

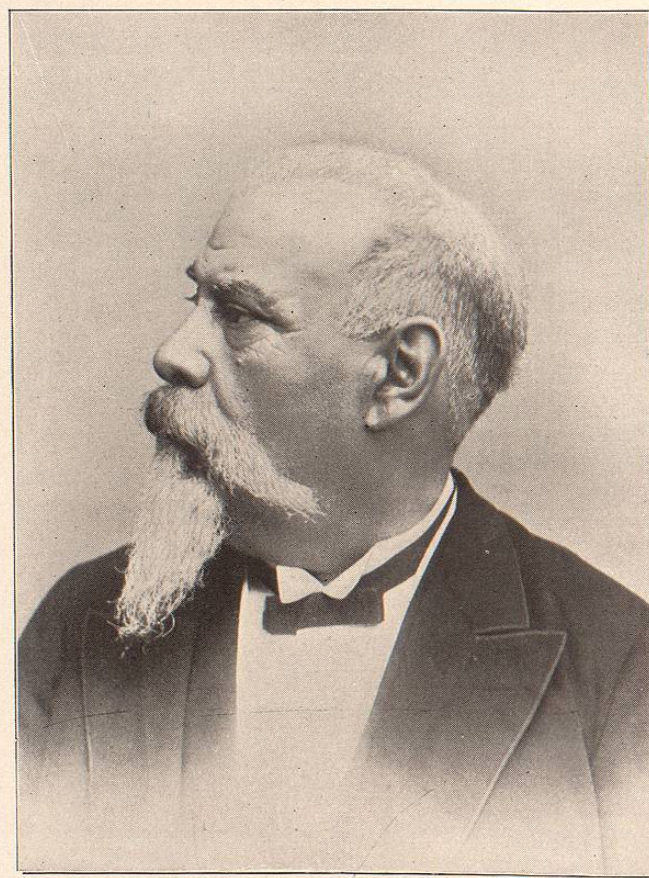
CHAPTER XVI

HIDALGO

LET us now leave the state of Mexico and journey through this fascinating republic, which combines so much of the old and the new, the romantic and the historic, the traditions of the past and the spirit of modern progress.

