carloads of tomatoes to the United States this year, 1898.

There is a sort of inside rowboat route from Tampico to Tuxpan, the region of wild monkeys and parrots, a genuine tropical country, in the State of Vera Cruz, and a gulf port; but it is time to return to the main line.

LAGOS.

This is the first place of note, south of Aguas Calientes, on the main line, a fine manufacturing city of about forty-five thousand inhabitants, with room for new industries and enterprises.

LEON.

This is a city of some one hundred and ten thousand inhabitants, a great manufacturing center, in a valley of extreme fertility of soil. One industry is the manufacture of beautiful, soft leather clothing, tastefully embroidered in gold and silver bullion, worn by wealthy people on their estates, but going out of date in the cities before the inexorable march of developing progress.

SILAO.

This is a rather pretty little city, and important as the headquarters of the Mexican division of the railway, and the junction of the fifteen-mile branch to Guanajuato.

GUANAJUATO.

This city of some seventy thousand inhabitants is picturesquely set in a frame of great mountains, in the center of a very rich mining district. It contains many fine public and private buildings and a branch mint. American enterprise and industry could make room and business here.

IRAPUATO.

This is a city of some twenty thousand inhabitants and a lucrative business point, with room for Americans. It is a fair agricultural section; but, like nearly all parts of Central and Northern Mexico, the farms, or ranches, as they are called in Spanish, are too large and expensive for small American farmers of moderate means. It is known as the "strawberry market," because there is never a train passes in the whole year, but fresh, ripe strawberries are offered for sale to the passengers at twenty-five cents a basket in Mexican silver.

It is also the junction of the Guadalajara branch, extending west one hundred and sixty-one miles. This branch line runs through a very rich agricultural country, that grows big crops of wheat, corn, sugar, and as fine oranges as any in the Republic. The train passes through Penjamo, a rustic old city of some ten thousand inhabitants, and thence to "La Piedad," with about the same number of souls, and no less quaint and ancient. The next station of importance is La Barca, a city

of fifteen thousand, and the greatest orange shipping station in Mexico. It is situated on the Lerma, the longest river in Mexico, near where it empties into Lake Chapala. Fifty miles west of La Barca, and fifteen miles before the train arrives at Guadalajara, at the station "El Castillo," a tramway leads out to the falls of Juanacatlan, the "Niagara of Mexico." The river plunges headlong over a precipice a hundred feet to the rocks below, making a sublime scene of awful grandeur.

GUADALAJARA.

This is the capital of the State of Jalisco, with a population of one hundred and thirty-five thousand, the finest city in Mexico, and second only to the city of Mexico, in point of inhabitants and commercial importance. It is well laid out, with streets running at right angles, exquisitely shaded with lovely trees, and embellished with the most beautiful parks, gardens, and public buildings in Mexico. The hospital contains twenty-three courts, called "patios" in Spanish, each a tropical grove and garden of flowers in itself, with fountains and walks. There is a fashionable drive, "The Pasco," laid out along the River San Juan de Dios. This is also a big shipping point for oranges and a leading manufacturing center, as well as distributing market for a vast and rich territory. The city is clean and has no beggars. Its schools are of the highest order. The climate is delightful all the year round, and rainfall bountiful, but not entirely exempt from light frosts

once in a great while. No place under the sun has a more promising future for Americans, with large or small means, as population and business will probably double in the next fifteen years, or less, at the present strides they are making.

The extension of the railway now terminates at Ameca, a booming town of twelve thousand inhabitants, down in a delightful valley, between Guadalajara and the Pacific Ocean, in the direction of Banderas Bay. The road leads through one of the finest agricultural and grazing districts in the country, which stretches away far and wide on either side and yet lower down toward the coast. Corn fields, under crude native methods of cultivation, with as good crops as any in the United States, abound in all directions.

The State of Jalisco is a great country in itself, extending from the high tableland region to the Pacific coast. It has room for as many American farmers, large or small, as may care to seek homes in its bounds. But water transportation to the United States is far less practical from the Pacific than from the Gulf coast of Mexico. But it is time to go back to the main line at Irapuato.

SALAMANCA.

This is a thriving manufacturing city, whose straw and leather goods are celebrated, though a small place, the next of importance south of Irapuato, with room for enterprise and industry.

CELAYA.

This is a city of some eighteen thousand inhabitants, with extensive cotton and woolen mills, and makes fine confectionery that is famous. Americans can make room there for new enterprises and industries.

QUERETARO.

This is the capital of the State of the same name, and a city of some sixty thousand inhabitants, supposed to have been founded by the Aztecs about the year 1446. It is a manufacturing center, and has near it the most extensive cotton mills in the Republic. It is also the center of the wonderful opal mines of Mexico, that have been worked for centuries and continue to yield goods of very superior quality. Queretaro is where Maximilian was captured and shot in 1867.

TULA.

This small place is noted for its ancient ruins, being one of the oldest places in the Republic, and has a church three hundred years old, with walls seven feet thick and a tower one hundred and twenty-five feet high. It is unimportant now, except as a junction of the Pachuca branch of the railway.

PACHUCA.

This is a city of possibly fifty thousand inhabitants, and a mining center with a mint. It was very prosperous till many of the mines became flooded some two years ago; but they are getting in shape again to resume work. There is nothing there to tempt Americans beyond mining industries and the employment they afford. There are many English-speaking people there. But a return to the main line is again in order.

The first scene of interest, south of Tula, is the great Nochistongo cut, commenced in 1607—a work designed by the Spaniards to drain the valley of Mexico, in which they sacrificed more than three hundred thousand Indians. The cut is from two hundred and eighty to six hundred and thirty feet wide and one hundred and fifty to one hundred and ninety-six feet deep, and of great length. The dirt was all carried out on the backs of Indians. The great enterprise was worthless, being too high to drain the valley.

From the cut, along the side of which the railway was built, the train passes over a low range of hills and enters the great valley of Mexico. The spires and domes of the capitol of Mexico gleam against a background of eternal snow, the summits of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl ascending heavenward. It is a sublime spectacle.

The valley is in a high state of cultivation, dotted thickly with numerous small towns, through which the train glides along into its final station of Buena Vista, a name immortalized in the Mexican war.



Alameda, Mexico City.

CITY OF MEXICO.

This city has probably more than three hundred and seventy-five thousand inhabitants, and is supposed to be more than six hundred years old. It contains one hundred and twenty churches, the grand cathedral having eighty-five thousand square feet of floor space and two towers, each two hundred feet high. There are some palatial private residences and fine business houses. There are many Americans, and English is spoken in nearly all stores of any pretensions. American enterprises and industries might make room for themselves on a large scale, under methods entirely different from those now in vogue. Americans now in business are getting on nicely.

Every schoolboy should know so much about the City of Mexico that it seems a waste of time and space to dwell longer on its description, which is merely an enlarged photograph of other points, in many respects and features.

MEXICAN NATIONAL RAILWAY.

This is the Laredo route, and enters Mexico at New Laredo, opposite Laredo, Texas. It is two hundred and sixty-five miles, shortest route, to Mexico City, but this advantage is largely counteracted by the fact that it is a narrow-gauge road that necessitates the transfer of passengers, baggage and freight. There is fine scenery on the line, ten thousand feet above the sea level. San Luis Potosi, described already, is also on this

line, which leaves but two other commercial centers of importance.

MONTEREY.

As already stated, this is a very important manufacturing city, with large and prosperous American industries, which prove clearly what is possible at many other points.

TOLUCA.

This is a beautiful and thriving place, in a fertile and productive valley, some six hours' run from Mexico City. It is a manufacturing center, and has one of the largest breweries in the country. There are many tributary towns of respectable size, not on the railway line, that greatly increase the trade of Toluca. Nothing tropical grows there. There should be fine openings for Americans.

This line also has a new branch from the junction of Acambaro to Patzcuaro, in the hot country of the State of Michoacan, which passes through Morelia, a pretty place. The State of Michoacan is new, as to development inspired by railway transportation, and has broad acres that would make desirable American farms and grazing lands.

INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY.

This is the Eagle Pass route, that enters Mexico at Ciudad Diaz, joining the Mexican Central at

Torreón. The line is located in northern Mexico and the high tableland country of central Mexico, not of much interest to the average American farmer, and offers no great show for merchants and manufacturers. It passes Sabinas, Monclova and Trevino, all points of some importance and promise.

THE MONTEREY & MEXICAN GULF RAILWAY.

This line connects Tampico with Monterey, and is three hundred and eighty-nine miles long. It passes Victoria and Linares, an orange belt that was badly damaged by frost when Florida was frozen out. Otherwise, it is not of much interest to Americans, unless they wish to go from Tampico to Monterey.

THE MEXICO, CUERNAVACA & PACIFIC RAILWAY.

This line is in course of construction, to connect Mexico City with the Pacific coast at Acapulco, nearly one hundred miles being complete and in operation. It starts from the City of Mexico, and ascends two thousand five hundred feet, almost in sight of the city, from which elevation it descends five thousand feet in a short distance to Cuernavaca, where Cortez built a palace. At Cuernavaca and thence onward, for a long distance, in the direction of the coast, is fine farm and fruit

and grazing lands. The line will be of great importance to the commerce of the City of Mexico, as the only quick and direct connection with the Pacific Ocean.

THE HIDALGO & NORTHEASTERN RAILWAY.

• This is a narrow-gauge line, in course of construction from the City of Mexico to Tuxpan, a port on the Gulf of Mexico. The main line is in operation one hundred and forty miles, to the city of Tulancingo, in the State of Puebla, and a branch to Pachuca is also in operation. Thus far, it has not passed the high tableland country, and hence, has little interest for Americans.

THE MEXICAN SOUTHERN RAILWAY.

This is an inland narrow-gauge line, three hundred and fifty miles long, connecting the cities of Puebla and Oaxaca, descending from a high to a low, hot land. It is not specially interesting to Americans seeking Mexican homes.

THE NATIONAL ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC RAILWAY.

This line, built, owned and operated by the Mexican Government, is one hundred and ninety miles long, and leads from Coatzacoalcos, on the Gulf of Mexico, to Salina Cruz, on the Pacific Ocean. The gulf port would be the proper place

to land from steamers, should anyone leave the United States by water, to go to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Coatzacoalcos river also empties into the gulf at the same point. As already stated, the isthmus is a very rich section of the country, of much interest to Americans, many of whom are settling at San Juan Evanjalista and other points, reached from Coatzacoalcos.

MEXICAN RAILWAY.

This line leads from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, and has branches to Pachuca and Puebla, making, in all, some three hundred and fifty miles of the finest track in the Republic, having iron cross ties. It is the oldest road in Mexico. Two companies failed while trying to build it, and an English company now owns it. Masterful engineering skill was required to climb the mountain more than eight thousand feet in a hundred miles, from Vera Cruz to Esperanza. The ascent is in a much shorter distance, as the country is nearly level some forty miles out from Vera Cruz.

VERA CRUZ.

This is a city of the gulf, of some forty thousand inhabitants, where Cortez landed and burned his ships. It is where Americans who come to the Vera Cruz district by water would land. Fifty miles out at sea, in the early morning watch, while all is yet dark where rolls the "ocean wave," the first glint of a sunbeam may be seen, up yonder,

more than seventeen thousand feet high and a hundred and twenty miles away, bathing and transfusing into gold and jasper the thousand years of snow that crowns Orizaba mountain. There once glowed volcanic fires up there where eternal winter now wields the sway, fires so fierce and powerful that they hurled huge rocks and lava to the coast, more than fifty miles. But this was in an age long dead, who can tell how ancient?

The commercial and industrial advantages of Vera Cruz have been outlined and cannot be overdrawn. Americans there and at interior points, working in harmony, can make for themselves and the Republic of their adoption the New York of Mexico. People, money and energy will do the transformation act in time incredibly short. The Mexicans are doing their best, but they have not men and money enough to develop such a combination of resources as rapidly as the destiny of their great country demands.

The Mexican Railway leads out from Vera Cruz, through a broad belt of low country, little used for any purpose but grazing, though it produces fine corn and other crops, where odd patches are occasionally planted.

Some forty miles up the line the outskirts of the coffee belt is reached. For two or three stations the country is too rugged to be desirable for settlements, though both coffee and fruits grow nicely. A little beyond the station of Paso del Macho the wild and gorgeous scenery of the tropical mountains shadows forth to view, though less grand and terrible than some distance farther up.

CORDOBA.

This old town has something less than twenty thousand inhabitants, but its name is familiar in all the coffee markets of the world. It is the center of some of the oldest and largest plantations in the country, as well as numerous thriving villages, whose people have grown rich in a few years from the proceeds of their coffee. Unfortunately for the town, it has been scourged by yellow fever about once in ten years, though in the mountains, nearly three thousand feet above Vera Cruz. It is one of the finest orange sections in the Republic, and grows pineapples prolifically, equal to those of Cuba, though much better keepers. The country teems with other tropical fruits, in all directions.

The junction is here of a railway, partly built, that was meant to penetrate the finest sugar and tobacco section of the Republic, much of which is yet remote from transportation.

ORIZABA.

This quaint old city and its manufacturing suburbs have possibly sixty thousand inhabitants. It is destined to become the Manchester of Mexico, because of the many factories it has that are now in course of construction and projected for the near future. It is also a fine orange center, and in the cream of the coffee belt.



Coffee Ranch—Orizaba Valley.

MAL TRATA.

This is a small station, the second above Orizaba, but entirely out of the coffee belt, where any fruits of the United States grow to fine perfection. From Mal Trata to the summit of the mountain there is no scenery anywhere to be seen from a railway train of more startling grandeur.

APAZACO.

This old city, the same as others between the summit of the mountain and the City of Mexico, has very little to interest home-seeking Americans. It contains a glass factory, and is the junction of the Puebla branch of the Mexican Railway.

PUEBLA.

This is a large city, the capitol of the State of the same name, and the center of a fine wheat and corn-growing district. It is also a manufacturing city, and has a brewery.

INTEROCEANIC RAILWAY.

This narrow-gauge line leads from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, through Puebla and other points reached by the Mexican Railway.

JALAPA.

This is a mountain city, the capitol of the State of Vera Cruz, in a coffee and fruit center, much

the same as Cordoba and Orizaba, and has interesting tributary towns. This line has also a branch road leading down into the State of Morelos from Mexico City to Puente de Ixtla, a fine fruit country, where oranges are wormy. The oranges from Yautepec, on this branch, have caused the impression that Mexican oranges are generally wormy, which is erroneous.

ALVERADO RAILWAY.

This is a short narrow-gauge line, leading from Vera Cruz to Alverado, the mouth of the San Juan river, from which point steamers run daily to Tlacotalpam, where the three branches of the river unite, as already described. This is the route settlers would take from Vera Cruz to reach the San Juan river country.

Alverado is the finest fishing point on the coast, as it is a short distance inland from the bar, and, hence, protected from violent gulf storms that often render fishing impossible near Vera Cruz. The great red snapper fishing banks are some distance nearer Alverado than Vera Cruz. Hence, all Alverado needs to take the fishing industry away from Vera Cruz is suitable transportation arrangements and an ice factory and cold storage plant to prepare them for shipment to the interior. The business is handled barbarously at Vera Cruz, and the fish shipped to the City of Mexico in bulk, in hot box-cars, with some broken ice thrown on them when they start. Naturally, they never have fish of the flavor that proper care

would carry shipments from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, and thence to interior markets.

FRONTERA.

This city is the port where one would land if going to the State of Tabasco. It is situated at the mouth of Grifalea river, that flows down by San Juan Bautista, the capitol of the State of Tabasco. As already stated, the banks of this river would make as fine banana plantations as any anywhere, and sugar, rubber and other tropical crops not excelled anywhere.

