

found was this: fine clearings on the hill-slopes extending almost to the crest of the mountains, flourishing fields of grain, cattle grazing in the pastures, fowls and turkeys being fattened, and log houses of substantial construction surrounded by neat little enclosures and occupied by peaceful little men and women. Clearing after clearing repeated this story of industry, thrift, and prosperity.

Finally, our appearance in the market town caused quite a sensation. They crowded around us on all sides. Some gazed suspiciously from the outside, but others were quite friendly, and regarded us with childlike curiosity. They examined our saddles and our baggage



PRINCIPAL STREET, TLAXCALA.

with great interest, and even felt of our clothes; but when we presented our letters from the governor and the good president they became our admiring servants.

Up in that region, between Ajutla and Juquila, is a marvellous lake of clouds. A deep blue sky and the brilliant southern sun, without a suggestion of mist in the still air, make the place wonderful on a grand scale. Clad with foliage clear to the summit, the great ridge forms half of a mighty amphitheatre whose sides are furrowed by mountain torrents. Five distant mountains form the wall of an oval valley, with lower peaks running parallel. At one side a spur juts out, making the only notable break in the enclosing rim. The great lake seems to approach this edge like a mighty river and pour over the great precipice like a dozen Niagaras combined in one. It is a cloud-lake, mighty, mysterious, and noiseless, making one of the greatest wonders in the region of wonders.

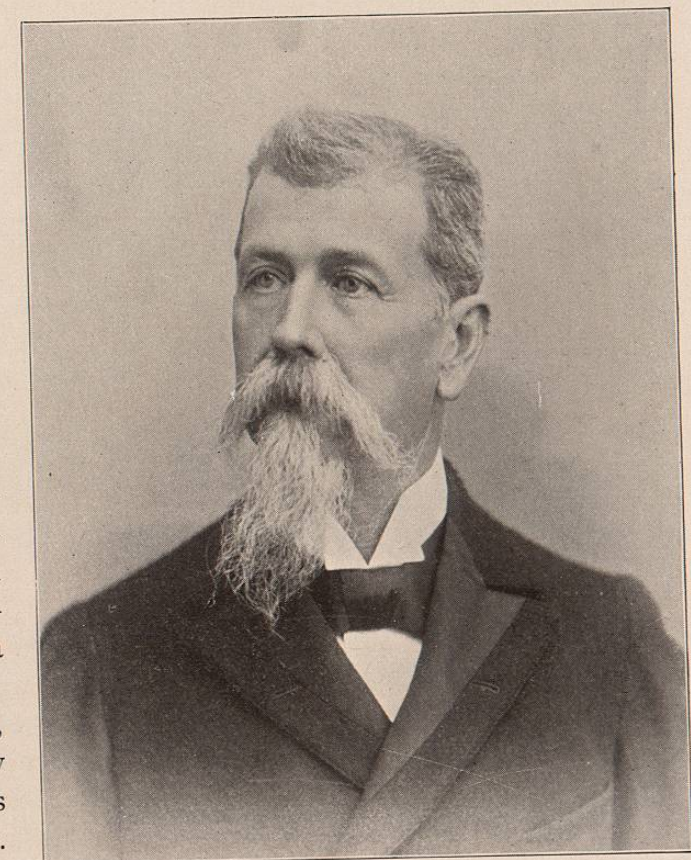
## CHAPTER XVIII

### PUEBLA

**T**LAXCALA is nearly surrounded by the fertile state of Puebla. The latter is bounded north and east by Vera Cruz, south by Oaxaca and Guerrero, and west by Mexico, Tlaxcala, and Hidalgo. The Cordillera of Anahuac crosses it and gives rise to many small streams, but Puebla has no large rivers. The mountains form a water-shed, and the state is drained partly into the Gulf of Mexico and partly into the Pacific. The average elevation is about six thousand feet, and the soil is generally fertile. Silver, marble, and alabaster abound, and plentiful crops of grain, fruit, sugar, and cotton are raised. Many remarkable remains are found of ancient Mexican civilization.

