

Under the streets it is said that extensive ruins exist, the origin of which is lost in the mists of antiquity, no mention of them being made in the traditions of either Toltec or Aztec. They probably date back to a period before the coming of these races, and may even belong to the civilization which left the famous ruins of Uxmal and Palenque in Yucatan.

The city—six thousand feet above sea level—has a population of forty thousand; streets well paved and swept, and an excellent manufacturing interest in woollens of fine quality.

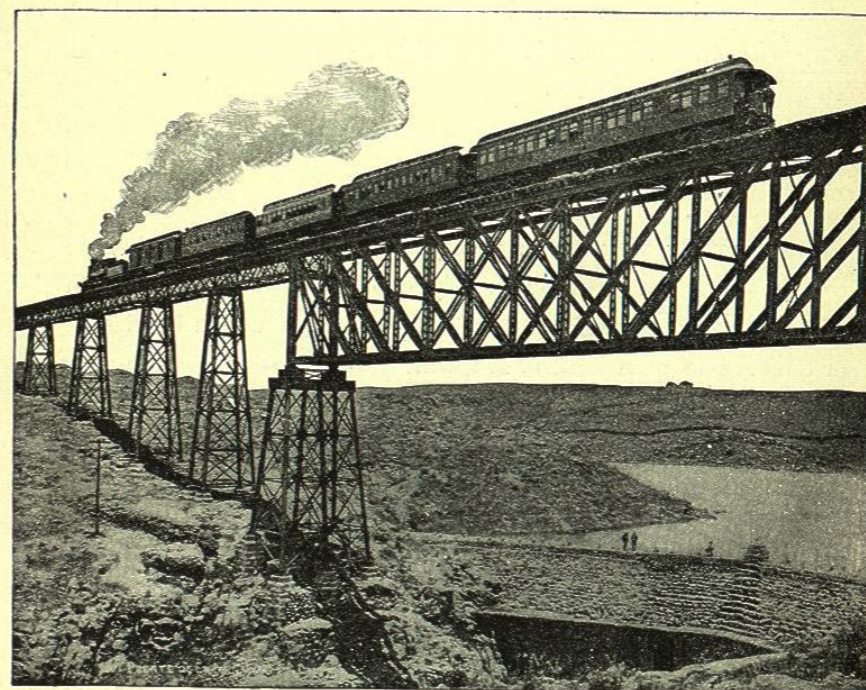
The State of Aguas Calientes was originally a part of Nueva Galicia, but in 1835 was created into a separate State. It has a delightful climate, is a fine farming country, and has a great variety of delicious fruits, both temperate and tropical.

As we move onward, the picturesque life of the country stands forth in inimitable representation at every station, large or small. Groups of horsemen, with gay blankets, bright silken sashes, and broad hats adorned with silver, curvet around on their high-mettled steeds, unconscious of the host of beggars who solicit alms from the passengers. A little removed are carriages containing dark-eyed, raven-tressed señoritas, with all the accompaniments of wealth and fashion, leaning idly back, and, like the rest of the crowd, waiting to see the cars. Thus "the rich and the poor are met together"—poverty in its most abject form stands side by side with the highest development of Aztec civilization.

At Aguas Calientes the great Central branches off towards San Luis Potosi, ending at Tampico on the Gulf, a distance of about 400 miles. Its western branch, now under construction, will extend from Irapuato to Guadalajara, and on to San Blas on the Pacific coast. Commencing at the extreme northern limit of the republic, and terminating at its capital, its arms stretching from gulf to ocean, this great iron road must inevitably remain the great international highway, and prove a boon to Mexico, developing her richest resources, and inviting the tourist to take advantage of the unrivaled facilities it offers in the comforts and luxuries of modern travel. Its steel rails and iron

bridges and every convenience and appliance for safety are unsurpassed.

Not the least among its inducements are the excellent eating-houses on the line. Here the traveler may feel indeed "at home," surrounded by the familiar sights and sounds and dishes of his native land—not omitting the inevitable "Twenty minutes for refreshments!"



THE PUENTE ENCARNACION.

Boston capitalists are to be commended for the inception and execution of this, one of the grandest railway schemes on the continent. With an unstinted expenditure of money they have made a road unsurpassed by any for comfort and convenience, and display an enterprise and energy worthy of the spirit of New England.

And that lawless element which so often finds security and a home in isolated districts, difficult of access, is now, owing to this road,



within easy range of military rule. Thus it was that the backbone of revolutionary spirit was broken.

