

festoons of gold roses and diamond stars. These cluster at the top under an enamelled geographical globe, on which Mexico and the Gulf are represented. Above comes a Mexican eagle grasping the globe with one talon, while with the other it holds aloft a diamond cross. At the top of the cross is a ring by which the crown is held by a cherub over the painting. The shields are surrounded with diamonds, and between the shields are rows of sapphires and emeralds. In the breast of each angel flames a ruby. This crown is said to be the finest piece of work of its kind in religious art in existence. The maker has offered eighty thousand francs to any one who will discover two roses or leaves alike in the whole work.

The abbot and canon of the basilica, on receiving the crown, bound themselves and their successors by oath to preserve it for the purpose for which it was given. The papal brief authorizing the coronation was then read, and the crown was blessed by the Archbishop of



THE SHRINE OF GUADALUPE.

Mexico, vested in full pontificals. A solemn pontifical mass by the same illustrious prelate was then celebrated. After the mass a procession was formed of all the clergy and their assistants, the archbishops and bishops, and celebrants of the mass. The crown, borne aloft by the canons, was accompanied by the entire procession through the crowded basilica and outside the church, making a circuit of the building, and returning to the sanctuary. Then the two archbishops who were deputed by the Holy See to put the crown in place ascended a platform some thirty feet above the pavement, and the glorious diadem was suspended over the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. At the moment of the coronation the enthusiasm of the congregation and all present could not be restrained. The whole assemblage shouted together, "Viva Dios!" "Viva Madre di Dios!" "Viva México!" and the entire congregation burst into

tears and sobs for joy that the long-looked-for and long-prayed-for honor had at last been done to their beloved Madonna of Guadalupe. At this point all the bishops ascended the altar steps one by one and laid down their crosiers and mitres as an act of homage to the Mother of God; and at the same hour all the bells of Catholic Mexico—from the Rio Grande to the Gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific—rang out the glad tidings that the Madonna of Guadalupe was crowned.

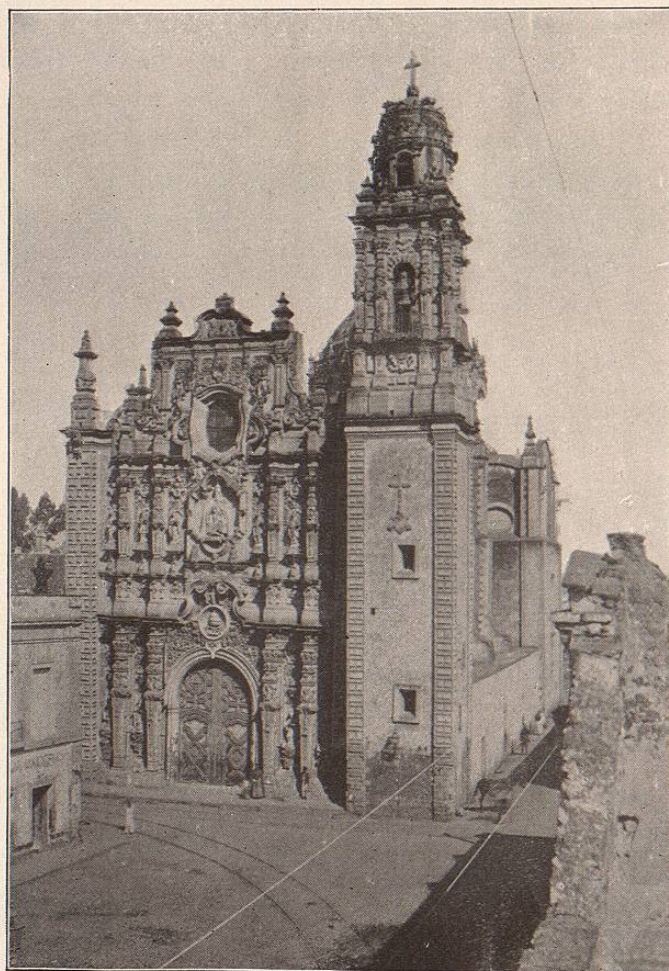
The interior of the church of Guadalupe is of the Doric order, and has three aisles, divided by eight pillars. There are eighteen arches, the centre one forming the dome of the edifice. The church runs from north to south, and has three great gates, one fronting Mexico and two others at the sides. Its length is, perhaps, two hundred and fifty feet, and its width about one hundred and thirty. In the four external angles of the church are four lofty towers, from the midst of which rises the dome. Three altars were at first erected, and in the middle one, destined for the image, was a sumptuous tabernacle of silver gilt, in which were more than three thousand two hundred marks of silver, and which cost nearly eighty thousand dollars. In the centre of this was a piece of gold weighing four thousand and fifty castellanos (an old Spanish coin, the fiftieth part of a mark of gold), and here the image was placed, the linen on which it is painted guarded by a silver plate of great value. The rest of the temple has riches corresponding.