The Pacific coast country is not accessible to American settlement, and will not be soon, except from the California coast of the United States, and, hence, need not be considered now. There is a very long stretch of fine country along the Pacific coast, where cheap homes may be secured; but the only practical way to get there would be by sea from San Francisco or San Diego, California. The long rail route, after transportation by sea, would make the shipment of perishable products out of the question. The National Tehuantepec Railway is a practical connection; and the Mexico, Cuernavaca & Pacific Railway will be another, some day. The soil, the productions and the climate of the Pacific coast country are much the same as the Vera Cruz district contains. But there is room for desirable homes for all the settlers likely to go from the United States to Mexico in a generation, far more accessible than the remote Pacific coast, with practical channels of direct communication.

HOW TO GO.

If one wishes to go all rail, by Mexican Central Railway, the El Paso route, the Santa Fe route and connections, to United States points, will give excursion or emigrate rates to any point in Mexico. Ask your ticket agent for rate, before ready to start, and he will send and get the special rate, if he should not have it.

The Southern Pacific Railway and connections will do the same, by the Eagle Pass route.

The Missouri Pacific, Iron Mountain & Southern Railways and connections will do the same, by the Laredo route; while The International & Great Northern Railway and connections also reach the Laredo route.

If the water trip from New York or the South should be preferable, James E. Ward & Co., No. 113 Wall street, New York, agents New York & Cuba Mail Steam Ship Co., will give rate and sailing dates from New York, New Orleans and Mobile, to Tampico, Tuxpan, Vera Cruz, Coatzacoalcos and Frontera, Mexico; and agents Mexican Gulf Steamship Co., at New Orleans and Mobile, will do the same, as also the agent of Atlantic & Mexican Gulf Steamship Co., at Mobile, for passage from New Orleans or Mobile to points in Mexico, named above. The same agents can sell through tickets to all interior points in Mexico, which are the better to buy, at the start. Such through passages may be arranged cheaply, especially if several persons are going together. There are excursion, as well as emigrant rates,

the latter very much cheaper than the former. If a poor family wishes to economize, the emigrant passage will do nicely and prove much more comfortable and convenient than second-class rail passage.

The same agents will name the weight of baggage that may go free, and the rate of freight on any excess, if so requested. All these details should be arranged before leaving home, as both money, delay and annoyance, on the way, will thus be avoided.

It will probably be necessary to buy local tickets from starting point to New York, New Orleans or Mobile, as the case may be.

West of Chicago and St. Louis, the all-rail route will be more desirable than rail and water, while east of those points rail and water will be cheaper and better for families than all rail. If the passage by rail is less to New York than to New Orleans or Mobile, that would be the route to take, if cheapness is an object. The passage by steamer will be about the same from all points of sailing—not very much more from New York than from southern points, and the time not much longer, except to Tampico, which is direct and quick from New Orleans or Mobile, but to Vera Cruz and other gulf ports of Mexico not much quicker than from New York.

Once landed in Mexico, and at the point selected, some merchant or other person can be found, without much trouble, who will direct one to the most desirable locality for a home. An American, or some Mexican who speaks English,

can usually be found. Steamship agents are usually well posted. This applies to farmers and stockraisers. As to persons desiring to establish business or factories, it would be well to keep their own counsels while making some observations and investigations, or, at least, not seek information at the start from persons in the same line of business contemplated.

Farmers would do well to keep out of the hands of land companies, unless such land is found in the section selected to be more desirable than any other. Many people in the land business have as good property as any in the Republic, and in the most desirable sections, while others have neither; and these are the dealers who are likely to mislead settlers. Get all the information from land dealers and anyone else you possibly can; examine everything with personal care, and then use your own practical judgment. In this way there will be little danger of going far astray.

Persons who go to seek employment without any previous arrangement will have to take about the same course they would in a strange place in the United States. Their only practical show will be in the manufacturing, mining and commercial centers, or with the railway companies. All the railways have their headquarters in the City of Mexico. The leading commercial, manufacturing, and mining points have been named, and the best route to reach them given. But do not go unless you are competent and qualified to do Mexican work, without an engagement. If you can speak and write Spanish fairly well, and

understand the work you wish to do, you would not be long idle at any place where there is much to do, even were you to go blindly, with no engagement. Yet above all else master the Spanish before you start.

SILVER.

The writer is an exporter and has a big plant in the Republic, with no other class of business than that of preparing Mexican products for market, and shipping them to the United States. From a self-interested point of view, the silver currency of Mexico is the best financial system in the world, and the cheaper the silver the better the inducement to do business. Many products of Mexico, suitable for export, are converted into gold at their cost in silver.

To illustrate: In 1896, when the price of gold ranged between eighty-five per cent and ninety-five per cent premium, before the passage of the Dingley Bill, we paid seven dollars to eight dollars, silver, for an article, that we bought in 1897, after the Dingley law went into effect, at from four dollars and fifty cents to six dollars, silver, when the premium on gold ranged from one dollar and twenty cents to one dollar and forty cents per dollar, and the price of the product was twenty-five per cent higher in the United States, in consequence of the new tariff, than in 1896. The business was demoralized for some time, at the start of the Dingley law, and there were few buyers, and no show to move much of the crop. This lowered prices in Mexico, though the paying medium was worth less gold than in any previous season.



Year-Old Banana—Frontera, Tabasco.

This is true, in a greater or less degree, as to most exportable products of the country. They are bought, without exception, for silver, and sold for gold. Hence, exporters are not trying to get the gold standard in Mexico.

All home products consumed in the Republic are bought of producers and sold to consumers for silver. Railway passage and freight, in Mexico, are in silver. Wages are paid in silver. Local prices of native commodities and prices of labor do not change with the rise and fall of silver. The medium and poor classes use very little value of foreign goods. The rich and dressy people only know that silver is cheap when they go to buy luxuries, and the importer knows it when he goes to buy foreign exchange, to pay for the goods that he must sell for cheap silver.

For practical purposes, among the masses, a cheap silver dollar goes about as far in Mexico as a gold dollar in the United States.

But, how long is this going to last? It would not work at all in the United States, where labor organizations are ready to strike at any moment, for less cause than paying them in dollars worth less than fifty cents. In Mexico there are no unions of labor and no strikes. It is a matter of no consequence to the poor what the rich have to pay for luxuries. The majority of the people do not even know that silver is depreciated, for the reason that they never see any other money, and that a dollar always buys about the same quantity of the necessaries of life, unless the extreme shortness of some staple crop raises prices;

and even then the money is not blamed. The Mexican masses are very docile and very patient. If idle they do not make any disturbance.

But all this is no valid argument that Mexico and her people are better off with dollars now worth forty-five cents in the United States than they would be with a currency at par. Certainly, the exporter would lose much of his big profit, and the producer would have more money to spend, compared with present foreign standards. The people are better off now than they were when their dollars were at a premium in foreign markets, some twenty-five years ago, and even since, yet it were absurd to assume that the decline in silver improved their condition. Little more than twenty years have passed since the time when there were no railways nor factories in the country, and when the devastation of civil war blurred the face of every section of the Republic. The people were reduced to conditions of pitiful distress, and sheer want, in many communities of Mexico.

Peace, plenty of labor and the general prosperity that railways, factories and the export of products have created, have ameliorated the hard lot of the poor, while the purchasing power of their dollar was steadily decreasing abroad. It were idiotic to assert that they would not be as well off as they are now had their money remained at a premium, or even at par.

There are certain irresistible radical forces at work to change the financial status of Mexico. What are they? Education and the progressive

light that it kindles. The young generation of Mexicans will be bright and well posted, and wide awake to the vital interest of individuals, communities, States and the Republic. When the President of the Republic stands up and publicly distributes the school rewards to hundreds of children, rich, middle class and poor, indiscriminately, the education of the masses receives an impetus sure to develop a high grade of popular intelligence.

All the foregoing causes seem to be evolutionizing the people, as very many parents, abundantly imbued with a copper hue of complexion, have blond, blue-eyed children. This fact is noticeable, in some degree, in all sections of the Republic.