At Encarnacion we cross the longest bridge on the road, a marvel of engineering skill. On our right we catch glimpses of the beautiful little city nestled among the trees whose soft green foliage is bathed in the simultaneous light of falling rain and dazzling sunshine.

At the various stations we partake of all sorts of Mexican dishes from the hands of unwashed and half-nude venders, but the interchange of familiar, idiomatic expressions, and their evident delight at hearing them from the stranger, equalize many differences.

Great plantations of cacti are laden with their thorny fruits, and as these industrious people rapidly peel them, the passengers enjoy their delicious flavor.

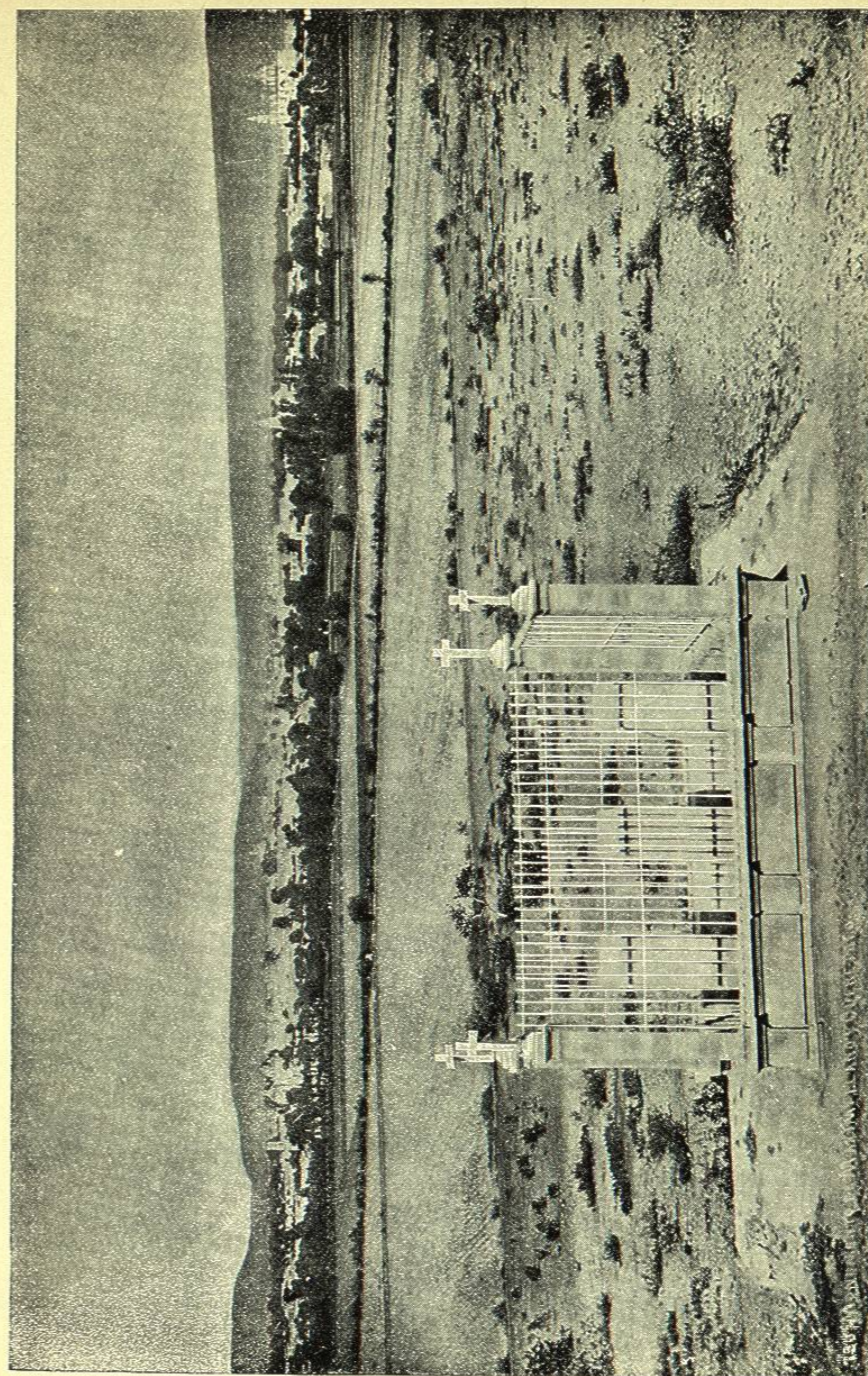
Tempting strawberries in pretty baskets are purchased, but, sad to relate, they prove to be mostly cabbage leaves, with which the basket is lined until there is only room for a few dozen berries.

