

The raising of sugar-cane on Puebla plantations also offers great opportunities to the planters. Already some plantations turn out a sugar crop valued at one hundred thousand dollars per annum in refined white sugar. Of course, however, these plantations are equipped with modern machinery. Great profit is made also on the muscovado, or unrefined sugar. The Mexican cane is much richer than that of Cuba or Louisiana. Eighteen sugar refineries have been established in the following districts: six in Atlisco, six in Matamoras, two in Chiatla, and four in Tehuacan. There are many flour-mills, and eighteen cotton and wool factories. Thus it will be seen that the state of Puebla is full of the present-day enterprise.

Industry is animated in various branches and is being actively developed, particularly the textile manufactures; since the products of the numerous and well-equipped mills for weaving and spinning cotton and wool, scattered through the state, rival the foreign products, and are worthy of attention through their variety and excellence.

Commerce is very active, involving in its processes a value of fourteen million dollars, and the culmination of its operations is guaranteed by the complete abolition of duties, since there are no more domestic custom-houses. Merchandise circulates freely through the state, and the industrial establishments and mercantile houses are subject only to the payment of taxes, which has been advantageously substituted for the odious system of excise.

There are good hotels; the Jardin, in Puebla, is especially fine. The noted sulphur baths are in the suburbs. They are thronged with visitors from all parts of Mexico, who bathe in their health-giving waters.

It is in this city that we find the exquisite onyx carved and painted in the most artistic manner. The mines are situated in this state. Puebla is the "Lowell" of Mexico; the principal cotton factories are located here, all in successful operation.

The state of Puebla is noted for its system of public instruction. I have never seen finer schools in any country than those in the city of Puebla, where the German system of instruction is employed. To their democratic governor, General Mucio P. Martinez, Puebla owes one of its most important reforms,—the new law of elementary instruction, the wise provisions of which are perfecting primary education and elevating higher instruction to a plane commensurate with the latest achievements of science and the greatest educational attainments of the century. The result of this system of education will inevitably make the state of Puebla an invincible stronghold of liberty.

General Martinez was one of the ablest generals of the French war. His popularity has been proved by his having already served two terms as governor of the state, and under his enterprising and progressive administration Puebla has been raised to the rank of the second city in importance in the republic. Licenciado Agustin Fernandez, the Secretary of State, is an important factor in this administration. He is a man of great ability. The total number of inhabitants in the state is nine hundred and sixty-nine thousand one hundred and forty-three.

CHAPTER XIX

OAXACA

"THE STATE OF PATRIOTS" is the name by which Oaxaca is known to the hearts of those who love this beautiful part of Mexico. Pastoral scenes, stupendous mountains, riven cañons, swift dashing rivers, magnificent views, tropical foliage, and a range of temperature that rises from cool and bracing to hot and stifling, and settles back over the gradients again; a people not too much changed by contact with railroad civilization, which has disturbed their ancient repose but a few years; a city quaint and charming; ruins of races that vanished and left little behind, and an insight into the industry of coffee-raising that is attractive to the practical mind, are a few of the attractions of this wonderful state.

Everybody knows the influence which Oaxaca has exerted throughout the republic under the name of Diaz; just as great was that of Juarez, the inflexible native president, who led the resistance to Europe at the head of an army of patriots from Oaxaca and conquered in the struggle. From this state also came Señor Ignacio Mariscal, secretary of state, besides many others who have risen to prominent public positions throughout the country, so distinguished is Oaxaca for her talented scholars, her able financiers, her brave soldiers, and her wise politicians.

The hospitality of Oaxacans is well known. It is sufficient even now to knock at any door in that charming state to have it opened with offers of shelter, food, and friendliness, and all without money and without price. Until within a few years inns and hotels were unknown, the hospitality among the private houses doing away with the need of such accommodations. The friendship and affection of the Oaxacans for one another are proverbial. Social reunions are constantly held, and there is much gayety and light-heartedness in consequence.