The rising generation of Mexicans will not be behind the people of the United States in progressive ideas and institutions, and will not be satisfied with a depreciated currency, nor with the stranger doing the business of the country. Mexicans, even the most stupid of the old peon class, learn any class of skilled labor very quickly, and are apt pupils in learning such other tricks of the stranger as anyone tries to teach them. The new generation will need no teachers. The young Mexicans will have caught the progressive vim of the Yankee without imbibing his ruinous political propensities, and hence, be able to cope with financial problems that threaten to wreck the free institutions of the United States.

For these reasons the Mexican dollar will probably be at par, or nearly so, with the money of

other countries, within the next ten years. Even the men of this day are waking up out of the lethargy that has been the curse of Mexico for ages. They see what the stranger is doing in their country, and many of them are beginning to imitate and follow his methods.

The reader now has a fair general idea of Mexico, as concisely as so large and varied a question may be presented, sufficient, it is hoped, to lead him to intelligent conclusions. All that has been said has been without the bias of partiality, asserted without fear, favor or affection, under the conviction that the people of the United States have never had full information about Mexico, and how to go there. No railway company, land company, government nor private party has contributed toward the cost of this production, nor has one sentence been written with a design to benefit anyone beyond the actual merits of the line named or the interest indicated. The interest of prospective settlers has been the actuating motive throughout, and under no other state of circumstances could a fair, honest guide be written—one that would not mislead by its omissions of interesting features, while its selfish statements might not be too highly colored.

Read a cartload of all the railroad and land company literature, that is poised as finger boards to Mexico, that is given away so profusely that rag pickers glean it from ticket offices, in their rounds, after reading this, and decide which gives information most practical and serviceable to one wishing to visit Mexico for any reason.

Before concluding, it seems opportune and appropriate to give some little outlines of predominating characteristics of the Mexican people, wherein the line of demarcation differs widely from what prevails in the United States; and, especially, as already promised, some account of the inflexible faith in their Virgin, Guadalupe. Their feast days, called holidays, in English, make a very strong feature in the Mexican life. And their religious loyalty is a marvel of mysteries, superficially viewed, when one remembers whence came the faith to which they pay homage; and the bitter antipathy they cherished for so many dark and weary ages, for their conquerers, makes it appear yet more extraordinary that any institution that came from Spain should now be an object of reverence, among the liberated masses, who yet hate Spain and Spaniards as cordially as their ancestors detested them, in days of the most galling slavery Mexicans ever endured. But, there is perhaps one explanation, and only one, found in the name "Guadalupe."

Christmas will be the first festive scene presented, which may serve as a passing relaxation from the prosy monotony of practical things.

CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO.

Christmas in Mexico would be a wonder and a show to Americans who never passed the holidays in a Spanish-American country.

Reflect one passing moment on the stage of the scene about to shadow forth, and try to imagine

what you cannot see and what none can ever know.

Here we are on the classic strand of the Mexican Gulf, whose sleepless tide chants the plaintive lullaby that was old a hundred thousand years ago. The shore is the border of a land whose deep, untold mystery has, perchance, no rivaling history beneath the starry marvels of the sky. Ruins of dateless cities, older than any accorded a place in the page of remotest chronicles, attest that Mexico was older than Babylon is today, long ages before the Aztec race ever roamed over her mystic vales. This is no idle dream. Let those who doubt come and see the proof.

But it was of Christmas, in this strange land of peculiar people, that we were to debate.

Yet, pause one fleeting moment and contemplate the people who dwell from mountain peak to ocean wave. Where was the natal shore of the blood that came not from Spain? Who were the people who perished ere the Aztec came, or were exterminated by his race? Both they and he had their gods and temples more grand and massive than those Rome has built on their nameless ruins—sites that hence yet appear more divinely desolate than they would with no shrines above their silent tombs. Why did they all die and leave no pictured page nor fairy legend to tell their pathetic story? Nothing remains but buried cities and voiceless shrines to tell you what was and is not, save something vague and shadowy in the restless, dreamy eye of sorrow that

looks upon you in every walk of life, and seems to bear a speechless record of the distant past.

But, now there appears a dash of Spanish blood in almost every Aztec vein. There is scarcely one clear-blooded native in a thousand.

And like their blood, their gods and temples have been changed, and such a change. Rome and the cross have triumphed over all besides.

But they have their Christmas, a gay and festive one, free from care and sorrow, a more merry Christmas than the freer and more favored children of the United States ever enjoy. Come and see them in the gloaming of a tropic eve that dies without a twilight, tripping light-heartedly from shop to shop, bent on missions of love and duty. This is on your Christmas eve, their "noche bueno," as it is called in Spanish.

There are hasty calls and reunions of friends and families, through all the early hours of the night. The streets, the shops and the dwellings are brightly illuminated and fantastically decorated.

At length the weird midnight spreads a brooding, flapless wing over the mirthful scene; but the merry revelers heed it not, as the deep-toned bells that proclaim the phantom hour, that is so solemn and still in other lands, knell the inception of the feast. All the world is then summoned to the table to partake of the Christmas dinner the people of the United States eat at noon Christmas day. There is nothing solemn nor sad in all Mexico. The lights are not permitted to burn blue, as they are said to burn at midnight



Date Palm Grove—Carmen, Tabasco.

1007

in other climes. The slave is free, the poor are rich, and earth is heaven for a little season.

For an hour or more the tables hold feasters spell bound, not only by exquisitely tempting dishes and delicately flavored wines, but by witching conversation, for which the Spanish tongue is unsurpassed by other language of the earth.

Sleep is not on the bill of fare. Little children are not drowsy. The festal dinner is but the beginning of raptures of the night. From the tables there is a rush for the ball rooms. All is life and joy. The air is rife with perfume and resonant with divinest music. Rare evergreens and matchless flowers are everywhere.

Mexican dances are slow and languid, but full of majestic motion, and rapturous beyond any other episode of life among young people of the Republic, as the beau and the sweetheart are paired in every set. At no other time is there ever close communion among young lovers, except in the blissful dance. They never go alone to theatre, nor church, nor for a walk nor a drive, nor is the beau admitted to the home of the girl. It is an extraordinary event if she sees him in her house. She must receive him through a grated window, like a fairy prisoner, while he stands in the street outside her home, in sunshine or rain. If he is not at his post once in twenty-four hours, he is by no means a devoted lover. This goes on for years and years, when the young man is not able to make a home and provide for a wife. The girl receives the attention of no other man. This social law is as inexorable as that of the Medes and Persians.

The Mexican girl is as attractive in the ball room as the dark-eyed maids of Spain, about whom poets have ever raved. It is very rare to see one perfectly homely, without some redeeming trait of beauty. The hair and eye are sure to be luxuriant and winning, no matter how ugly the features.

There are three types; the clear-blooded Castilian, the offspring of Spanish parentage, that never mingled with the native race; three-quarters or more of the same Spanish blood, lightly tinged with that of the yellow tribes; and three-quarters, more or less, of Aztec blood, gently modified by pure infusion from proud Spanish veins. Some of the maids of this last type are very beautiful, the copper color of their race being toned to a deep brunette, with long, glossy, black hair and the soft, dreamy, dark eyes of Andalusia. Some few of the other types are as beautiful as any women on the earth, and most of their less fortunate sisters are not without winning characteristics.

Such are the components of the upper walks of life. The second class contains the same elements of blood, but possesses less of the material things of earth, which puts its members below the social cream.

Beneath all comes the poor peon, the bone and sinew of Mexico, the slave of Montezuma, of the Spaniard subsequently, and of the class that holds the lands and other substance of the country to-day, though often with the same blood throbbing in lowly veins that pulsates in the upper walks of

life. He, too, has his midnight dinner and dance, truly more humble than those of his master, yet no less real and impressive. While he has his fowl he is content with pulque, the national beverage or rum, the cheap intoxicant of Mexico, instead of wine.

Early mass in the cathedrals is a grand feature of Christmas morning in Mexico, and everybody goes to church some time during the day.

The decoration of the churches would be inconceivable among people of frosty countries, where it would be almost impossible to have such a display of flowers on Christmas day as render the churches of Mexico beautiful beyond description. Such exquisite flowers are the free-will offerings of the lady members of the churches, plucked from their own gardens, without money and without price.