I omitted to mention the Mapirmi desert, through which we pass, some four hundred miles from Chihuahua. It was then covered with grass, several inches in height, and herds of sleek cattle browsed about; but I was told that after the rainy season the cattle withdrew to better watered localities, and the birds, also, flew away, but the grass still stood dry and motionless on the desolate plain.

Lagos, a city of perhaps forty thousand inhabitants, is the seat of extensive manufactures, and especially important as the central station, whence branch lines will extend to the famous mining cities of San Luis Potosi on the east and Guadalajara on the west.

The largest manufacturing city in the republic is Leon. Its population is one hundred thousand, and the principal manufactures are cottons and woolens, hats, boots and shoes, and cutlery.

Silao is beautifully situated in a fertile valley. It has extensive mills, and is the junction of the branch line to Guanajuato, that famous city nestling in the mountains full of patriotic and historic associations. The branch extends from Silao to Marfil, about twelve miles; and three miles further, up a steep and rugged mountain, the



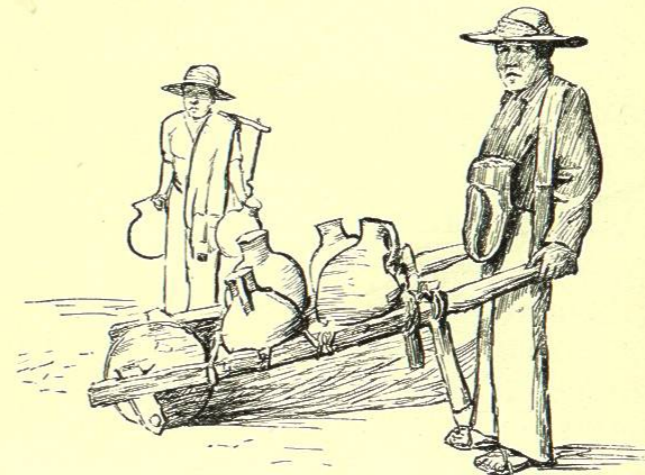
MONUMENT TO MAXIMILIAN AT QUERÉTARO.



tram connects with the city. The inhabitants are mostly engaged in silver mining.

Passing Irapuato, Salamanca, and Celaya, we come to Querétaro—capital of the State of that name—a beautiful and interesting city—familiar to all as the place where Maximilian, Miramon, and Mejia were executed. The place is marked by three crosses.

Along the line of the railway, as elsewhere, many memorial crosses may be seen. Sometimes they mark the scene of deadly combat, and again, point the traveler to the spot where a murder has been com-



WATER-CARRIER OF QUERETARO.

mitted, and ask the prayers of the faithful for the repose of the soul thus violently launched into eternity without the last rites of the Church. The piles of stones about the crosses represent the petitions that have been offered up, and, judging from the heaps we saw, the mute appeal must be seldom disregarded.

San Juan del Rio is reached, and we ascend from its lovely and picturesque valley and along the elevated region to Marquez. We then descend into the beautiful Tula Valley, with its varied scenery and tropical growths. Every village has its history, with traditions older still.