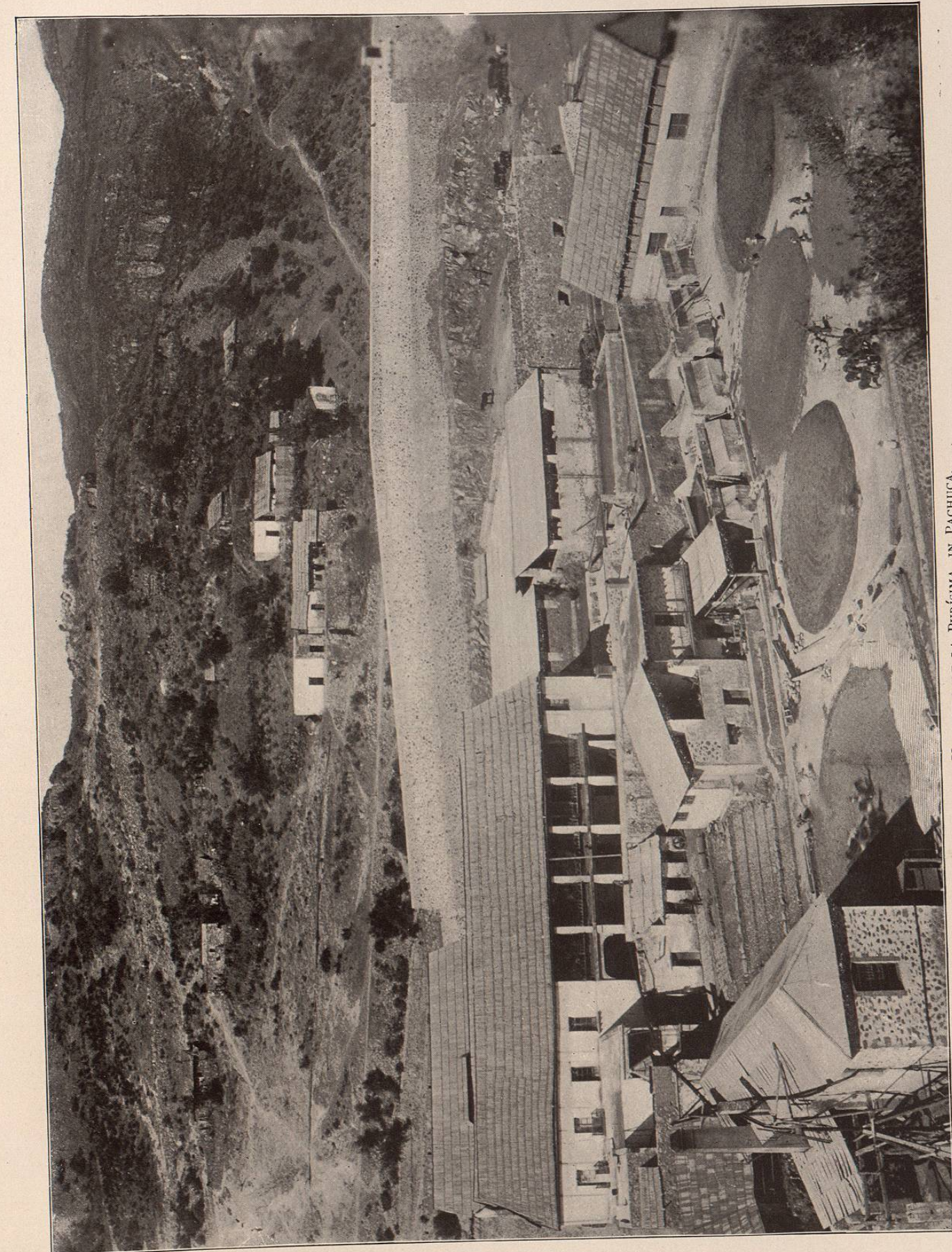
Closely adjacent on the northeast lies the state of Hidalgo. The word *hidalgo* is applied in Spain to every noble man and woman, though strictly belonging only to the lowest orders of nobility, constituting the *hidalgua*.

This state bears the name of Mexico's Washington, the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who was the first to proclaim the independence of his country (September 16, 1810), and who gave his life for the nation that was to be. Touching the state of Mexico (its southern boundary), and enclosed by that and the states of Querétaro to the west, San Luis to the north, and Vera Cruz and Puebla on the side of the rising sun, it has a cluster of delightful and prosperous cities and towns along the lines of the Mexican Central Railway. El Salto, Tula, San Antonio, Marquez, Nopala, Cazadero, are strung, like jewels, along the thread of steel rails forming the main line, while Pachuca, the capital, Tlaxcoapan, Rosal, Temoaya, and Concepcion are on the branch which leaves the main line at Tula.



SEÑOR GOBERNADOR-GENERAL RAFAEL CRAVIOTO.

Pachuca, the capital city, has a population of forty thousand, which rejoices in the fact that the city is eight thousand feet—a good mile and a half—above sea-level. It is the seat of government, and is entirely devoted to mining and metallurgical reduction and the business growing out of these twin industries. Pachuca is surrounded by high mountains veined with silver, which the Spaniards mined three hundred and seventy-five years ago, and the Aztecs before them. North of the city is the deepest shaft in the country, sixteen hundred and forty-five feet deep, with fortress-like walls. Real del Monte has one of the largest water-wheels on earth, fifty feet in diameter.