THE BULL FIGHT.

This may appear to the average American as a peculiar feature of Christmas devotion, following the beautiful and impressive services held in all the churches, previous to the hour of admittance to the bull ring. People of all classes go. The sport is an ancient one, that came from Spain to stay while Spanish blood flows in Mexican veins. Whether it ever had the approval of the Church, who can tell? It certainly never had the interdiction of the Church, which has nearly always had the power to have stopped in Spain anything obnoxious to its will. The exhibition of this spectacle often takes place on Sunday, and on the

yet more sacred holidays. On some occasions, in Mexico City and other large places, twenty-five dollars, and even fifty dollars are paid for the more desirable seats, and as much as five dollars for standing room in sun or rain, as the case may be, so long as there is an opportunity to see the arena of blood. This is proof positive of the popular interest in the bull fight, possibly too powerful for the law and gospel of this age.

The bulls are bred of peculiar stock, and wild as beasts of prey. Fortunes have been made in this industry. Many of the best animals are jet black, and as fine specimens as eye ever saw, majestically bold and terrible, in appearance, as the ferocious lions of the bloody circus of ancient Rome.

This noble animal is confined in a narrow stall, with a door that opens into the arena, so that when opened he sees at once a chance to gain his lost liberty, for which he makes a frantic, joyful plunge. What a cruel deception. His stately head erect, his proud nostrils distended, his grand eyes flashing defiance, he dashes forth to the view of an expectant, impatient audience, with more precipitate action than the rising curtain ever discloses the culminating scene of a dread tragedy on the stage. He is greeted by the wild huzzas of thronging thousands, the gorgeous apparel and waving handkerchiefs of the frenzied multitude. This is all new to his unprepared nature. If he has thinking faculties and takes time to reflect, he imagines he has been suddenly hurled headlong into pandemonium. But the

tumult is in the seats above him. He knows from instinct or intuition that the people up there are not barriers in his way, and he rushes madly for freedom on his own level.

Lo! he quickly beholds that he is surrounded by impassable walls and menaced by horsemen, the same foes, apparently, who deprived him of his liberty and forced him, a captive, from his native mountain to his narrow prison of the moment. Unawed he dashes into the combat, so unequal as to make his courage more admirable than any human bravery. He disdains his adversaries, and seeks neither liberty nor escape from their onslaughts. Danger is an unknown factor to his gallantry.

At the first daring bound horse and rider go down before him as if struck by an engine in a career of sixty miles an hour. The horse is finished, and the rider lands sprawling flat on the ground. His bullship promptly disengages his horns from the body of the horse, and is ready to make quick work of the imperiled rider. But a goad pricks him from behind. Like an athlete he turns to face his new assailant, while the most frantic shouts of delight ring, again and again, from above. In an instant the second horse and rider are in the predicament of the first, the peril of the rider being yet more desperate, ere rescue turns the brave animal in an other direction.

Faster and more furious the valiant animal now wages the combat, his body bathed in his own blood and that of the horses he has slain. In quick succession two more horses go down before

his impetuosity. The excitement among the spectators is vociferous and almost without bounds. The suspense becomes appalling, as the bull begins to gain, more and more, in the competitive race for the championship.

At length he becomes indifferent to the attacks to turn him from the finish of his human prey. The fifth horse goes down. The bull frees his horns from the writhing flesh, just as the rider struggles to his feet, near the wall. With a quickness, almost rivaling the agile spring of the panther, before the other bull fighters in the ring or the audience above realize what is passing, or how it was done, the bull is seen starting on a wild career around the ring with the unhorsed fighter pinioned on his horns, which have passed through the center of the body.

The climax of human tragedy is reached. Usually horses and bulls alone perish, men rarely. Once in a great while an extraordinary show culminates as a parting soul wings its way from the awful scene.

The other fighters and the spectators are dismayed, but not so the bull. It is certain that the victim is lost, beyond help or hope. The bull must be killed. There is no other alternative. Minutes seem ages. The bull appears the only being perfectly reconciled with this trying feature of the show.

Quickly the other bull fighters recover from their startling surprise and regain their confused presence of mind. But they fail to dispatch the bull or check his reckless speed at once. A

dozen frightful wounds do not arrest him, till at last he falls, exhausted by the loss of blood. The fighter is gently released from the horns of the now impotent monarch of his absent herd, who has perished dumbly brave and all alone in the midst of so many human foes. The vanquished animal gasps out his last expiring breath into the rigid face of his antagonist, cold and stark in the icy embrace of death. It is nearly nineteen hundred years since Calvary, yet Christmas has another human sacrifice to a rite whose origin and object none seems to know nor care, unless it started as it yet exists, to satiate a craving to see the flow of blood, animal or human, what boots it which, so long as there is a sanguinary finish to the hilarious shows.

The people now hie them homeward, satisfied with the result of the evening; and the other bulls procured for this occasion are kept for another day, as five horses, one bull and a man make a very respectable real tragedy.

THE THEATER.

Christmas night is the grand theatrical occasion of the year. Standing room is at a premium. The best attainable talent is always present, not seldom imported for the holiday season. Mexicans love the theatre and the circus, and none are so poor and wretched that the luxury of a bull fight, the theater or the circus is not an occasional indulgence. These things seem to be necessary elements of popular life. They are the

customs and the traditions of a country and a people about whom hover a halo of mystic wonderment. Who could have the heart to deprive them of this pittance of enjoyment after the long ages of woe that have been their heritage, from sire to son, till hope at length seemed an idle whim, a dream of mockery? Life among them—the very soil of their strange land—has been an endless civic drama, a tragic stage, that yet calls aloud for mortal sympathy from remotest and even savage shores; for have they not passed through scenes to touch the heart of the wildest race of earth, and call down the retribution of heaven? Ah! how slowly grindeth thine relentless mills, ye gods; yet are not Mexico and Mexicans at last avenged? Nemesis slumbered long, while the despoilers of “The land that is fairer than day,” bathed luxuriantly in metaphoric seas of “milk and honey,” fancying never ending immunity was theirs. But a change came over the spirit of their dreams, and what a change.

Hidalgo, the priest, exclaimed “The day for more endurance has gone by, and by the eternal God this remorseless slavery shall end”; and he became a liberating warrior. That his deeds were unfeelingly bloody none may deny, yet he dealt out the coin of death that he at last received, to foes for whom no other mode of warfare had any terror.

When the sun of freedom glowed at last for Mexico, and her pale young star came out in the galaxy of her liberated sisters, the eldest and the

strongest smote and despoiled her afresh, while yet in her swaddling clothes of feebleness.

After this most cruel of all her dastardly undoings, and much internal ruin, the French came to scourge her anew. But this, too, had an end, as did another period of civil strife, and left her free and prosperous at last, though not till the present day.

Then, who can grudge her the overflowing ecstasy of her festivities?

THE SHRINE OF GUADALUPE.

Guadalupe is a name that quickens the pulse and inspires a feeling of reverence in every true Mexican heart. It is a name that binds Mexico indissolubly to the Church of Rome. It is the name of the immaculate native virgin, the patron saint of Mexico. The story is one of wondrous mystery. That of Mary and Christ combined is less sacred to the lowly and ignorant. Guadalupe, Mary and Christ make the trio that Protestantism can never break. While there is a Church of Rome and a Mexico, the religion of the people will be Catholic, if not wholly in reality and practice, surely in name and form of service.

The stage on which Guadalupe shadowed forth is now a beautiful villa, "Guadalupe," and a splendid cathedral, the shrine of the virgin, a short distance south of the city of Mexico, near the Mexican railway. This is the Mecca of Mexico. Here rests the footsore and weary pilgrim from the remotest shore of Mexico.

The strangest feature of all is that a priest of the Church of Rome was the sponsor of the virgin, which blended her marvelous story with the Church for all time in Mexico, no matter how it is esteemed in Rome. No priest denies in Mexico the valid sanctity of Guadalupe any more than that of Mary and Christ. She is a feature of the religion of the Mexicans that Rome herself does not dare to wrench from the faith of Catholics in Mexico.