Our reflections are broken and we are warned of the approaching

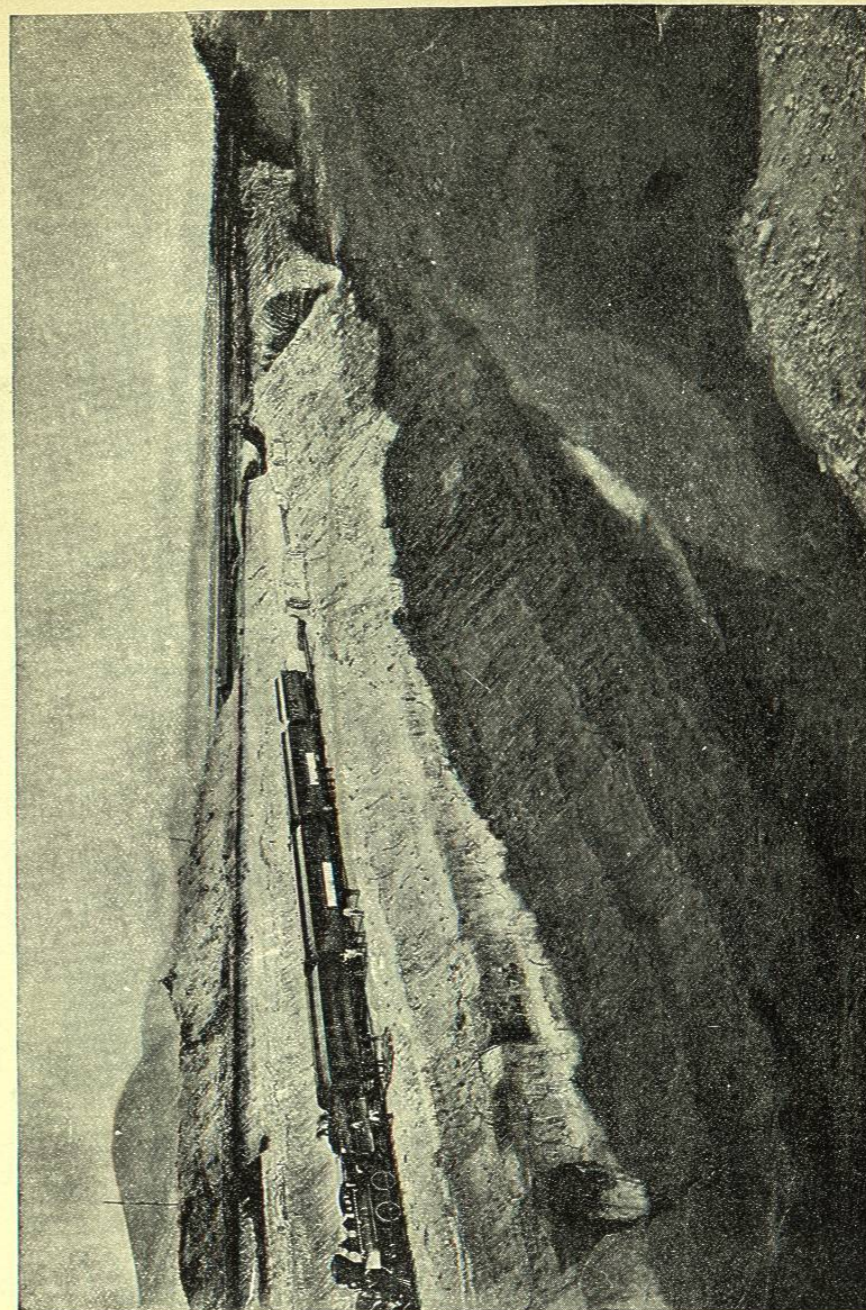


end of the journey by the announcement that we are nearing the great Nochistongo *Pass*. Originally this was a tunnel, but now it has more the appearance of a vast chasm rent in the earth by a mighty volcanic upheaval. The railway is constructed upon its very border, and often it seems as if the train would leap across this yawning aperture. Two centuries of time, and millions of dollars, were expended upon its construction. Beyond all doubt it was one of the most stupendous hydraulic enterprises ever undertaken by mortal man. Under the Spanish dominion the Aztec system of dikes was done away with, and in 1607, the scheme of draining the city by a tunnel was commenced. The tunnel was twenty-one thousand six hundred and fifty feet long, but it fell in, and consequently the whole valley was inundated. The Spaniards, to prevent the city being drowned out, recommenced the laborious task on the Nochistongo, converting it into an open channel, four miles long. This great trench was completed in 1739, and thousands of Indians perished in the work.

As it now stands, the Nochistongo is the original tunnel with the earth removed from the mountains, making an open channel for the water. It winds through the mountains with a slight incline—a frightful spectacle, three hundred and sixty-two feet in breadth, about one hundred and sixty-four in depth, and extends twelve and a half miles; but, though centuries have elapsed, it is still unfinished.

A few more turns of the road, a shrill whistle, a general movement on the part of the passengers, and we come to a halt in the handsome depot of the Mexican Central. Carriages are drawn up in line, their swarthy Jehus filling the air with their peculiar idioms. In one of them we were borne along through grand old historic streets to the Hotel San Carlos.

Once inside its massive doors the visitor finds himself initiated into still stranger "*costumbres*." He is registered by the *administrador* (manager), and is then consigned to the *camarista* (a male chambermaid), and together they toil up one flight of stairs to where the master of keys and letter-boxes—a pure Indian—gracefully performs his part of the business. Glance downward over your shoulder and



THE GREAT NOCHISTONGO PASS.

