

Heretofore the war-ships of Mexico have been obliged to go into dry-dock for cleaning, scraping, and general repairs in some foreign port. But the Mexican government decided to have this done in the future within its own jurisdiction. The dry-dock will possess all modern and latest devices for both convenience and safety of vessels. The foundation is to be of concrete, while every stick of timber and piece of iron or steel used in its construction will possess durability and utility fully proved by tests.



COFFEE RANCH IN VERA CRUZ.

Tuxpam is beautifully situated on the river a few miles above the coast. The vegetation all around is of the most luxuriant sort, and the city has a growing population of several thousand.

The state of Vera Cruz possesses a sufficient diversity of climate and scenery to suit every taste except that which inclines to the wholly frigid. It has ample resources to meet every reasonable want of mankind of high or low degree. It affords the widest scope for the energy and skill of the manufacturer and the merchant, the stockman, the planter, and the

navigator. It is a most inviting field for the lumberman, the fisherman, the fruit-grower, the market-gardener, and the dairyman. It is easy to realize, after the study of the unique physical characteristics of this section, that the true lover of that which is grand and beautiful in nature will here find much to admire.

In Tuxtla's woods and waters are game and fish resources adequate to the wants of a nation of sportsmen and epicures. That eminent American naturalist Professor Nelson says, "The most unexpected and striking impression received by a stranger visiting Tuxtla is that produced by the remarkable varied beauties of the scenery." He next notes the richness of the soil and the great agricultural possibilities of the district, and wonders at the vast amount of uncultivated land lying in a state of virgin freshness awaiting the coming of tillers to yield an abundant harvest. Going to and from any of these places one is constantly passing through landscapes worthy of the painter's brush, so full are they of charming interest.

The state of Vera Cruz is rapidly gaining fame for the variety, beauty, and sublimity of its scenic attractions, as well as for the fertility of its soil. Few regions present greater attractions to tourists, pleasure-seekers, and lovers of the picturesque and sublime in nature. Capitalists can hardly make a mistake by investing their money either in real estate, transportation lines, or manufactories. Tobacco has been for many years the king crop in Tuxtla County, while coffee, sugar, vanilla, cacao, bananas, cocoanuts, rice, rubber, corn, pineapples, and beans have been successfully cultivated for generations, large quantities of coffee being exported yearly. One cannot ride in any direction without seeing forests of valuable timber, composed principally

of fine cabinet woods, such as cedar, mahogany, laurel, rosewood, ebony, chicozapote, chagani, jonote, gateado, lignum-vitæ, etc.

In the county of Tuxtla alone there are many villages ranging in population from one thousand to eight thousand souls. Good business houses are to be found. Schools in which English is taught, churches, two telegraph lines, post-offices and daily mail service to the larger towns, also telephone service to the smaller ones and to private haciendas, are among the many advantages of this county. Thousands of acres of land are cut up into small tracts and owned by the poor people or Indians of the county.

A greater combination of natural advantages, suitable either for the capitalist or for the sportsman or the angler coming from the frozen northern regions to pass the dreary winter months, does not exist on the American continent. The altitude and the salt breezes from the Gulf combined prevent malaria and produce a remarkably cool and health-giving air.

Rubber-trees produce, in Tuxtla County, in seven years after planting the seed. Cacao and vanilla, pineapples and bananas, grow in profusion. Cocoanut-trees have a vigorous growth, and attain a great age, up to an altitude of twelve hundred feet above sea-level. In the plaza of San Andres there is a tree seventy-five feet high that is said to be one hundred years old. Cocoanut-trees produce in six years from the time of planting.

The group of mountains in Tuxtla County constitute the only high headland bordering the Gulf from Florida to Yucatan: hence its healthful conditions over any Gulf region.