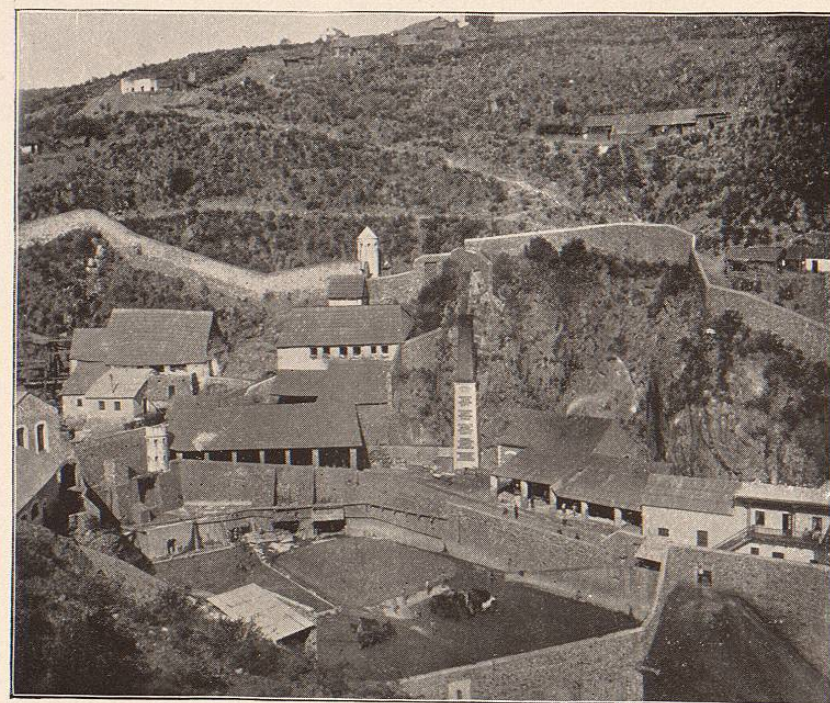


HACIENDA DE LA PURÍSIMA, IN PACHUCA.

The largest pump in the world may be found at the Dificultad mine in Real del Monte, the road to which from Pachuca is very fine, and was built by the originators of the Real del Monte Mining Company at their own expense.

The city of Pachuca is considered one of the most prosperous in the republic in proportion to its population. While it has no artificial drainage system, a natural sewer in the shape of a river supplies this deficiency.

The plantation of Santiago Tuxtla once belonged to Cortez, and is said to be the one on which he first planted sugar-cane in Mexico; in fact, the remains of old sugar-mills said to have



HACIENDA OF SAN BUENAVENTURA.

been built by him are still to be found, overgrown with cedars some of which are over two feet in diameter, which certainly shows that the ruins are very old. Pachuca is a shell of porphyry with its open edge toward the northeast and its curves lost in the lofty Sabanillas and San Cristobal range. The Pachuca skies are a lovely blue and the mountains brown. Only now and then a bit of green shows among the deep gullies. The river is of a muddy color, but the bridges of stone between east and west Pachuca are quite picturesque. Her streets spread out like the stems of a lady's fan, bearing the names of Guerrero, Allende, Bravo, and other Mexican heroes. The *patio* of one house is often on a level with the roof of a neighbor, and the streets climb up the sides of the mountains like so many flights of stairs. The boulevard to the Cuesco hacienda and the road to the Santa Gertrudis mine are each very pleasant. Prosperous has been its career in the past, but with the swamping of the three greatest mines in December, 1895, the growth of the place received a short check. It was in the year 1557 that Bartolomé de Medina, a monk, initiated the "patio" process for reduction of silver ores. The Pachuca mines were then twenty years old, and, although millions of silver pesos have been taken from the heart of the mountains, the silver skin of Pachuca has as yet only been scratched. Previous to the accident in December, 1895, when the three great mines of San Rafael, Maravillas, and Camelia were flooded, the district had an output in silver of five hundred thousand dollars per week.

The mines have already started up, however, and have installed new electrical plants, so that the future of Pachuca mines is definitely settled to be greater than anything the past has ever known. These electrical plants were put in with twelve hundred horse-power, so that, with the growth of the future, Pachuca is destined to be, as it has been, one of the most celebrated mining centres in the world.

