

of the beautifully polished woods of the mountain forests and all manner of gewgaws, toys, and silver filigree work, which have a large sale among tourists who visit the city of Mexico. Leaving Las Cruces, the soil becomes well watered and very fertile. One sees hundreds of farmers at work in their fields of alfalfa, barley, onions, and maguey, and in orchards of olives, prunes, and almonds, that cover hundreds of acres.

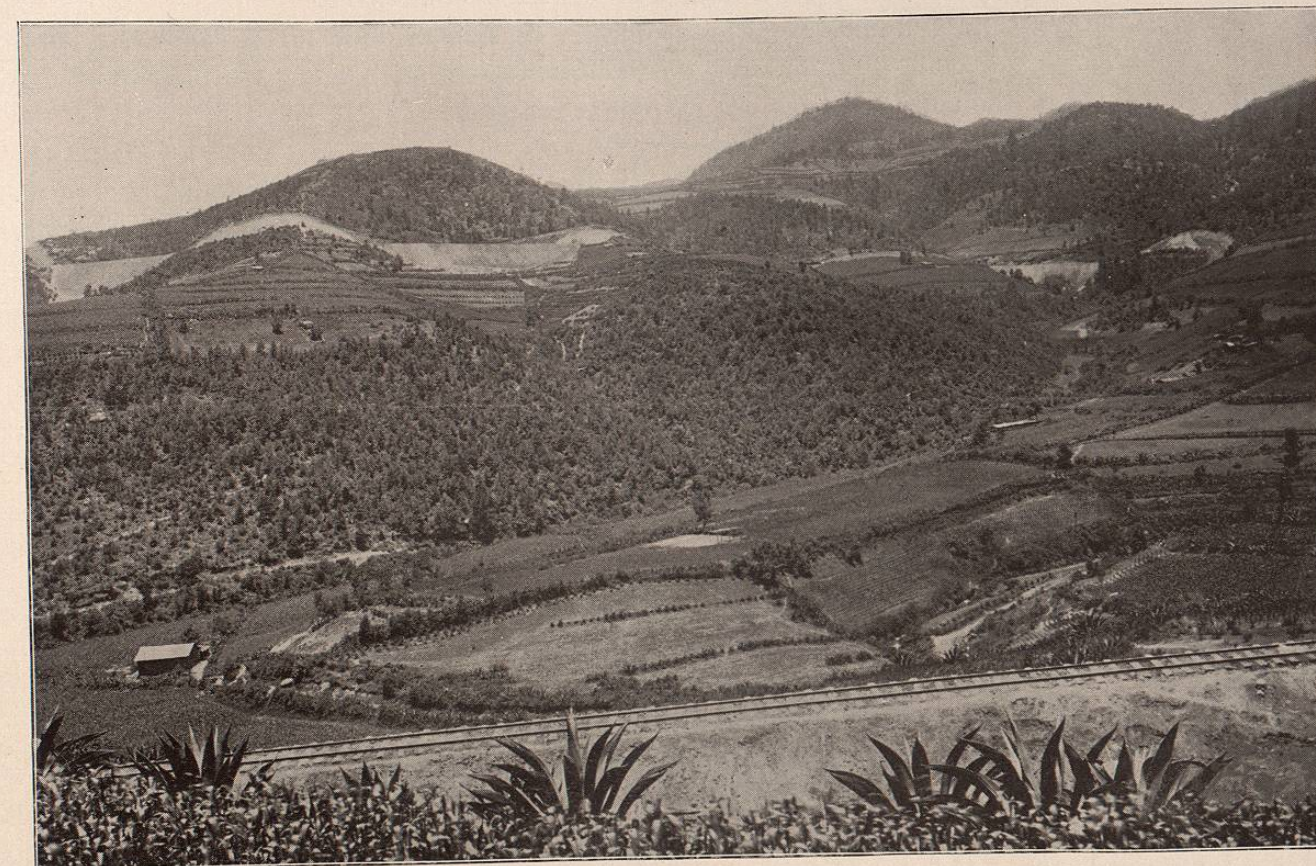
The peak of Toluca was made famous by the historian Prescott. It is more than sixteen thousand feet high, but not snow-covered. The peak of Toluca has probably an extensive snow-field on its summit, but this is hidden by irregular ridges, which compare ill with the symmetrical cone of Popocatepetl or the battlemented crest of the White Lady (Ixtaccihuatl). The wind blows snow in fine jets from the hidden snow-field, and this makes the mountain appear to be smoking. The folk-lore of the Aztecs in the days of Montezuma was redolent with legends about the smoking Toluca and its supernatural power.

