

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The combination of dirt and dulces in Celaya is altogether too overpowering for an American stomach. "Dulces?" I exclaimed to a persistent vender of the dainties. "Dulces in all this filth!" I spoke in English that I might spare his sensitive feelings, but I soon found the precaution useless, for neither dulce merchant nor opal peddler possessed tender sensibilities. In spite of our most discouraging looks, the women and children on the pavement, the street-car conductors, the hotel clerks, bell-boys and waiters, in turn pulled from their pockets the familiar little packages of black paper, containing watery, lifeless opals, which they displayed to our wearied eyes, exclaiming "*Bonita, señor; Muy hermosa, señora!*" Sometimes these pertinacious vendors baited their hook by addressing me as "beautiful señorita"—an impolitic course of conduct which still further hardened my already flinty heart against them.

Celaya is said to be a very interesting town, but

the atmosphere of the place did not harmonize with our mood, so we concluded to go on to Irapuato for the night. Here we found a frank-faced young American who took us to his little hotel, furnished with clean beds, snowy towels, and blessed hot water. We were in the seventh heaven and went to bed early that we might make the most of the delightful American springs and mattresses; but our hopes of a refreshing sleep were soon dissipated, for a Mexican family next door proceeded to make the night hideous with their revels. In vain the guests appeared at their respective windows with pitiful protests, in vain the landlord argued and threatened. At four o'clock he was obliged to send for the police to compel order, and then it was time to get up for the morning train.

We were bleary-eyed and dizzy from sleeplessness when we boarded the Guadalajara train, and continued on our weary round of pleasure. We were soon speeding through unpicturesque but fertile regions. The country west of Irapuato might, from outward seeming, be Illinois or Iowa, but the barns of the Mexican farmer are unique. They have roots, they increase in size from year to year, and they attend to their own repairs. In short, the trees are the barns, upon whose branches the two corn harvests of the year are stored during the long and rainless winters. This is one of the richest

agricultural regions in Mexico, and the haciendas look more modern than in other parts of the country. At the station of Atequiza, a short distance this side of Guadalajara, is an immense hacienda which has its own railway and electric lights.

We had promised ourselves a delightful season in Guadalajara, which is said to be the prettiest and most modern town in Mexico. If we were somewhat disappointed I must lay it to the heat and the dust, and not to any lack in Guadalajara. The season was late for pleasure-seekers, and we were the last of the winter tourists. I can imagine that when the rains come and wash off the dust-buried roses, hibiscus and orange trees, and when the thousands of blooming plants in the plaza cast their fragrance on the soft air, that Guadalajara is a paradise. It certainly possesses one of the promised blessings of paradise—the hours—for the women of the town are, with few exceptions, beautiful. The proportion of white faces is larger than in the other Mexican cities, and if these dark-eyed daughters of the south possessed a queenly carriage they would be peerless; but, unfortunately for the doctrines of the Dress-Reform League, these women, the daughters of mothers who wore the rebosa, the chemise and the sandal, are entirely lacking in that grace and symmetry of form so natural to the whale-boned daughters of our own land. I fear we cannot give to

Greek raiment the entire credit for the wonderful perfection of the ancient Greek form.

The public buildings of Guadalajara are really fine. Over the doorway of one of the municipal palaces is this reminder, "Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh in vain." Such an audacious mixture of politics and religion would surely be tolerated only in a half-civilized community. In the Cathedral of Guadalajara is one of the treasures of Mexico—an Assumption of the Virgin, by Murillo. The face of the Virgin is the same face of white innocence—a little older—that we know so well in the Immaculate Conception. The difficulty of seeing the picture amounts almost to a prohibition, and the Mexican government should take steps to make the public sharers in the delights of this great painting. We made repeated unsuccessful attempts to see the treasure, but our determined perseverance at last won the day. Upon our first visit we were received by the doorkeeper of the Cathedral, who accepted a generous fee, and then handed us on to the sacristan—who also received a fee—and who ushered us into a dark, dirty closet where he left us with the request to "Wait a minute." We waited many minutes; then an acolyte came by, who to our request to see the picture answered, "Wait a minute." Then a priest passed through the room who deigned to listen to

