

venerable and druidical look. Here one may wander through the noble avenues and rest under the trees, walk through the tangled shrubberies, bright with flowers and colored berries, or enter the cave and stand by the large clear tank, and then climb the precipitous ascent on which stands the castle.

From the terrace that runs around the castle the view forms the most magnificent panorama that can be imagined. The whole valley of Mexico lies stretched out as in a map:—the city itself, with its innumerable churches and convents; the great aqueducts which cross the plain; the avenues of elms and poplars which lead to the city; the villages, lakes, and plains which surround it; to the north, the magnificent cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe; to the south, the villages of San Augustin, San Angel, and Tacubaya, which are embowered in trees and look like an immense garden. And though in the plains below there are many uncultivated fields and many buildings falling to ruin, yet with its glorious enclosure of lofty mountains, off whose giant sides great volumes of misty clouds are ever rolling, and with its turquoise sky forever smiling on the scene, the whole landscape, as viewed from this height, is one of unparalleled beauty.

Chapultepec, only a short league from Mexico, is perhaps the most haunted by recollections of all the traditionary sites of which Mexico can boast. Could these hoary cypresses speak, what tales might they not disclose, standing there with their long gray beards and outstretched, venerable arms, century after century, already old when Montezuma was a boy, and still vigorous in the days of Bustamente! There the last of the Aztec emperors wandered with his dark-eyed ladies. Under the shade of these gigantic trees he rested, perhaps smoked his "tobacco mingled with amber," and slept, his dreams unhaunted by visions of the stern traveller from the far East, whose sails even then were perhaps within sight of the shore. In these tanks he bathed. Here were his gardens and his aviaries and his fish ponds. Through these woods he may have been carried by his young nobles in his open litter, under a splendid dais, stepping out upon the rich stuffs which his slaves spread before him on that green and velvet turf.

And from the very rock where the castle stands he may have looked out upon his fertile valley and great capital, with its canoe-covered lakes and outspreading villages and temples and gardens of flowers, no care for the future darkening the bright vision.

Tradition says that now these caves and pools and woods are haunted by the shade of the conqueror's Indian love, the far-famed Doña Marina.

The castle is indeed a beautiful building. A double row of light and elegant arches in white and pale-tinted marbles marks the broad colonnades, from which the main body of the palace springs into the air with an effect of great delicacy and beauty. All the rooms open on these marble balconies; and on the uppermost flight, reached by an exquisite stairway with gilded balustrades, have been built fountains and terraced gardens, enchanting as the hanging gardens of Babylon. Around under the arches the walls have been painted in fine copies of Pompeian frescos and Greek designs, executed with great purity both of color and of form. This flowery arbor, perfumed and beautiful, forms the centre around which cluster the rooms of the palace. These are convenient for the purpose of summer residence, and contain some marvellous ceilings, wherein Cupids play among tangled flower-wreaths or blow on conch-shells to waken sleeping Love. And over all the wonderful outlook makes it ideal.

Adjoining the palace, the military academy gives a passing opportunity to note the system of instruction provided by the government to prepare its future soldiers and scientists.