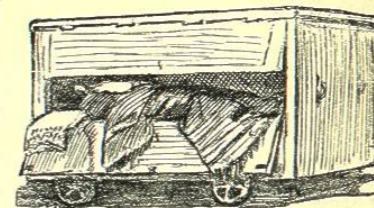


you will see your name enrolled on an enormous blackboard, from which any visitor may read your arrival without the trouble of investigating the register or questioning the *administrador*.

We found ourselves at last upon the third corridor, No. 54, in a grand old room with a fine view from the front window of the bustling Calle del Coliseo below, while through the door opening upon the inner galleries an enchanting prospect is afforded of a court filled with gorgeous flowers and tropical plants flooded with silvery sunshine.

The *camarista* manifested his pleasure in serving me and in due form of courtesy introduced himself as Pomposo Vazques, "*Elscriado de V.*" ("Your obedient servant"). On entering the room, he directed attention to the placard of printed rules and to the bell—insisting that he should be called at any time. In the evening a gentle tap at the door, to which I responded, showed me the full-length figure of Pomposo, in all his dignity. He wished to know if I needed anything, on which I asked for matches. With arms pinioned to his sides, hands thrown upward above his shoulders, digits outspread, with eyes serious, mouth drawn to one side and head shaking ominously, he informed me: "*En este hotel siempre faltan cerillos y jabon!*" ("In this hotel we never furnish matches and soap"). After this speech he moved backward step by step, like a grand chamberlain retiring from the presence of royalty, until his grotesque figure reached the doorway and disappeared in the corridor.

About nine o'clock I heard an awful rumbling and shaking of the building, as if the whole structure was toppling over. No solution came that night, but next morning when Pomposo came on his rounds, I ascertained that it was the *mozo* rolling his strangely constructed bed to the front door, where, snugly ensconced, he could, at a moment's notice, admit a lodger or ward off an intruder.



THE "HOME, SWEET HOME" OF THE MOZO OF SAN CARLOS.



Before entering on my more serious labors, I recall an amusing incident in which Pomposo figures as principal. Like all the other hotels at the capital, the San Carlos is kept on the European plan, which made it necessary for guests to pass through an open *patio* to the restaurant. On one occasion, when going down to dinner, I encountered Pomposo at the head of the stairway. He came rapidly toward me, flourishing his arms, as if the house were on fire or Popocatepetl had made a fresh outbreak, and almost out of breath, exclaimed: "Porfirio! Porfirio! Porfirio!"

"Who is Porfirio? and what is the matter?" I asked. Completely overcome, he sat down, and, not comprehending my lack of understanding, continued breathlessly: "In the grand dining-room down stairs, Porfirio has sixteen friends; they are eating; hush! Do you not hear the music?" I still asked to be enlightened as to the august Porfirio, whose name had cast a spell on Pomposo.

"Do you not know General Porfirio Diaz, our President?" And without waiting for an answer, added, "Don't go down till later, *por Dios Santo!*"



"WE NEVER FURNISH SOAP AND MATCHES IN THIS HOTEL."

## CHAPTER VI.

### TENOCHTITLAN—THE AZTEC CAPITAL.



AMONG the many northern tribes which invaded the lovely valley of Anahuac in the twelfth century were the Aztecs or Mexicans. After leading a nomadic life for more than a century—wary from their wanderings—they rested on the borders of Lake Tezcuco. The remarkable revelation of an eagle with outspread wings, standing upon a *tunal* that grew from a fissure in a rock on the water's edge, holding in his talons a serpent, impressed them as a favorable omen of future sovereignty, and indicated this spot as a permanent abiding place. At once they began preparations for building their city. Upon a slender foundation of reeds, rushes, and piles in the spongy marshes of Tezcuco the Aztecs built their huts, to be replaced in time by the solid structures which adorned the city at the coming of the Spaniards. This was the beginning of *Tenochtitlan* ("cactus on a stone"), named in honor of its supernatural origin—the capital of the most powerful empire of the Western world. To-day the hoary superstition is sacredly embodied as the national emblem on the escutcheon of Mexico.

From these humble beginnings, by subjugations of the weak and alliances with the strong, this Indian empire extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from unknown limits on the north to the Gulf.

This city was the great center of government, law, and religion to