Guadalupe has exercised a wonderful influence among the savage tribes, and served to render Mexican character docile and gentle. She has never been responsible for any cruelty.

Her story runs in this wise: A great many ages ago, when the dominion of Spain was young in Mexico, and the Church little more popular among the natives than the government, a priest went out to a settlement, beyond the suburbs of Mexico City, to hold religious services. He sent an Indian out to gather some flowers. When he returned with his first tribute the priest sent him for a second instalment.

The Indian had a blanket, called "serape" in Spanish, because the early December morning was chilly.

The second time he came without flowers, his blanket carefully folded, great beads of perspiration standing, cold and clammy, on his forehead, greatly agitated and speechless. The priest demanded the cause of his singular conduct and perturbation, with some indication of impatience. The poor fellow merely put his finger to his lips,

as a signal of silence to the priest, unfolded his blanket and said not a word. The priest started, aghast. He felt indisposed to ask farther questions, at the moment.

The poor Indian's blanket contained the most exquisite painting of the most beautiful being the priest had ever seen. He knew the poor man's blanket as well as he knew his face and voice. An hour before the blanket was plain cloth, without any vestige or semblance of any color or figure. The painting was clearly supernatural. No mortal being could do the work in months. But the matchless colors and handiwork were past human knowledge and skill. The priest was well answered and in no mood to answer questions himself.

There were plenty of other witnesses present, who knew the blanket and saw the transformation nothing but a miracle could have wrought. There was no chance for imposition, hence no room to doubt. This was something that admitted no skepticism, that the Indians would soon believe everywhere.

When at length the owner of the blanket recovered sufficiently to speak, he explained that the beautiful being whose living image was indelibly portrayed on his blanket had appeared to him and placed her likeness on his blanket in an instant. Her name was Guadalupe, the Virgin Patron Saint of all the Mexicans, and that he must proclaim her, and send word to all the tribes for delegates to come there to the spot and see the token she had left, and hear what he had to tell them.

and that a Pilgrim's Shrine must be built there in commemoration, to preserve the blanket and its immortal picture, made without the touch of hand, in colors no painter's art could ever approach.

The priest naturally regarded the circumstance as a heavenly ministration, sent as an auxiliary to the work of the holy Church among the heathen tribes that did not take any too kindly to the cause of the cross. Hence, he advised the Indians to do just as the strange apparition had bid their friend, and assured them of every possible assistance on his part.

Swifter than tidings of the landing of Cortez flew over mountain and plain, the wondrous story of Guadalupe was borne to the utmost bounds of the dominion of the Spaniard, and beyond. The delegates came in return almost as quickly as the messengers went.

Arrived at the scene of the divine miracle, the story was told by the Indian who was the owner of the now sacred blanket, and the other witnesses present, when he first brought it to the astonished priest. The priest let the crescent spell work its own destiny. There could be no treacherous deception of the white man in the visitation of the chosen of heaven. Seeing was believing. Delegates from the tribes became eager converts.

The early result was the foundation and building of a splendid Temple of Guadalupe, which is to this day the magnificent Cathedral of Guadalupe, whose ministers have ever been and are priests of Rome.

Since then numerous churches and chapels of Guadalupe have been built in many sections of Mexico, under the auspices of the Church of Rome, or her representatives in Mexico, and always ministered by Romish priests.

But the original shrine has ever been and is the pilgrim's goal, where the sacred picture of Guadalupe still remains bright and fresh, as its startling reality was first unfolded to the eyes of the priest; and the Mexican faith is that the souls of those who look upon the image of their Virgin shall never die. This faith is as beautiful and admirable as it is innocent and harmless, so irreproachable that the great and potent Church of Rome has never ventured to hurl an anathematizing bull at it, nor her priests failed to minister in the chapels and temple of the Virgin, nor to hold extraordinary services in all the churches of Mexico on the grand feast day of Guadalupe.

The day of Guadalupe is December the 12th, the season of pilgrimages to the natal shrine. Since the advent of railways, excursion trains run for many days from every part of the Republic, crowded to their utmost capacity, while uncounted thousands make the journey on foot, even from the remotest sections of the country. It is the grandest holiday of all, except the national celebration of the independence of Mexico, September the 16th, which is entirely different in character. The feast of Guadalupe, in Mexico, eclipses that of Christmas in other countries.

Candles are burned all night, even in the most distant and humblest mountain cabins. The

poorest peasants go to their nearest market town, not seldom fifty miles, to procure a supply of candles for the sacred occasion. They may be seen journeying, afoot, through dust or mud, as the case may be, with heavy burdens on their backs, of the respective produce of which each is master, even to charcoal and fat pine knots, to exchange for the coveted and necessary supply of candles. No hardship nor privation is deemed too great a sacrifice to avoid dereliction in the discharge of this imperative duty. It would be a reproach, if not a sacrilege, to be without candles.

Work is suspended all day. Services as imposing as those of Christmas day are held in all the churches.

In the afternoon the inevitable bull fights are in order, the grandest and most costly of the whole year being celebrated at Mexico City, owing to the great number of pilgrims there, who come to visit the nearby Shrine of Guadalupe. Such pilgrims all see the City of Mexico, which makes a grand boom for business.

Guadalupe has been so long and is so firmly enthroned in Mexico that conjecture would be idle as to the age when her reign of faith will reach its zenith or begin to decline. When it ends Rome will fall, unless Mexico is first depopulated, or all the native blood of her people drained from their veins, so far as the sway of the Church applies to Mexico. The growing skepticism of countries advanced in all fields of development will not take root rapidly in Mexico when Guadalupe becomes the object of their attraction. Edu-

cation is not doing anything in the direction of eradicating the popular faith in the native Virgin. It is not likely to do more, as the deep-rooted faith, among the wealthy and most intelligent classes, is in the bosom of the mother, whence the daughter is certain to imbibe and transmit it on to remote posterity. Among the lowly the fidelity is inflexible everywhere, and needs no nurturing.

Through the medium of this faith that of Mary and Jesus has been established in Mexico, under the auspices of Catholicism, so securely that Protestants are wasting time, energy and money in seeking to gain favor among the native people. Protestants, as a rule, do not understand the people, nor how to convert them. They know little and care less about Guadalupe. They would tear her with a sudden wrench from the native breast. The attempt is madness, as none know better than the priests, who hold and lead the people at will in spiritual matters. Otherwise the Church has no more power in Mexico than in the United States, and the Protestants have equal show with the Catholics, so far as the government is concerned. They have neither part nor lot in Guadalupe, and hence are without influencing power to supplant Rome in Mexico. But for Guadalupe Rome would have been exiled when Spain was expelled.

No convents remain in Mexico, neither of nuns nor Jesuits, and are not likely ever to be permitted again. Thus Rome is more circumscribed in Mexico than in the United States. The convents were a big loss to Rome in Mexico, though far less than they would have been had Guada-

Pyramid of the Sun—San Juan Teotihuacan, Mexico.



lupe never appeared and became auxiliary to the Church.

The Temple of Guadalupe is an object of much interest to religious people, as it contains many ancient paintings, some of which are said to antedate the time when the Aztecs came into the country, as well as the original picture of Guadalupe, on the same sacred blanket, if holy men do not attest untruths. They are sustained by the assertion that there is neither paint nor artist competent to reproduce the picture, and that no artist has lived in the time of its existence able to produce it. Be all this as it may, the picture is a reality any one may see, and one in which the Mexicans have boundless faith.

The writer is not a Catholic, and would be glad to see the growing power of Rome less vigorous than it is, owing to a fear that if able Rome would overthrow all other institutions of earth, and assume the supreme sway, alike of church and state, regardless of the seas of human blood through which she might have to wade to attain that end. She is surely advancing steadily toward that goal, and may reach and seize it if so disposed. But let us charitably hope she cherishes no such even remote design.