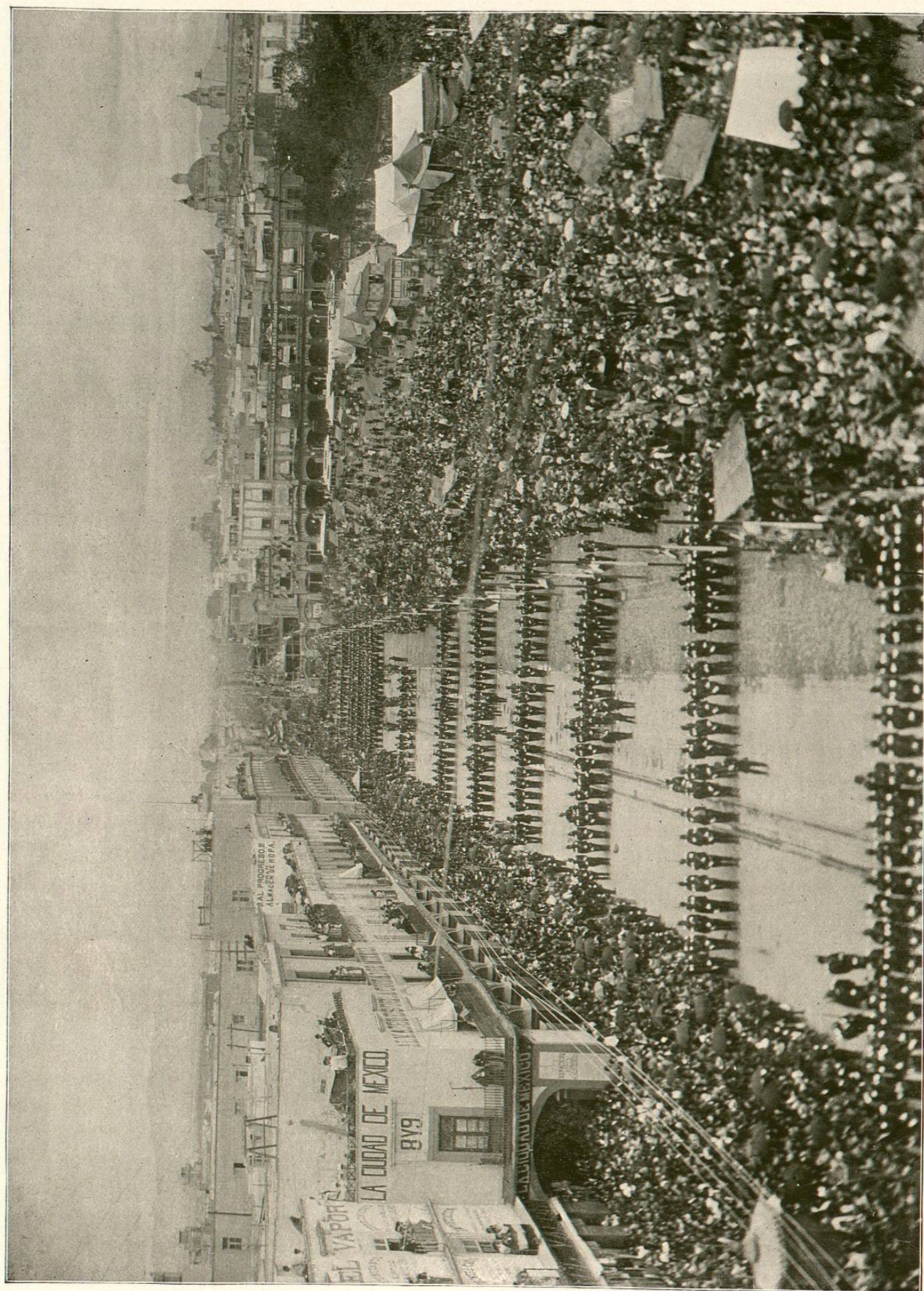
CHAPTER IX

THE MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

INDEPENDENCE DAY in Mexico means the same thing from the Mexican standpoint as the Fourth of July means in the United States; and on that day Mexico celebrates two events of national importance: President Diaz was born at eleven o'clock P.M., September 15, 1830, and one hour later, at twelve o'clock of the 16th, was first inaugurated the birthday of Mexican independence. After General Diaz became president of the republic the custom was changed to inaugurate Independence Day and the president's birthday at the same time. On the night of September 15, 1896, for instance, at exactly eleven o'clock, there went up from the plazas of the great cities, from plain and valley and mountain top, one mighty shout from tens of thousands of freemen's throats, "Viva México!" "Viva el Presidente!"

Congress held its reunion and adjourned at eleven o'clock to participate in the celebration. At that moment a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by the national guard, and there followed an uninterrupted hour of festivities. A banquet was given at Chapultepec to President Diaz by the Mexican army, when the secretary of war congratulated the president in the name of the army on reaching his sixty-fifth birthday and on being so firmly intrenched in the hearts of his people. Besides the army, the diplomatic corps, the Mexican cabinet, and many of the prominent people were present at this brilliant occasion.

On the 14th it is customary for the people of the city of Mexico to celebrate President Diaz's birthday with their unrivalled "Battle of Flowers." The sixty-fifth anniversary of his birth was celebrated in the city of Mexico by nearly a quarter of a million of people. It was a great day, and when "fair Tenochtitlan" arrays herself for a *fiesta* the display rivals anything ever seen elsewhere on the continent. It was on this occasion a continued rivalry between the beauty and loveliness of the brilliantly-robed ladies and the masses of gorgeous, many-hued flowers. This celebration is observed with the utmost informality. It is one of the days when everybody has full license. The rich and the poor mingle and pelt one another with flowers in the most democratic manner. It is an occasion on which the rich prepare splendid spectacles and brilliant displays, which the poor are allowed to witness and enjoy in the freest manner. The day is intended as an object-lesson, teaching loyalty to the republic through the faithful observation of the birthday of its president. On the occasion in question there could have been seen before sunrise large numbers of Indians coming from every section, down the mountains, through the thoroughfares and byways, across the valley, and through every gateway, into the city, bearing large supplies of the choicest and rarest flowers. These early comers hastened through the streets to the humble homes or shops of their relatives or friends, and before ten o'clock every building of note in the city was profusely decorated in honor of the occasion. Numerous fine bands were brought from barracks and from the capitals of other



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provinces or states. These were stationed along San Francisco Street at the crossings between the Alameda and the palace.

Shortly after ten o'clock the president and Mrs. Diaz took position on one of the balconies of the Jockey Club building, and the long procession was soon in motion. The scene presented was striking in beauty. There were countless fine carriages, barouches, four- and six-in-hands, tandems, all bedecked with flowers in artistic taste. There was raging a continuous battle, even the president taking a lively part. The streets were strewn with flowers. They showered from balconies and house-tops.

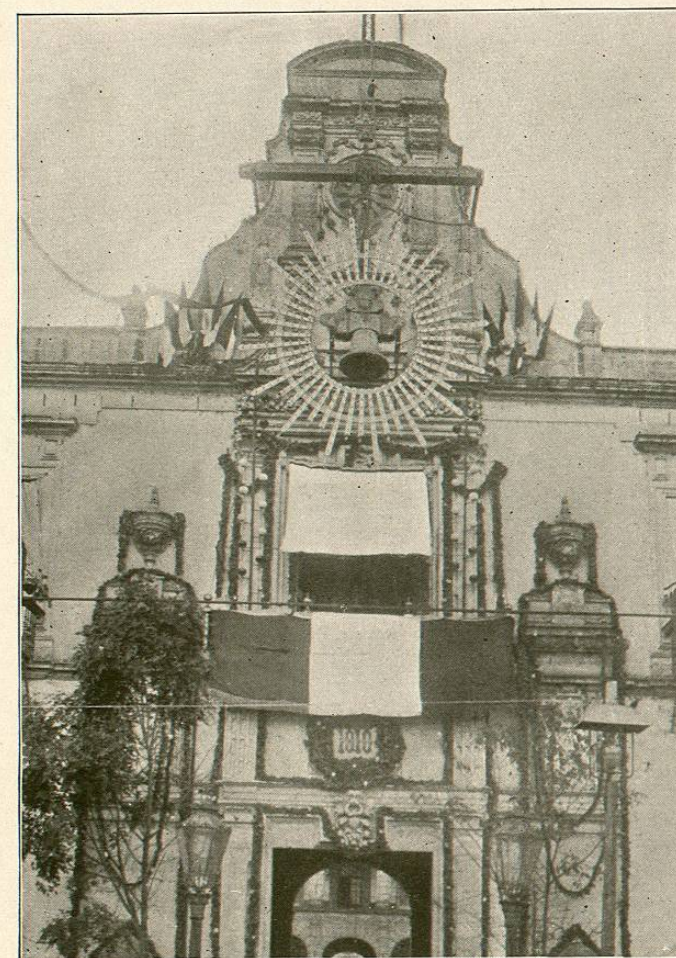
Visitors, especially Americans, were delighted with the inexhaustible supply of flowers and the innate taste of the Mexican people. The passing pageant was in harmony with the prevailing architecture. Graven house-fronts, statuary, escutcheons, fantastic ironwork of balconies, the tiles of the porcelain palace, all helped to frame a picture the like of which no other city on the continent can hope to rival. Such is the wonderful spectacle of Mexico's floral carnival.