The city of Puebla, capital of the state, was founded soon after the Spanish conquest, the soldiers of Cortez laying it out six miles from the ancient sacred city of Mexico,—Cholula. The Puebla of to-day is a finely laid-out city with handsome squares. The city contains over sixty churches, twenty-one collegiate or theological schools, charity schools, hospitals, and other benevolent institutions. Some of the handsomely ornamented churches were injured in the French siege of 1863, when the city withstood General Forey and his French army during a siege of two months.

Within sight of Puebla are Popocatepetl, twenty-five miles away, Ixtaccihuatl, thirty miles northwest, Malinche, twenty miles northeast, and Orizaba, sixty miles east. The climate is delightfully mild and agreeable, and the country all around exceedingly fertile. Seen at sunrise from Puebla, the view of the great volcano is unrivalled. The clouds roll away as a curtain is drawn from a high altar. The snowy top and sides appear shining in the sun like a grand dome of pure alabaster. One thinks of Sinai; of Moses on the mount when the glory of the Lord was revealed; of the



SEÑOR GENERAL DON MUCIO P. MARTINEZ,  
GOVERNOR OF PUEBLA.



mountain of the Transfiguration; and then the sun rising higher and higher from the radiant brow of Popocatepetl sheds its glory on all below, and ushers in another day of Mexican sunshine.

Orizaba, which forms a boundary between the departments of Puebla and Vera Cruz, is said to be the most beautiful of mountains on a near approach, as it is the most magnificent at a distance; for, while its summit is crowned with snow, its central part is girded by thick forests of cedar and pine, and its base is adorned with woods and sloping fields covered with flocks, and dotted with white ranches and small scattered villages, forming the most agreeable and varied landscape imaginable. Ixtaccihuatl means white woman; Popocatepetl, the mountain that throws out smoke. They are thus celebrated by the poet Heredia:



SEÑOR LICENCIADO DON AGUSTÍN FERNÁNDEZ,  
SECRETARY OF STATE, PUEBLA.

Nieve eternal corona las cabezas  
De Iztaccihuatl purísimo, Orizaba  
Y Popocatepec: sin que el invierno  
Toque jamás con destructiva mano  
Los campos fertilísimos de ledo  
Los mira el indio en púrpura ligera  
Y oro tenerse, reflejando el brillo  
Del sol en occidente, que sereno  
En hielo eterno y perennal verdura  
A torrentes vertió su luz dorada,  
Y vió a naturaleza, conmovida  
Con su dulce calor, hervir en vida.

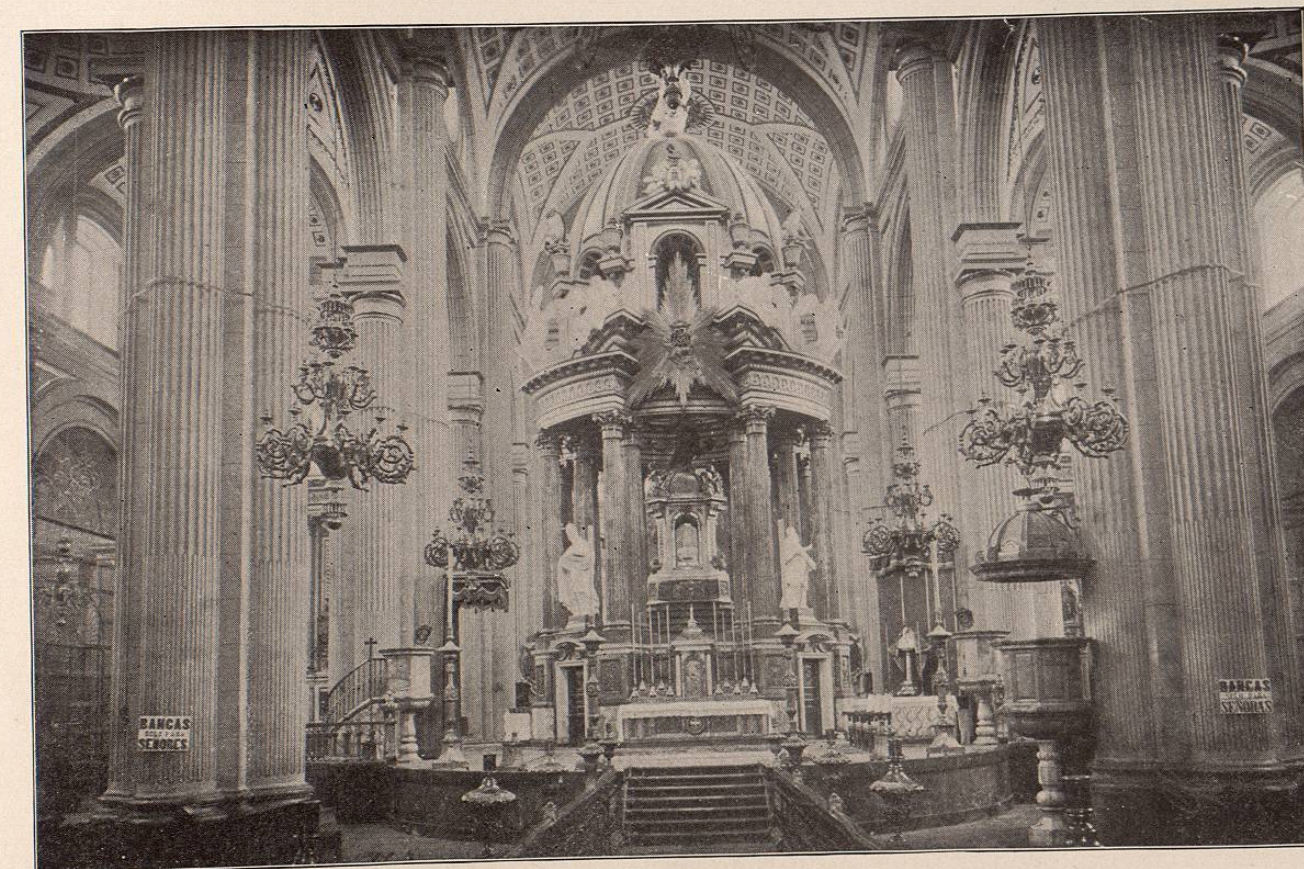
TRANSLATION.

Eternal snow crowns the majestic heads  
Of Orizaba, Popocatepetl,  
And of Iztaccihuatl the most pure.  
Never does winter with destructive hand  
Lay waste the fertile fields where from afar  
The Indian views them bathed in purple light  
And dyed in gold, reflecting the last rays  
Of the bright sun, which, sinking in the west,  
Poured forth his flood of golden light, serene  
'Midst ice eternal, and perennial green,  
And saw all nature warming into life,  
Moved by the gentle radiance of his fires.

As you approach the city of Puebla, there are farms of considerable extent on both sides of the road. The grains chiefly cultivated are wheat, barley, and Indian corn. The wheat is used for bread by the better classes, and I have never seen better bread anywhere. The Indian corn is used chiefly, I believe entirely, by the Mexicans in making tortillas. The tortilla is the bread of the great mass of the people. The grain is softened by soaking it in water; it is then ground on a smooth stone, with a long roller made also of stone, and after mixing the due proportion, which is always a very large proportion, of chile and some wine, it is spread out in a thin layer and cooked as negroes do the hoe-cake.

Puebla is a beautiful city, with lofty houses built in the purest style of architecture, and broad and remarkably clean streets. The cathedral of Puebla is a magnificent edifice, which has been said, though hardly with justice, to rival the cathedral in Mexico.

The cathedral is noble and inspiring. It is said that the rapid progress of building was owing to the assistance of two angels, who nightly descended and added to its height, so that each morning the astonished workmen found their labor incredibly advanced. It is not so large as the cathedral of Mexico, but it is elegant, simple, and in excellent taste. Sixteen columns of exquisite marble, adorned with silver and gold, form the tabernacle (in Mexico called *el Cípris*). This native marble, called Puebla marble, is brought from the quarries of Totimehuacan and Tecali, respectively at two and seven leagues from the city. Everything there is interesting or historic; of especial interest are the tombs where the



INTERIOR OF CATHEDRAL IN PUEBLA.

bishops are buried, and a vault in which lies a martyr, whose body, enclosed in wax and loaded with paste emeralds and diamonds, is supposed to have been miraculously preserved for centuries.

The towers are three hundred feet high, and it would scarcely be possible to find a more beautiful building in Mexico.

The cathedral, with its floor of colored marbles, its rich and artistically attractive high altar of different varieties of Puebla onyx, and the beautiful iron work and wood carving about the choir, boasts an interior which equals that of the cathedral of Toledo, of Burgos, of Leon, or of any other town in Spain. The music at Puebla is good. An organ, a piano, a violoncello, and other stringed instruments, and men and boys in vestments, combine with excellent results.

There are three theatres in Puebla, the Guerrero, the Principal, and the Casino. The Guerrero theatre was built in 1868, and stands on the site of the old city prison. The interior



is built entirely of wood taken from an old bull-ring, and has a capacity of about fifteen hundred people. It is owned by the city, and has been greatly improved with modern scenery and stage fittings. This theatre attracts the attention of all visitors on account of its beauty of proportion and its artistic decorations. The prevailing colors are white and gold, while the interior of the boxes and the galleries are finished in deep red.



CATHEDRAL OF PUEBLA.

It is thought that the "Teatro Principal" of Puebla is the oldest theatre on the western continent. It was inaugurated in 1790, by the Viceroy Ahumada. It used to be known as the "Teatro de los Arrieros," being the favorite amusement place of the *arrieros*, or mule-drivers. To-day, however, it is patronized by the best classes of society. It is unusually interesting on account of its old Spanish architecture, with solid masonry boxes and galleries. If, as is asserted, this really is the first theatre built in the New World, it should be of more than local interest.

The Casino was built as a private theatre for a local society, but has now passed into the hands of the Administrador del Timbre, who leases it to travelling companies.

There is also a bull-ring in Puebla, with seats for three thousand people. It is an uncommonly large ring, but for that reason is not popular with bull-fighters.

Another place of popular amusements is

the Puebla athletic grounds, or "Velodromo," from which there is a very fine view. It may be of interest to state that Puebla has a playwright of considerable reputation, Francisco Neve, whose "La Llorona" is a very fine tragedy.

Puebla, the "City of Angels," with its hundred domes and spires gleaming in the sun, makes the same impression upon the traveller of to-day as ancient Cholula, the "City of the Gods," made upon Cortez and his army when they entered it in the course of their march against the kingdom of the Montezumas; that is, Puebla, which is only six miles from Cholula, is in some ways the representative of the older city. The tradition goes that the ancient Aztecs used to see the sun-lit forms of angels and fair spirits hovering over the sacred city of Cholula. These, they believed, were reinforced by hosts of guardian spirits behind the fleecy clouds, placed there by the gods to watch over the sacred city which they loved so well. When the ancient city had fallen into decay, and Puebla began its growth, the good people believed that the spot for the "City of the Angels" was indicated to them by these spirits of the air, and that while they slept these angels spread protecting wings over it. It is certainly a pretty idea this, that the spirits deserted the shat-

tered idols and ruins of Cholula to raise up a new city unto a new faith. Cholula of old was the Aztec city of churches and shrines; Puebla of to-day is the great Christian city of modern Mexico.

As of old, too, when the people of ancient Cholula were further advanced in the arts and sciences than those around them, so to-day the people of Puebla have made their city in many respects the most beautiful in the land. It is a model of cleanliness and good taste; while the people unite the push and thrift and ingenuity of their Indian ancestors with the ambitions and demands of modern enterprise.

In Puebla one appreciates the real beauty of the climate. The houses are bright and cheerful, the streets are beautiful, and the city has the best system of sewerage in the republic.



PANORAMA OF PUEBLA.

The common people are gifted with imagination, which throws a halo of romance over all their lives. Surrounded as they are by magnificent scenery, the spirit of poetry is developed even among the poorest of them. Among these neglected descendants of mighty nations one comes across legends older than the dead races, yet perfectly poetic in thought, form, and language. In travelling through Mexico, not according to guide-books, but off the beaten tracks and among the middle classes, one comes to realize a spirit that the modern tourist knows not of, and finds that the Mexican people have plenty of poetry in their souls.

There are persons who can witness the view from Cholula or the light of the setting sun on the Malinche without the slightest stir of emotion in their souls. These are not the ones, however, to know and feel the romance and poetry of the common people in Mexico.

The tradition of Quetzalcoatl and his life up among these great purple sun-lit hills is