The transmutation of the hoary past into the aggressive future is nowhere better illustrated than by the growth and prospects of Tula. It is true beyond question that in the near future

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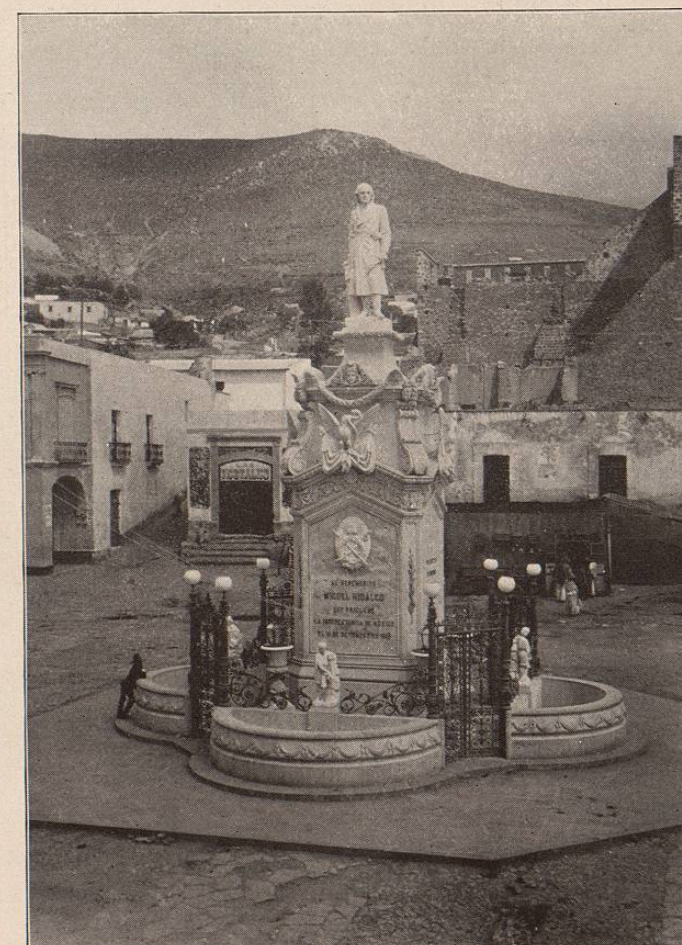
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Tula will be a resort like Orizaba and Cuernavaca, although it is not quite seven thousand feet high. The city is built upon a series of terraces that go down to the bottom-lands of emerald green. The broad, well-paved streets and fine sidewalks are arranged along these terraces. Half-way down to the river is an old church which looks more like a fortress than a house of worship. It stands on an enormous square artificially raised and perfectly level; a battlemented wall around it is a modification of those known in Europe as *redans*, which were common in Mexico prior to the Spanish conquest. The towering massive church has its roof battlemented in the same way. At regular intervals along the walls are solid buttresses with stone sentry-boxes. This square and its outer wall are ascribed to the ancient Toltecs.

There are three ancient bridges in the vicinity, one of which at least is Toltec. Various Toltec traditions have come down about this locality, flavored with all the musty romance of the past. There is good reason to suppose that one of these bridges was built in 210 A.D. and fell in the middle of the eleventh century, the remains still forming a picturesque bit of Tula. In this vicinity, too, are other antiquities, summed up in what the citizens call "The Treasury of Montezuma."

On the same hill are some ancient Chichimec fortresses,—circular heaps of loose stone with earth thrown over them to keep them in place. They resemble the funnel which the ant-lion makes for the destruction of the wandering ant. From their summit there is a most exquisite view of the valley of the Tula River and of the city with its lower terraces embosomed in verdant ash-trees. The church looks like a mediæval fortress, and the valley is an emerald patch of waving wheat-fields. "The Treasury of Montezuma," now in ruins, is on the top of the hill. There are two distinct kinds of fragmentary walls, eight feet thick. There is one large room thirty-two feet long, with the chunam flooring nearly perfect. The people of Tula visit these ruins continually, believing many treasures to be concealed there. They dream dreams, and then go out and sink pits in the flooring, hoping to enrich themselves with wonderful treasures of Montezuma's time. It is probable that at one time these ruins were the abode of the patriarchal chief, when the whole slope was covered with fruit-trees and the summit a beautiful garden.