On the plains of Toluca one sees the river Lerma like a ribbon of silver. This is one of the great rivers of Mexico. It flows northwest to Lake Chapala, the largest lake in the republic. From this it runs north, and under the name of Rio Grande de Santiago rolls a navigable stream to the Pacific Ocean, which it enters near San Blas. The city of Lerma is on the rocky eminence, and the bell-tower and dome of its famous church are very conspicuous. The whole plain rises gently from the marsh land at the foot of the hills and sweeps up to the base of the great mountain-range of which the peak of Toluca is the culmination. Far as the eye can reach the soil is cultivated and gives evidence of lavish care. The variegated coloring of the fields, planted in different varieties of grains, gives it the appearance of a mammoth checker-board. Everywhere are big villages or imposing haciendas. One of these, perched upon the last slope of the hill-side, might have been taken bodily from one of the Italian cantons of Switzerland.

At the outskirts of Toluca are two elaborate shrines, where one may often see a group of farmers and laborers who have stopped on their way home to offer prayer. Near by is a queer old stone one-arched bridge over a little stream. It is a very crude, massive affair, unlike anything in the United States. Not a half-mile away is an American steel bridge, and the contrast between them is striking. One is inadequate, expensive, unscientific, and yet picturesque; the other is plain, cheap, perfectly sufficient, but utilitarian. These two bridges represent early Mexico contrasted with to-day under the enlightened rule of President Porfirio Diaz.

The little village of Otumba, about twenty-five miles from Mexico, was the scene of one of Cortez's greatest battles. From these plains, stretching far away to the territory of Tlaxcala, can be seen the venerable pyramids of Teotihuacan, which, next to the pyramid of Cholula, are the most remarkable remnants of ancient American civilization in North America. They were found by the Aztecs, according to their traditions, on their entrance into the country, when Teotihuacan, the habitation of the gods, now a paltry village, was a flourishing city, the rival of Tula, the great Toltec capital. The two principal pyramids were dedicated to Tonatiuh, the sun, and Mextli, the moon. The former, which is considerably the larger, has been found by recent measurements to be six hundred and eighty-two feet long at the base and one hundred and eighty feet high, dimensions not inferior to those of some of the kindred monuments of Egypt. They were divided into four stories, of which three are now discernible. The interior is composed of clay mixed with pebbles, encrusted on the surface with the light, porous stone *tetzontli*, so abundant in the neighboring quarries. Over this was a thick coating of stucco, resembling in its reddish color that found in the ruins of Palenque. According to tradition, the pyramids are hollow, but hitherto the attempt to discover the cavity in that dedicated to the sun has been

unsuccessful. In the smaller mound an aperture has been found on the southern side at two-thirds of the elevation. It is formed by a narrow gallery, which, after penetrating to the distance of several yards, terminates in two pits or wells. The largest of these is about fifteen feet deep, and the sides are faced with unbaked bricks; but to what purpose it was devoted nothing is left to show. It may have been to hold the ashes of some powerful chief, like the solitary apartment discovered in the great Egyptian pyramid. That these monuments were dedicated



CUMBRE DE LAS CRUCES,
THE PLACE WHERE A GREAT BATTLE WAS FOUGHT.

to religious uses there is no doubt, and it would be only conformable to the practice of antiquity in the Eastern continent that they should have served for tombs as well as temples. Prescott, who gives the best description of them, says, "Distinct traces of the latter destination are said to be visible on the summit of the smaller pyramid, consisting of the remains of stone walls showing a building of considerable size and strength. There are no remains on the top of the pyramid of the Sun, but the traveller who will take the trouble to ascend its bald summit will be amply compensated by the glorious view it will open to him: toward the southeast the hills of Tlaxcala, surrounded by their green plantations and cultivated cornfields, in the midst of which stands the little village, once the proud capital of the republic; somewhat farther to the south the eye passes across the beautiful plains lying around the city of Puebla de los Angeles, founded by the old Spaniards, and still rivalling, in the splendor of its churches, the most brilliant capitals of Europe; and far in the west he may behold the valley of Mexico spread out like a map, with its diminished lakes, its princely capital rising in still greater glory from its ruins, and its rugged hills gathering darkly around it as in the days of Montezuma."