However all this may be, Protestants need not deceive themselves about the strong, uneradicable hold Rome has on Mexico; but it is difficult for a cold, dispassionate observer, living in the country and daily mingling with the natives, not hearing nor speaking a word other than Spanish in months, to imagine how Protestantism would in any way benefit Mexico or Mexicans.

There are a great many other feast days, mostly of church origin, in Mexico, when the poor laborer is idle, though the stores are open half the day, as they are on Sunday.

All Saints' day, November 1st, is the day the graves are decorated in Mexico—a beautiful custom. The cemeteries and graveyards claim and have tributes of floral offerings unapproachable in any other part of the world, at that date, as no other land, not even Florida, can produce the flowers.

It were heartless to sneer at Guadalupe and Mexican faith in her, especially on the part of Christians who do not always live as well up to their own professions as those poor Mexicans do to theirs. God Almighty will never damn the Mexicans for a faith that never had a human victim, and never caused man to make war on his fellow. It is a clean and bloodless faith, that never will breed distress on earth. Let the Mexicans enjoy it in peace, for they deserve a rest.

ANCIENT WONDERS.

It passes mortal knowledge whether the colossal pyramids of Mexico, or mounds, as they are known in common parlance, were religious or military. They unquestionably were the product of much devotion, great expenditure of current wealth, or undisputable slavery, not equaled in the construction of the pyramids of ancient Egypt.

The stupendous one, in Cholula, on the Inter-oceanic Railway, some seven or more miles from

the city of Puebla, is much larger than the grandest in Egypt. The base, one thousand four hundred and twenty-three feet square, covers about forty-four acres, while the height is one hundred and seventy feet. The truncated summit has more than one acre surface. The surface of the whole structure is now covered with trees and dense shrubbery.

There rests upon the summit a fine church, "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios," Our Lady of Remedies, in English. Historians have generally supposed that the great mound was the work of the Toltecs, as it is said to have been there when the Aztecs came into the plateau; but Ignatius Donnelly says it is the Tower of Babel, in his book entitled "Atlantis." Why he makes this assertion it is difficult to conjecture, unless he has heard or read something of a belief of some natives, that it was erected by a family of giants that escaped a great flood, and designed to rear it above the clouds, but were stopped by fire from heaven.

This coincides with the story of the Hebrew flood and the Chinese tradition of a deluge, which seems to indicate that all peoples must have had a common origin, with legends of creation and flood not all unlike.

Speculation would be idle. The great work exists, and was built by human hands, which is all we can ever know of its oblivious history.

The pyramids of the Sun and Moon, in plain view of the Mexican Railway, on both sides of the station of Otumba, the scene of the bloodiest bat-

tle between Cortez and the Aztecs in 1520, are near San Juan Teotihuacan. They are in about the same proportion, as to size, as the sun and Moon, the one of the Sun being not much inferior to the monarch of Cholula, just described above. The same people were probably the builders, and the purpose was likely the same, whether religious or military.

There are numerous others in many sections of the country, some large, some small, but nearly all after one model.

The ruins of cities the Aztecs are said to have found in the country, probably long antedating the Toltec race, seem to indicate that they were built by the same people who built the mounds. The ruins of Mitla, and many other nameless cities, are unquestionably evidence of civilization, probably not surpassed by that of any other people who ever lived on the earth. There are works of defense at Mitla that would make grand object lessons to military students and engineers of this age. This seems to indicate that the mounds may have been connected with great works of defense, and had a military, rather than a religious object.

The ruins of a buried city as large as New York were discovered on the Gulf Coast in 1897, entirely overgrown with trees and jungle. There are temples and palaces, and abundant other evidences of a high degree of civilization among the inhabitants, whose majestic city was probably mouldering in lifeless ruin thousands of years before Babylon was founded. This is the most important and mysterious discovery yet made amid

the mounds and ruins of Mexico. It was certainly a mart of foreign commerce of or with people who had seagoing craft, and were masters of navigation. With whom and where did they have trade to create and sustain a metropolis of such stupendous magnitude, down where the deep blue surge of ocean rolls? Was it with Tyre, Carthage, Rome, or all or none of these? Could it be the "Lost Atlantis" reposing there, in her long and dreamless sleep? Surely she was never arrayed in more gorgeous splendor, nor claimed more inhabitants than the silent city that slumbers so profoundly on that desolate shore. No wonder that the murmur of the wave and the song of the zephyr are ever sad, when they sigh and chant beside and over where there once must have been, for short or long, so much mortal agony; for all the millions who once smiled and sang and sighed and wept, in hovel and palace, never perished in the ecstatic bliss of rapturous dreams. How did they die? From the famine of siege and the sword of conquest, or the tidal wave of the remorseless Gulf? Who can tell? Did any ever know, after the overwhelming catastrophe? Could it have been the horrid shock to earth and nature, when the volcanic fires of Orizaba mountain first leaped with infernal force, in flaming avalanche, from the seething bowels of the world, that snuffed out the lamp of life, and left the fated city in eternal solitude? Something sufficient to wreck a world must have meted out that dateless doom.

There seems to be strong possibility, if not logical probability, that whatever force blotted that

grand and populous city out of throbbing existence, left the whole of Mexico cold and pulseless; else why such vast and numerous ruins everywhere that bear the same stamp of civilization, and appear to have been the wrecks of the same age? It may have been depopulating vandal hordes from the far north, with which the wealthy and indolent denizens of the south were unprepared to cope, or the general doom-day of that shore and people, wreaked by some unpropitious freak of perverse nature. Any way, they died, and left no record, nor yet hereditary story of their melancholy fate; and their cities became ruins, never since the dwelling place of man. This seems to render problematic the theory of conquest: the vanquishing stranger would have been likely to have made him a home in the luxurious abode and stately palace of the despoiled, and preserved the beautiful cities for his own people, so they would have remained tenanted when the Aztec came. But they were deserted wastes then as they are now, according to the legend of the ancient tribes, bequeathed from sire to son and age to age, and told till this day.

The "Herald," New York, contains elaborate, graphic illustrated descriptions of these ruins, that are in no wise overdrawn.

Books and books would be required to hold mere outline sketches of ruins and other prehistoric features of Mexico, not yet a part of her written history, as the work of discovery is but little progressed; and the buried city, that remained wholly unknown until a few weeks past, may be no more

than a single page in the voiceless marvels of her unexplored secret treasures.

But these are problems that interest the antiquarian and invite the attention of the student of ancient history.

Over the weird, mournful scenes of such woeful cities there hovers a spell of pathetic mystery that should conjure romantic reverie into semblance of living forms, and repeople that solitary shore with beings that teem in the brain, and construct the inspiring cradle of poetic vision and its creative imagery. The unprepared prosy mind is rife with shadowy spirits that assume human shape and flit in the dread haunts of desolation, till they seem endowed with quick feeling and sufferance, that come stealing softly back upon them, till from the dull, dusty shades of ruin springs anew into brilliant splendor the lonely city of the dead. Who can tell if this is all mere dreaming fancy, or if the spirits of the past do not really make their presence felt, in some vague, uncertain sense, not clearly perceptible to the dull comprehension of flesh and blood? The experience amid such scenes of dead ages is fraught with awful inspirations, it matters little why or wherefore; and one need not feel ashamed to confess the weakness that is impotent to resist the supernatural influence that pervades the very atmosphere, and lurks in every shadow of ruin, grey with the traces countless years have imprinted on each form and feature. Man is but human, and his nature prone to superstitious weakness, or it may be an untaught innate sympathy of his soul, that

communes with spirits of the long forgotten dead, and stirs too deeply the immortal fountain of his being. The dull insensibility of the flesh may obscure the vision of the soul, or the medium of the mortal may not possess transmitting faculties, able to catch and express the impressions with which the immortal is pregnant. Perchance it is the spirit within us that feels and realizes what the mind cannot see nor understand, when striving to glance backward along the desolate wake of recordless time. It is not all idle nothingness that binds us under the responsive spell of nameless phantasy, and makes us linger in the spectral precincts of a perished world. There is a charm beyond and above the silent stage, within the dome that echoes nevermore. Where is now the dwelling-place of the emancipated spirits of countless multitudes that died violently, without the common course of nature? Do not some of them lurk in grim recesses of the ruins, where their clay tenements repose in dust and ashes? Or may they not revisit, if for brief seasons, the weird loneliness of their native shore? Are they not the invisible hosts of the spirits of pilgrims who go to view the shrines of a people whose altars burn no more, the very perfume of whose incense vanished long, long ago? Do they not try to tell us the saddening tragedy, in the scene that was their last on earth? Will not some one, some day, with a spotless soul, nurtured by a pure and blameless life, body forth as a medium, and converse with the disembodied spirits, whose phantom presence is a conviction, may be a reality, and tell the won-

drous story to the world of life? This would be a priceless revelation, and one not all impossible to attain, as records deemed inspired and holy undeniably attest. Cannot the combined science and theology of this marvelous age of ever new revealing light rear and endow one perfect mortal, fitted for the grand and glorious research?