The connecting of Tampico and Tuxpam by the lagoon of Tamiahua also opens up a great section of fertile country. The country around the lagoon and around Tuxpam has a population of many thousands, and they would cultivate large areas of land and produce many things for export if there were regular facilities for shipment. Bananas, oranges, lemons, limes, pineapples, and many other things that require certain, regular, and rapid transportation, can be produced as easily, surely, and profitably there as in any other part of the world. Coffee, sugar, tobacco, and corn grow to perfection. Coffee-trees are as easily raised as peach- or apple-trees, and the crop is sure every year when bearing age is attained, at four or five years from planting, and will give an annual average profit of fifty dollars per acre.

No irrigation is required; the rainfall is sufficient, together with the humidity of the sea-breezes, to keep vegetation green and growing constantly. Bananas and pineapples grow as well about Tuxpam as they do in Jamaica and Honduras. Tuxpam has the advantage over those places of being three days nearer the United States markets by sea, *via* Tampico, while from Tampico there is a direct rail line to the northern cities, thus insuring quick transit.



ALAMEDA IN VERA CRUZ.

Vera Cruz will always be a port of consequence and a great gateway of commerce. It is the natural outlet of a fertile agricultural region, and must share in the prosperity of the export trade. The competition of Tampico is already felt in tonnage, and it is likely that the more northern port is already abreast in that particular of the City of the True Cross, for the growth of Tampico has been very rapid during the past few years. A friendly rivalry between the two ports, which are chief among the trading points of the Gulf coast, and between the railways using them as termini, will do no harm, for there is business enough in modern Mexico for both.

Physicians continue to send anæmic and debilitated patients to the coast, and for one who has too long lived in the dry and over-stimulating table-land climate a change to the sea-shore is most beneficial. There one breathes easily and the denser air is more heavily charged with oxygen. The change observable in a nervous invalid is immediate, for color comes back at once to the pale cheeks and whitened lips of the anæmic. The sea-breeze is nature's own tonic, never improved upon by the art of the drug compounder. There is so much to see and enjoy in Vera Cruz that for the table-land-dweller it is a complete novelty; and the invalid from the sea plateau finds in the sight of the sea and the ships a novel distraction, contributing to the restoration of nervous poise.

The state of Vera Cruz has an accomplished and popular executive head in Señor Don Teodoro A. Dehesa, to whose ability is owing much of the present progress of the place.



CHAPTER XXI

TAMAULIPAS

AT the extreme northeast of the state of Vera Cruz one crosses the Panuco River to Tampico, a rival port of Vera Cruz City. This is a convenient port for handling heavy tonnage, and, consequently, Tampico is fast becoming one of the most important towns in Mexico. It is in the state of Tamaulipas, and was originally named "Santa Ana de Tamaulipas." This state has several ports, but they are mostly encumbered with bars that hinder navigation.

Tamaulipas extends from Vera Cruz to the Rio Grande del Norte, which divides it from Texas. It has an area of twenty-eight thousand six hundred and fifty-nine square miles and a population considerably above one hundred thousand. The coast is low and sandy, and there are several lagoons along the shore, the largest of which—Laguna Madre—is over one hundred miles long, and in some parts over twenty miles wide.

The principal rivers of this state are the Fernando, or Tigre, Borbón, Santander, and Tampico. In the northern part the flat coastlands extend inward for many miles and then rise to elevated plains; in the south the country is diversified by many mountains and valleys, and the scenery is very picturesque. There are rich silver- and copper-mines, which promise great and undiscovered wealth, in these directions. Valuable timber abounds on the mountains, and, as the soil is very fertile, all the fruits, grains, and vegetables of the temperate and torrid zones are easily raised. This is also an excellent state for stock-raising of all kinds.

The chief towns are Ciudad Victoria, the capital of Tamaulipas, Matamoras, and Tampico. The latter town is built on rising ground, with wide streets crossing at right angles. The houses are mostly of stone. There are several churches, a custom-house, hospitals, a prison, good schools, and a number of monuments.



SEÑOR LIC. GUADALUPE MAINERO,
GOVERNOR OF TAMAULIPAS.