It appears that the present sacristy of the parochial church dates back to 1575, and was then a small chapel, where the miraculous image was kept, and where it remained until the beginning of the next century, when a new church was built, to which the image was solemnly transported. Even when enclosed in the first small sanctuary its fame must have been great, for, by orders of the archbishop, six dowries of three hundred dollars each, to be given to six orphans on their marriage, were annually drawn from the alms offered at her shrine. But in 1629 Mexico suffered the terrible inundation which destroyed so large a part of the city, and the excellent archbishop, D. Francisco Manzo, while devoting his time and fortune to assist the sufferers, also gave orders that the Virgin of Guadalupe should be brought into Mexico and placed in the cathedral there, then of very different dimensions from the present noble building, occupying, it is said, the space which is now covered by the principal sacristy. When the waters retired and the Virgin was restored to her own sanctuary, her fame increased to a prodigious extent. Copies of the divine image were so multiplied that there is probably not an Indian hut throughout the whole country where one does not exist. Oblations and alms increased a thousandfold; a silver throne, weighing upward of three hundred and fifty marks, and beautifully wrought, chiefly at the expense of the viceroy, Count of Salvatierra, was presented to her sanctuary, together with a glass case (for the image), considered at that time a wonder of art. At the end of the century a new temple, the present sanctuary, was begun. The second church was thrown down, but not until a provisional building (the actual parish church) was erected to receive the image. The new temple was concluded in 1709, and is said to have cost from six to eight hundred thousand dollars, collected from alms alone, which were solicited in person by the viceregal archbishop, D. Juan de Ortega y Montanez. Two private individuals in Mexico gave, the one thirty, the other fifty, thousand dollars toward its erection.

In 1802, some part of the walls and arches began to give way, and it was necessary to repair them. But first, under the direction of the celebrated sculptor Tolsa, a new altar was erected for the image. His first care was to collect the most beautiful marbles of the country for this purpose. The black he brought from Puebla, and the white, gray, and rose-colored from the quarries of San José Vizarron. He also began to work at the bronze ornaments, but



because of the immense sums of money necessary to its execution the work was delayed for nearly twenty years. But, in 1826, it was recommenced with fresh vigor. The image was removed, meanwhile, to the neighboring convent of the Capuchins, and the same year the altar was concluded, and the Virgin brought back in solemn procession in the midst of an innumerable multitude. This great altar, which cost from three to four hundred thousand dollars, is a concave hexagonal, in the midst of which rise two white marble pillars, and on each side two columns of rose-colored marble of the composite order, which support the arch. Between



LA SANTÍSIMA CHURCH.

these are two pedestals, on which are the images of San Joaquin and Santa Anna, and two niches containing San José and San Juan Bantista. Above the cornices are three other pedestals, supporting the three archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael; and above St. Michael, in the midst of cherubim and seraphim, is a representation of the Eternal Father. The space between the upper part of the altar and the roof is covered with a painted crimson curtain held by saints and angels. The tabernacle in the centre of the altar is of rose-colored marble, in which the image is deposited, and all the ornaments of the altar are of gilt, bronze, and silver.

There are at Guadalupe the church of the Capuchin Nuns, and the churches of the Hill and of the Well, all in such close conjunction that the whole village, or city, as it calls itself, combine to make one religious establishment or confraternity, belonging to these temples and churches, united in the worship of the Virgin, and commemorating the "miraculous apparition" manifested to the chosen Indian, Juan Diego.

The shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe is the most precious and sacred in all the republic: embodying this most beautiful and significant of legends as it does, pilgrims flock to it in a never-ceasing stream.

A rival shrine, in popular interest at least, is that of the celebrated Virgin de los Remedios. It is on a mountain a few miles out of Mexico. The view from it is superb, commanding the whole plain. The church is old and very picturesque as it stands in gray, solitary state in the midst of a quiet expanse.

This Virgin was brought over by Cortez, and when he displaced the Indian idols in the great temple of Mexico and caused them to be broken in pieces and the sanctuary to be purified, he solemnly placed there a crucifix and this image of the Virgin; then, kneeling before it, he gave solemn thanks to heaven, which had permitted him thus to adore the Most High in a place so long profaned by the most cruel idolatries.

It is said that this image was brought to Mexico by a soldier of Cortez's army called Villafuerte, and that the day after the terrible Noche Triste it was concealed by him in the place where it was subsequently found. At all events, the image disappeared, and nothing further was known of it until, on the top of a barren and treeless mountain, in the heart of a large maguey, it was found by a fortunate Indian. Its restoration was joyfully hailed by the Spaniards. A church was erected on the spot. A priest was appointed to take charge of the miraculous image. Her fame spread abroad. Gifts of immense value were brought to her shrine. A treasurer was appointed to take care of her jewels, and a camarista to superintend her rich wardrobe. No rich dowager could die in peace until she had bequeathed to Our Lady of Los Remedios her largest diamond or her richest pearl. In seasons of drought she is brought in from her dwelling in the mountain and carried in procession through the streets.

Wax candles are always burning before her shrine, and maids of honor are in attendance. Her whole wardrobe and jewels are worth more than a million of dollars, among them being different petticoats of diamonds, pearls, and emeralds.