our prayer and who conjured us to "Wait a minute." Then the faithless sacristan again appeared and said, "Wait just a little minute, señor," and seemingly disappeared off from the face of the earth. But the chill of the stone bench upon which we sat, combined with our fiery, untamed American natures, moved us at this point to come away, grumbling at having wasted the whole forenoon in "waiting a minute." A few days after, however, we met in the Cathedral a party of the higher clergy who not only listened to our prayer, but courteously escorted us to the sacristy where the picture hung, and gave us permission to seat ourselves and study it at leisure.

The markets of Guadalajara are the finest in Mexico. There is no suspicion of filth or decay in the bright fresh fruits and fragrant blossoms piled upon the long tables. The products of all climes are at the very door of Guadalajara, for although the town itself is in a temperate region, a descent of 3,000 feet into the Barranca brings the traveler into the tropics. This is a hard trip, and an exciting one, down a narrow mountain trail where the pensive little donkeys, stopping to meditate, choose the most hair-raising precipices for their reflections. In the bottom of the Barranca runs the Lerma River, which is crossed by an absurd little ferry.

There is, not far from the plaza, an Hospicio, much

applauded by the guide-books, which is supported by the government for the ostensible purpose of teaching useful arts to orphan boys and girls. As we were specially interested in this line of work, Ahasuerus took some trouble to obtain permits to visit the institution. When we arrived at the Hospicio we were given an application for rheumatism in the shape of seats on a cold, stone bench in an icy hall, where we waited an hour for the coming of the Sister who was to show us through the building. When she did at last appear she seemed to be under the vow of perpetual silence. She galloped us through a long hall to a refectory door which she deigned to open an inch, gave us a peep into a dormitory window, hustled us through a gaudy, tasteless chapel, and back again to the door. Evidently the Hospicio does not approve of curious strangers who might ask questions. We saw few children, and those few were spiritless little souls, and there was no childish noise about the building. We could not help contrasting our reception and the seeming desolation of the place with the hospitable air, and active, cheerful life of the government training school at Guadalupe near Zacatecas.

During the first few days of our stay in Guadalajara we went every evening to hear the band play in the beautiful plaza. The music was very good, and was enjoyed by an appre-

ciative and enthusiastic audience. The concert generally ended with "Cuba Libre," whose strains elicited from the impulsive and liberty-loving Mexicans storms of applause. But one morning, when we went upon the street, we noticed an excitement among the people. Messengers with the left arm bound in crape were hurrying around distributing huge black-bordered envelopes. These, as we afterward learned, contained tidings of the sudden death of the general commanding the State of Guadalajara. There were no more park concerts, and the city seemed restless and gloomy. Changes in the government are feared no less in Mexico than in France.

One of the suburbs of Guadalajara is San Pedro, where live the famous potters who make the finest Mexican ware. The Mexican pottery is exceedingly fragile, and the utmost care is necessary in packing it for transportation. The few pieces in which I invested were soon nothing but glittering dust. The Indian sculptors whose work attracted so much attention at the Chicago Exposition have their workshop in San Pedro. They make little busts and statuettes, and for a small sum the traveler can, in a few hours, have a very satisfactory bust of himself or of his photographed friends.