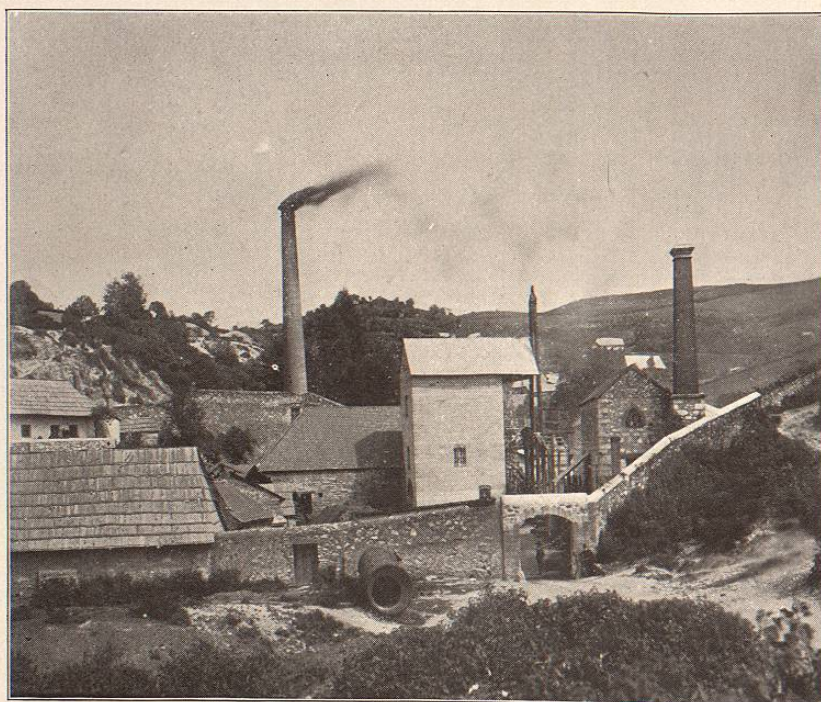
There are other strange relics of ancient times on another hill near Tula. These are carved rocks resting upon a stratum of adobe, below which the hill slopes down to the river precipitously. The carvings are symbolical, and are supposed to have been made about 1160 A.D., in the Chichimec era. There is a great wealth of carving, although the details are not so distinct



STATUE OF HIDALGO.

as they might be, because some clerical vandal has covered it with paper, fragments of which still cling there. There are seven of these rocks,—a magical number,—and it is thought they were objects of adoration previous to the conquest. Indeed, it is believed that certain Indians worship these rocks to-day. It is a deplorable thing that the Spaniards disturbed the rock-carving at Chapultepec or that vandals meddled with these at Tula.

The beautiful valley in which Tula is situated teems with tropical flowers and foliage, and is noted for the Toltec ruins and relics which have been found and are still found there. The old church, which was built three hundred years ago, has walls seven feet thick, which seems enough for all practical purposes of construction, and the tower is one hundred and twenty-five feet high. It lies in the valley which the Toltecs entered when they came southward in 648, nearly twelve hundred and fifty years ago. What can we say definitely of the happenings in our own country more than eight hundred years before Columbus landed, and about four hundred years before Leif the Red set foot upon our shores? Tula was an important town more than a thousand



MINE OF REAL DEL MONTE.