Poet and priest have vied with each other, poring over the ruins of Greece and Rome. For what? Because they were the fount of letters, the cradle of art, perchance transplanted from Mexico, near the end of all that was once illustrious and brilliant there, certainly never bred from Greek nor Roman seed. The ruins of Mexico hold and keep the dormant germs of inspiration, ready to spring forth into flowers and fruit, obedient to the awakening touch of researching genius, whose growing page would glow and burn with new wonders of unfolding mystery. The vulgar dust we tread is holy, consecrated ground, the scene of romance and tragedy, untold by mortal words; and the air we breathe is melody personified, sighing from nests of ocean foam to pinnacles of snow, over a land whose every plant and flower exhales the divine essence of unuttered song. Florida—Italy—are cold and prosy, and never did and never can approach the frostless Edens of Mexico, where was once, perchance, the immortal garden, bartered for the fruit of knowledge, if Mr. Donnelly errs not as to the site of the Tower of Babel. Then let us seek in the mystic realms of Montezuma what we may not find in lands that have been long more favored.

Poets need not call down the "black-eyed maid of heaven" to inspire their song; for the dark-orbed lasses of the torrid clime, laved by the melodious wave of the sleepless Gulf, can create a spell to mock the power of the Grecian nymph, and invoke a muse whose lyre will soar beyond all Grecian melody. Why not praise the witchery of eyes, though mortal, that are divinely endowed—all gentleness—whose glance unfolds anew the hundred tales of love; or, in the flurry of overwrought passion—all fierceness—that reveals somewhat, or does not all conceal, the spectral story that should make their land immortal?

Near Kansas City, in America, science has lately unearthed a battlefield, where countless thousands perished in combat more than twenty thousand years ago. No page of history names such numbers slain on any single field of mortal strife as repose there on the scene of their nameless struggle. Whom were they? Whence came they? May not one of the embattled hosts have come from Mexico? Perchance the army of Mexico was overwhelmed, and her fair land and matchless cities became a prey to the conquerors.

These are themes for not all groundless stories, that might shame Troy and Marathon, and leave Canae and Waterloo eclipsed as mere petty skirmishes. Who will disrobe them of their shroud of deep, dark mystery, and fling their breathing, pulsating, burning pages fluttering in the gale of enlightening revelation? The task might prove a labor of love, worthy of a master mind and a cunning hand—a rare artistic product of modern gen-

ius. There should, and must, be some one thus endowed, or that the ruins and muse of Mexico would inspire. Once begun, the page will grow on, almost alone; the theme is so near a being of life and feeling that its long pent-up spirit will infuse impelling force into the medium that essays to clothe its long neglected, spectral image in a robe of language, and lend him a flowery pattern wherewithal to fashion and frame his words into pictured semblance.

This is what Mexico has been, and is, and may be made, in miniature. She is no niggardly custodian of her boundless resources—mines of contemplation, where research will never exhaust the hidden treasures of dead thought and numb feeling; mines of silver, gold and jewels that will never fail; and soil and sunshine for a hundred million inhabitants: these, and more untold and much that is nameless, woo the stranger to her magic shores, far more invitingly bounteous than was the ancient Hebrew's fabled land of promise. Mexico is a Palestine for all who will to have her such, and one that needs no sword nor spear to acquire a due portion of her blessings.

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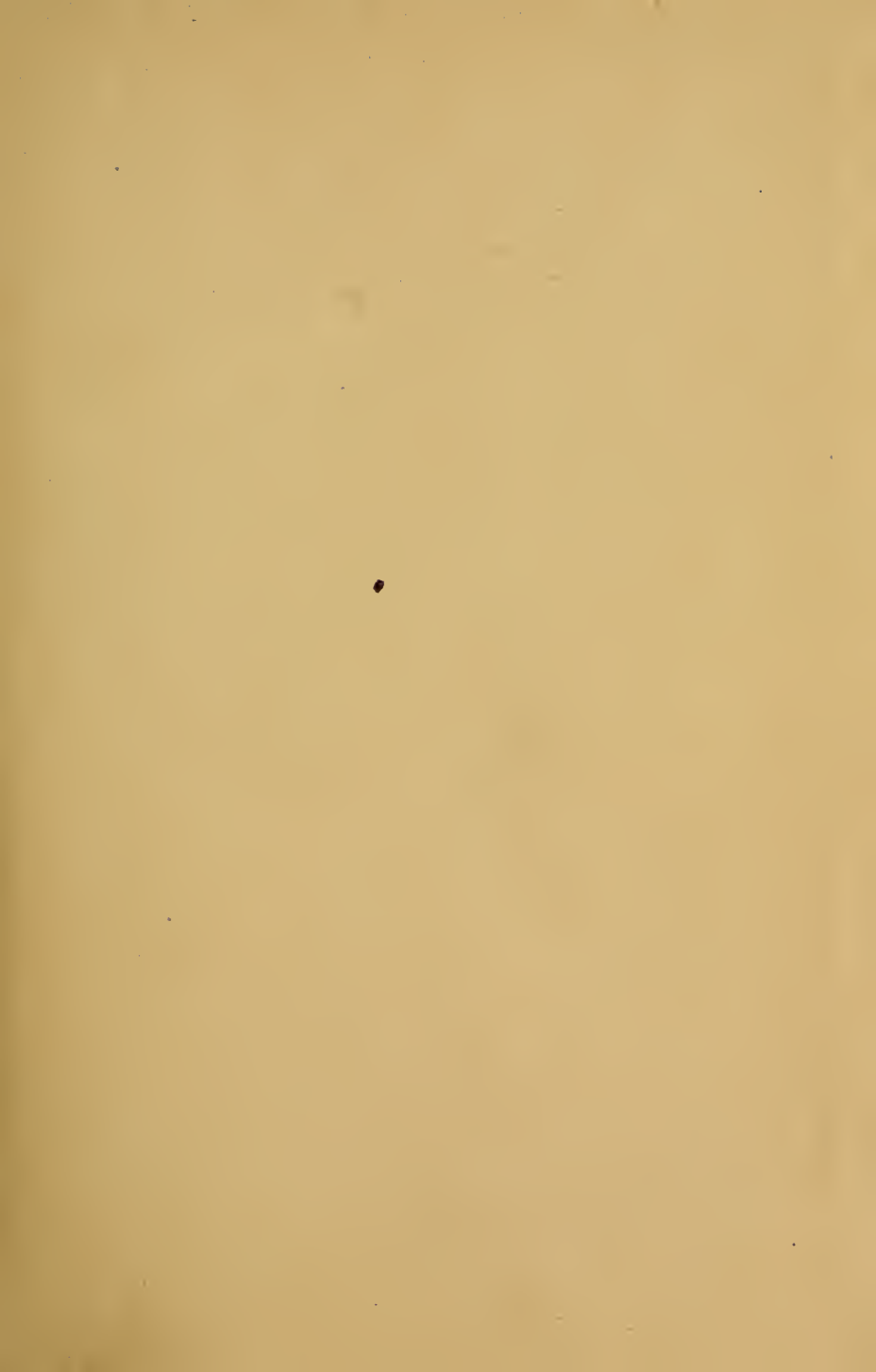
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