To reach the famous Falls of San Juanacatlan we went by rail to the little station of El Castillo, a

distance of twelve or fifteen miles from Guadalajara. Thence we took a mule-car to the Falls. We had, on this expedition our usual escort of leather-jacketed soldiers, for no train or tram-car leaves any station in Mexico without this armed guard. Personally I liked these toy warriors and felt very safe



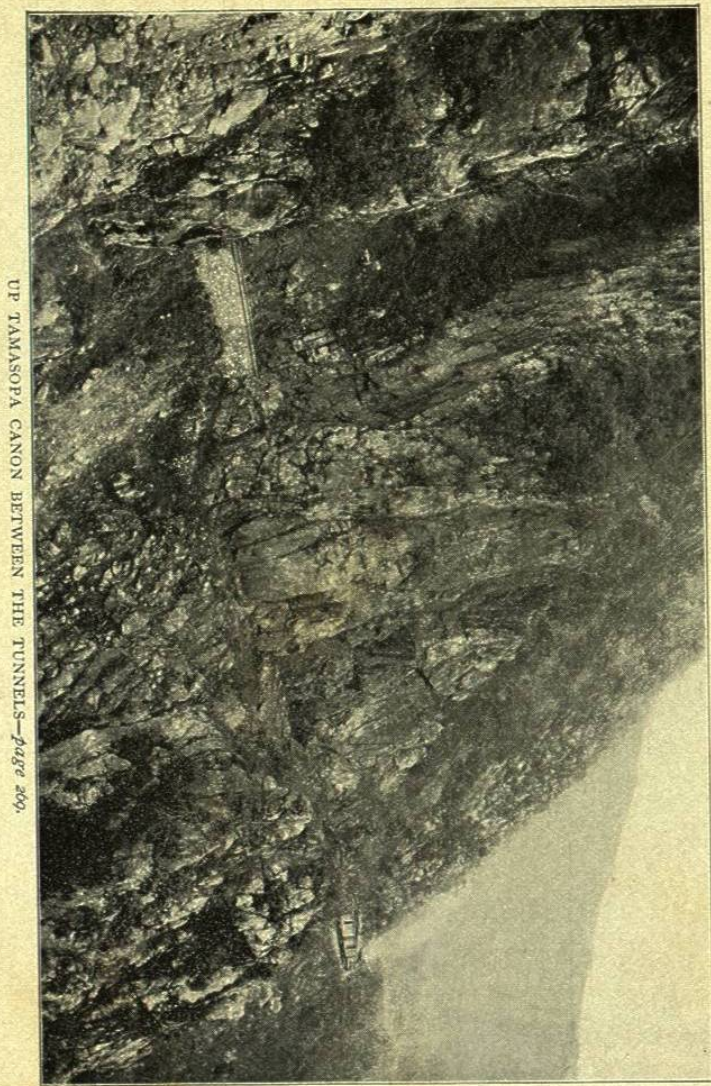
FALLS OF SAN JUANACATLAN

in the shadow of their sombreros, but Ahasuerus openly scoffed at them, and declared that they turned their toes in when they marched. Indeed, that zealous martinet evinced an inordinate desire to drill the entire Mexican army.

Under the protection of these pigeon-toed guardians of the republic we arrived safely at the Falls. San Juanacatlan bears a striking resemblance in miniature to Niagara. The Fall, which is about seventy-five feet high, must be a mine of wealth to the owner of the hacienda; for it furnishes the power for lighting Guadalajara, and it will in future be pressed into service by a fine mill, as yet uncompleted, which is to be fitted with all the modern improvements in machinery.

Our traveling companions on this trip were an interesting company. There was a bright-faced young Frenchman, a low-browed, unprepossessing Spaniard, a German commercial traveler, two courtly and affable Mexicans, a coffee-planter from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec who claimed citizenship in Kansas, and ourselves. There were all the materials for a successful composite photograph.

The beautiful Lake Chapala, which lies in the foot-hills not far from Guadalajara, is the summer residence of the wealthy city people. Lake Chapala, which is one hundred miles long and twenty-five wide, is the largest lake in Mexico. The verdant rim of this charming basin of water is surrounded by handsome homes, and the hot springs along its shores furnish delightful and health-giving baths. Before we left Guadalajara summer was coming on apace, and the morning trains to Cha-



UP TAMASOPA CANON BETWEEN THE TUNNELS—page 260.

pala were crowded with family parties—with pretty, modest maidens, short-jacketed youths, hunters, dogs and pleasure-seekers. It was the same scene we have so often witnessed in our own land, on the continent and in England. The summer-resort instinct seems to be a part of human nature, and it probably descends from as far back as Adam and Eve. I have no doubt that if the fair mother of the race had been allowed to remain in Eden she would have built a row of summer cottages and a summer hotel before the end of the second year.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

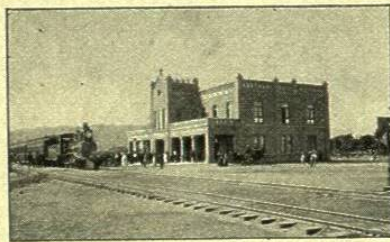
The traveler should not fail to buy strawberries at Irapuato. They are brought to the train at every season of the year, and are always good, but in April they are in their perfection. They are packed hulls down in large baskets with curiously twisted handles, and the globes of vivid scarlet, seedless, pulp, as big as plums and as sweet as honey, are as tempting to the eye as to the palate. In nearly every state in Mexico just such strawberries might be raised, but for some reason Irapuato furnishes the only crop of the kind.

We had another terrible night at Celaya, another struggle with filth, mosquitoes, dulce peddlers and opal venders, and then we turned our faces northward to San Luis Potosi, passing on the way the pretty city of San Miguel de Allende. This town has fine terraced gardens and a church with a pig-loving saint. The saint has a very dolorous outlook on the world, doubtless because his fine antique pig has been replaced by a hopelessly mod-

ern and porkish one. Another member of the canonized fraternity in the Casa Santa has had his bones inserted into a body of wax and endeavors to look as much like a sure-enough, live saint as possible.

San Miguel de Allende takes its name from the patriot and revolutionist Allende, who aided Hidalgo in his

struggle for liberty. A short distance from San Miguel is the little town of Atotonilco, with the humble church from



MEXICAN NAT. R. R. STATION, SAN LUIS POTOSI.

whose altar Hidalgo snatched the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe—the banner which was to become the standard of Mexico. We had promised ourselves the privilege of a reverent pilgrimage to the town of Hidalgo-Dolores—to the home, the church and the beehives of our hero, but the town was infected with smallpox, and therefore unsafe for strangers. From Hidalgo-Dolores the young curé and patriot, issued his grito, or call to arms. To his holy standard flocked many of the neighboring vil-

lagers, among them Allende, who brought with him the Queen's Regiment in which he was an officer.

We found San Luis Potosi to be a great mining town, dusty and comfortless, with a sun-burned plaza. It, too, was infected with the smallpox, and we were glad to get out of it. The only impressive thing about our stay in San Luis Potosi was our first dinner, which consisted of five beef courses; beef soup, boiled beef with chili, a *ragout* of beef with carrots, roast beef, and a salad of cold beef and potatoes. I was reminded that I used in my school days to read in the Physical Geography, "Man, in the tropics, lives principally on vegetable food."

As we strolled one day through the town we met a party of excursionists who greeted us warmly and inquired, "What party are you with?" When we explained that we were our own party, they cried aghast, "What, down here all alone!" Upon our further explanation that we had not been alone at all, but that in fact we had sometimes had only too much company, they regarded us with commiseration, demanding as a final clincher, "But what have you had to eat?" It was impossible to convince these doubting souls that we quite often had a very fair meal, and that the French restaurants in the City of Mexico were as good as the ordinary restaurants in Paris. They evidently considered us

very eccentric, and returned to their Pullman cars with an amusing assumption of superiority.

From San Luis Potosi we took the Mexican Central R. R. to Tampico, not because we wished to see Tampico, which is jungle-like and malarious to a degree, but because we wished to see the most wonderful bit of scenery in Mexico, the Tamasopa Cañon. As a sight-seeing expedition our trip was a failure, but as a stimulus to imagination it was eminently successful. Just before we reached Canoas, where the descent into the cañon begins, a heavy fog enveloped us. But the regular trains do not wait upon the weather, so we slipped by the long excursion train of our San Luis Potosi acquaintances, which was waiting for the weather to clear, and rolled over the edge of the precipice. It was a fairy-like experience. Sometimes we seemed to be adrift in fleecy vapors, sometimes to be running along the edge of the sky, looking down upon a shadowy world below. The white mist curled around us like feathers; giant branches of orchid-decked trees flashed out of the curtain and were gone again, and filmy masses of tropical vegetation swung like cobwebs in the silver ether. Certainly the ride down the cañon on a clear day can not be so magically beautiful as it was in the fog. The clouds lifted as we reached the foot of the descent and we found everything in the valley drip-



ping with moisture. The station of Rascon—according to railroad men the unhealthiest spot in Mexico—is situated in a moldy jungle. The company intended to move their buildings to some place where the sanitary conditions are better, and perhaps they have done so before now. With the railroad station will probably go the few squalid huts which form the so-called town.

The accommodating fog lifted again long enough for us to see the wonderful string of cascades—El Salto del Abra—which are of the most exquisite tint of robin's egg blue. This chain of waterfalls is more than a mile long, and one of the falls is three hundred feet high. Somewhere down there, where the river tumbles and foams, is Choy's Cave; but as the regular trains do not stop for caves we were compelled to go mournfully on our way.

The last grade—the Cañon of El Salto del Abra—took us down to the plains. At Las Palmas, at the foot of the descent, the trains from both directions were huddled, awaiting orders. The fog had interfered with the time table, and both engines and engineers looked sullen. We strolled around the little Chinese eating-house, taking notes of railroad complications and vexations. "Number Four" was lost. As the other engines came panting up to the station, the engineers rushed into the office to receive their orders, and were met by an account of

"Number Four's" delinquencies. I do not know how "Number Four," when she finally came in, explained her conduct, but she did come in safely at last, closely followed by the excursion train which we had left at Canoas, waiting for the weather to clear up. The excursionists had seen nothing at all of the wonders we had seen, and were damp, cross and disgusted.

For some time after the arrival of the tardy trains Las Palmas was a scene of confusion, and I wondered what the dead and gone Aztecs, sleeping in their ruined cities not far from us, would say if they could suddenly rise from their graves and hear the babble of strange tongues and the shriek of the monster engines. But one by one the long trains at last pulled out, and went winking off into the night, while the east-bound passengers crossed the plains and the rivers Tamesi and Panuco, and in the darkness rolled into Tampico.

Tampico resembles in some respects the Gulf cities of our own land. It is damp, unhealthy, odorous, but it has the best harbor in Mexico, and doubtless will be, in the near future one of the large cities of the republic. A fine beach about eight miles from the town furnishes delightful sea-bathing. The low shores, upon which Tampico is built, are uninteresting; but the high bluffs which rise

further back from the river might, and probably soon will be, utilized for residence purposes.

As we journeyed back to San Luis Potosi we chatted with our fellow-passengers—American railroad officials and employes, with their wives. After the manner of our sex, we women discussed together the subject of housekeeping, particularly the comparative advantages of housekeeping in Mexico and in the United States. I found that they were all homesick, and they gave but a sorry account of the domestic outlook for Americans in Mexico. It is difficult to find schools for the children, as it is dangerous to send a child to the municipal schools where contagious diseases are not quarantined. Then, too, household supplies are poor and high-priced. One cannot exist on drawn-work, silver filagree, leather belts or card cases, and these staples are almost the only cheap thing in Mexico. Fruit in tin cans costs \$1.75 a can, bacon from 60 to 80 cents a pound, butter from 80 cents to \$1. It is impossible to find shoes for American feet in the country, most of the clothing must come from the United States, and as the tariff is high, dry goods are expensive. In short, a family can live better in the United States on a given salary than it can in Mexico on more than twice the amount. It was the same old story; my

countrywomen, like all good Americans in a foreign land, felt themselves to be exiles in the midst of hardships.