years ago, and in fact was the capital of Mexico until A.D. 1325. The proof of all this lies everywhere around,—the *casas grandes*, the broken columns, the quaint images all about the present town. The queer old church—although built in 1553 it is new in Tula—was evidently both fortress and church, as its seven-foot walls attest. Modern lime-kilns in this neighborhood, older than Egypt, mar in some measure the æsthetic beauty of the scenery around about. When I crossed the little market-place near the plaza and turned into the high-road to the city of Mexico—which commences in a rude causeway over which immense trees cast a grateful shade—I came to an old stone bridge over the Tula River, and at once there opened before my enraptured eyes one of the finest landscapes on the American continent, the flowing river, the far-reaching meadows, the wide-branching trees, the clambering vines, the brilliant and contrasting flowers, the blue and cloudless sky, all combining to make a perfect picture that the artist might search for a lifetime to improve upon. When the now long-departed Toltecs after long wanderings saw this lovely country spread out before them, “fair as the garden of the Lord,” no wonder they halted there and set up their homes and altars. Nowhere in Mexico does one feel more strongly the impression of ancient Mexico than at Tula. Here is the witchery of an old, old world,—shadowy people, vague and mystical rites and ceremonies, and dreams of ancient Toltec civilization. In the small plaza stand the remains of old gods in the blazing sunshine of to-day; and down yonder, crumbling into dust, is the old Toltec pyramid, built how many centuries ago? One may, by a little searching, find broken pieces of obsidian razor-blades and flint arrow-heads

that were bathed in human blood before American civilization was even dreamed of; one may read in the old church venerable hieroglyphics pertaining to the idolatrous worship of the Aztecs and Toltecs; one may see on every side evidences or traces of the romance and traditions of the long-forgotten past; or one may take note of modern ideas and progress creeping in on every hand, of new ideas, of little children worshipping in the old church in the purer religion of to-day, of charming, cordial people; in short, the most curious admixture of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow imaginable.

When at Tula, fifty miles from the national capital, we must not forget the canal of Nochistongo, a piece of work to which the Suez Canal is nothing. It is an open cut twelve miles long, with an average depth of one hundred and eighty feet and an average width of four hundred feet, built, at the cost of many thousand lives and eighteen million dollars, to save the city of Mexico from inundation from Lake Tezcuco.

This cut, or *tajo*, of Nochistongo was commenced in 1607. In its greatest width it is six hundred and thirty feet across. It may be seen very well from the line of the Mexican Central Railway, the trains passing along one side of the cut.

At Cazadero, more than eleven hundred feet above the last principal station (San Juan del Rio), the scenery is very fine, embracing three varieties,—broad plain, deep-reaching valley, and cloud-piercing mountains. It was here, three and a half centuries ago, that the natives honored the first Spanish viceroy, Mendoza, by a grand hunt, as was their custom, in token of good will and welcome.

The western part of the state is generally flat, or broken by mountains of but slight elevation; the centre and north, however, are quite mountainous, the principal chain being that of Metztitlan (some of whose peaks are two thousand feet above the sea), noted for its magnificent basaltic columns. There are beautiful lakes, one of them, Metztitlan, being about twenty miles long and ten wide; then there are others, also beautiful,—Tecomulco, Apam, and Zupitlan.

In some parts, as Pachuca and Apam (the celebrated pulque district), the climate is very variable. It is hot in Huejutla and other parts, and cold in other portions of the state.

The principal riches of the state of Hidalgo are its innumerable mineral deposits, especially those of silver, gold, copper, lead, iron, and coal. There are three hundred and seventeen mines in operation, and of these one hundred and ten are yielding metal. The more noted mineral districts are Pachuca, Real del Norte, El Chico, Zimapan, Zacualtipan, Ixmiquilpan, and Actopan. Pachuca, Real del Norte, and El Chico are the most prosperous, having forty mines in yield, some of which, as Santa Gertrudis, San Rafael, La Luz, Pabellon, El Barón, La Blanca and Dificultad, San Antonio, and El Rico, are very rich in silver. The mines of the Zimapan



THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE.