

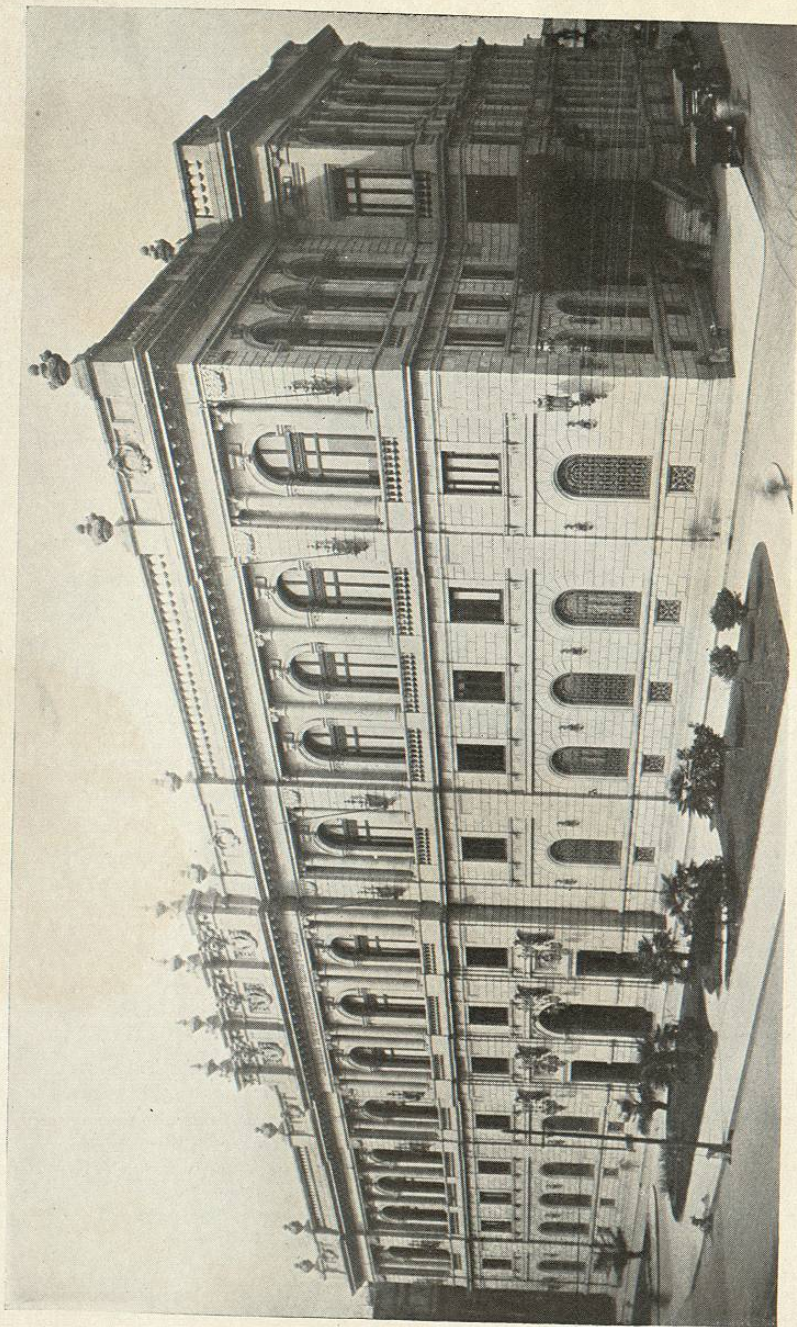
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A RECENT AEROPLANE VIEW OF CHAPULTEPEC CASTLE AND PARK, MEXICO CITY.

varied route and a road that taxed engineering talent as well as the coffers of its promoters. If a night stop is made at Orizaba the traveler may enjoy an early morning ride through one of the world's most beautiful regions with the marvelous sights of the Maltrata Valley, in picturesqueness to be compared with the views along the famous winding railroad up the Himalayas to Darjeeling in India or those in the highland tea districts of Ceylon. The distance to Mexico City from the Rio Grande varies from 860 to about 1,200 miles, while from Vera Cruz to the capital the railroad distance is 263 miles. There is also the rail connection from the Mexican capital to Guatemala and to various Pacific and Gulf of Mexico ports. The city is the terminus for six railways. The stranger traveling from any direction toward the City of Mexico, upon reaching the central plain, finds among the country's striking features the universal cultivation of flowers and the vast fields of maguey. The former are to be had during the entire year, and of such a multitude of varieties as to please every individual taste. The latter plant produces the national drink of the masses; so flowers and pulque are at least two commodities to be found on every morning train bound for Mexico City.

Apropos of the annual independence celebration which occurs the middle of September, the following is an extract taken from the writer's notebook made on one of these occasions:

By far the most interesting part of the celebration does not begin until toward midnight of the 15th. Imagine, if you can, a city with a normal population of nearly a million people, augmented by thousands from all parts of the country. The air is balmy, and the gorgeous profusion of blooming flowers and climbing vines reach from sidewalk to the tops of the houses and "shake o'er a faint perfume." Flags of many hues, interwoven among the blossoms and the electric bulbs, remind us that friendly nations, too, are joining in the celebration. All vehicles, for the time being, have been ordered from the street connecting the Alameda with the Plaza Mayor, and the beautiful thoroughfare is now completely in possession of the shouting populace. The enthusiasm can not be restrained; neither is there any desire



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS, MEXICO CITY.

on the part of officials to quiet the throng, for this is the national holiday, and good-natured merrymaking is to be enjoyed by everyone. As the night advances, humanity moves en masse toward the historic plaza fronting the palace. Here amid shouts and gladness and the patriotic airs of numerous bands the great throng awaits the coming of the eventful hour of midnight. Slowly but surely the time approaches; huzzahs have ceased, and the throng now awaits silently, almost breathlessly, the final stroke of the great clock. The hour is at hand! The President of the Republic appears on the balcony of the palace. The lights surrounding the liberty bell just above, throw his figure into bold relief as he utters the famous "grito," and pulls the rope of the same old bell that called to arms the patriots of Dolores, more than a century ago. Instantly the blasts of bugles and the shouts of "Long live Mexico" resound again and again far back over the multitude. The cathedral, so dear to the hearts of all Mexicans, which a moment ago was in total darkness, is now gemmed against the heavens by thousands of incandescent lights. Its giant, deep-toned bells, revolving completely, send forth thunderous music, which is taken up by all the bells of the city and reechoed far out over the valley. Rockets blaze from scores of towers and exploding bombs rain showers of sparks over the shouting crowds.

Numerous signs point to an era of better days in Mexico. Some authorities have devoted many pages to analyzing conditions in detail, which can not be reiterated here. Among the influences for good let us not underestimate the power of women in assisting Mexico to work out her social and political problems. Women of Mexico are becoming more interested in the country's welfare and development, and their activities are assuming wider scope. With woman's aid the thoughtful and patriotic men of this country are bringing about a period of peace and tranquillity which will assure its future material prosperity.

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