From its geographical position, geological formation, fuel and water, means of communi-



SEÑOR GENERAL DON MARTIN GONZALEZ,
GOVERNOR OF OAXACA.

cation, and climate, the state of Oaxaca is a veritable paradise for the prospector and capitalist seeking investment in mining properties. Two vast mountain ranges traverse the state from north to south, whose peaks in many cases rise to an altitude of from ten to twelve thousand feet.

These mountain ranges, which are the culmination of the Rocky Mountains of the United States and the Sierra Madre of Southern Mexico, are highly mineralized throughout their length and breadth, the veins in some portions breaking through chlorite or argillaceous, and in others through a formation carrying gangue quartz or spar, with here and there a tremendous dike of igneous rock.

The principal metals found in these veins are gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron, either free or in various combinations with one another. The veins carrying free gold are those most extensively worked, and, although comparatively few mines have been opened up, those that have been are producing large quantities of exceedingly rich mineral. The Indians are working out the gold by hand in many districts, and are bringing into the city of Oaxaca monthly hundreds of ounces for sale. Gold in combination with other metals cannot be extracted by these Indians, and, as they are the only prospectors in the country, little attention is paid to copper, lead, and iron, and some classes of silver ores. A few small companies are working silver properties, the mineral from which, however, carries a fair percentage of gold, and the larger part of the ore from these properties is being shipped to Monterey smelters, a distance of eight hundred miles, or to Europe, for treatment. The whole state is practically an unexplored field,

only a few districts having been superficially prospected. Within a few years we may expect to see Oaxaca one of the first metal-producing districts of the republic.

There are already located in the city of Oaxaca two agencies representing large ore-purchasing companies, which are taxed to their utmost capacity in sampling, assaying, and shipping. The finest Mexican onyx also comes from this state.

Oaxaca is a maritime state, lying between the Pacific Ocean and the states of Puebla and Vera Cruz, and, with Chiapas, extends farther south than any other in Mexico. Oaxaca has an area of twenty-seven thousand three hundred and eighty-nine square miles, with a fast increasing population. The great chain of the Mexican Andes crosses the state, giving it some of the most magnificent scenery in the entire republic. The mountains are divided into chains and ridges that give a surprisingly picturesque and beautiful variety to the country. The most remarkable summit is that of Zempoaltepec, in the district of Villalta, which rises to an elevation of ten thousand five hundred and forty-two



A BEAUTY OF TEHUANTEPEC.

feet, and from the top of which may be had magnificent views of the entire state, with broad glimpses of both the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean. Other important peaks are the sierra of San Juan de Ozolotepec; Chicahaustla, in Teposcolula; Colcoyan, in Hanjanpam; Jilotepec, in Tlacolula; and Mijes, in Quetzaltepec. The three principal rivers are the Quiotepec, which rises north of Oaxaca City and, uniting with the Cosamaloapam, runs a course of one hundred and twenty miles; the Villalta, descending from the Zempoaltepec and emptying into the Pacific,



THE BIG TREE AT TULA.

after running its course of one hundred miles; and the Atoyac, which rises near the capital and winds for one hundred and seventy miles before reaching its mouth.

The climate of Oaxaca is in general very salubrious, for, although it is nearer the equator than some other states, its high mountainous altitudes give it healthy breezes.

Besides her vast mining resources, the agricultural resources of Oaxaca are practically limitless. All the products of the temperate zone are raised in great abundance, while the more profitable ones of the torrid zone abound. The cacao raised here is equal to the best from Caraccas, while the annual yield of cochineal is over five hundred thousand pounds.

One of the chief products of the land is maize, which produces at the rate of four hundred to one. There are always two crops, and sometimes there are three, a year, the produce being sold on the spot at good prices, for it is one of the staple food-stuffs of the country; therefore there is no fear of over-production. The same may be said of beans, which are also a staple article of food. With the maize crop and the beans are planted bananas. They grow quickly, require little care, and bear in the first year. All these are very valuable products, and will support the colonists for the first few years, while the other crops are coffee, tobacco, cocoa, and oranges; but most of these, except tobacco, take a few years before they begin to yield. Cocoa is even more productive than coffee. The cultivation of fruit is a most profitable enterprise in Oaxaca. Since the destruction of the orange-groves in Florida by severe frost a few years ago, Oaxaca oranges have found an illimitable market in New York and other chief cities of the United States. Then there is the cultivation of various fibrous plants, such as the ramie and the sisal hemp. These products have raised the province of Yucatan from one of the poorest states to one of the richest. These plants require little or no care. Many, indeed, use them as hedges to divide the fields.

The Mexican government is anxious to encourage English colonists and English enterprise, and has given proof of its good will by granting several important favors and exemptions to colonists. Among these are exemption from taxation, whether federal or local, for a period of ten years; freedom from import duties for all goods, machinery, building material, clothing, and cattle coming into the country for the use of the colonists; and exemption for the same period from all military and municipal services.

An English colony in that part of Oaxaca cornering on Chiapas and Vera Cruz owns fifteen thousand acres of the finest land, selected on a spur of the Sierra Madre, near the important town of Suchil, close to the Tehuantepec Railway. The importance of this fact can scarcely be over-estimated. The railway, one hundred and thirty miles long, and connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific coast, was opened in 1894. Its traffic receipts, according to the British consul's reports, have already doubled. The Mexican government has determined to assist in developing this district by deepening and enlarging the port of Salina Cruz, on the Pacific side, and the port of Coatzacoalcos, the terminal point on the Mexican gulf. This property is well timbered, and is divided into lots of one hundred acres each, suitable for the cultivation of fruits, coffee, and tobacco. A new railroad has been surveyed, which will cross the rich coffee regions of Teutila, Jalapa de Diaz, and Textepic, and will be a great advantage to Villa Alta and Coapan, which undoubtedly are destined to become the richest coffee regions in the world, as they are superior to those of Uruapam. By this road the exportations from the state of Oaxaca to the Gulf of Mexico and any point on the Atlantic will be made three hundred kilometres shorter than by any other route. Several points of the state of Puebla will also be greatly benefited by the new railroad. From this it can readily be seen that the people of Oaxaca are waking up to the spirit of modern enterprise.

Although Oaxaca is practically an agricultural state, there are a great many manufactories, the more important being of soap, sugars, aguardiente, or cane-rum, beer, gunpowder, and palm-leaf hats. There are also flour-mills, salt-mills, tanneries, and cloth-factories. By the way, Mexican cotton-mills declare large dividends. It has been amply demonstrated that Mexican cotton prints can drive out European goods on the Pacific coast. Mexico on a silver basis and with cheap labor will parallel the manufacturing achievements of Japan.

The state of Oaxaca, and especially the valley of Oaxaca and its tributaries, are especially rich in subjects for research, and have never had the attention their importance demands. The city of Oaxaca is situated at the junction of three valleys, with high mountains surrounding it: the Etta valley extends to the northwest, the Flacololula valley lies nearly due east, while the



THE CATHEDRAL OF OAXACA.

principal or Oaxaca valley extends to the south. These valleys to-day support a population of nearly two hundred thousand people, which is probably not one-third of that which they had supported prior to the time of the conquest and for ages before, for here was the seat of the great Zapoteca empire, that had successfully defended itself against all invasions, and had never paid tribute or acknowledged allegiance to the great power of the Montezumas.

While its artisans were famous throughout Mexico at the time of the conquest, they had allowed many magnificent structures to fall to ruin, and even the traditions of some of their greatest works to be forgotten, or to be found only in the picture-records which had been preserved for centuries, but which were all destroyed during the Spanish conquest. Had these been preserved they would undoubtedly have been of inestimable value at the present day.