The summit of this larger mound is said to have been crowned by a temple in which was a colossal statue of its presiding deity, the Sun, made of one entire block of stone, and facing the east. Its breast was protected by a plate of burnished gold and silver, on which the first rays of the rising luminary rested. An antiquary in the early part of the last century speaks of having seen some fragments of the statue. It was still standing, according to report, on the invasion of the Spaniards, and was demolished by the indefatigable Bishop Zumarraga, whose hand fell more heavily than that of Time itself on the Aztec monuments.

Around the principal pyramids are a great number of smaller ones, rarely exceeding thirty feet in height, which, according to tradition, were dedicated to the stars, and served as sepulchres for the great men of the nation. They are ranged symmetrically in avenues terminating at the sides of the great pyramids, which face the cardinal points. The plain on which they stand was called Micoatl, or "Path of the Dead." The laborer, as he turns up the ground, still finds there numerous arrow-heads and blades of obsidian, attesting the warlike character of its primitive population.

"What thoughts must crowd on the mind of the traveller as he wanders amidst these memorials of the past," says Prescott; "as he treads over the ashes of the generations who reared these colossal fabrics which take us from the present into the very depths of time! But who were their builders? Was it the shadowy Olmecs, whose history, like that of the ancient Titans, is lost in the mists of fable? or, as commonly reported, the peaceful and industrious Toltecs, of whom all we can glean rests on traditions hardly more secure? What has become of the races who built them? Did they remain on the soil and mingle and become incorporated with the fierce Aztecs who succeeded them? or did they pass on to the south and find a wider field for the expansion of their civilization, as shown by the higher character of the architectural remains in the distant regions of Central America and Yucatan? It is all a mystery, over which time has thrown an impenetrable veil that no mortal hand may raise. A nation has passed away, powerful, populous, and well advanced in refinement, as attested by their monuments; but it has perished without a name; it has died and made no sign."

A few hundred yards from the pyramids, in a secluded spot shut closely in by two small hillocks, is a very remarkable stone, no doubt a sacrificial stone. It is about ten feet long, five or six feet broad, and as many feet in height. It is very handsomely hewn, with a well-cut cornice, but has none of the human or other figures in relief which are so well cut on other sacrificial stones in Mexico. The whole weight of this huge mass of porphyritic stone cannot be less than twenty-five tons.

From these pyramids a broad street leads off in a southern direction for six or eight hundred yards, and terminates in the ruins of the old city Teotihuacan. These ruins cover an area very nearly as large as that of the present city of Mexico, and the streets are distinctly marked by the ruins of the houses. There is one large public square of twenty acres, with the ruin of a stone building in the centre of it, with many more smaller squares in different places, each having the same ruin in the centre, which is proportionately as much smaller than the ruin in the large square as the difference in the size of the squares themselves. If it was desired to build a new city on the same spot one could not be laid out in any respect better than by adopting the plan of this one which is in ruins. The streets and public squares are designated by the large piles of rock in close juxtaposition on the sides of each, but each pile separate, and having exactly the appearance, only larger, of a long row of potato hills. These stones have manifestly not been placed one upon another, but have exactly the appearance of a brick or stone house which has tumbled down. On the western side of this ruined city is a ravine

some forty feet wide, the sides of which are for the greater portion of its extent of a soft rock. On each bank of this ravine there are niches eighteen inches or two feet in diameter, and of a circular form; these are said by the natives of the country to have been places of sepulture.

The ancient city of Tezcuco, which at the period of the conquest was second only to the city of Mexico, is also a place famous in history as the spot where Cortez launched his thirteen brigantines, which were used with so much effect in his second and successful attack upon the city of Mexico. They were built in Tlaxcala, sixty miles distant, and were carried to Tezcuco by the Tlaxcalans and put together and launched there. The city of Tezcuco was at that time on the eastern shore of the lake, but the waters have receded and left it three miles distant. The site of Mexico is the same now as then, but it was then surrounded by water and connected with the mainland by three causeways. The same receding of the waters of the lake at Tezcuco leaves the city of Mexico the same distance from the western shore. The lake is daily crossed by Indians from the neighborhood of Tezcuco carrying vegetables, coal, and other articles to Mexico for sale.