The story of Mexico's Liberty Bell is most interesting. In September, 1810, when Hidalgo and his little band of patriots were secretly consulting how they could best effect the freedom of Mexico, this bell was rung to sound the first note of Mexican liberty. It hung in a little church in the hamlet of Dolores Hidalgo, near the city of Querétaro. On the 15th of September, as the little band of patriots were counselling together, a special courier came hastening thither with a message from the Corregidora Señora Dominguez to the effect that their plot for freedom had been discovered by the Spaniards. This lady's memory is revered to-day throughout Mexico, and the key-hole in Querétaro where she listened to the Spanish councils is one of the sights of that city. On the Mexican Independence

Day her picture is exhibited in the city side by side with that of Hidalgo. When Hidalgo received the news at Dolores he had this bell rung to summon all the patriots in the vicinity, and made a stirring speech, which resulted in their starting out together to strike the first blow in the revolution. The bell weighs 982 kilogrammes; its height is .78 of a metre; its circumference at the base is 3.298 metres. The following inscription is on the bell:

DE S. S. JOSEPH
22 DE JULIO DE 1768.

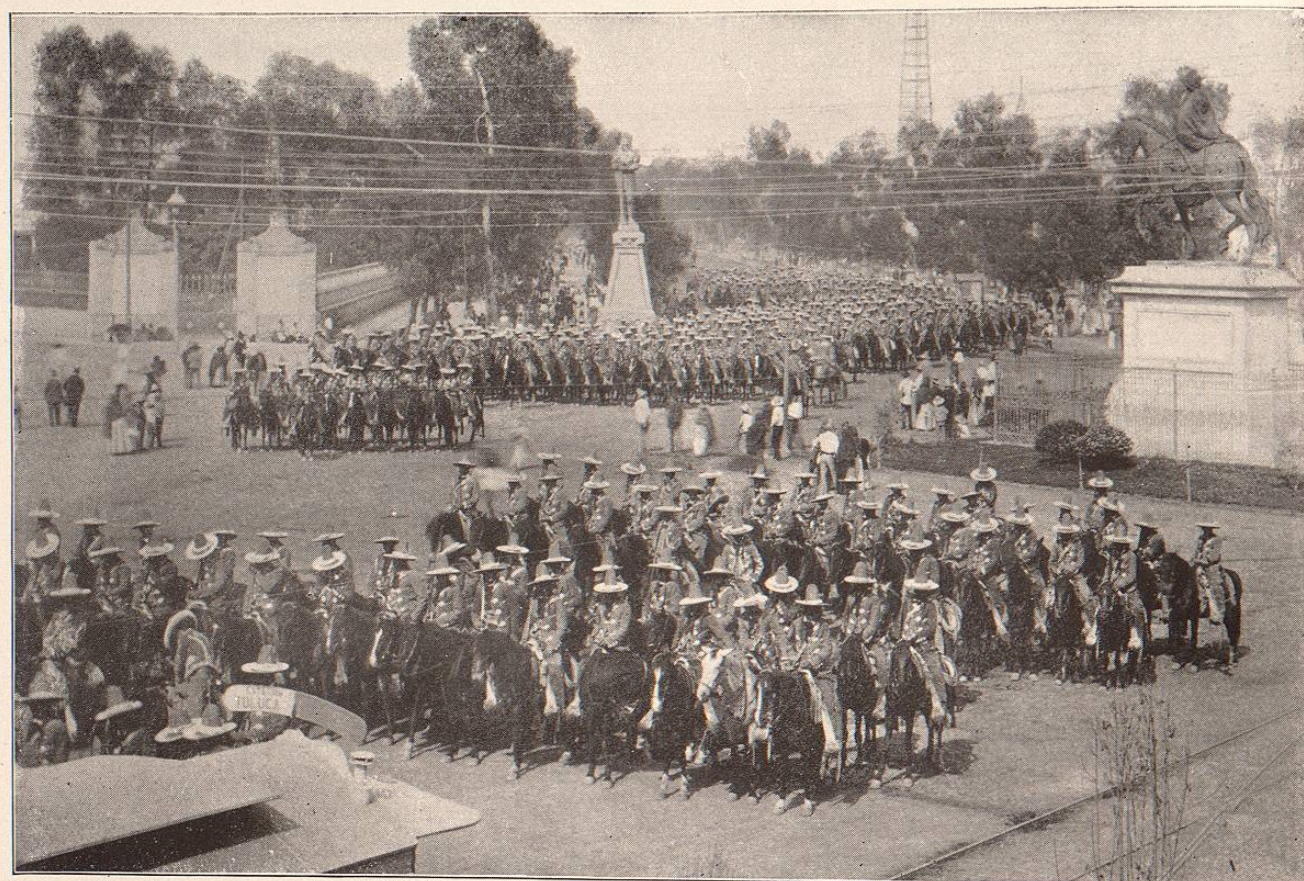
It is made of copper and silver, with enough of the latter metal to give it the silvery ring for which it was so famous.



THE LIBERTY BELL.—1810.

The celebration September 14, 1896, was marked by the transportation of Mexico's Liberty Bell to the National Palace. It was mounted on a car handsomely decorated for the occasion with red and white flowers and with gilded wheels. At the front was a Mexican eagle with wings outstretched. Immediately behind was an old brass cannon cast by Hidalgo in 1811, and behind the cannon was a group of trumpets, arms, gun-sponges, picks, and shovels. Next was the bell itself, which is inscribed with the date of its founding, July 22, 1768, and with its name. Over it was an artificial wreath of laurel and oak, and behind was another military trophy. At the end of the car was a gilded star with a crimson oval centre inscribed with the word "Independencia" in gilt letters, and above it "1810."

The procession included all the prominent officials of the state and country, and awoke the enthusiasm of thousands of people on the route to the palace. Flowers, serpentines, and



RURALES ON THE 16TH OF SEPTEMBER.

confetti were showered upon them as the dignitaries followed the car to the lively strains of the band. At the Plaza Major every foot of space was crowded by sight-seers. When this magnificent pageant reached the front of the palace several speeches were made.

The bell had been brought from the village church of Dolores Hidalgo in Guanajuato, and General Rocha made the first speech, praising the achievements of General Diaz in establishing order and good government throughout Mexico. He said the notes of this bell would be a perpetual reminder to the people of the exploits of their favorite heroes, and implored all Mexicans to swear that they would rather die than submit to foreign dictation. The bell which in Dolores awakened patriotism may be again the tocsin to summon the Mexican people to die in defence of their country.

General Diaz replied in an inspiring speech full of patriotism, declaring that the notes of the bell would seem to the people like the voice of Hidalgo embalmed in metal. Every year, he promised, this bell shall be rung to recall the heroes of the past, to encourage the people to defend Mexican independence and to continue the work of national regeneration, of which the struggle for independence was only the preface. After this the band struck up the national anthem, the cathedral bells were set ringing, a thousand doves, with neck-bands of the Mexican tricolor, were let loose, and, amid acclamations from thousands of throats, the bell was raised to its place at the front of the palace. The troops then marched past, saluting the bell, and the ceremony came to an end.

The capital of Mexico is changing perhaps more rapidly and radically than any other city of the country. Many of the residences are lighted with electricity. It goes without saying that they are handsomely furnished. Streets in the city of Mexico are paved and kept clean and in good repair. The street-car lines extend into the country for miles beyond the city limits, and run in all directions out from Cathedral Square. These cars are drawn by mules, and are by no means slow. Indeed, the way these little animals throw up their hind legs, as if afraid the cars will catch up with their heels, is very amusing. The drivers are mostly Indians.

A very pleasant thing in connection with the car service is that you can hire a car by the day, going how and where you please. In this way you can visit all parts of the city and suburbs, switching off at different points and connecting with different lines, taking out a party of friends with you, and being left, when evening comes, at your own door. Where else can this pleasure be indulged in?

Another custom in Mexico City is to use these cars for funeral purposes. When a funeral is to take place, the corpse is placed in a car with wheels so arranged that they will run either on or off the car-tracks. Mourners follow in a special car with white linen curtains at the windows. The drivers are in black, and the funeral cortège passes in a solemn and decorous manner to the cemetery.

The big drainage canal, leading to and through the mountains thirty miles distant, is practically finished. This is one of the greatest engineering works of the century. The city of Mexico stands in the centre of a valley hemmed in on all sides by high mountains. The distance across it is from forty to sixty miles.

The canal starts at San Lázaro, running twenty-nine miles along the eastern side of the Guadalupe range, crossing lakes San Cristobal, Xaltocano, and Zumpango, and arriving at the mouth of the tunnel near the town of Zumpango.

